

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE IN DISTRESS

Assess the **SITUATION**

- Recognize the signs
 - Signs of distress may appear as changes in mood, personality, performance, actions, or behavior that are out of the ordinary.
- Observe body language and listen attentively
- Start the conversation
 - “I’d like to talk to you about [something I’ve noticed]. Is that ok?”
 - “I wanted to check in and see how things are going for you.”
 - “Help me better understand what’s going on.”



Is this an **EMERGENCY?**

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

1. Is the person behaving in a threatening or violent manner?
2. Are you concerned about the safety of the person?

DIRECTLY ASK THE DISTRESSED INDIVIDUAL:

1. “Are you thinking about hurting or killing yourself?”



If **YES**

SOME THINGS YOU CAN SAY ARE:

1. “I am concerned about you and want to be sure you get support. I am not the best person for this, so let’s contact someone who is.”
2. “There is help available for you. Let’s figure out together how to get you the help you need right now.”

DISCUSS EMERGENCY CRISIS RESOURCES AND CONTACT ONE OF THE OPTIONS TOGETHER

If **NO**

WORK THE PROBLEM AND TAKE ACTION BY ASKING THESE QUESTIONS:

1. “How can I best support/help you right now?”
2. “What strategies have worked for you in the past?”
3. “Who are the people in your life that can support you in this?”
4. What resources would be most helpful in this situation?”

OFFER RESOURCES AND HELP THEM CONNECT TO THE ONES THAT THEY FEEL MAY BE HELPFUL

FOLLOW UP

- Provide relevant resources located below or find help online.
- Check back with the person at a later date.
 - “How have things been going since we last talked?”
 - “Your wellbeing is important to me and I wanted to see how you have been feeling.”

Try these TIPS

- Listen actively
- Offer reassurance
- Express concern and support
- Use non-judgmental language
- Act sooner rather than later
- Be available
- Involve others if needed
- Take care of yourself

CAMPUS RESOURCES

WSU COUNSELING SERVICES

IWC 222 | 507.457.5330 |
counselingservices@winona.edu

WSU HEALTH SERVICES

IWC 222 | 507.457.5160

BASIC NEEDS

WINONA: winona.edu/current-students/basic-needs-winona/
ROCHESTER: winona.edu/current-students/basic-needs-rochester/

OASIS CENTER

Gildemeister 110 |
wsu@advocacywinona.org

EMERGENCY CRISIS RESOURCES

IF IT IS AN EMERGENCY, CALL 911

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

Call or Text 988

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text 741.741

CRISIS RESPONSE FOR SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA

Call 1.844.274.7472

THE ADVOCACY CENTER OF WINONA

Call 507.452.4453

ADDITIONAL CAMPUS SUPPORT

If you have a student of concern and want a broader network of support for this student, consider filing a **BAIT report** here: [BAIT Form](#).

If it is primarily a concern over academics, consider completing an **EIP: Early Intervention Program Referral** here: [EIP Form](#).

Remember, if someone is opening up to you about their concerns, **THEY CHOSE YOU**. While it's not your job to provide counseling, you can listen, express empathy, and help them explore resources.

