



Supporting Students in Distress

Faculty and staff members develop close and supportive relationships with students - in their classes, as supervisors and advisors, and through research-centered relationships. Often, when students are in distress, they will share their concerns with their instructors, supervisors, or program staff. While many faculty and staff members are comfortable providing support and encouragement, sometimes students may describe challenges or concerns that faculty and staff members consider beyond their resources and/or comfort.

It can be stressful to determine the best way to support students, especially when you may have concerns about students' health, well-being or safety. If students tell you that they are thinking about suicide or if you observe behaviour that causes concern for students' safety, please take advantage of resources here at OISE and the University of Toronto to connect students with supports.

We hope that the following suggestions for ways to support and refer students will provide helpful guidance and help us all to offer students a more seamless experience of support.

1. Your first resource is **Jeananne Robertson** (jt.robertson@utoronto.ca; 416-978-2448), *Student Success Counsellor & Assistant Director Student Experience* within the Registrar's Office and Student Experience. Jeananne will meet with students to ensure that they connect with relevant support resources. There are several options for facilitating student referrals to Jeananne:
 - a. In urgent cases, please bring students to the Registrar's Office and Students Experience (ROSE) in person to make a personal introduction. If you are unable to come to ROSE, please call and ask that Jeananne come to your office/classroom for an in-person introduction.
 - b. If you are confident that the situation is not an emergency, please advise students to contact Jeananne (in person, by phone, or by e-mail) to arrange a meeting
2. In the event that Jeananne is unavailable, several Student Services staff members in the Registrar's Office and Student Experience are prepared to accept referrals from faculty and staff and facilitate students' connection with crisis support resources at the University of Toronto.

Ghayas Shams (ghayas.shams@utoronto.ca; 416-978-1599)

Anne Marie Kwan (oise.financialaid@utoronto.ca; 416-978-2237)

Ian MacLeod (ian.macleod@utoronto.ca; 416-978-7861)

3. If all above-listed resources are unavailable, but the University is open (business hours) – **faculty and staff** can contact the University of Toronto **Crisis Response Team** at (416) 946-7111. This is an internal U of T resource, and this number **should not** be shared with students.
4. If you are in communication with students outside of business hours or when the University is closed, you may wish to refer students to the following resources:
 - a. The nearest Hospital Emergency Room / Urgent Care Centre. For a list, please visit: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc/emergencies>
 - b. Good2Talk: <http://www.good2talk.ca/> (1-866-925-5454)

Good2Talk is a free, confidential, and anonymous helpline providing professional counselling, information, and referrals for mental health, addictions, and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario - 24/7/365.
 - c. My SSP (1-844-451-9700 or download the My SSP App) 24-hour, 365 free, confidential support for international students is available for any school, health, or general life concern, in 35 languages.
 - d. The [Gerstein Centre](#) offers crisis intervention to adults living in the City of Toronto who experience mental health problems. Services include telephone support, community visits, and a short-stay residence. All services are free of charge and can be accessed through the **Crisis Line at 416-929-5200**, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - e. **Campus Police / Community Safety** at 416-978-2222 are available 24/7 and have specific training and resources. You can refer students directly, or consult /report your concerns about a student.

Students at Risk

Occasionally, faculty and staff may encounter students that they perceive to be “at risk”, or who seem to be in distress, but who are not seeking help to mitigate or manage the factors that may be contributing to their at-risk status. Indeed, such students may not seem to be aware that they might benefit from help.

Faculty and staff cannot compel students to seek help, and there is no requirement for mandatory reporting in the absence of concerns about safety (either the safety of the student themselves or the safety of others). If you have persistent and significant concerns about a student, please share your concerns with your Department Chair and/or Program Director.

