STUDENTS IN DISTRESS: Interventions and Campus Resources

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Outline for this afternoon

- Scenarios and responses
- Tools in responding to students in distress
- Resources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Any time within the past 12 months</th>
<th>Spring 2017 (n=81,529)</th>
<th>RIT 2017 (n=2,104)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt very sad</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt very lonely</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
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<td>Felt overwhelming anxiety</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt things were hopeless</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt overwhelming anger</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seriously considered suicide</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intentionally injured yourself</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
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Scenarios
Student does not attend class

First time
- Reach out to student via email

Once per week
- Reach out to student via email, early alert, connect with NTID counselor/academic advisor

Never attends but remains enrolled
- Reach out to student via email
- Send an early alert
- Connect with NTID counselor/academic advisor
- Submit a Tiger Concern Report (https://www.rit.edu/reporting-incident)
Student does not attend class

Shares that they aren’t attending regularly due to: mental health, food/housing insecurity, family crisis

- Reach out to the advisor,
- Submit a Tiger Concern Report (“report concerns about a student”
  https://www.rit.edu/reporting-incident)

Doesn’t respond to professor/advisor outreach

- Submit a Tiger Concern Report
Student expresses significant emotion during class

Student cries
- Approach the student; ask to speak with them- offer options for doing so (at current space, outside the room, after class, etc)
- Ask what they may need for immediate support

Student paces/slams hands on desk
- Professor approaches the student- asks to speak with them and offers options for doing so.
- Asks about the behavior, lets the student know how this is impacting classroom
Student expresses significant emotion during class

Student shares personal history that you suspect will lead into Title IX information

Pause conversation, explain your interest in offering support and your own mandated reporter status as well as options for confidential support

“I’m going to ask you to pause briefly, I want to support you and assist you, please note that if you share with me that you have experienced a Title IX related incident (Sexual Misconduct (including sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking), Sexual Harassment, Gender Discrimination, Retaliation) I MUST report this. If you want support around this issue but don’t want it reported at this time, I can connect you with an office that does not have report it” (https://www.rit.edu/reporting-incident#report-a-title-ix-concern)
Tools
STRESS & OUR BODY

- Today’s stress are different and more frequent
- Overloaded with stress:
  - Thinking about things that haven’t happened yet
  - Thinking about what happened in the past
- When stressed, minds are blocked
• Don’t want to bother too much
• Don’t know what to say
• Don’t want to make things worse

Saying something

• Tells the student you care
• Allows the student to express their feelings and thoughts
• Offers students helpful connections and resources
TOOLS: managing students in distress

Calm

Listen

Validate

Reframe

Refer
TOOLS: stay calm

▪ Having a calm and confident presence
  ▪ Eye contact and body language
  ▪ Not only this helps the student, this helps YOU!

▪ Stay in the moment, be focused

▪ Acknowledge the discomfort

▪ Having and knowing resources helps
TOOLS: active listening

- **Show interest and concern**
  > Be curious, let them express, begin with open-ended questions; “Tell me what’s going on”

- **Show empathy**
  > “That is tough!”

- **Show non-judgment**
  > Be aware of bias, avoid assumptions, be willing to learn, offer advice only after listening

- **Show compassion**
  > Ask yourself, what is/has been happening for this student that might be contributing to their struggles? Focus on their feelings and thoughts
**TOOLS:** validate

- **RECOGNIZE**
  - “You have a lot on your plate right now”
  - “A lot of things are happening to you right now”
  - “That must be really difficult to cope with”
  - “With [all of that], it makes sense why you are stressed!”

- **RELATE/NORMALIZE**
  - “It’s not easy to do [all of that], I know other students are struggling too”
TOOLS: reframe

- Appreciate their talking to you (this will reinforce help-seeking)
  - “Thank you for sharing with me, that took a lot of courage - you are not alone!”
- Recognize achievements and strengths
  - “It might not feel like this, but you [discussed great points in class, did a great job on the assignment] - keep doing your best and hopefully things should be okay”
- Focus on here and now
  - “I can see that it feels like everything’s falling apart - try to do one thing at a time - most of the times things will start to feel better. We can start planning. What is [bothering, stressing] you the most right now?”
TOOLS: refer

- Refer to a skill or to a resource
  - “In the past, what are some things that usually makes you feel better?
  - “Sometimes taking time for self-care and [watching something funny] helps me. Could that be helpful for you?”
  - “Sometimes I find it helpful to plan 1:1 time with a friend, do you have someone you could do that with?”
  - “It might be helpful to [talk with a counselor] - it was helpful for others - can I help you get connected?”
  - Any kind of planning helps with hope, and connections are important
SUPPORTIVE LANGUAGE IDEAS

Common Practice:
“Calm down”
“You’ll be okay”
“You don’t need to cry”
“Stop slamming.”
“Don’t be upset.”
“I’m over this.”

