Students in a Mental Health Crisis
A crisis is a situation in which an individual’s usual style of coping is no longer effective, and the emotional or physiological response begins to escalate. As emotions intensify, coping becomes less effective, until the person may become disoriented, non-functional, or attempt harm.

Symptoms of a Mental Health Crisis
- Suicidal or homicidal threats, written or verbal, or attempted acts
- Extreme anxiety resulting in panic reactions
- Inability to communicate (e.g., garbled or slurred speech, disjointed thoughts)
- Loss of contact with reality (e.g., seeing or hearing things that aren’t there, expressing beliefs or actions at odds with reality, losing track of dates and time)
- Highly disruptive behavior (e.g., hostility, aggression, violence).

Given the number of individuals and departments on campus who are trained to help (see Campus Resource List), you do not need to act alone in your efforts.

What To Do in a Mental Health Crisis
If you believe a student might be in imminent danger to him/herself or to others, immediately (or have someone else present) call the NAU Police Department or local police for assistance—“911” works on and off campus; 928-523-3000 goes directly to the NAU Police Department dispatch operator.

If the danger is not imminent or clear and you need help in assessing the situation, call Counseling Services (CS) at 928-523-2261. You can also give the student the CS phone number and encourage the student to call, possibly while sitting in your office. You may also consider walking the student to CS during office hours since this is often an excellent way of showing support. After office hours, a counselor is on-call to respond to emergencies; the same number will connect you to the CS answering system: 928-523-2261.

Consultations Are Available 24/7
During or after office hours, you can seek phone consultation with staff at Counseling Services. Call 928-523-2261 and ask to speak with a counselor. If it is an emergency and you need an immediate response, please let us know.

Campus Resource List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMERGENCIES</th>
<th>928-523-3000 or 911</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability Resources</td>
<td>928-523-8773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway Student Success Center</td>
<td>928-523-4772</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office of Student Life</td>
<td>928-523-5181</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAU Police Department</td>
<td>928-523-3611</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residence Life</td>
<td>928-523-3978</td>
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NOTE: The people depicted in this brochure are models used for illustrative purposes only.

Counseling Services
Campus Health Services
Health and Learning Center, bldg. 25
PO Box 6046
Flagstaff, AZ 86011
928-523-2261

nau.edu/counseling
While most students cope successfully with the demands of college life, for some students the pressures become overwhelming and unmanageable.

The inability to cope effectively with stress can pose a serious threat to a student’s overall functioning, possibly resulting in distress. On rare occasions, this distress can escalate into a mental health crisis that may pose imminent danger to the student and others. The expression of interest and concern by a staff or faculty member may be a critical factor in helping a struggling student re-establish the emotional equilibrium necessary for success in a university environment.

Symptoms of a Student in Distress
- Uncharacteristic changes in academic performance
- Excessive absences from meetings, classes, or work
- Depressed or lethargic mood
- Hyperactivity and/or rapid speech
- Social withdrawal or isolation
- Marked change in personal dress, hygiene, eating and/or sleeping routines
- Repeatedly falling asleep in class or at work
- Appearing drunk or under the influence of drugs
- Significant changes in weight
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses to events
- New or recurrent behavior that pushes the limits of acceptable behavior and that interferes with the effective management of class, work, etc.

What You Can Do for a Student in Distress

If you choose to approach a student you are concerned about—or if a student seeks you out—here are some suggestions which might be helpful:

1. **Talk to the student**
   When both of you have time and are not rushed or preoccupied, talk to the student in private. Give the student your undivided attention. Just a few minutes of effective listening on your part may be enough to help the student feel comfortable about what to do next.

2. **Be direct and nonjudgmental**
   Express your concern in specific, behavioral, nonjudgmental terms. For example, say something like “I’ve noticed you’ve been absent from class lately, and I’m concerned about you,” rather than “Why have you skipped so many classes lately?”

3. **Listen sensitively**
   Listen to thoughts and feelings in a sensitive, non-threatening way. Communicate understanding by repeating back the essence of what the student has told you. Try to include both the content and feelings. For example, “It sounds like you’re not accustomed to such a big campus and you’re feeling left out of things.” Remember to let the student talk.

4. **Refer**
   Point out that help is available and seeking help can be a sign of strength. Make some suggestions about places to go for help. (See Campus Resource List for ideas.) Tell the student what you know about the recommended person or service.

5. **Follow up**
   Following up is an important part of the process. Check with the student later to find out how he or she is doing. Provide encouragement as appropriate. Consult with others if you are not sure your support is helping.

Campus Connect | SafeJacks Training
To learn more about how to support a student in distress, please consider attending a Campus Connect/SafeJacks training session.

**CAMPUS CONNECT** is a two-hour suicide prevention/mental health awareness gatekeeper training program. **SAFEJACKS** are individuals who have been trained to assist in identifying and supporting students in crisis and referring them to Counseling Services.

The skills learned in Campus Connect training will enable students and staff to respond to students experiencing a wide range of emotional crises. To find a listing of scheduled Campus Connect sessions, please go to: http://nau.edu/health-services/health-promotions/safejacks-campus-connect/

For more information or to make an appointment, call 928-523-2261

nau.edu/counseling