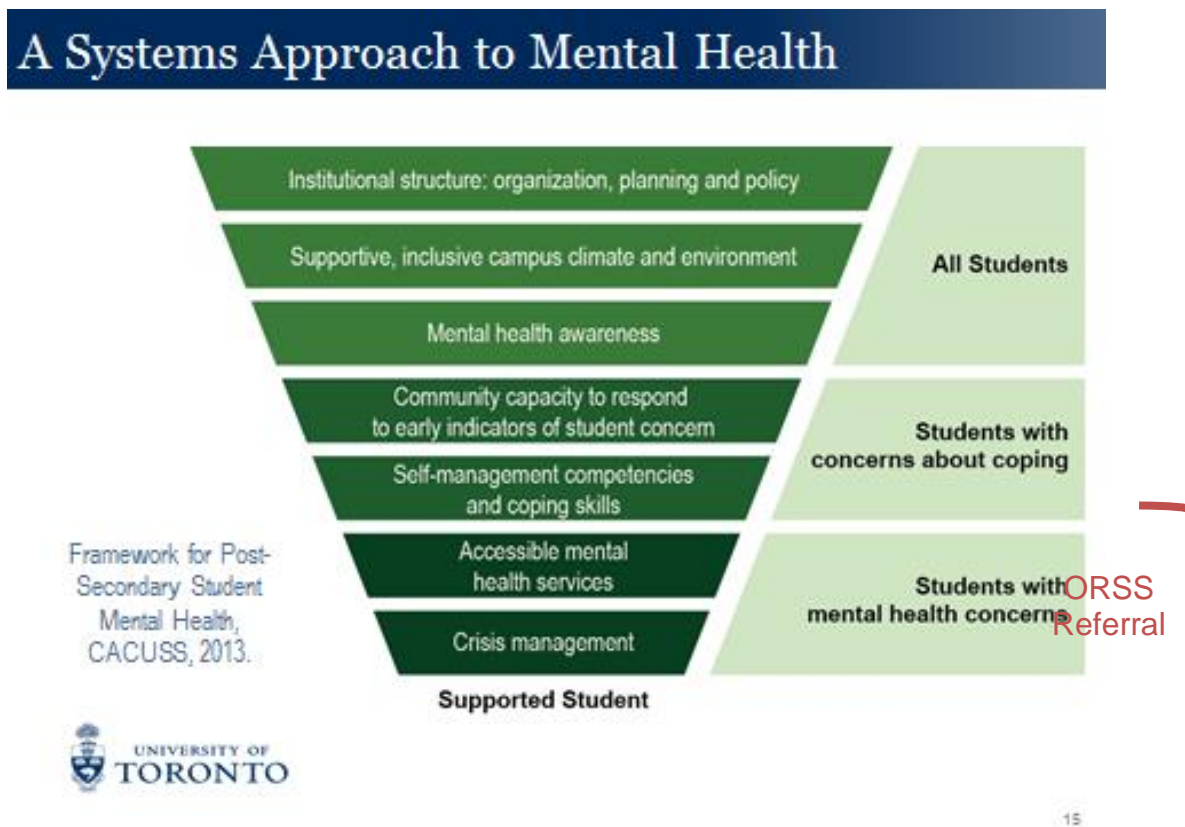
Chairs and Directors may wish to contact Student Progress & Support, who will be able to coordinate integrated and centralized follow up if they determine that the situation

merits intervention. There are three Coordinators at Student Progress & Support (416-946-0424).

Sexual Violence Prevention and Support

The SVPS Centre provides confidential support, services, counselling and resources to member of the U of T community (students, staff, and faculty) affected by sexual violence or harassment. It is not mandatory to formally report sexual violence in order access counselling support.

Additional information is available online at <https://www.svpscentre.utoronto.ca/about-the-centre/services/>. Support can be accessed by phone at 416-978-2266.



As cited in the Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health (University of Toronto, 2014).

University of Toronto. (2014). *Report of the Provostial Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health: The University of Toronto Student Mental Health Strategy and Framework*. Retrieved from Toronto, ON: <http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/Assets/Provost+Digital+Assets/Provost/Provost+Digital+Assets/Provost/Reports/MentalHealthReportOct2014.pdf>

University of Toronto. (2016). *Final Report of the Presidential and Provostial Advisory Committee on Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence*. Retrieved from Toronto, ON: <https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/committees/prevention-response-to-sexual-violence/>