Alternate:
“This seems important. Tell me what’s up. How can I help you?”
“Are you okay?”
“I can see this is difficult.”
“Take a deep breath, then tell me what happened.”
“Tell me what is upsetting you.”
“I’m here for you to the best of my ability. Others are here for you as well.”
RESPOONSE: Suicidal comments

▪ Stay calm!

▪ Be available (to listen, to talk, to be concerned)

▪ Clarify their suicidal thoughts
  ▪ “I want to know more about your suicidal thoughts – are you thinking about actually killing yourself, or is it more related to general thoughts of dying, giving up, feeling like but not actually doing it?”

▪ Take it seriously
  • not in imminent risk, it’s a plea for help
RESPONSE: Suicidal comments

- ASK if you are concerned about possible suicidal thoughts, even if student did not say anything
  - Most people are relieved when someone asks them directly about thoughts of suicide
  - “I care about you and I’m worried about you. I want to check and see if you are thinking of giving up, dying, hurting, or killing yourself?”
Talking about Suicide

- Talking about suicide does NOT give them ideas
- It will not cause them MORE distress
- It will not make them more likely to act on their thoughts

- It DOES show you care
- It engages the person
- It gives the person permission to communicate what they are thinking
Resources
Health & Mental Health Resources

- **Counseling & Academic Advising Services (CAAS)**
  - CAAS Center, SDC 1445 9-4pm; Vicki Liggera valnca@rit.edu

- **NTID Counseling & Psychological Services (NCAPS)**
  - August Center, 2nd Floor
  - Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pm, 585-475-2261, Wed closed 11am-12
  - Afterhours 1-855-436-1245

- **Case Management**
  - August Center, 2nd Floor, casemanagement@rit.edu
Health & Mental Health Resources

- **Student Health Center**
  - August Center 1st Floor
  - Mon-Thurs 8am-7pm, Fri 8am-4:30pm, Wed closed 11am-12

- **Substance & Addiction Intervention Services for the Deaf (SAISD)**
  - Keven Poore kmpsai@rit.edu
Academic & Pragmatic Resources on Campus

- Early Alerts via Starfish
- Counseling & Academic Advising Services (CAAS)
- NTID Learning Center (NLC) and Academic Hub
- NTID Communication Studies and Services
- Disability Services Office (DSO)
Miscellaneous Resources on Campus

- **RIT FoodShare & Bern’s Closet**
  - Located in Global Village they are free to access

- **Financial Aid & Scholarships**
  - Appeals can be made for assistance if financial situation changes

- **Emergency Funding**
  - Refer to casemanagement@rit.edu
Reporting an Incident

https://www.rit.edu/reporting-incident
Points of Contact Refresher

- **Kiersten Blankley** serves on SBCT and does all NTID behavior management & intervention and crisis response

- **Vicki Liggera** oversees CAAS and works closely with Kiersten as the backup for SBCT

- **Megan Jaros** oversees Case Management for the entire university. They receive all TCR’s and coordinate response and outreach.
Closing Thoughts
▪ You got this.
▪ You have it in you.
▪ Do your best.
▪ When in doubt,
  ▪ reach out / say something
  ▪ stay calm
  ▪ start with concerning question
  ▪ focus on the student
▪ …it also helps to have resources on hand!
YOUR SELF-CARE

▪ Debrief
▪ Maintain boundaries
▪ De-stress  Have fun, YOU still need to come first!
▪ Take care of yourself  Sleeping, eating, and moving

This will help you continue your good work with students!
Other possible prevention strategies

- Include encouragement to reach out in syllabus
- Discuss and normalize stress in class
  - Think about common time points of stress
- Encourage reaching out
  - This is not so you are responsible – this is mainly to encourage students to reach out, so you can connect them to resources