be real. be there.
Mental health matters at UofSC

At the University of South Carolina, we are committed to the success and well-being of our students. Students report that stress, anxiety, sleep difficulties and depression are among the top five impediments to their academic success. While most students experience high levels of stress with no substantial problems, a small but significant portion of students may experience mental health issues as a result of stress. For these students, stress may be more likely to interfere with personal, academic and career goals. For some, stress may even result in thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

You are in a pivotal position to identify difficulties with stress and mental health. Your connection to students, identification of signs of distress and expression of concern and empathy can be helpful.

We have an ongoing initiative to encourage students to be real and communicate openly with friends, peers, faculty, staff and mentors and to be there for each other.

We encourage you to talk to students about the importance of caring for their mental health and about resources available during syllabus review, mid-semester and prior to final exams and projects.

You may say something as simple as: "If stress is impacting you or getting in the way of your ability to do your school work, maintain relationships, eat, sleep or enjoy yourself, please use the resources available. Counseling is available with 10 sessions included in your student health fee. Group sessions are free, and psychiatric services are available for a minimal fee. You can also schedule a stress management consultation. Visit sc.edu/myhealthspace to make these appointments. Check out the website sc.edu/mentalhealth for more information."

Warning Signs of a Student in Distress

- Tearfulness, prolonged periods of sadness or listlessness
- Marked agitation or irritability, overly nervous or tense
- Inappropriately aggressive or abrasive behavior
- Withdrawal and/or lack of social connections
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Excessive procrastination and/or poorly prepared work and inconsistencies with previous work
- Pattern of infrequent class attendance and little or no work completed
- Dependency and/or repeated requests for special consideration
- Lack of energy or frequently falling asleep in class
- Expressions of having suicidal thoughts, being a burden to others or wishing they were not alive
- Impaired speech and disjointed thoughts, unusual talkativeness
- Comments (written or verbal) that suggest thoughts about harming oneself or any threats to another person
- Marked change in personal hygiene
- Excessive weight gain or loss

We are aware that it can be difficult to know when to be concerned about a student. While there is no “template” for identifying a concerning student, the following are some warning signs that may indicate distress or a significant mental health concern:
Resources for a Student in Distress

If you are concerned about a student, it is important to know that there are steps you can take and resources available. We encourage you, if possible, to speak directly to the student and express your concerns. We also want you to be aware of and seek consultation from university resources, such as those listed below.

• Counseling & Psychiatry is available between 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Friday in the Thomson Building and 2-8 p.m. Sunday in the Center for Health and Well-Being during the fall and spring semesters. Call 803-777-5223 and ask to speak with a counselor about a student of concern.
• Mental health services for students in crisis are now available around the clock. Students who have an urgent need can call Counseling & Psychiatry at 803-777-5223 at any time and will receive direct support or be referred to immediate help. USC faculty and staff can also call at any time if they have concerns about a student.
• For emergency situations, call Law Enforcement and Safety at 803-777-4215 and communicate your concern or go to the nearest emergency room.
• Student Health Services offers stress management consultations: sc.edu/myhealthspace or 803-576-8283
• Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention and Prevention services: 803-777-8248
• The Behavioral Intervention Team responds to non-emergency concerns related to possible self-harm, erratic behavior or potentially threatening behavior: sc.edu/bit, 803-777-4333
• The Student Success Center provides many academic support services including early intervention: sc.edu/success, 803-777-1000
• The University Advising Center has many advising resources including Academic Success Coaching, advising and withdrawal support: sc.edu/advising/uac, 803-777-1222
• Mental health resources including an online anonymous mental health screening are available: sc.edu/mentalhealth
• Training resources on suicide prevention and identifying and responding to students of concern are also available: sc.edu/healthservices and search for suicide prevention.

Thank you for all of the work you do to support the success and well-being of our students. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Listed below is an additional resource to help you.

The University's EAP provider, McLaughlin Young Group, offers health and wellness services. This includes mental health programs, personal health planning and stress management. Employees have access to counselors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by calling 800-633-3353 or through the website mygroup.com (username: USC; password: guest).

Supporting the vision of a Healthy Carolina community
University of South Carolina is an equal opportunity institution