

## Orange Folder

# STEPS TO ASSIST COLLEAGUES IN DISTRESS

### ▶ Recognize signs of distress

In your role as a UBC staff or faculty member, you may be the first person to see signs that a colleague is in distress, or they may come to you specifically for help. Use this guide to familiarize yourself with common signs of distress, and the steps you can take to offer assistance.

### ▶ Respond with concern and empathy

It's okay to be uncertain about how to respond. You don't need to have all the answers. Being there to support your colleagues is often the most valuable thing that you can do.

- If possible, move to a discrete and appropriate environment.
- Express concern and be specific about the signs and behaviours you've noticed (i.e. "I've noticed you don't seem like yourself at work lately.")
- Listen actively, ask open ended questions, and help them feel heard and understood
  - Use this supportive conversation library ([workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/supportive-conversation-library](http://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/supportive-conversation-library)) to find more strategies for having supportive conversations with colleagues, friends and loved ones.

### ▶ Refer your colleague to available resources

Your role is not to diagnose or treat, but you can share that confidential help is available. Early intervention plays a key role in creating healthy and respectful workplaces.

- Help make them aware of the range of support services available (SEE NEXT PAGE).

#### **If a colleague does not want help:**

- Respect their decision. Accepting assistance must be left up to the individual, except in emergencies.
- If they change their mind, they can access resources in the future.

### **Managers and Supervisors**

If you've observed concerning changes in behavior that are impacting the workplace, the university may have a legal "duty to inquire." Before taking any further steps, please contact the appropriate resources for support.

UBC Vancouver: Advisory Services or Faculty Relations, [hr.ubc.ca/contact](http://hr.ubc.ca/contact)

UBC Okanagan: Human Resources, [hr.ok.ubc.ca/contact](http://hr.ok.ubc.ca/contact)

You can also contact UBC's Employee and Family Assistance Program for confidential People Manager Consultations: 1-866-424-0770.



# CONNECT TO RESOURCES

## IMMINENT RISK OF HARM

*"I am concerned about my colleague's safety, or the safety of others."*

Examples:

- Active thoughts of suicide, with a plan or suicide attempt.
- Behaviour that is violent, destructive, aggressive or threatening to self or others.
- Colleague is confused, hallucinating, or has trouble remaining conscious.

## HIGH LEVEL OF DISTRESS

*"I am concerned about some recent behaviour that is out of character for one of my colleagues."*

Examples:

- Deterioration in personal appearance and hygiene, and significant impairment with daily tasks.
- Expressions of severe hopelessness or references to suicide.
- Substance use concerns.
- Loss of touch with reality/severely disorganized thinking.
- Increased interpersonal conflict and anger.
- Physical health concerns.

## GENERAL MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

*I am concerned about the general wellbeing of one of my colleagues. I'm not sure if it is serious but I would like to offer them some support."*

Examples:

- Low or irritable mood with change in energy, appetite, sleep, and/or concentration, which is impacting daily functioning.
- Persistent worry, obsessions, agitation, irrationality, racing thoughts, panic attacks.
- Flashbacks to a traumatic event, intrusive memories and thoughts.
- Interpersonal conflict.
- Lack of social support.

### STEPS TO TAKE IMMEDIATELY:

1. **First, call Emergency Services: 911**
2. **Then, call Campus Security:**  
UBC Vancouver: 604-822-2222 // UBC Okanagan: 250-807-8111

### RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS:

**Employee and Family Assistance Program: 1-866-424-0770**

**BC-specific:**

- **Access and Assessment Centre**, Vancouver General Hospital: 604-675-3700
- **Mental Health and Substance Use Centre, Interior:** 310-MHSU (6478) or Kelowna General Hospital 250-862-4000
- **Mental Health Support Line:** 310-6789 (no area code)
- **KUU-US Crisis Line Society:** 1-800-588-8717 (Toll-free), 250-723-4050 (Adult Line)
- **Residential School Survivors and Family:** 1-866-925-4419 (24 hour crisis line)
- **Indigenous Mental Health Counselling and Crisis Intervention:** 1.855-242-3310, hopeforwellness.ca

**Canada-wide (including BC):**

- **Suicide Crisis helpline (24/7):** 9-8-8 or 988.ca
- **Crisis Services Canada (24/7):** 1-800-784-2433, crisiservicescanada.ca

### RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS:

**Staff and Faculty Mental Health Resources and Supports**

- **Employee and Family Assistance Program:** 1-866-424-0770 or [app.greenshieldplus.ca](http://app.greenshieldplus.ca)
- **UBC Employment Groups** [hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/collective-agreements-and-terms-conditions-employment](http://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/collective-agreements-and-terms-conditions-employment)
- **UBC Health, Wellbeing & Benefits:** [hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing](http://hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing)
- **Remain at Work - Return to Work & WRAP Programs:**  
**UBC Vancouver:** [hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing/working-injury-illness-or-disability](http://hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing/working-injury-illness-or-disability)  
**UBC Okanagan:** [hr.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellbeing/wrap](http://hr.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellbeing/wrap)
- **Supports for substance use and addictions** [hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/substance-use-and-addiction-support-resources](http://hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/substance-use-and-addiction-support-resources)

**BC-specific:**

- **Wellbeing.gov.bc.ca**
- **HealthlinkBC:** 811, [healthlinkbc.ca](http://healthlinkbc.ca)
- **Medimap BC:** [medimap.ca](http://medimap.ca)

**Available to Canadians anywhere in the world:**

- **Wellness Together Canada:** [ca.portal.gs](http://ca.portal.gs)

Thank you for playing a very VITAL ROLE in creating healthy and respectful workplaces at UBC.

**MORE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT:**  
[hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/helping-faculty-and-staff-distress](http://hr.ubc.ca/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/helping-faculty-and-staff-distress)

### QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR COPIES:

Human Resources  
UBC Vancouver Campus [hr.ubc.ca/contact](http://hr.ubc.ca/contact)  
UBC Okanagan Campus: [hr.ok.ubc.ca/contact](http://hr.ok.ubc.ca/contact)

### RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS:

[wellbeing.ubc.ca/supporting-students-distress](http://wellbeing.ubc.ca/supporting-students-distress)

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