

# **BYU Faculty and Staff Guide For Students in Crisis**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)  
Emergency Crisis and Referral Services

## **Contact Information**

### **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**

1500 WSC  
Receptionist: (801) 422-3035  
Business Hours: 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday  
Kara Cattani, PhD, Clinical Director of CAPS  
Tom Golightly, PhD, Associate Clinical Director  
Rick Moody, PhD, Associate Director of Training

### **Counseling and Career Center**

2500 WSC  
Receptionist: 422-6291  
Business Hours: 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday  
Steve Smith, PhD, Director (CAPS, UCS, Pre Professional Advisement Center)  
Tyler Pedersen, PhD, Assistant Director  
Vaughn Worthen, PhD, Associate Director

### **BYU Campus Police**

2120 JKB  
(801) 422-2222  
Available 24 hours

This guide provides faculty with more information about how to deal with students who may be experiencing emotional/psychological difficulties, and offers resources about the help and benefits available from a counseling professional at Counseling and Psychological Services. It is to be regarded as an informational resource only and not as faculty policy.

The following outline provides basic information helpful to faculty:

1. Psychological emergency crisis services for BYU students
2. How can I help a student make an appointment?
3. Faculty as a helping resource
4. Helping students in distress initiate contact
5. Signs and symptoms warning of student distress
6. How can I assist a student who might be reluctant to seek counseling?
7. What if I need consultation regarding a potentially at risk student?
8. Emergency contact information and BYU campus resources

## 1. Psychological Emergency Crisis Services for BYU Students

If a **student is at serious risk for harm to self or others**, faculty can refer that student to Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). **Counselors are available 24-hours a day** to assist students in crisis situations. If a student is experiencing a severe personal crisis and may benefit from speaking with a counselor, a faculty may accompany them to CAPS during business hours.

If there is a **life-threatening emergency during non-business hours (4:30pm-8am weekdays or on weekends)**, you can contact the **BYU Police** and they will put you in touch with a counselor. You can also call 911 or encourage the student to go immediately to the nearest emergency room, and accompany the student, if necessary. The BYU police do not become involved with counseling unless requested to do so as a precaution for safety, when students are deemed a danger to themselves or others. The BYU police dispatch acts primarily to relay information to a counselor to speak to a faculty member or a student requesting help.

If faculty refers a student to the counseling office and the student at risk leaves, with the intent to disregard the referral, the faculty member should call the BYU Police for assistance. The police are authorized to place the student in custody for an assessment by a licensed therapist. If you believe a student is at risk, but are unaware of her/his current whereabouts, call the BYU Police who will then notify the appropriate personnel in order to facilitate an assessment.

## 2. How Can I Help a Student Make an Appointment?

CAPS makes it a **priority to see any student in an immediate crisis**. If you feel the situation is an emergency, call CAPS, identify yourself, and inform the secretary of the student's need to be seen by a "Counselor on Duty" as soon as possible. Walk the student over to our center: or, if you feel it is necessary, contact the BYU University Police to help escort the student.

If the student is not in crisis, direct the student to the **CAPS website (caps.byu.edu) or to the CAPS center in 1500 WSC (801 422-3035)** so that the student may go through the process of making an initial appointment. Encourage the student to take responsibility for personal changes by making their own appointment for counseling. However, there may be times when it may also be appropriate for you to accompany the student to our center and/or help make an appointment. Other than for emergency crisis situations, CAPS makes every attempt to schedule appointments for students within a 1-2 weeks' time. Students who request to be seen by a specific counselor may need to wait longer.

Students may be treated at CAPS on an emergency basis but to receive continuous treatment, students must attend university three quarters or full time (9-12 credit hours). Local referral resources available for longer term treatment include the Comprehensive Clinic, LDS Family Services, or local therapists. For ethical treatment and continuity of care, students receive counseling as long as needed from CAPS before referring out, regardless of credit status.

