

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS



RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS (CONCERN)

You may be the first person to observe that a student is struggling. **Signs of distress include:**

- Noticeable decrease in academic performance
- Significant change in mood or behaviour
- Social isolation or withdrawal
- Disruptive behaviour
- Emotional outbursts
- Deterioration in personal hygiene
- Unclear communication



REACH OUT AND RESPOND (CARE)

Choose a time and place where you can **safely** and **privately** speak with the student. It is important to respond, let them know you are concerned, and **recognize your own limits**.

Say what you see

- *"I've noticed you have been falling asleep in class lately, is everything ok?"*
- Express concern and identify the behaviour.

Listen

- *"It sounds like you are going through a tough time right now and are having a hard time juggling everything."*
- The more you understand the situation, the more support you can provide to the student.



REFER (CONNECT)

- Reassure them that asking for help shows strength.
- Provide information about **resources** and offer to support them in accessing help.

*"There are many resources that are here to support you. I think *insert resource* could really help. Would you like support reaching out?"*

WHAT IS A CARE REFERRAL?

A Care referral connects students with support when they are facing academic, financial, mental health or personal challenges. Care takes a student-centered, strengths-based approach.

For behaviours that fall under the **Student at Risk Policy**, the Assessment and Care Team coordinates the response. For **sexual or intimate partner violence**, contact the **SVRPS Office** directly.

How to Make a Care Referral

Submit a referral through the **online form** or via **email** caresupportservices@queensu.ca

What to Include

- What the student shared with you directly
- Specific behaviors you have observed
- Who interacted with the student
- Any steps already taken to offer support

How to Talk to a Student About a Care Referral

Let the student know you're connecting them with support, not because they're in trouble, but to help them manage their current challenges. Emphasize that the Care team responds quickly and coordinates assistance to help students get back on track.

What Happens Next?

A Care team member will follow up with the student, if appropriate, to connect them with the necessary supports.

Questions? Please connect. caresupportservices@queensu.ca

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EMERGENCY

Student behaviour is threatening, aggressive, explosive, life threatening or self-injurious.

- Direct or indirect reference to suicide or suicidal ideation.
- Threats of violence or physical aggression.
- Potential alcohol or drug overuse.
- Unclear or disorganized speech.

What to do:

Immediate action and referral

- Call the **Emergency Report Centre** at

613-533-6111 or 911

- **AMHS Mental Health Services** responds to situations where urgent support is needed.
Call 613-544-4229
- Once the needs for safety are managed, **a Care referral must be filed.**

DISTRESSED

Student appears distressed and is experiencing multi-layered challenges. There is no imminent risk to self or others.

Signs may include:

- Difficulty managing mental health issues.
- Significant difficulty coping with daily stressors.
- Significant or rapid changes in mood.
- Increase in drug or alcohol use.
- Verbally aggressive or disruptive actions.
- Concerning messages posted to social media or included in emails.

What to do:

Submit a Care referral and a member of the Care team will connect with the student



caresupportservices@queensu.ca

STRESSED

Student may be struggling and in need of support or guidance.

Signs may include:

- Academic, financial or personal stress.
- Trouble fitting in or adapting to university.
- Difficulty understanding policies.

What to do:

Connect student to appropriate

resources



Offer support and reassurance

A Note About Privacy: Privacy laws permit information sharing on a “need to know basis” to ensure student and campus safety. The Care team is committed to protecting student privacy, while delivering timely support.

Please note: Sexual violence disclosures are best referred to Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Services

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