



DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

HELPING STUDENTS

A Guide for Assisting Students in Need

DEAR COLLEAGUES:

I’m sure we can all agree that working on a day-to-day basis with college students provides many rewarding experiences as well as unexpected challenges. Some of those unexpected challenges arise because many of our students are struggling with issues in their personal lives that may have the potential to impact our campus community. In my experience, most college students need help with a problem at some point during their college careers, and they’re more likely to turn to a faculty member or a staff member they trust for that support.



It’s with those students in mind that the Division of Student Affairs is providing this resource for helping students. Getting students the help they need before they’re in crisis is a goal we should always be working towards. Accordingly, on the pages that follow you’ll find information on issues, situations and problems that some students struggle to overcome.

Western Carolina University has a broad array of student services that can help students manage their problems and work through difficult situations. The primary intent behind this publication is to provide you with good information and pragmatic strategies for responding to students who might share their problems or concerns with you. By no means is this an exhaustive or comprehensive resource for making diagnoses or providing therapy, instead this is a simple tool to aid you in your work with our students.

Another goal of this publication is to make us all more aware of the campus resources available. When confronted with a distraught student none of us should feel alone. This is a caring, collaborative academic community and all of us are working to help our students succeed. My hope is that this resource will make it easier to connect with one another and all the expertise available at Western Carolina.

I should also acknowledge the efforts of WCU’s Student Crisis Response Team (SCRT) in preparing this resource. As you’ll see in the pages that follow, the SCRT plays an important role on our campus and for our students.

In closing, I want to thank you for caring for our students and for this campus community. I know that our students appreciate all the support they receive from their interactions with you every day.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Miller".

H. Sam Miller, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

What is a Student Concern?

Interacting with students is both a vital and essential part of being on a university campus. This interaction provides for teaching moments and creates an environment for learning which takes place both in and out of the classroom. Occasionally, a student's behaviors will rise above normal interactions to a level of concern that may lead to disruption of classroom, a university activity, or cause concern of threat towards oneself and/or others. A student concern is a situation or experience that inhibits the student's ability to function well in the University environment. If you believe there is an urgent situation with a student, and unsure what to do, Counseling & Psychological Services 227-7469 is available to consult with you.

Faculty, staff, students or others who are concerned about the behavior of a student that is potentially dangerous to self or others, or is disruptive are encouraged to report or discuss the concern with an appropriate University representative. If you have a concern about a student, confidentiality laws do not prevent you from reporting the concern.

Please complete the on-line Incident Report Form:
<https://publicdocs.maxient.com/incidentreport.php?WesternCarolinaUniv>

Share as much information as possible to assist in appropriate outreach. If there are questions you cannot answer, simply skip those entries. If you would like to first talk to someone about your concerns, call the office of the student affairs at 828.227.7234.

*If you think the incident is an emergency,
Call Campus Police 227.8911.*

Student Crisis Response Team

WCU utilizes a case-management based approach to actively seek out students having difficulties and/or demonstrating concerning behaviors. The Student Crisis Response Team (SCRT) meets regularly to confidentially share information and discuss students that may be having behavioral difficulties.

SCRT is charged with coordinating efforts and appropriate services to students in need. These services can include but are not limited to:

- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Student Health Services
- Student Community Ethics
- University Police
- Division of Student Affairs
- Local Community Resources

Early Alert

The purpose of Early Alert is to contribute to student success through intentional intervention with potential at-risk students by encouraging faculty, staff, and/or other individuals to notify/refer students of concern. A case management approach is used to identify area of need, provide outreach to the student, monitor referrals received, and follow up as necessary for the success of the student.

Non-Life-Threatening and Other Emergencies

In these situations, call the Office of Student Affairs at 227.7234. You may be redirected to other campus resources depending upon the nature of the situation. Examples of emergencies in this category include:

- Missing persons
- Hazing / Hate incident
- Stalking
- Acute anxiety, Panic attacks, or Trauma-related anxiety
- Substance intoxication or student seeking detox / substance abuse treatment services
- Domestic violence / Abusive relationships
- Acute psychological symptoms / emotional distress

Make sure that you concurrently consult with your supervisor in accordance with university protocols.

