

BIZARRE/ERRATIC BEHAVIOR

Any bizarre/erratic behavior or extreme change in behavior may signal that a student is in distress and requires intervention. The competition and pressure associated with the current academic climate, on top of more general life difficulties, can be very stressful for many. Some students can adequately cope with these stressors, but when stress exceeds the student's capacity to cope, stress becomes distress.

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR:

- Excessive procrastination and very poorly prepared work, especially if inconsistent with previous work.
- Infrequent class attendance or frequent tardiness with little or no work completed.
- Dependency (e.g., the student who hangs around after class or makes excessive appointments).
- Listlessness, low mood, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class.
- Marked changes in personal hygiene.
- Impaired speech (very rapid or very slow) and disjointed thoughts.
- Repeated requests for special consideration (e.g., deadline extensions).

WHAT TO DO:

- Talk to the student in private about your concern. Be as specific as possible in stating your observations and reasons for concern. Listen carefully to everything the student says.
- Repeat the essence of what the student has told you so your attempts to understand are communicated.
- Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental.
- Maintain the boundaries of your relationship; know your limitations with respect to your role in the student's life. When you feel you have helped as much as you can, seek another option.
- Refer the student to **Student Counseling Services** (315-464-3120) and provide him/her with contact information. Offer to help the student place the call and make the appointment while you are together. Offer to accompany the student to meet with a counselor if appropriate.

- Expressed suicidal thoughts verbally or in writing; expressions of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Physical evidence of self-harm (e.g., cuts on arms or legs) or other unexplained injuries.
- Excessive weight gain or loss.
- Behavior which regularly interferes with effective class management.
- Frequent or high levels of irritable, unruly, abrasive, or aggressive behavior; mood swings.
- Exaggerated emotional responses.
- Unable to make decisions despite your repeated efforts to clarify or encourage.
- Bizarre behavior that is obviously inappropriate for the situation (e.g., talking to something/someone that is not present).
- Students who appear overly nervous, tense or tearful.
- Social isolation/withdrawal from friends and family.
- Intoxication, hangover, or other after affects of misuse.

- If the student resists referral and/or you remain uncomfortable with the situation, contact **Student Counseling** (315-464-3120) to discuss your concern. Notify the Director if you feel the situation is an emergency or urgent enough to require immediate assistance.
- If the situation is a true emergency (involves threat to personal or public safety), immediately contact **University Police** (315-464-4000). If in Binghamton, call 911.
- Contact the **Dean of Student Affairs** (315-464-4816) about your concern and the steps taken. If in Binghamton, contact the **Director of Student Affairs** (607-772-3532), who will, in turn, communicate with the **Dean of Student Affairs**.

