

Faculty & Staff Referrals to Mental Health Services

Student concerns generally fall into three categories: emergency situations, urgent referrals, and non-urgent referrals. The information below explains how to identify each type of concern, when intervention may be needed, and how to connect students with the appropriate resources.

While the Counseling Center can assist with urgent and non-urgent referrals, emergency situations require immediate connection to emergency services or law enforcement due to concerns about immediate safety.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If a student is in immediate danger or there are concerns about their immediate safety, contact emergency services right away.

- Call **911** if the student is in immediate danger.
- Contact **University Police (410-543-6222)** or the law enforcement agency local to the student's current location if you are concerned about the student's immediate safety.

Emergency situations require immediate intervention to address safety concerns. While the Counseling Center may provide consultation or follow-up support, emergency responders are the primary resource when a student may be at risk of harming themselves or others or is otherwise unable to remain safe.

SITUATIONS REQUIRING AN EMERGENCY INTERVENTION

- The student expresses thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or harming others.
- The student is showing symptoms of psychosis (e.g. hallucinations, delusions, significantly disorganized communication, or severely disorganized behavior).

If you are concerned about a student's ability to keep themselves or others safe and are currently with, or in contact with, the student, do not leave the student alone or end contact until they are connected to Counseling Center staff or another appropriate crisis resource.

URGENT REFERRAL

An urgent referral may be appropriate when a student is experiencing significant emotional distress and would benefit from prompt support, but there is no immediate concern about their ability to keep themselves or others safe.

Examples include:

- Significant emotional distress
- A recent traumatic event, such as a sexual assault
- Difficulty coping with a stressful or overwhelming situation
- Intense emotional reactions that are interfering with the student's functioning

If there is uncertainty about whether a situation is an emergency, prioritize safety and consult with the Counseling Center, University Police, or another appropriate resource.

In urgent, non-emergency situations, talk with the student about available options and resources so they can determine what best meets their needs. Everyone responds to difficult experiences differently, and visible emotional distress does not necessarily indicate a mental health crisis.

For example, a student who is crying may be experiencing a range of emotions and may not require immediate intervention. Avoid making assumptions based on your own experiences or level of comfort. By providing information about available resources and discussing options with the student, you can communicate concern and support while empowering the student to make informed decisions about their mental health.

Making an Urgent Referral

DURING COUNSELING CENTER WALK-IN HOURS

Monday-Friday 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Option 1: Accompany the Student to the Counseling Center

Location: Guerrieri Student Union, Room 263

1. Inform the front desk that you are making a crisis referral.
2. Remain in the office until a clinician is available.
3. Share relevant information regarding your concerns.

Option 2: Contact the Counseling Center

Phone: 410-543-6070

1. Call the Counseling Center
2. Explain that you are concerned about a student and would like to speak with a clinician.
3. Follow the clinician's recommendations.

OUTSIDE OF COUNSELING CENTER WALK-IN HOURS:

1. Call **TimelyCare** at **1-833-4-TIMELY (Option 2)**
2. Explain the situation to a member of Care Coordination Team.
3. Follow their recommendations.

If further, or more immediate, intervention is needed, call University Police at 410-543-6222 and explain the situation.

What Happens After an Urgent Referral?

A clinician will assess the student's needs, evaluate any safety concerns, and determine appropriate recommendations or next steps. Recommendations may include ongoing counseling, referral to additional resources, connection with other campus resources, or a higher level of care.

Unless it is determined that a student needs to go to the hospital in order to keep themselves or others safe, then it remains the student's choice to participate in treatment and follow-through with recommendations.

If you become aware of additional information or concerns after making the referral, please contact the Counseling Center. Information that may seem minor can help clinicians better understand the student's circumstances, assess risk, and make informed recommendations.

Example Conversation

A student comes to their professor's office hours.

Student: I am falling behind in your class and cannot finish the next assignment on time. I don't know what to do. I feel like everything is falling apart. Sometimes I think it would be better if I were not here anymore.

Professor: What do you mean by not here anymore?

Student: Like not alive, everything would be so much easier.

Professor: The most important thing is always going to be your safety. It sounds like you are feeling very overwhelmed. I want to make sure you get help, so you are able to stay safe and start to feel better. With you mentioning that you are thinking about not wanting to be alive, I need to get you in contact with the Counseling Center on campus.

Student: Oh, no, I don't have time, I need to get back to the assignment, and I have two papers to write before the end of the day.

Professor: That sounds like a lot to have on your plate, but first we need to make sure that you are safe. I can walk you to the Center and make sure you are set up. You can talk to them about what is going on and come up with a plan. After, we can meet again to discuss a plan for your assignments.