Once a student becomes a client at CAPS, the terms of confidentiality apply fully. Unless the student signs a "Consent for Release of Information", CAPS may not release further information about the student. That means you, as the referral source, will not be able to obtain any further information about the student after admission occurs. The terms of client confidentiality are in accordance with the legal, ethical and professional mandates of the licensing boards governing the practices of all licensed professionals providing services in CAPS. Confidentiality obligations change when students are an immediate danger to themselves or others, and BYU police may then become involved.

### **3. Faculty as a Helping Resource**

Faculty are in a unique position to help students in distress. Students hold professors in high esteem and therefore, faculty can offer students the kind of advice and direction that students will carefully consider. During the process of teaching or advising, faculty may observe students showing signs of distress either through personal contact or through their writings to you.

If you find yourself in the position of receiving personal information from students, they most likely view you as a compassionate and respectful listener. Faculty are, for the most part, not trained counselors, and even if they are, do not function in that role, due to the ethical mandates that discourage dual-role relationships. The challenge for most faculty is to define the most appropriate ways to help a distressed student, and then assist the student in making helpful choices to alleviate their stress.

### **4. Helping Students in Distress Initiate Contact**

Faculty may be hesitant to ask questions related to well-being. Some faculty have expressed their worry about stepping over professional and legal boundaries. We invite faculty to be active in asking questions in order to identify students that might be struggling and in need of psychological care. Don't ignore strange, inappropriate, or unusual behavior. Talk privately to the student in question, in a direct and matter-of-fact manner, indicating your observations and concerns. Be sure to focus on the behaviors that were displayed and express your concern about how these behaviors are impacting the student. Early feedback, intervention and/or referral can prevent more serious problems from developing.

#### **Offer Support and Assistance**

Your interest, attentive listening, and concern may be pivotal in helping a troubled student. Avoid criticisms or sounding judgmental. Allow the student time to respond and acknowledge that her/his perception may be different. Summarize the essence of what the student has told you as a way of clarifying the situation. Validate the student's feelings while also encouraging positive action by helping the student to define the problems and help needed.

### **When Should I Consider Intervening?**

Know your limits as a helper. When a student needs more help than you are able or willing to give, a referral is appropriate. A faculty member should not attempt to assess degree of risk; please allow licensed professionals available on campus, trained in crisis assessment to make this judgment. If you have any suspicions about a student being at risk, you should refer as soon as possible. The following sections address specific types of emotional and behavioral concerns which may warrant counseling support.

## **5. Signs and Symptoms Warning of Student Distress**

If a student demonstrates bizarre or dangerous behavior or makes specific threats to himself/herself or others, you are urged to contact either BYU University Police Dispatch (801) 422-2222 and/or local emergency services (911). If you are unsure if the situation warrants this, a consultation with a CAPS counselor (801) 422-3035 can help determine if emergency treatment is needed. CAPS clinical faculty will respond as soon as they are available. See Crisis and Emergency Services for additional information.

### **Verbal expressions or behaviors that indicate risk for harm to self or others should be considered cause for immediate referral. These behaviors may include:**

- **Threats to others—verbal, written or otherwise**
- **Threats of suicide**
- **Impaired or garbled speech and disjointed thinking**
- **Bizarre or psychotic behavior that is obviously inappropriate**
- **Any potentially dangerous behavior or actions**

The list below outlines behavioral changes or stressful events in students' lives which may warrant counseling, but not immediate intervention, especially if their problems have noticeably compromised their ability to function academically, personally, or socially. Referral for counseling support may be appropriate.