In working with students in distress, faculty and staff play a vital role in facilitating access to appropriate campus resources. This booklet contains useful suggestions and strategies to help you in this process.

REACTING TO URGENT STUDENT ISSUES

Responding to Student Emergencies

The university encourages and supports a staff member’s or professor’s decision to respond to students in distress. Students in distress may display troubling behavior. Such behaviors may include the following:

- Suicidal gestures, intentions or attempts
- Other behavior posing a threat to the student (e.g., drug abuse)
- Threats or aggression directed toward others
- Demonstrated inability to care for oneself

CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR RESPONDING TO MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES:

For consultation with a Counseling and Psychological Services counselor, call 227.7469. The office is open Monday through Friday 8:00am-5:00pm. If you have decided to make a referral, please read the next section on “Referring a student for professional help” for details on steps to take.

If the student prefers to talk with a counselor not associated with the university, please refer him or her to the therapist referral listing on the WCU Counseling & Psychological Services (CPS) webpage, their health insurance benefits coordinator or the CPS case manager for assistance identifying a community resource. Our staff is also available to provide information on specialized counseling services in the community, and our website, counselingcenter.wcu.edu, has ULifeline and many mental health resources, questionnaires, etc.

Counseling and Psychological Services staff is on call for emergency consultations 24 hours a day, seven days a week, when school is in session. For after-hours emergency services, call WCU Police at 227.8911, and they will contact the counselor-on-call to consult with you or the student.

If the student requires immediate medical attention, hospitalization, or is unmanageable (aggressive, hostile, refusing care), or if you feel directly threatened by a student or feel others are at risk, call WCU police at 227.8911. They will provide assistance and transport the student to the appropriate facility.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Move the student to a quiet and secure place if possible.
- Enlist the help of a co-worker so that the student isn’t left alone and you aren’t left alone with the student.
- Listen attentively and respond in a straightforward and considerate way.
- When contacting a campus resource, have available as much information as possible, including your name; the student’s name and location; a description of the circumstances and the type of assistance needed; the exact location of the student in the building; and an accurate description of the student.
- Alert the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible (227.7234).

Life Threatening and Serious Emergencies

Call 227.8911. Examples of emergencies in this category include:

- Seizures / Head injury
- Bleeding (heavy or uncontrollable)
- Breathing problems / Chest pain
- Drug or alcohol overdose
- Loss of consciousness
- Suicidal ideation or action
- Sexual Assault
- Suspicious person or intruder
- Hearing voices, disoriented or otherwise misperceiving reality
- Homicidal, aggressive or potentially violent intentions / actions
- Acute medical issues warranting immediate treatment

WHEN YOU CALL 227.8911, LET THEM KNOW:

- You are calling to report an emergency at Western Carolina University
- The address
- The injury or situation
- The telephone number you are calling from
- Your name and follow-up phone number

Upon completion of report, be sure to follow-up with your supervisor and the Office of Student Affairs at 227.7234, in accordance with university protocols.

REACTING TO URGENT STUDENT ISSUES

Referring a Student for Professional Help

WHEN TO REFER

In many cases of student distress, faculty and staff can provide adequate help through empathic listening, facilitating open discussion of problems, instilling hope, conveying acceptance, giving reassurance and offering basic advice.

In some cases, however, students need professional help to overcome problems and to resume effective functioning. The following signs indicate that a student may need counseling:

- The student remains distressed following repeated attempts by you and others to be helpful.
- The student becomes increasingly isolated, unkempt, irritable or disconnected.
- The student’s academic or social performance deteriorates.
- The student’s behavior reflects increased hopelessness or helplessness.
- You find yourself doing ongoing counseling rather than consultation or advising.
- The student shows significant and marked changes in behavior and mood.

