

Faculty & Staff: be **there** for students and provide **Mental Health Support**

be **real**. be **there**.

Mental health matters at UofSC

At the University of South Carolina, we are committed to the success and well-being of our students. Students report that stress, anxiety, sleep difficulties and depression are among the top five impediments to their academic success.¹ While most students experience high levels of stress with no substantial problems, a small but significant portion of students may

experience mental health issues as a result of stress. For these students, stress may be more likely to interfere with personal, academic and career goals. For some, stress may even result in thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

You are in a pivotal position to identify difficulties with stress and mental health. Your connection to students, identification of signs of distress and expression of concern and empathy can be helpful.

We have an ongoing initiative to encourage students to be real and

communicate openly with friends, peers, faculty, staff and mentors and to be there for each other. We have a video that shares current students' stories and thoughts about seeking help. (Find the video on YouTube by searching for "Mental Health Matters at UofSC").

We encourage you to talk to students about the importance of caring for their mental health and about resources available during syllabus review, mid-semester and prior to final exams and projects.

¹ National College Health Assessment taken by USC students in spring 2017



Warning Signs of **a Student in Distress**

We are aware that it can be difficult to know when to be concerned about a student. While there is no "template" for identifying a concerning student, the following are some warning signs that may indicate distress or a significant mental health concern:

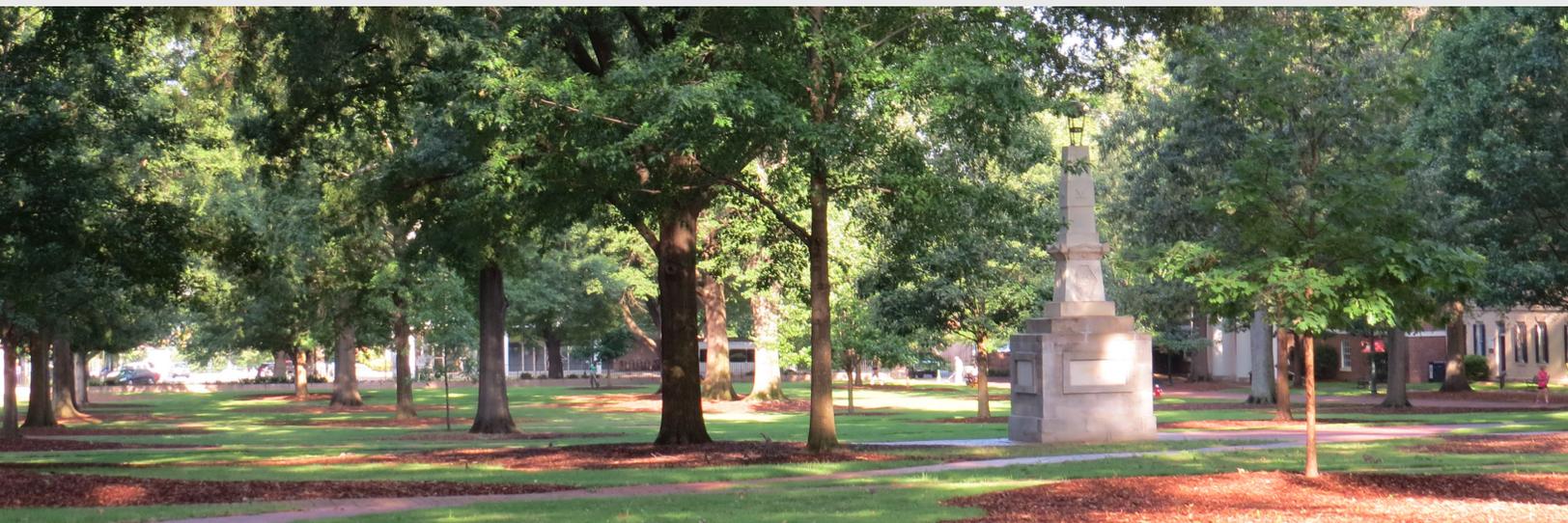
- Tearfulness, prolonged periods of sadness or listlessness
- Marked agitation or irritability, overly nervous or tense
- Inappropriately aggressive or abrasive behavior
- Withdrawal and/or lack of social connections
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Excessive procrastination and/or poorly prepared work and inconsistencies with previous work
- Pattern of infrequent class attendance and little or no work completed
- Dependency and/or repeated requests for special consideration
- Lack of energy or frequently falling asleep in class
- Expressions of having suicidal thoughts, being a burden to others or wishing they were not alive
- Impaired speech and disjointed thoughts, unusual talkativeness
- Comments (written or verbal) that suggest thoughts about harming oneself or any threats to another person
- Marked change in personal hygiene
- Excessive weight gain or loss

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Resources for a Student in Distress

If you are concerned about a student, it is important to know that there are steps you can take and resources available. We encourage you, if possible, to speak directly to the student and express your concerns. We also want you to be aware of and seek consultation from university resources, such as those listed below.

- **Counseling & Psychiatry** is available between **8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters. Call **803-777-5223** and ask to speak with a counselor about a student of concern.
- For emergency situations, call **Law Enforcement and Safety** at **803-777-4215** and communicate your concern.
- **Student Health Services** offers stress management consultations: **803-576-9393**
- **Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention and Prevention services: 803-777-8248**
- **The Behavioral Intervention Team** responds to non-emergency concerns related to possible self-harm, erratic behavior or potentially threatening behavior: **sa.sc.edu/bit, 803-777-4333**
- **The Student Success Center** provides many academic support services including early intervention: **sc.edu/success, 803-777-1000**
- **The University Advising Center** has many advising resources including Academic Success Coaching, advising and withdrawal support: **sc.edu/advising/uac, 803-777-1222**
- **Mental health resources** including an online anonymous mental health screening are available: **sa.sc.edu/shs/mentalhealth**
- **Training resources** on suicide prevention and identifying and responding to students of concern are also available: **sa.sc.edu/shs/cp/training**



Your mental health matters, too. **Resources for Faculty and Staff**

Thank you for all of the work you do to support the success and well-being of our students. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Listed below is an additional resource to help you.

The University's EAP provider, McLaughlin Young Group, offers health and wellness services. This includes mental health programs, personal health planning and stress management. Employees have access to counselors 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by calling **800-633-3353** or through the website **mygroup.com** (username: USC; password: guest).