

UM Faculty and Staff Student Support Guide:

Recognize, Respond, and Refer

1. Recognize

Distressed Behaviors:

- Changes in academic performance and/or attendance
- Symptoms of depression or anxiety
- Clear signs of distress such as crying, agitation, or mood swings
- Expressions of non-imminent suicidal ideation
- Insolation or alienation from others
- Unusual or erratic behaviors
- Cutting or self-harming
- Paranoia
- Changes in appearance or hygiene

Disruptive Behaviors:

- UM supports the freedom of expression. However, actions or speech that disrupt the functioning of the university may be considered disruptive
- Comments intended to demean a group or individual
- Vaguely communicated threats
- Inappropriate physical boundaries
- Overuse of an office or staff function

Dangerous Behaviors:

- Directly communicating threats
- Physical assault
- Destructive behaviors: throwing items, tipping tables, etc.
- Stalking behaviors
- Psychotic or delusional speech



For more information on how to support a student, or to make a referral, please visit the UM Dean of Students website



2. Respond

Offer Support:

- Approach the student with curiosity and compassion
- Avoid minimizing their concerns or beliefs
- Allow for gaps in communication and for silence
- Offer to reach out to someone on their behalf (see the section titled “Refer”), or contact the Dean of Students Office or Curry Counseling to make a referral together

De-escalate:

- Utilize non-verbal listening skills: head nodding, verbal cues, etc.
- Ask open ended questions
- Paraphrase what the student is saying back to them, use their own phrases and/or word choices
- Offer to help locate a solution

Address Disruptive Behaviors:

- Name the behaviors using objective language
- Explain how their behavior is impacting you or the environment

- If the student is agitated, offer to schedule a meeting at a more appropriate time and place, or offer to bring in a supervisor
- If the student’s behavior escalates:
 - Calmly ask them to exit the space (note: students may be directed to leave if their behavior is disruptive enough to impact the functioning of a classroom or office; however, they will be allowed to return the following day unless a formal process occurs)
 - Send the student and your supervisor an email explaining why the request to exit occurred
 - **Immediately submit a referral to the Dean of Students** (see the section titled “Refer”) **or to the Office of Community Standards**
 - **If the student refuses to exit, or further escalates, call UMPD at 406-243-4000 for assistance**

3. Refer

- Refer students who demonstrate concerning behaviors by filling out a referral form on the UM Dean of Students website
- Encourage the student to make an appointment with Curry Health Center Counseling by calling 406-243-4712 during operating hours. Same-day emergency appointments are available.
- **Report emergent concerns or threats to student and campus safety to UMPD at 406-243-4000. Dispatch can connect the student to the City of Missoula’s Mobile Support Team, if needed**