HOW TO REFER

- Speak to the student in a direct, concerned and caring manner.
- Because students may initially resist the idea of counseling, be caring but firm in your judgment that counseling would be helpful. Also be clear about the reasons that you are concerned.
- Be knowledgeable in advance about the services and procedures of Counseling and Psychological Services and other campus help-giving agencies. The best referrals are when the student knows what to expect and whom they will likely see.
- Suggest that the student call to make an appointment, and provide the phone number (227.7469) and location, Bird Building, second floor.
- Offer the student the use of your phone or call the receptionist yourself while the student waits in your office. The student will more likely follow through with attending an appointment that was “publicly” made and agreed upon in your presence.
- Ask for an emergency appointment that day if you feel the student cannot wait for the first available initial appointment.
- Walk the student up to Counseling and Psychological Services and ask to see a counselor immediately if you feel the student is unable to wait (e.g. suicidal or unable to function or take care of self) for an “emergency” appointment.
- If you need help in deciding whether it is appropriate to make a referral, call Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469) for consultation with a counselor.
- Counseling and Psychological Services staff will also come to your department or staff to speak further regarding referrals or Counseling and Psychological Services procedures and services. Please call 227.7469 to schedule.
- If the student prefers resources off campus, explain that Counseling and Psychological Services also maintains a list of community referrals for specialized services.

Assisting the Student Who May Be Suicidal

FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students.
- Suicidal states are often associated with major depression, a combination of acute anxiety and depression, post traumatic stress disorder, and bipolar disorder.
- People who are suicidal often tell people about their thoughts or give clues to others about their feelings.

SOME FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUICIDE RISK ARE:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Pessimistic view of the future
- Intense feelings of hopelessness, especially when combined with anxiety/feelings of alienation and isolation
- Viewing death as a means of escape from distress
- Previous suicide attempts
- Personal or family history of depression or suicide

A student who is suicidal and who confides in someone is often ambivalent about suicide and open to discussion.

Students who are at high risk usually have a specific plan, have a means that is lethal (e.g., medication, knife, gun) and tend to be or feel isolated.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Call 227.8911 if the student is in immediate danger to him/herself.
- Talk to the student in private.
- Remain calm and take the lead.
- Take a student’s disclosure as a serious plea for help.
- Ask the student directly about feelings and plans.
- Express care and concern. Assure the student that you will help him or her reach a professional.
- If the incident occurs during business hours, escort the student to Counseling and Psychological Services located in the Bird Building.
- Call 227.8911 to access emergency services on weekends or after hours.
- If you feel overwhelmed or unprepared to help a suicidal student, call the Office of Student Affairs (227.7234), which will maintain your confidentiality and arrange a meeting with that student.

AVOID

- Minimizing the situation. All threats must be considered potentially lethal.
- Arguing with the student about the merits of living.
- Allowing friends to assume responsibility for the student without getting input from a professional.
- Assuming the family knows that the student has suicidal thoughts.
- Discussing the student’s personal or family history of suicide attempts.

Dealing with a Student Who Seems Disoriented or Psychotic

The main feature of psychotic thinking is “being out of touch with reality.”

Symptoms include:

- Speech that makes no sense
- Extremely odd or eccentric behavior
- Inappropriate or complete lack of emotion
- Bizarre behavior that could indicate hallucinations
- Strange beliefs that involve a serious misinterpretation of reality
- Social withdrawal
- Inability to connect with or track normal communication
- Extreme or unwarranted suspicion

Bipolar disorder involves periods of serious depression combined with period of extreme euphoria and frenzied thinking and behavior, the latter of which can reflect a poor reality. A person with bipolar disorder can become psychotic.

Psychological illnesses that involve psychotic features often have an onset between the late teens and early 30s. Psychotic symptoms may also be induced by medications reaction and/or substance abuse.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Call the WCU police at 227.8911 if the student is highly impaired and/or is extremely disruptive.
- Consult with a professional at Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469).
- Speak to the student in a direct and concrete manner regarding your plan for getting him/her to a safe environment.
- Accompany the student to Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469).
- Recognize that psychotic states can involve extreme emotion or lack of emotion and intense fear to the point of paranoia.
- Recognize that a student in this state may be dangerous to self or others.

