

For Faculty & Staff

Faculty and staff members are in a unique position to identify and help students who are in distress. This may be particularly true for students who cannot or will not turn to family or friends. Anyone who is seen as caring and trustworthy may be a potential resource in times of trouble.

Your expression of interest and concern may be a critical factor in helping impaired students reestablish emotional equilibrium, thus saving their academic careers or even their lives.

The purpose of this brochure is to help you recognize some of the symptoms of student distress and to provide some specific guidelines for intervention and for referral.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Edison Hall, Room 100

732.906.2546

www.middlesexcc.edu/counseling

MCC Campus Police

732.906.2500

New Jersey Hopeline

(Suicide Prevention)

1.855.NJ.HOPELINE

(654.6735)

Suicide Prevention LIFELINE

1.800.273.8255

Military Veterans

Suicide Prevention Hotline

1.800.273.8255 (Press 1)

Center for Empowerment

(formally Rape Crisis Intervention Center)

732.321.1189

Domestic Violence Hotline

1.800.572.SAFE (7233)

Addictions Hotline of NJ

1.800.238.2333

NJ 2-1-1 Partnership

877.652.1148

MIDDLESEX
COUNTY COLLEGE

HOW TO HELP A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

Counseling Services

Edison Hall, Room 100

732.906.2592

www.middlesexcc.edu/counseling

SUCCESS STARTS HERE

Counseling Services

This brochure is designed to provide helpful information to faculty and staff about procedures for counseling referrals and consultation, and understanding the role of emotion in learning.

Confidentiality

Information that is shared with professional counselors during sessions will, in most cases, not be shared with others outside of the department.

Students are made aware of the limits to confidentiality. Exceptions to confidentiality include:

1. Situations where there is evidence that the student or someone else's safety is in danger.
2. Legal situations in which court orders are presented.
3. In addition, the professional staff members in the Counseling Services Department share information with each other in an effort to provide the best possible service.

Tips for Recognizing Distressed Students

At one time or another, everyone feels depressed or upset. The following may help to identify some symptoms which, when present over a period of time, suggest that the problems with which the person is dealing are more than the "normal" ones.

- Marked change in academic performance or behavior
- Unusual Behavior or Appearance
- Reference to Stressful Life Events
- Reference to Suicide, Homicide or Death



What Can You Do? Intervention Guidelines

If you choose to approach a student you are concerned about or if a student reaches out to you for help with personal problems, here are some suggestions that might make the opportunity more comfortable for you and more helpful for the student.

Listen: Listen to thoughts and feelings in a sensitive, non-threatening way.

Talk: Express your concern in behavioral and non-judgmental terms.

Give Hope: Assure the student that things can get better.

Avoid: Avoid judging, evaluating, and criticizing even if the student asks your opinion.

Maintain: Maintain clear and consistent boundaries and expectations.

Refer: While making a referral to Counseling Services, it is important to point out that

1. help is available &
2. seeking such help is a sign of strength and courage rather than a sign of weakness or failure.

Referral & Consultation

Counselors are available to consult with faculty and administrators at any time during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday & Thursday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday) either via phone or in person. In the case of an emergency, counselors will make immediate adjustments to their schedule to see a student in crisis, or consult with a faculty or staff member. The following steps will facilitate this:

1. Phone or escort the student of concern to the Department (ED 100, 732.906.2546). Your first contact will be with the Counseling Services receptionist. Briefly explain to her that you have a student that you are very concerned about and you would like to speak with the director.
2. If the director is unavailable, let the receptionist know the nature of your concern without going into detail.

Examples:

- I am concerned for a student's safety.
 - The student has been behaving in class very differently than usual.
 - The student has been acting out in class.
 - The student disclosed information to me that alarmed me.
 - The student disclosed information to me that I don't know what to do with or how to handle.
 - The student confided in me and I know that I am not equipped to address his or her needs.
3. The receptionist will immediately identify a counselor with whom you can consult.