

RESPONDING TO SUICIDE / ASSAULT / SELF-HARM THREATS

If there is an imminent self-injury or assault threat, if a weapon is shown, or if a student displays erratic, disoriented, or intoxicated behavior, call Public Safety (6400) immediately!

Please do not call 911 or any other off-campus service unless you cannot reach Public Safety.

Do:

- Take the student out of the classroom/hallway to a more private situation.
- ASK DIRECTLY IF A STUDENT PLANS TO HARM SELF OR OTHERS. Despite its abruptness, this question will not cause damage, and may in fact reassure both of you.
- Take the student seriously and acknowledge that the student's behavior is a plea for help.
- Reassure the student that you will help him/her reach a counselor.
- Accompany the student to the Health & Wellness Center, G-217 or call ext. 6275 for a Counselor to come to you. In the event the Health & Wellness Center is closed, contact **Public Safety at ext. 6400**

Do Not:

- Minimize. Any threats to others or self need to be handled as potentially lethal.
- Argue with the student.
- Agree to be bound by confidentiality.
- Over commit yourself and not be able to deliver what you promised.
- Allow friends to take care of the student without getting a professional opinion.
- Leave the student alone.

SUNY Niagara HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTER

G-217

Licensed Counselors available
to provide Confidential
Personal Counseling Services
to Students Free of Charge

To schedule an appointment,
call: 716-614-6275 or stop in.



Hours available at both NFCI and
Sanborn campuses.

**After Hours: Contact
Public Safety
Ext. 6400**

SUNY Niagara STUDENT SERVICES

Health & Wellness Center
G-217

STUDENT-IN-CRISIS PROTOCOL



FACULTY • STAFF
ADMINISTRATION

GUIDE

2026-2027

GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING & REFERRING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

SUNY policy mandates that mental health counseling (called “Personal Counseling” at SUNY Niagara) be carried out only by licensed professionals. These guidelines are an attempt to provide some structure for faculty and staff in dealing with students in crisis.

Scenarios which meet the criteria for Personal Counseling referral

- A student reports or displays significant emotional distress (tears, anger, agitation, depression, disorientation, etc.), confides in and seeks advice from you (i.e. in an academic advisement session) regarding personal matters or in a manner that causes concern.
- You observe significant emotional distress and/or behavior change in a student (dramatic change in class attendance or participation, grooming, weight, alertness, academic performance).
- A third-party reports a student in distress to you.
- A student reports a critical incident to you (rape, child abuse, assault, suicide attempt, declaration of suicidal or aggressive intention, etc.).
- A student confides in you that she is pregnant and asks you for referral to an outside agency.
- A student confides in you that they are a victim of domestic violence and asks you for referral to an outside agency.

Deciding whether a situation requires a Personal Counseling referral

It is appropriate and compassionate for a faculty or staff member to lend a sympathetic ear to a student who trusts him or her enough to seek advice.

Students feeling overwhelmed by a heavy academic workload is an issue that is well within the role of academic advisement. The question is **"at what point am I slipping into the mental health counseling role?"**

- A key *subjective* indicator is your own feeling of whether the issue being discussed seems appropriate to your level of relationship with the student. If you are a student's advisor or coach and have had numerous close contacts over an extended period, it may be quite appropriate to confide about relationship or family problems. If you know them through teaching a class or two, such disclosure may indicate more emotional distress than you are comfortable dealing with.
- *Objective* indicators include whether the student is seeking, covertly or overtly, multiple meetings, and whether emotional concerns become the main topic rather than in your area of expertise. ***In general, multiple sessions with primarily emotional themes is considered mental health counseling.***

Whatever your decision process, when you conclude that mental health counseling is advisable, your first referral should be to the Health & Wellness Center's Personal Counseling Services.

How to Refer Students for Personal Counseling

Once you've decided a student needs Personal Counseling, ***please refer them directly to the Health & Wellness Center*** (*please do not refer them to off-campus services*). This is important because it provides a collection point for the College to track campus mental health needs and coordinate our responses.

If a student asks you directly for a referral, please consider referring them to the Health & Wellness Center to meet with a Counselor and a possible referral if warranted. If you have a particular off-campus resource in mind, feel free to share this information with the Counselor so that they may consider it in the assessment and appropriate referral if necessary.

If a student has not sought you out but has been observed in distress, the situation is more delicate (especially if the student is causing disruption in class). It is a good idea to consult with a Personal Counselor (ext. 6275), who can make an outreach if necessary. It is not a confidentiality violation for you to discuss a student with a Counselor. In the case of a threat to self or others, safety of the student should be priority and reported to a Health & Wellness Center Counselor immediately.

Refer the student by directing them or walking them to ***the Health & Wellness Center, Room G-217*** using your discretion about whether personal accompaniment is needed. Offer to meet the Counselor with the student if you feel this will make the student more comfortable. If the student is hesitant or confused, it is appropriate to call the **Health & Wellness Center at extension 6275** and ask the Counselor to come to you.