

# Faculty Guide to Supporting Student Mental Health

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How to create a culture of care on campuses



The Jed Foundation



## Faculty Are on the Frontlines

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This guide will walk you through straightforward—but significant—steps you can take to:

Support

Recognize

Reach out

Connect

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# How to Recognize a Student Who Is Struggling

Some students may struggle with school for a variety of reasons. Some students may struggle with school because of a learning disability, a mental health condition, or a physical health condition. Some students may struggle with school because of a lack of motivation, a lack of understanding of the material, or a lack of support at home. Some students may struggle with school because of a lack of resources, such as a lack of access to technology or a lack of access to a quiet place to study.

Teachers can help struggling students by identifying the signs and symptoms of struggling students and providing them with the support they need to succeed. Teachers can also help struggling students by providing them with the resources they need to succeed.

- Missed assignments
- Repeated absences
- Decline in academic performance
- Reduced participation in class
- Excessive fatigue
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate or exaggerated behavior
- Alarming or worrisome content in assignments

# How to Reach Out to a Struggling Student



## DO

- Find a way to speak privately to the student, for instance after class when other students have left, or in your office.
- Tell them what you are observing that makes you concerned.
- Ask open-ended questions about how they are doing.
- Let them know you are here to listen and connect them to support if they need it.
- Share campus resources and ask if they need support or help in accessing them.
- Report any concern that a student is at immediate risk (see next page) to campus authorities (BIT or CARE teams, counseling center, or campus security).



## DON'T

- Underestimate the student's struggles. It is far better to check in unnecessarily than to dismiss a potentially harmful situation.
- Promise confidentiality school guidelines might require you to report a student who is at immediate risk of harming themselves (see next page).
- Leave the student alone if you feel they are at immediate risk.

# How to Know When a Student Needs Immediate Help

A student may be at immediate risk and should be connected to professional mental health services right away if they:

- Express suicidal thoughts or intentions
- Express thoughts of self-harm
- Express thoughts of harming others
- Express thoughts of harming themselves or others

## What to do:

- Stay calm. Take a few deep breaths and try to stay focused on the student's needs.
- Listen to the student and let them know you are there for them.
- Do not argue or try to reason with the student.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.

# How to Start the Conversation

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## Ways to approach a struggling student.

- . I've noticed you've seemed a little down lately, so I wanted to check in with you. What's been going on,,
- . I noticed you missed class a few times. What's going on for you,,
- . You seem really tired in class lately. How are you doing these days,,

## Ways to respond when a student shares their struggle with you.

- . I'm so glad you told me about this. Let's brainstorm how we can get you some support,
- . Thank you for sharing this with me. There's good support on campus I'll help connect you to it,
- . Wow, that sounds really hard. It makes sense you are struggling. Let's figure out what on-campus supports can help you right now,

## Ways to talk with a student who needs immediate help.

- . I understand that you are hurting right now. I am here to help you and connect you to good support on campus,
- . I hear that you feel hopeless right now. I've worked with the counseling center, and I think they could help. Let's walk over together,
- . I can tell that you're very upset, and I'm concerned about you. I'm going to connect you with someone who can help you stay safe,

*If a de dec e ca ca ec*







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