AVOID

- Assuming the student will be able to care for him/herself.
- Agitating the student with questions, pressure, etc.
- Arguing with unrealistic thoughts.
- Assuming the student understands you.
- Allowing friends to care for that student without getting professional advice.
- Getting locked into one way of dealing with the student. Be flexible.
- Assuming the family knows about the student’s condition.

REACTING TO URGENT STUDENT ISSUES

Identifying a Student Who Is Aggressive or Potentially Violent

FACTS ABOUT AGGRESSION

- Aggression varies from threats to verbal abuse to physical abuse and violence.
- It is very difficult to predict aggression and violence.

SOME INDICATORS OF POTENTIAL VIOLENCE MAY INCLUDE:

- Paranoia/mistrust
- An unstable school or vocational history
- A history of juvenile violence or substance abuse
- Prior history of violence or abuse
- Fascination with weapons
- History of cruelty to animals as a child or adolescent
- Impulse control problems
- Fire-starting behaviors

Please consult with the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary (227.7234).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Assess your level of safety. Call 227.8911 if you feel in danger.
- If you feel it is appropriate to stay with the student, remain in an open area with a close exit (sit closest to the door).
- Enlist the help of a co-worker.
- Explain to the student the behaviors that are unacceptable.
- Stay calm and set limits.
- Use a time-out strategy (that is, ask the student to reschedule a meeting with you once he/she has calmed down) if the student refuses to cooperate and remains aggressive or agitated.
- Consult with professionals at the Office of Student Affairs (227.7234) or Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469).

AVOID

- Staying in a situation in which you feel unsafe.
- Meeting alone with the student.
- Engaging in a screaming match or behaving in other ways that escalate anxiety and aggression.
- Ignoring signs that the student’s anger is escalating.
- Touching the student or crowding his or her sense of personal space.
- Ignoring a gut reaction that you are in danger.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO MAY HAVE HEALTH OR EMOTIONAL ISSUES

Student Who Has an Illness or Injury

Over the course of a typical academic year, many students find themselves coping with an injury or illness, and in some situations, students are dealing with very serious problems. While Health Services provides comprehensive health care for students, most serious problems will require that students get health care at a hospital or from their health provider at home.

DOES UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDE NOTES OR DOCUMENTATION THAT A STUDENT WAS ABSENT FROM CLASS DUE TO AN ILLNESS OR INJURY?

The University Health Services staff can provide the student with a note validating that the student was in fact seen in health services with a date and time stamp; however, health services cannot disclose any student’s protected health information as an explanation for class absences. The student may request a note from the office staff validating today’s visit. Health services does reserve the discretion to provide a note requesting a student’s absence for medical reasons if medically necessary.

HOW SHOULD A STUDENT COPING WITH AN ILLNESS OR INJURY REQUEST SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, an individual with a temporary disability caused by an illness or injury may request an accommodation. The student with a broken leg, for example, may be eligible for the same support services as a student living with a permanent mobility disability. These students should contact the Office of Disability Services in the Killian Annex OneStop for more information.

WILL I BE NOTIFIED IF A STUDENT IS SERIOUSLY ILL OR INJURED AND ABSENT FROM CLASS/ WORK FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME?

When the Office of Student Affairs learns that a student has been seriously injured or is coping with a serious illness, Student Affairs staff will contact faculty and other university officials to share this information as needed. For more information please refer to the WCU absence notification protocol at wcu.edu/28495.asp. Unfortunately, the university doesn’t always receive word of these situations in a timely fashion. If you hear from a student’s classmates or others that a student might be out due to an illness/injury and you would like official confirmation, feel free to contact the Office of Student Affairs. Student Affairs routinely contacts students’ parents and family members to check for updates on our students.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Contact the Office of Student Affairs (227.7234) if you are concerned about a student’s health or well being.
- Contact Health Services (227.7640) if you have questions about college health issues.
- Refer students to Health Services if they need help with a health issue.
- Refer students to the Office of Disability Services (227.2716) if they need to request a formal accommodation for dealing with a short-term disability.
- Know the University’s policies for attendance in class and for student employees.