### **Harmful Statements**

- Vague or direct references to suicide
- Statements of helplessness or hopelessness
- Not wanting to exist
- Indications of persistent or prolonged unhappiness
- Inability to make decisions despite repeated efforts to clarify or encourage
- Expressing desires to give away expensive belongings or other personal items to others

### **Unusual Behavior or Marked Change in Behavior**

- Extreme mood changes or excessive, inappropriate display of emotion
- Sudden withdrawal from people
- Hyperactivity, or excessive anxiety, chronic irritability, including unruly, aggressive, violent or abrasive behaviors
- Confusion, disorientation, or bizarre behavior
- Unusual dependency which may be manifest by lingering or making excessive demands for contact outside of normal periods of association
- Normal emotions that are displayed to an extreme degree or for a prolonged period of time, such as tearfulness or nervousness
- Extreme risk-taking behavior

### **Problems with Academic Performance**

- Infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed, or unusually poorly prepared work
- Poor academic performance and preparation, especially if such behavior represents a change from previous functioning
- Repeated request for special accommodations
- Excessive anxiety about test taking or speaking in class
- Confusion over low performance
- Excessive procrastination

### **Trauma or Crisis in Relationships**

- Break-up or change in relationship status
- Death or illness of a family member or close friend
- Conflict or relationship loss with roommate, friend, or family
- Victim of assault (physical or sexual)
- Gender or sexual identity and sexual orientation issues

### **Substance Abuse**

- Evidence or excessive use of alcohol or other drugs
- Impaired daily functioning secondary to substance use

## **6. How Can I Assist A Student Who Might Be Reluctant To Seek Counseling?**

Unless the student is at risk for harm to self or others, professional counseling remains a voluntary option for students. Despite every effort to facilitate a referral, the student may choose not to follow through on your suggestion that they seek counseling. If you find yourself in this situation, continue to express your belief that they might benefit from counseling, and keep your offer of help available to the student. Reassure students that the CAPS services are confidential, free of charge for those who qualify, and that counseling can be an empowering tool of change. Encourage the student to “try it and see how it goes”. Acknowledge, validate, and discuss the student’s fears and concerns about seeking help.

## **7. What If I Need Consultation Regarding a Potentially At Risk Student?**

CAPS counselors are available for consultation to faculty and staff. If you have concerns about any student, you may seek consultation by phone or in person. We will assist you while asking you to keep in mind, that without the student's written consent, we may not provide you with any specific information about any student who might be a client of our center.

### **Counseling Services**

- Individual Counseling
- Marital Counseling
- Group Therapy
- Stress Management and Biofeedback Services
- Consultation
- Guest speaker for classes/workshops on various counseling/clinical topics

## **8. Emergency Contact Information and BYU Campus Resources**

### **Emergency Numbers/Crisis Lines**

- BYU University Police: (801) 422-2222; [police.byu.edu](http://police.byu.edu)
- Local Emergency Services: 911
- UVRMC Hospital (Utah Valley Regional Medical Center), Provo: (801) 373-7850

### **BYU Campus Resources**

- Student Health Center: 422-2771; [health.byu.edu](http://health.byu.edu)
- BYU Disruptive Student Conduct: [policy.byu.edu](http://policy.byu.edu)
- UAC - University Accessibility Center: 422-2767; [uac.byu.edu](http://uac.byu.edu)
- UAC – University Advising Center: 422-3826; [universityadvisement.byu.edu](http://universityadvisement.byu.edu)
- CASC – Career and Academic Success Center: 422-2689; [casc.byu.edu](http://casc.byu.edu)
- UCS – University Career Services: 422-6535; [ucs.byu.edu](http://ucs.byu.edu)
- Pre Professional Advisement Center: 422-3044; [ppa.byu.edu](http://ppa.byu.edu)
- Honor Code Office: 422-2847; [honorcode.byu.edu](http://honorcode.byu.edu)
- WSR - Women's Services and Resources: 422-4877; [wsr.byu.edu](http://wsr.byu.edu)
- International Office: 422-2695; [internationalservices.byu.edu](http://internationalservices.byu.edu)
- Multicultural Office: 422-3065; [multicultural.byu.edu](http://multicultural.byu.edu)
- Financial Aid: 422-4104; [financialaid.byu.edu](http://financialaid.byu.edu)