

# Referral Guide for Students of Concern

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*“If You See Something, Say Something.”*



# Disruptive Students

## Students of Concern Team Mission

The *Students of Concern Team* seeks to proactively identify, assess, and offer a coordinated institutional response to situations with the potential to negatively impact the health, safety, and success of the University at Buffalo community members.

## What we do

- Serve as a central body to which concerning student behaviors may be referred for action or remediation
- Meet weekly to discuss referral cases and put individuals in touch with appropriate support.
- Assess referred students for their potential risk to the campus and community and make decisions based on the best interest of both the student and the university.
- Supplement student interactions with other campus offices, or off-campus agencies, such as the Court System, disciplinary procedures, academic guidelines, etc. Students will continue to be responsible to those other agencies and offices.

## What is disruptive behavior?

Disruptive behavior is any behavior that interferes with the rights of other students, faculty and staff and their access to an appropriate learning or work environment. If a student is disruptive either frequently or severely, or both, then the student should be referred.

## What is NOT necessarily disruptive behavior?

Most disagreements, even if they become heated, are not disruptive. Disagreements over cultural differences are not inherently disruptive. Students should still be allowed to express and debate opinions, but not in a way that threatens or insults other individuals.

## What are some examples of disruptive behavior?

- Yelling, arguing aggressively and not responding to directions to calm down.
- Intimidating or harassing words or actions.
- Words or actions that make students, faculty or staff fear for their safety.
- Assault, property damage or other harm, or making threats to cause harm.

## TIPS FOR DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

- Document the situation and report the behavior to Judicial Affairs & Student Advocacy.
- Never hesitate to call UB's University Police at 716-645-2222 if the situation does not begin to diffuse. Filing a report does not result in an arrest in most cases.
- Allow the student to vent his or her anger without interrupting, as this could cause further anger. Say something like "I understand that you feel that way," so the student feels as if they have been heard.
- Do not touch the student. Remain calm.
- Do not perpetuate their anger by arguing back, using sarcasm or blame.
- Ask a student who becomes disruptive to leave the classroom.
- Review "Obstruction & Disruption in classroom" policy and consider including it on your syllabi. The policy can be found at [undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/obstruction.shtml](http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/obstruction.shtml).





# Distressed Students

## What is a “Distressed Student”?

College can be a very difficult time for some students. “Distressed” students are those who may be dealing with a mental health issue or crisis that affects their academics, what they say, and how they act. When we recognize signs of distress in a student, we can help them find support on campus.



## How do I recognize a distressed student?

Not every distressed student will exhibit the same signs, but some signs include:

- Difficulty managing his or her emotions.
- An increase in drug and alcohol use.
- Coming to class apparently under the influence.
- A sudden drop in academic performance.
- A sudden decline in personal appearance or hygiene.
- Depression and talking about suicide.
- Partaking in high-risk behavior.
- They are a recent victim of a crime or trauma.

This list is not exhaustive, and typically, a student exhibiting multiple signs simultaneously makes their situation of more concern.

## TIPS FOR DEALING WITH DISTRESSED STUDENTS

- Speak with the student privately and let him or her know you are concerned.
- Listen empathically to what is troubling him or her.
- Do not place blame on the student.
- Address your concerns as observations about his or her recent behavior.
- Make sure the student knows that you’re willing to help, but maintain clear boundaries.
- Know what you’re comfortable discussing with the student, and refer when the problem exceeds your skill level.
- Don’t promise the student confidentiality, but promise that you will only tell the appropriate people.
- Don’t judge or criticize the student.
- Remember to document the conversations after, so that if a pattern emerges, it can be traced.
- Encourage the student to seek help from professionals, and say that doing so demonstrates courage and strength.

## What kind of behavior should I refer?

It’s important to refer any disruptive or disturbing behavior you see in students. You should refer any incidents or interactions with students that cause you to think he or she may be a threat to his or her own or another person’s safety. All verbal, written and implied threats should be documented.

You should also refer any written work a student submits with a disturbing theme or references. Also, things such as a decline in academic performance, a significant number of absences or a decline in personal appearance can be cause for concern when it is out of the ordinary for a particular student.

If you’re unsure if a certain situation should be referred to the Students of Concern Team, please contact Judicial Affairs and Student Advocacy for guidance.

## How do I refer?

You can refer non-emergency situations online by accessing our online form at [ub-judiciary.buffalo.edu/](http://ub-judiciary.buffalo.edu/) or by calling Judicial Affairs and Student Advocacy at 716-645-6154.

## Important Phone Numbers

### On-campus resources

Campus Living	645-2171
Counseling Services	645-2720
Disability Services	645-2608
International Student & Scholar Services	645-2258
Judicial Affairs & Student Advocacy	645-6154
Student Health Services	829-3316
University Police	645-2222
Veterans Affairs	645-2271
Wellness Education Services	645-2837

### Off-campus resources: (24 hours)

Erie County Crisis Services	834-3131
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-TALK x8255

## Students of Concern Team

### Members and Departments

#### ***Judicial Affairs & Student Advocacy***

Elizabeth Lidano                      lidano@buffalo.edu  
DIRECTOR

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STUDENT SUPPORT  
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#### ***Counseling Services***

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#### ***Health Services***

Mary Stock, MD                      mestock@buffalo.edu  
SENIOR PHYSICIAN

#### ***University Police***

Gerald Schoenle                      gws3@buffalo.edu  
CHIEF OF POLICE

#### ***Campus Living***

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#### ***Campus Living***

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RESIDENTIAL JUDICIAL COORDINATOR

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## Emergency Procedure

Call UB's University Police at 716-645-2222 if:

- you are concerned for your safety or for the safety of others
- you believe a student is considering suicide and requires immediate intervention

If the situation is not imminently dangerous, call UB Counseling Services at 716-645-2720 for a consultation.

The Students of Concern Team can convene to do behavioral risk assessment when necessary.