AVOID

- Requesting that a student provide a detailed doctor’s excuse to explain absences.
- Inappropriately sharing your personal health information with a student.
- Hesitating to call the Office of Student Affairs or University Health Services for help if you have a concern about a student’s health/illness.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO MAY HAVE HEALTH OR EMOTIONAL ISSUES

The Student Who Is Anxious

Anxiety can be generalized across a range of situations, or it may be situation-specific (e.g., test anxiety, social anxiety, public-speaking anxiety).

SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY INCLUDE:

- Stress
- Panic
- Avoidance
- Irrational Fears
- Fear of losing control
- Ruminations
- Excessive worry
- Sleep or eating problems

The Student Who Is Demanding

Students who are demanding can be intrusive and persistent and may require much time and attention.

Demanding traits can be associated with anxiety, depression, substance abuse, personality problems, mania, and/or thought disorders.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DEMANDING INCLUDE:

- A sense of entitlement
- An inability to empathize
- A need for control
- Difficulty in dealing with ambiguity
- Perfectionism
- Difficulty with structure and limits
- Dependency
- Fears about handling life
- Elevated mood
- Drug use or abuse

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the student in a place that is safe and comfortable.
- Remain calm and take the lead.
- Set clear limits up front and hold the student to the allotted time for the discussion.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the student in private.
- Remain calm and take the lead in a soothing manner.
- Focus on relevant information, speaking clearly and concisely.
- Help the student develop an action plan that addresses his or her main concerns.
- Refer the student to Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469).

AVOID

- Overwhelming the student with information or complicated solutions.
- Arguing with student’s irrational thoughts.
- Devaluing the information presented.
- Assuming the student will get over the anxiety without treatment.

- Emphasize behaviors that are and aren’t acceptable.
- Respond quickly and with clear limits to behavior that disrupts class, study sessions, or consultations.
- Be prepared for manipulative requests and behaviors.
- Call the Office of Student Affairs (227.7234) for help with identifying strategies for dealing with disruptive behaviors.
- Refer the student to Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469) for counseling.
- Consult with the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary (227.7234).

AVOID

- Arguing with the student.
- Giving in to inappropriate requests.
- Adjusting your schedule or policies to accommodate the student.
- Ignoring inappropriate behavior that has a negative impact on you or other students.
- Feeling obligated to take care of the student or feeling guilty for not doing more.
- Allowing the student to intimidate you to not deal with the problematic behavior.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO MAY HAVE HEALTH OR EMOTIONAL ISSUES

The Student Who May Be Depressed

Depression is a common mental health problem that varies in severity and duration.

In its less serious form, depression is a temporary reaction to loss, stress or life challenges. It can be alleviated through the passage of time and/or the natural healing effects of social support, daily routines and simple coping strategies like distraction and exercise.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION CAN INCLUDE:

- Feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness and worthlessness
- A deep sense of sadness
- An inability to experience pleasure
- Irregular eating and sleeping
- Difficulties with concentration, memory, and decision-making
- Fatigue and social withdrawal

Sometimes depression includes irritation, anxiety and anger.

In its most serious form, depression can be accompanied by self-destructive thoughts and intentions as a way to escape from the emotional pain.

Research shows that depression can be highly responsive to both psychotherapy and medication.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the student in private.
- Listen carefully and validate the student’s feelings and experiences.
- Be supportive and express your concern about the situation.
- Discuss clearly and concisely an action plan such as having the student immediately call for a counseling appointment.
- Refer the student to Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469).
- Be willing to consider or offer flexible arrangements (e.g., extension on a paper or exam), if appropriate, as a way to alleviate stress and instill hope.
- Ask if he/she has thoughts of suicide. If so, do not leave the student alone. Walk him/her over to Counseling and Psychological Services. If it is after 5:00pm, or on the weekend, access emergency services by calling 227.8911.
- If you feel overwhelmed or unprepared to help a depressed student, call the Office of Student Affairs (227.7234), which will maintain your confidentiality and arrange a meeting with the student.

