

A Mentor's Guide to Recognizing and Responding to Distress in Your Trainees

RECOGNIZING, RESPONDING,
AND GETTING HELP WHEN
YOUR TRAINEE IS IN
DISTRESS

INFORMATION PROVIDED
BY: EMORY COUNSELING
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
SERVICES

COLLATED BY: GDBBS
DIVISION STUDENT
ADVISORY COUNCIL



Recognizing Distress In Your Trainee

Is your trainee experiencing significant changes in their [1]:



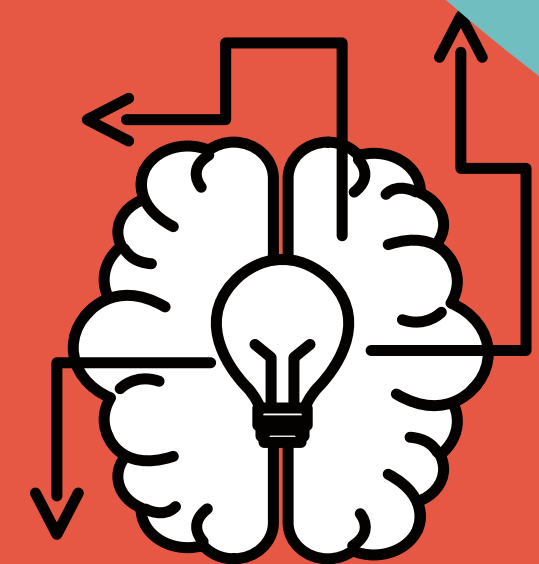
Behavior

- Deterioration in quality of work
- Inability to concentrate
- Repeated absences
- Continual seeking of accommodations
- Social withdrawal
- Impulsive behavior
- Excessive sleep or insomnia
- Changes in appetite
- Excessive use of drugs or alcohol



Emotions

- Sadness, weepiness, or depression
- Extreme emotional reactivity
- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Outburst of anger
- Mood swings
- Excessive dependency



Consider referring trainees for counseling if their problems are compromising their ability to take pleasure in life or to function academically, personally, or socially.

Recognizing Distress In Your Trainee

Has your trainee recently experienced any of the following [2]:



Stressful event or trauma

- Death of a loved one
- Break up of a romantic relationship
- Physical or sexual assault
- Change in family relationships
- Serious illness

- Expressed feelings of hopelessness or lack of control
- Disturbing material in academic assignments
- Someone close to the trainee committed suicide
- Reckless behavior
- Giving away possessions
- History of attempted suicide(s)

Suicidal risk factors



If at any time you feel that your trainee is a danger to themselves or others, call 911 or Emory Police (404-727-6111)

Responding To A Trainee in Distress

If you noticed any of the signs above in your trainee, it may be time to act. Here are some helpful tips for communicating with a distressed trainee.



Talk to your trainee in private when you are not rushed and can give your undivided attention.

Express your concerns directly, specifically, and honestly. Give examples of behaviors you've noticed that led to your concern..



Listen carefully to the trainee's thoughts and feelings. Try to convey your understanding by repeating the essence of what the trainee has said.

