



HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS



University College of the North



Recognizing and Responding to Students in Distress

If you are concerned about a student, do not let uncertainty stop you from taking action. University College of the North (UCN) is committed to helping students who find themselves in situations that require support. This booklet has been developed to help staff identify, respond to, refer, and report troubling student issues.

Let's Break it Down

Stay Safe

Recognizing that students who are in distress may become violent or display threatening behavior - ensure the safety of yourself, your students, and the campus. Coordinate professional care appropriately and follow-up to be sure the student remains safe from harm or suicide.

Play it Safe

If you become concerned about a student, take immediate action to discuss the issue with the on-site Student Counsellor or the Dean of Students directly. Act in a timely fashion to report safety concerns or violations of the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities.

De-Escalation and Provide Hope

Avoid any statements that can be taken by the student as embarrassing or threatening. Go over resources with student and connect them with someone who can be of further assistance to them.

Clarify Expectations

Refer to Student Rights and Responsibilities and ensure you set limits with the student within the learning environment.

Listen Sensitively and Carefully

Students in distress need to feel heard by the person who is helping them. Ensure you create and/or find a quiet environment to speak to the student in and help the student if they are having difficulty articulating their emotions in the moment. Direct questions will help clarify what supports the student needs.

Share What You Know

It is your responsibility to the student to share information with those who can help support their needs, while still adhering to FIPPA. Finding appropriate support does not violate the student's rights, it ensures that the student remains safe and healthy.

Consult Supports in a Timely Fashion

Follow-through and timely consultations with the appropriate supports are very important in a student's time of need. Always report serious or persistent behaviours to the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible.

Follow Up

If you feel comfortable doing so, follow up with the student after making the appropriate referrals. This shows that you care and also opens up further connection to you (the initial contact).

Take Care

Ensure that you are taking care of yourself through the act of supporting your student. Helping students navigate through distressing moments takes a toll on the helper as well.

Important Tips When Helping

- Find a quiet space to talk.
- Pay attention.
- Use supportive words “I want to help..” “I want to check in..”
- Avoid interruptions and judgement.
- Ask questions to show your interest. “How can I best support you?”
- Let the person know that there is hope for them.
- Go over next steps.
- Set boundaries and know your limits.
- Act in an emergency.



Maintaining Compliance with Provincial, Federal and University Policies

At the University College of the North (UCN), we have adopted numerous policies that protect and support our students, as well as faculty and staff. Such policies include the following:

- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)
- Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Academic Integrity
- Accessibility for Students with Disabilities
- Respectful Work and Learning Environment
- Academic and Disciplinary Appeals
- Impairment Drugs and Alcohol

More information on UCN policies may be found at <https://soar.ucn.ca/ICS/Welcome/Policies/>

Three facts:

1. A study, conducted by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, found that 28 percent of Manitoban adults have been diagnosed with at least one mental illness. Unfortunately, the study also concluded that the actual number is much higher.

<https://themanitoban.com/2018/10/study-finds-28-per-cent-of-manitobans-diagnosed-with-mental-illness/35338/>

2. Indigenous students make up 76.61% of the entire student population.

https://soar.ucn.ca/ICS/icsfs/UCN_Academic_Report_2021-22_for_web_jan_2023.pdf?target=cc21cadd-63bb-45fb-85d4-c8e626bdc6ca

3. In one study, conducted by Stats Canada, 6 in 10 Indigenous participants report that their mental health has worsened since the onset of physical distancing.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00035-eng.htm>

4. In another study, published in Transcultural Psychiatry, which included 32 post-secondary institutions across Canada, “revealed that in the past year, 53.8% of students had felt hopeless...”

<https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Indigenous-Student-Mental-Health-Report.pdf>

Immediate Support

The Pas

Campus Security
204-627-8572

RCMP
204-627-6204

Fire and Emergency
911

Thompson

Campus Security
204-677-7234

RCMP
204-677-6911

Fire and Emergency
204-677-7911

Counselling and Conflict Resolution

The Pas

Barbara Partridge
Student Counsellor
bpartridge@ucn.ca
204-627-8804

Thompson

Ainslee McLaughlin
Student Counsellor
amclaughlin@ucn.ca
204-677-6459

Communities

Davion Johnson
Student Counsellor - Communities
dajohnson@ucn.ca
204-677-6881



On-Campus Support The Pas

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204-677-6731

Olufemi Okusanya

Assessment Officer
ookusanya@ucn.ca
204-677-6676

Community Support

Brian Loewen

Academic Advisor
bloewen@ucn.ca
204-617-7056

The Pas

St. Anthony's General Hospital
204-623-6431

Beatrice Wilson Health Centre
204-627-7410

Aurora House (24/7)
204-623-7427

Thompson

Thompson General Hospital
204-677-2381

Burntwood Community Health Clinic
204-677-1777

MKO Mobile Crisis Response Team
1-844-927-5433

Off- Campus Resources

Manitoba Metis Federation - Mental Wellness Line
1-833-390-1041

Hope for Wellness Line
1-855-242-3310

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Support Line
1-844-413-6649

Klinic Sexual Assault Crisis Line (24/7)
1-888-292-7565

Rainbow Resource Centre
1-855-437-8523 (Toll Free) or 204-474-0212

Trans Lifeline
1-877-330-6366

REES - Respect.Educate.Empower Survivors
Provincial Sexual Assault Line
1-888-292-7565