AVOID

- Downplaying the situation.
- Arguing with the student or disputing that the student is feeling depressed.
- Providing too much information for the student to process.
- Expecting the student to stop feeling depressed without intervention.
- Assuming the family knows about the student’s depression.

The Student Who May Have an Eating Disorder

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISORDERED EATING BEHAVIORS

Western Carolina University has a history of providing a multidisciplinary approach for students with disordered eating and related behaviors since 1991. As it is well established that a good medical history and evaluation is essential in the evaluation of an eating disorder, students are encouraged to first access services through Health Services. Assessment services which determine the nature, scope and severity of an eating disorder encompass a medical evaluation, psychological and psychiatric evaluation and, in some cases, specialized evaluations from community resources. Additional services could include ongoing psychological, medical and psychiatric services, wellness education and referral coordination and, in some cases, coordinated multidisciplinary treatment services involving campus and community resources. For a student whose safety is jeopardized by their disordered eating and other behaviors or needs services beyond what we can provide, referrals are made to appropriate community resources.

SIGNS THAT A STUDENT MAY HAVE AN EATING OR RELATED PROBLEM

- Dramatic weight loss
- Preoccupation with weight, food, calories, fat grams, dieting, and/or exercising.
- Frequent comments about feeling “fat” or overweight despite weight loss.
- Development of food rituals (e.g. eating foods in certain orders, excessive chewing, rearranging of food on a plate.)
- Excessive, rigid exercise regimen – the need to “burn off” calories despite weather, fatigue, illness or injury.
- Unusual swelling of the cheeks or jaw area.
- Calluses on the back of the hands or knuckles from self-induced vomiting.
- In general, behaviors and attitudes indicating that weight, dieting, and control of food are becoming primary concerns.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Select a time to talk to the student when you are not rushed and won’t be interrupted.
- In a direct and nonpunitive manner, indicate to the student all the specific observations that have aroused your concern.
- Express your continued support. Remind the student that you care and want to help. Ask the student to explore these concerns with a counselor, doctor, or other health professional. You may offer support by helping the student make an appointment.
- If the information you received is compelling, communicate to the student your tentative sense that this may be evidence of disordered eating behavior and your clear conviction that the matter needs to be professionally evaluated.
- Contact Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469) or Health Services (227.7640) if you have questions or concerns about resources or approaching the student.

AVOID

- Conflicts or a battle of wills with your student.
- Diagnosing or providing therapy; instead develop a compassionate and forthright conversation about more appropriate interventions based upon the student’s situation.
- Placing shame, blame or guilt on your student regarding his/her actions or attitudes.
- Giving simple solutions. For example, “If you’d just stop, then everything would be fine!”

Student Who May Have a Substance Addiction

SIGNS THAT A STUDENT MAY HAVE AN ALCOHOL OR DRUG PROBLEM

Physical Signs

- Blood-shot eyes
- Slurred speech or difficulty speaking intelligibly
- Lack of coordination or poor balance
- Disheveled appearance/poor self-care
- Pinned pupils in low light or dilated pupils in well-lit areas
- Smells like alcohol or has a sweet, pungent smell
- Nausea, insomnia, sweating, or concentration problems after reducing or stopping use
- Changes in sleep patterns

Behavioral Signs

- Failure to fulfill major school, work, or home responsibilities
- Risky behaviors such as driving any vehicle after drinking or starting fights
- Recurrent legal problems related to alcohol or drugs, such as DWI or possession charges.
- Relationship problems caused or worsened by alcohol or drug use.
- School-related problems such as poor attendance, low grades, or recent disciplinary action
- Changes in friends/peers or withdrawal from friends
- Secretive behaviors
- Restlessness or jumpiness
- Multiple doctor appointments without evidence of a problem

Emotional Signs

- Emotional instability – sudden shifts in mood
- Depression
- Irritability
- Aggressive outbursts
- Anxiety

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Treat the situation as serious.
- Share your concern and encourage the student to seek help.
- Recognize that denial is a powerful aspect of substance problems and that it can involve conscious or unconscious lying and distorting the truth.
- Refer the student to the Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469).

