

# FACULTY/STAFF EMERGENCY GUIDE

## HELPING STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY

### Students in Distress

Counseling & Psychological Services Center (CPSC) has developed this informational guide to assist faculty, staff, and the university community when dealing with troubled and/or troubling students.

### Students with Disruptive Behavior

The Rowan University Classroom Behavior Policy outlines procedures regarding students with disruptive behavior. <http://www.rowan.edu/provost/policies/documents/ClassroomBehaviorPolicyandProcedures.pdf>

### Resources

Public Safety (emergency) .....	4911
Public Safety(non-emergency) .....	4922
Student Life.....	4040
Office of Community Standards and Commuter Services.....	4242
Counseling & Psychological Services Center.....	4222
Substance Abuse Services.....	4222
Student Health Center.....	4333
Situation Threat Assessment Team.....	4040

### Disruptive Conduct in the Classroom

#### What Constitutes Disruption?

*Level I can include:*

- Persistent speaking without permission
- Engaging in activities not related to the class
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices, cell phones, etc.
- Sleeping in class
- Chronically entering class late or leaving early
- Eating/drinking in class without permission
- Verbally abusive speech directed at faculty or other students

*Level II disruptive behavior can include:*

- Threats of any kind
- Harassment
- Physical altercations
- Destruction of property
- Any behavior that puts the health or safety of the instructor or other students in the classroom in jeopardy

### Tips

- Be aware of the location of the nearest telephone, even a personal cell phone.
- If the student is disruptive, but not a threat to others, discuss it with the student individually and your department chair.
- If the student is a threat to others, call Public Safety immediately.
- You may always ask the disruptive student to leave the classroom at the time of the disruption; however be aware that he/she is permitted to return the next class period unless removed permanently pursuant to procedures.

**If in doubt, call Public Safety  
 256-4911 or 911**

### Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a critical requirement for an effective professional counseling and physician relationship. As such CPSC staff are unable to give information back to the referring faculty or staff without the student's permission. Exceptions to the usual rules may be made in situations involving danger to self, danger to others, child abuse, and court orders.

# MAKING A CPSC REFERRAL

## Promote Appropriate Boundaries

One part of creating a strong mental health safety net is educating students, faculty, staff, and families about the signs and symptoms of emotional problems and actions to take if they are concerned about a student. Faculty, students or other non-healthcare personnel should not serve in the capacity of a health/mental health professional. In particular, untrained individuals ought not to assume responsibility for a student who poses a risk of suicide or violence. For example, it is not legally advisable to ask resident assistants, friends, or roommates to “watch” a student who may be at risk. Similarly, faculty, and staff should avoid taking on a professional role for which they are not trained. Non-mental health professionals need to be aware of formal support services (CPSC, Student Health Center, Dean of Students’ Office) available to students and focus on making appropriate referrals. Reaching out to a student of concern is an important element in creating a caring community, but well-intentioned informal counseling efforts may delay the student’s receipt of professional services. <sup>1</sup>

Each department is assigned a faculty liaison from CPSC. If you have any questions or concerns about a student, please contact CPSC to connect with the liaison for your department.

## Easily recognizable indicators that a student may be experiencing more stress than he or she can handle include:

- Marked decline in quality of coursework, class participation, quality of papers or test results; increased absence from class or failure to turn in work.
- Excessive/repetitive requests for accommodations such as extensions on assignments, rescheduling exams, and/or requests for incompletes.
- Prolonged depression, suggested by sad expression, apathy, weight loss, sleeping difficulty, tearfulness.
- Nervousness, agitation, excessive worry, irritability, aggressiveness, non-stop talking.
- Bizarre, strange behavior or speech.
- Extreme dependency on faculty or staff, including spending much of his/her time visiting during office hours or other times
- Marked decline in personal hygiene.
- Talk of suicide, either directly or indirectly such as, “I won’t be around to take that exam anyway” or “I’m not worried about getting a job, I won’t need one.”
- Comments in a student’s paper that arouse concern about depression, suicide, an abusive relationship, excessive anger, violent thoughts, or other issues.

## Tips for referring a student

- Explain to the student that counseling is not just for “crazy” people and that many people have normal problems in their daily lives.
- Emphasize that counseling provides a chance to explore feelings and solve problems with the help of an objective listener.
- Stress that counseling does not encourage dependency; and may be time limited on campus.
- The need for counseling is common; nearly half of college students surveyed have reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function. <sup>2</sup>

## Once the student has agreed that counseling may be useful, there are several possible steps to take depending on the urgency of the situation

- Give the student information about the counseling center and urge him/her to call.
- Offer to let the student call from your office right then, so that a public commitment will have been made.
- Accompany the student yourself to make sure he/she arrives at the counseling office, and provide the CPSC with any necessary information. The CPSC staff will appreciate your calling ahead if the student is being brought over or sent directly, so that plans can be made to have a counselor available.

