

Faculty and Staff Guide to Working with **STUDENTS IN DISTRESS**



IMPORTANT RESOURCES AND OFFICES

Student Relations Coordinator	x4537
Student Success Services Counseling	x4040
Office for Student Access, Room 2220 on the TTC	x4397
Kalamazoo Valley Department of Public Safety - All Campuses	x4911
Faculty/Counselor Connection through My Valley Class Roster	

* If a Kalamazoo Valley counselor is unavailable, contact Public Safety and they will call Kalamazoo Community Mental Health (269.373.6000), if appropriate.

For medical emergencies or imminent threats of harm, pick up a red (interior) or blue (exterior) phone to reach Public Safety. Or call x **4911**. In the event you are unable to reach Public Safety, call **911**.

Specific student behaviors that could lead to making a referral to an appropriate college resource:

- A major change in behavior: serious decline in grades, quality of work, attendance, class participation.
- Strange or bizarre behavior.
- Prolonged depression (sadness, weight loss, apathy, fatigue).
- Social isolation.
- Excessive alcohol or drug use.
- Noticeable changes in personal hygiene.
- Persistent irritability or impatience.
- Suicidal comments or gestures.

HELPFUL ADVICE IF A STUDENT DISTRESS/ BEHAVIOR SITUATION OCCURS.

- Students may seek you out as someone who can offer help. Listen and be supportive. With your care and concern, you do make a valuable difference in students' lives.
- Know your limitations. You do not need to serve as a counselor for troubled students. We have trained counselors available to do this.
- Know your resources and be prepared to make the proper referral when necessary.
- Don't wait to see if the behavior goes away. It is important to address the concern as quickly as possible.
- Document your interactions with students. This helps in referrals or in case the situation progresses. Be specific about what has occurred or been said by you and the student.
- Be clear about classroom expectations in your syllabus.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A STUDENT WITH THESE BEHAVIORS OR OTHER CONCERNS?

- Refer them to our trained counselors who are available to provide timely help. Do not be hesitant about consulting with appropriate college resources such as the Student Relations Coordinator.

HOW DO I KNOW IF A STUDENT MAY NEED A COUNSELING REFERRAL?

- Exercise judgment on a case-by-case basis. Typically a conversation with the student is advisable. Often students are unaware of the impressions they make. When you talk with the student, tell them what behaviors are causing concern. Give them a chance to respond, and be attentive and respectful. If you feel uncomfortable with the discussion, please refer the student for additional assistance through Counselor Connection or contact the Student Relations Coordinator.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND WHEN A STUDENT IS DISRUPTING MY CLASS?

- For a student at Kalamazoo Valley to disrupt a class, something significant must be happening (very distraught, inappropriate behavior, immature social skills, insecurity). If your class is discussion-based, provide clear guidelines so that everyone has the opportunity to participate. First consider speaking to the student about the behavior in private after class. If overly distracting, it may be necessary to correct the student, and invite him or her to talk after class.
- You can ask a student to leave if the behavior interferes with the class. Adhere to the specific follow-up procedure outlined in the faculty or student handbooks. The student should be told why he or she was asked to leave and be given the opportunity to discuss the matter further. Feel free to consult with the Student Relations Coordinator, Counseling, or Public Safety. If the student refuses to leave your classroom after being asked to leave, do not hesitate to contact Public Safety.