



RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

210 Elliott University Center
Monday–Friday
8:00 am–5:00 pm
deanofstudents.uncg.edu
336.334.5514
dossaf@uncg.edu



UNC GREENSBORO
Division of Student Affairs
Dean of Students



[instagram.com/uncgdos](https://www.instagram.com/uncgdos)

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Life Threatening Situation

UNCG Police (24 hours) 336.334.4444
UNCG Police (Text) **336.447.3898**

Non-Emergency

UNCG Police (24 hours) 336.334.5963
Dean of Students Office 336.334.5514

Classroom Management Concerns

Undergraduate Teaching &
Learning Commons 336.334.5980

Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy

Contact Dept. Chair or Academic Dean
Dean of Students Office 336.334.5514

Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity Policy

Office of Student Rights
& Responsibilities 336.334.4640

Residence Life Resource

Housing & Residence Life ... 336.334.5636

Health & Mental Health Resources

Counseling & Psychological
Services 336.334.5874
Student Health Services 336.334.5340
Campus Violence Response
Center 336.334.9839
Guilford County Behavioral
Health Center (24 hours) 336.890.2700
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
988lifeline.org/chat ... or ... Call/Text 988

Administrative Resources

Dean of Students Office
(Multiple Student Issues) 336.334.5514
Graduate School 336.334.5596
International Programs
Center 336.334.5404

RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Be alert to signs of Distress

Academic Indicators

- Deterioration in quality of work
- Missed assignments
- Repeated absences
- Essays or creative works that indicate extreme hopelessness, social isolation, rage, fear, or despair.

Emotional Indicators

- Direct statements indicating distress
- Unprovoked anger
- Sudden changes in personality
- Excessive dependency
- Tearfulness

Physical Indicators

- Deterioration in physical appearance
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Visible changes in weight
- Coming to class bleary-eyed, hung over or smelling of alcohol or other drugs

Safety Risk Indicators

- Any written or verbal statement which has a sense of finality or a suicidal tone to it
- Essays or papers which focus on despair, suicide, or death
- Statements to the effect that they are “going away for a long time”
- Giving away prized possessions
- Self-injurious or self-destructive behaviors

Steps for Assisting a Student in Distress

1. **Reach out:** Meet privately with the student in distress if you feel comfortable doing so. If necessary, call for guidance on how best to handle the situation: Dean of Students Office (336.334.5514), Counseling & Psychological Services (336.334.5874) or the University Police (336.334.5963).
2. **Build rapport:** Listen attentively and repeat what they tell you.
3. **Ask questions:** Use direct and simple language.
4. **Empathize:** Express care and concern. Specifically point out signs you’ve observed.
5. **Take notes:** Document your conversation with the student for future reference.
6. **Problem solving:** Talk to the student about seeing an appropriate professional on campus.
7. **Help student create action plan:** Try to come to an agreement about help seeking behavior and resources.
8. **Contact a resource:** Email the Dean of Students Office so we can also reach out as needed and track patterns of concern (dossaf@uncg.edu). If safety risk indicators are present do not send an email, call immediately. If after hours, contact the University Police.
9. **Follow up:** Reach back out to the student soon after to see how they are doing.



Frequently Asked Questions

When should I call the police?

Err on the side of caution. Call the University Police whenever you believe there is any threat of violence, a student is a risk to self or others, or other unlawful behavior. Any threat of violence should be taken seriously.

How do I respond when classroom disruption occurs?

Faculty members have broad authority to manage the classroom environment. Faculty should address disruptive behavior immediately. Students may be asked to leave the classroom and must do so. Faculty may implement the *Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy* as needed.

What if a disruptive student claims the behavior is a result of a disability?

The faculty member should consult with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (336.334.5540). Students who have a disability may only qualify for classroom accommodations after registering with that office. Students with or without disabilities must adhere to reasonable behavioral standards.

Should I act immediately or wait for a pattern of misbehavior to occur?

The classroom is a learning setting and as such, behavior should be addressed immediately so that the student can learn expectations for collegiate classroom behavior. Generally, professors who state reasonable expectations early, and enforce them consistently, help students avoid the harsher consequences that flow from more serious infractions later.

What can I do to encourage appropriate behavior in the classroom?

Include on your syllabus a statement about the expectations of behavior. Discuss the concept on the first day of class. Consider having some way to start each class with something that earns students points—example: a quiz—that will encourage timeliness. Address inappropriate behavior immediately and respectfully.