Recognize
Engage
Assess
Connect
Help

Faculty and Staff Guide to
Student Mental Health Services

905.721.3392
studentlifeline@ontariotechu.ca
ontariotechu.ca/mentalhealth

Ontario Tech UNIVERSITY

Recognize warning signs

As an Ontario Tech University faculty or staff member, you're in a key position to notice warning signs that may indicate that a student is in need of assistance. While students are resilient, there may be times when stressors become overwhelming and affect their academic performance. You may observe students:

- Missing class, assignments and exams.
- Showing significant decline in quality of academic performance or class participation.
- Expressing thoughts of despair or harm to self or others (e.g. submitted work or email).
- Displaying extreme disorganization or inappropriate content in written assignments.

Visible signs

The student demonstrates...

- Risky behaviour
- Panic or anxious behaviour
- Aggressive or paranoid behaviour
- Tearfulness or difficulties making eye contact
- A change in appearance or personal hygiene
- Burn marks, cuts or scars

Verbal signs

The student discloses...

- Thoughts of suicide or harm to others
- Worries about coping with life stressors
- Disorganized speech
- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness or helplessness
- Traumatic experiences (e.g. sexual assault or bullying)

Emotional signs

The faculty or staff member...

- Has an instinct that something is wrong
- Senses isolation or withdrawal

Privacy Act (FIPPA)

Staff and faculty are required to comply with Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) which, among other things, requires that the university protects the personal information of its students from improper disclosure.

Disclosure within Ontario Tech

Within Ontario Tech, employees may disclose personal information about students to another employee of the university who needs the information in the performance of their duties and where the disclosure is necessary and proper in the discharge of the institution's functions. This means you may disclose a student's personal information to staff in Student Mental Health Services for the purposes of assessing or assisting a student.

Disclosure outside of Ontario Tech

Outside of the university, privacy legislation is not a reason not to share information if a person is in danger (i.e. it is reasonable to believe that a student may harm themselves or another person). It also allows for disclosure in compassionate circumstances to facilitate contact with a close family member or friend. Any such decision to disclose a student's personal information without consent is extremely difficult and requires reasoned judgement, and if circumstances permit, General Counsel should be consulted.

Engage the student

A **Acknowledge** the warning signs that students are displaying. You may consider reaching out to the student if you have a good rapport and feel comfortable meeting with them in your office. Students may also inform you of their challenges directly.

"I noticed that two of your assignments haven't been completed. I'm concerned about you."

"It sounds like you're worried about school."

B **Believe** in the importance of empathy. Show compassion and display a non-judgemental attitude. Show interest and listen actively by recognizing their feelings. This lets students know that someone cares.

"I'd like to support you."

C **Create** a space where you and the student can explore options that may help them. You may be able to offer a resolution through your role (e.g. providing an extension as appropriate) and/or you may need to refer students to services on campus.

" I am able to consider these options:_____"

"There are services available on campus that can help you."

Assess risk level

Assess the student's risk level to determine the type of assistance required.

HIGH Student is in imminent risk of harm to self or others	MEDIUM Student is in distress	LOW Student needs mental health support.
Immediate suicide plan or attempt	Panic attack	Worries about academic and test performance
Unresponsive due to substance use	Thoughts of suicide	Isolation or Hopelessness
Display of threatening behaviour and escalation in disruptive or aggressive behaviour that is unresponsive to intervention	Experiences of abuse, trauma or sexual violence	Conflict in any relationship
		Sexuality related concerns
		Stress and sleep problems
		Culture shock
		Procrastination and lack of motivation

Connect To Help

HIGH Immediate response is required

MEDIUM Support is available within 24 to 72 hours

LOW Response is based on availability

On Campus
Call Security
905.721.3211 or ext. 2400

Off Campus 24/7
Call 911

Nearest Emergency Service

" I'm concerned about your immediate safety, I will call emergency services."

Suggested actions

On campus - Student Mental Health Services

Students can book a "Distress Support" appointment

Faculty/staff can refer student to SMHS

Faculty/staff can consult with a SMHS counsellor

On campus - Health and Wellness Centre

Students can walk-in at Campus Health and Wellness Centre for an assessment

"It sounds like you're having a difficult time. There are supports that can help you. With your permission, I can refer you to mental health services."

Suggested actions

Students can book an "Intake Appointment"

Inform students that peer, groups and 1:1 support is available

Invite SMHS to present in class about resources

Refer or Consult with Student Mental Health Services

"'There are resources at the university's mental health website, or with your consent, I can make a referral to services."

For more information about student mental health resources, workshops, and groups: visit ontariotechu.ca/mentalhealth

List of 24/7 community distress resources

Distress Centre Durham
905.430.2522 and 1.800.452.0688

DMHS Crisis Access Linkage Line
905.666.0483 and 1.800.742.1890

Durham Rape Crisis Centre
905.668.9200

Good2Talk
1.866.925.5454 or text 686868

Suicide and Crisis Helpline
9.8.8

Toronto Distress Centre
416.408.4357

List of campus resources

Academic Advising
Visit your faculty website

Human Rights Office
usgc.ontariotechu.ca/human-rights

Office of Campus Safety
ontariotechu.ca/campussafety

Student Award and Financial Aid
ontariotechu.ca/safa

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
ontariotechu.ca/graduatestudies

Student Accessibility Services
ontariotechu.ca/sas

Student Mental Health Services
Shawenjigewining Hall, SHA 320
Charles Hall, CHA 218
905.721.3392
ontariotechu.ca/mentalhealth

Campus Health and Wellness Centre
Room G1030 | 905.721.3037

Campus Connected

Staff and faculty can attend a Campus Connected orientation session for more information on how to engage with students.

Campus Connected is a movement that connects the people on our campus. Members of this movement affirm their ability to engage with others with an attitude of caring and kindness, as well as listen with empathy and without judgment. Visit ontariotechu.ca/campusconnected to register for a "Faculty and Staff" session.