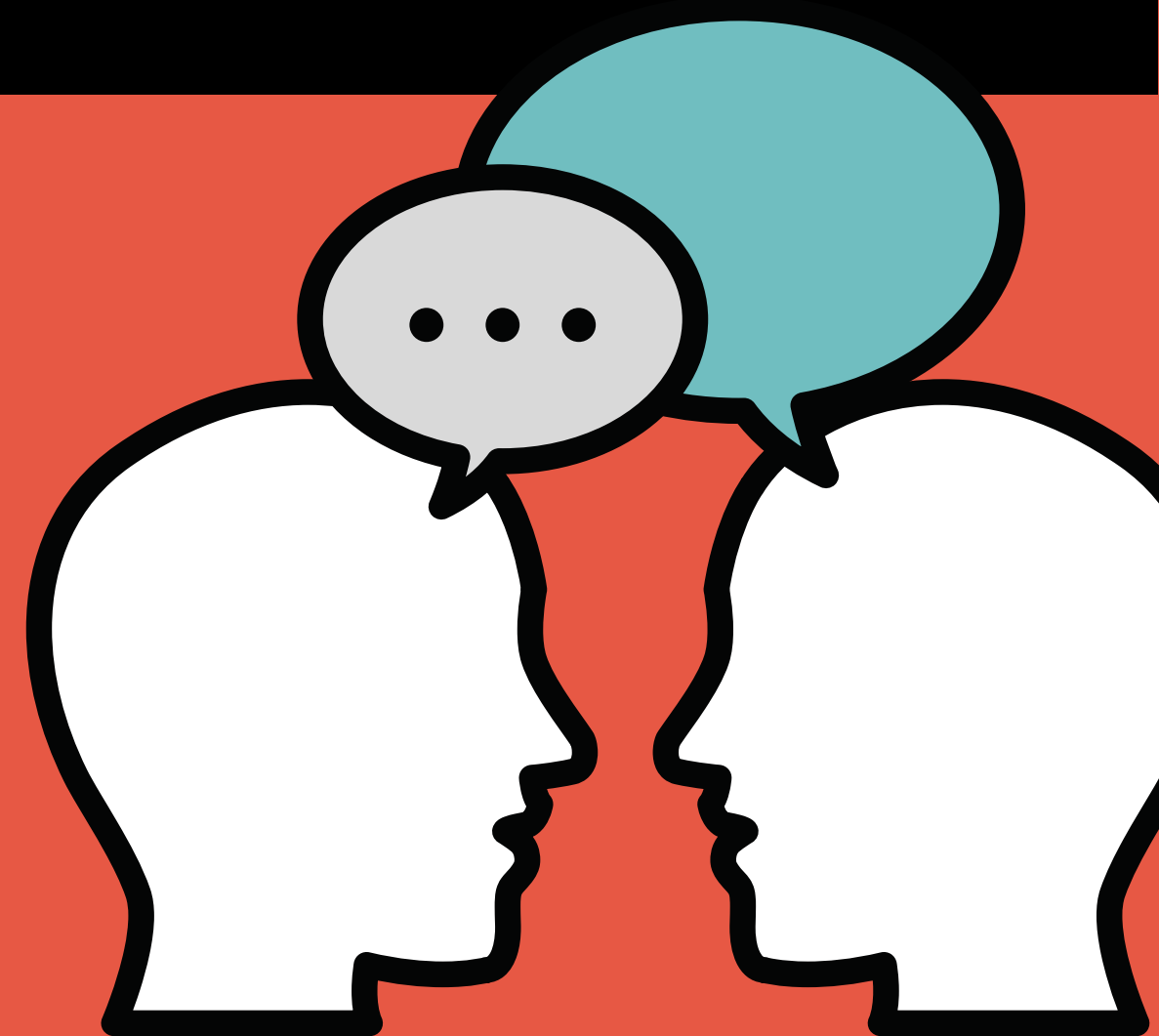
Avoid judgement or criticizing even if the trainee asks for your opinion. Respect their perspective, even if you do not agree with it.



Do not attempt to diagnose your trainee or offer medical advice.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. CALL CAPS AND ASK TO SPEAK TO A COUNSELOR IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A TRAINEE'S SAFETY. YOU MAY ALSO CALL 911 OR EMORY POLICE AT (404) 727-6111.

As a mentor, involve yourself only as far as you are willing to go. Use healthy boundaries so you do not become more involved than your time or skill permits.



Responding To A Trainee In Distress

How to make a referral to a counselor for your trainee:

- Suggest in a caring, concerned, and forthright manner that the trainee talk with a counselor. Give examples of concerning behavior(s).
- Inform the trainee that CAPS offers many services, including free counseling in which confidentiality is respected and assured.
- Give the trainee the number for CAPS: **(404) 727-7450**
 - You can offer to help the trainee call CAPS, if needed.
- If you want to talk to the counselor, get the trainee's permission first (if possible).



REMEMBER:

- Sometimes it takes a few days before a trainee can be seen, **therefore it is extremely important that you inform CAPS if you consider the situation to be one that requires immediate attention**
- Counselors cannot share any information without the trainee's permission - including if they made or missed an appointment
- **Changing basic attitudes and feelings, learning to handle everyday problems, or improving academic performance may be a process which moves slowly**
- Respect the individual. The trainee may choose to either accept or ignore the help available.

As the referring person, you are the first step in the counseling process. Your approach to the student and your attitude towards counseling are of major importance!

Encouragement from you, as a mentor, goes a long way.

You can find more information about CAPS @

<http://counseling.emory.edu/>



References:

- [1] <https://psychcentral.com/depression/depression-symptoms-major-depressive-disorder/>
<https://www.stress.org/daily-life>
<https://www.calmclinic.com/anxiety-guide>
- [2] <https://www.apa.org/topics/suicide/signs>
<https://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/suicidal-behavior-adolescents.pdf>