Student: Okay.

Professor: Okay, I am going to call over and let them know we are on our way. When we get there, they will most likely ask you to complete some forms and will want to talk to me about why we came over. After, I will head out, does that sound okay?

Student: Yes, I understand, I will reach out about the assignment after.

(This example is intended to illustrate a supportive conversation and should not be viewed as a script.)

NON-URGENT REFERRAL

A non-urgent referral may be appropriate when a student is experiencing emotional, interpersonal, academic, or mental health concerns that do not require immediate intervention but may benefit from additional support.

Examples may include:

- Stress or feeling overwhelmed
- Anxiety or depression
- Relationship concerns
- Grief or loss
- Adjustment to college life
- Academic stress
- Family concerns
- Difficulty coping with a life event
- Changes in mood or behavior

If you observe that a student may be experiencing emotional distress or mental health concerns, consider speaking with them privately to express your concern and discuss what you have observed. Listen empathically, avoid judgment, and refrain from making assumptions about their experience.

If a student discloses mental health concerns, a significant life stressor, or appears reluctant to discuss what is going on, let them know that the Counseling Center and TimelyCare are available to provide support.

If the student has concerns about seeking help, discuss those concerns with them. If you do not know the answer to a question, you can review information on the Counseling Center website www.salisbury.edu/counseling together or contact the Counseling Center for additional information.

If the student seems apprehensive about seeking support, you may offer to:

- Help them schedule an appointment.
- Review available resources with them.
- Provide contact information so it is readily available when they are ready to seek support.

Example Conversation

Professor notices that a student who is typically on time has been showing up late and appears distracted while in class. The professor asks the student to stay after class so they can talk and invites the student to talk in the professor's office.

Professor: I have noticed that you have arrived 5-to-10 minutes late to the past three classes and appear distracted during lectures, so I wanted to check in.

Student: I am sorry, it will not happen again, I have just been having a hard time recently.

Professor: If you think it could be helpful to talk to someone, you can always go to the Counseling Center or use TimelyCare.

Student: Oh, I don't think it is that bad, I can push through.

Professor: It is completely up to you, but I just want to make sure that you know there are resources that can help. It is all free, confidential, and there is no commitment, so if you go once and that is enough for you to feel better, you do not need to continue.

Student: I thought you needed to have anxiety or depression or something to go there.

Professor: No, they can help with whatever is going on. It can be a one-time conversation to get things off of your chest or a few sessions if you have more that you would like to talk about. They can also help with referrals if you feel you would benefit from something long-term.

Student: Okay, well I will think about it.

Professor: Okay, if it would be helpful, you can schedule while you are here, or I have this sheet with the Counseling Center and TimelyCare's information that you can take with you.

Student: I will take the sheet, thank you again, I will be sure to be on time for our next class.

(This example is intended to illustrate a supportive conversation and should not be viewed as a script.)

CONFIDENTIALITY

Counseling Center services are confidential. As a result, Counseling Center staff are generally unable to share information about a student's participation in services or the content of those services. If you become aware of additional concerns after making a referral, please contact the Counseling Center and share that information with a clinician.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

QUESTIONS ABOUT REFERRING A STUDENT?

For additional guidance about referring a student to the Counseling Center, you can:

- Visit [Salisbury.edu/Counseling](https://salisbury.edu/Counseling)
 - Select **"Referring a Student"** for information about making referrals and connecting students with Counseling Center services.
 - Select **"Faculty and Staff Resources"** to access referral guidance, handouts, and educational materials.
- Contact the Counseling Center at **410-543-6070** to consult with a staff member about a student's concern.

NOT SURE IF THE COUNSELING CENTER IS THE RIGHT RESOURCE?

SU Cares (Case Management) assists students who are experiencing non-academic barriers that may affect student well-being, success, or ability to remain engaged at Salisbury University.

To submit an Online Care Report to SU Cares:

1. Visit [Salisbury.edu/SUCares](https://salisbury.edu/SUCares)
2. Select **"Request SUCARES Assistance."**

The Counseling Center does not receive, or have access to, Care Reports.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Emergency:** 911
- **University Police:** 410-543-6222
- **Counseling Center:** 410-543-6070
- **TimelyCare Faculty & Staff Guidance Line:** 1-833-4-TIMELY
- **Counseling Center Website:** [Salisbury.edu/Counseling](https://salisbury.edu/Counseling)
- **SUCARES:** [Salisbury.edu/SUCares](https://salisbury.edu/SUCares)