## Questions?

Contact the Counseling & Psychological Service Center at 856-256-4222.

# Q & A ON CLASSROOM SAFETY

**Q. What if a disruptive student claims the disruptive behavior is the result of a disability?**

**A.** The fact that a student may have a disability should not inhibit you from notifying appropriate authorities (including Public Safety, as needed) about disruptive behavior. Students with or without disabilities need to know they must adhere to reasonable behavioral standards. Setting and enforcing such standards may encourage students with disabilities to obtain needed therapy and to take prescribed medications.

Disability claims and accommodations requests should be discussed with the Academic Success Center. There is an established procedure students should follow if they have a disability and seek a reasonable accommodation.

Generally, while different rules apply in the elementary and secondary school setting, pertinent federal agencies and the courts have made it clear that an institution of higher education does not have to tolerate or excuse violent, dangerous, or disruptive behavior, especially when that behavior interferes with the educational opportunities of other students. Colleges and universities may discipline a student with a disability for engaging in misconduct if it would impose the same discipline on a student without a disability.<sup>3</sup>

**Q. How do I reach out to affected students?**

**A.** Students who have been impacted by another student's death (by suicide or other means), suicide attempt, or concerning behavior (e.g., cutting) should be made aware of the services available at the Counseling & Psychological Services Center. Being proactive about reaching out to affected students and the encouragement of help-seeking will decrease the likelihood that these students will suffer in silence.<sup>1</sup>

**Q. When should I call the police?**

**A.** You should call Public Safety or 911 whenever you believe there is any threat of violence or other unlawful behavior – including a student's refusal to leave a class after being told to do so. Any threat of violence should be taken seriously. Err on the side of caution and notify Public Safety as soon as you can.<sup>3</sup>

**Questions? Contact:**  
**Academic Success Center at 856-256-4460,**  
**Counseling & Psychological Service**  
**Center at 856-256-4222, or**  
**Public Safety at 856-256-4922.**

**Q. Should I act immediately or wait for a pattern of misbehavior to occur?**

**A.** It's often a mistake to assume disruptive behavior will stop on its own. A fundamental tenet of progressive discipline is to document and respond to "small" incidents sooner than later. Generally, teachers who state reasonable expectations early, and enforce them consistently, help students avoid harsher consequences that flow from more serious infractions later. Early intervention might help define needed boundaries for a student.<sup>3</sup>

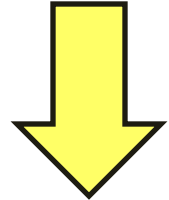
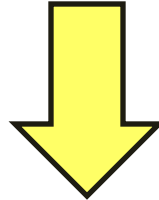
<sup>1</sup>Adapted from the Jed Foundation, Student Mental Health and the Law: A Resource for Institution of Higher Education. New York, NY: The Jed Foundation, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> American College Health Association 2006 Survey.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the ASJA Law & Policy Report, No. 26 Copyright: ASJA & Gary Pavela: All rights reserved.

# THE FIRST CONTACT

University Staff, Professors, Teaching Assistants, etc.



## Aggression

If you see or are dealing with aggressive behavior or other unusual situations:



### Public Safety

An RU officer will respond, assess and assist.

Phones:

**Emergency - 4911**

**Non-emergency**

856-256-4922

Location: Bole Annex

<http://www.rowan.edu/safety/>

## Illness

If you see or are dealing with a person who is injured or whose behavior seems erratic:



### Student Health Center

Phone: 856-256-4333

They will see, assess and treat, as needed at the Health Center. \*If the condition seems serious or occurs after hours, contact Public Safety.

Location: Linden Hall

<http://www.rowan.edu/health>

## Emotional Behavior

If you see or are dealing with a student who "needs to talk to someone" about a personal concern or is experiencing a psychological or emotional crisis:



### Counseling & Psychological Services Center (CPSC)

Phone: 856-256-4222

Location: Savitz Hall

<http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/counseling/>

## Disability

If you are dealing with a person with a disability who having difficulty, ask him/her if you may contact:



### Academic Success Center

Phone: 856-256-4283

Location: Savitz Hall

<http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/>

## Assault

If you are a victim or are dealing with a student who is a victim contact: **Counseling & Psychological Services Center (CPSC)** at 856-256-4222

## Deceased Student Notices

When students of RU pass away there is a method to notify appropriate departments.