RESPONDING TO STUDENTS WHO MAY BE VICTIMS OF

Violence

Responding to victims of violence is a very challenging and complex process. It is most critical that a caring intervention addresses all factors, with particular attention toward health and safety issues for all affected by the situation. The following campus and community resources may be helpful whenever there is history or potential for violence.

WCU POLICE

The University Police Department is responsible for all criminal investigation and apprehensions. In cases of sexual assault, the department tries to assign an officer of the appropriate gender to the case. The officer assigned will be available 24 hours a day to survivors. Regardless of whether charges are filed, the police are available to answer questions about the legal process and legal options regarding an incident.

Students, faculty, and staff may provide anonymous information regarding non-critical incidents by calling WCU Police TIPS line at 828.227.8477.

University Police | 828.227.8911

Critical incidents need to call 911.

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT COMMUNITY ETHICS

The Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) works with the University community to educate students about their rights and responsibilities as stated in the Western Carolina University Community Creed, the Student Handbook, and the Code of Student Conduct.

Please consult with the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) at 227.7234 to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary.

828.227.7234 | dsce.wcu.edu

OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Office of Student Affairs assists survivors with academic and personal concerns that arise after an assault. The staff is responsible for handling student conduct cases when violations of Student Conduct are reported. Counseling, support and referrals also are provided to students who need various kinds of academic or personal help resulting from an assault.

114 Scott East | 227.7234 | dsa.wcu.edu

DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENTIAL LIVING

Department of Residential Living staff is knowledgeable about campus services and can help survivors get assistance. The student-conduct process or changes in housing can be expedited by staff.

116 Scott West | 227.7303 | housing.wcu.edu

STUDENT CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

WCU utilizes a case-management based approach to actively seek out students having difficulties and/or demonstrating concerning behaviors. The Student Crisis Response Team (SCRT) meets regularly to confidentially share information and discuss students that may be having behavioral difficulties.

114 Scott East | 227.7234 | wcu.edu/7018.asp

OFF-CAMPUS ASSAULTS / SAFETY CONCERNS

Jackson County Sheriff's Dept. | 828.586.1911

Sylva Police Department | 828.586.2916

Assaults at Cherokee Center
Cherokee Police Department | 828.497.4131

Emergencies at UNCA
UNCA Public Safety Office | 828.257.6710

Emergencies at Asheville-Buncombe Tech
Asheville Police Department 911

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CPS)

CPS provides both immediate crisis intervention and therapy to recent or past survivors of sexual violence. Students are seen either individually or in a group with others who have experienced similar trauma. Therapists can be accessed by appointment, walk-in, or after-hours emergency. In addition, a case manager is available to assist students in accessing appropriate community resources.

2nd Floor Bird | 227.7469 | counselingcenter.wcu.edu

UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

University Health Services will provide urgent care for medical emergencies according to the standards of care for ambulatory care centers.

Hours of operation:
Weekdays 8:00am to 5:00pm
Saturdays 9:00am to 12:00pm

Health Services may be closed during a scheduled student holiday.

Assault-related injury or illness will be treated as a priority concern. Individuals seeking care for sexual assault will be evaluated by a nurse and physician or physician assistant to the level of care requested by the student. Rape kit examinations are not provided at University Health Services. Specific information about access to rape kit examinations and police reporting will be provided to the student in a timely fashion. The student may elect to proceed to a hospital emergency room for further care.

If Counseling and Psychological Services has not previously been contacted, the student will be advised of access to counseling and arrangements made to have a counselor available for any further exam or proceedings.

Should the student elect to receive care at Health Services (227.7640), an appropriate physical exam will be performed to include STD testing and treatment, pregnancy prevention and evaluation and treatment of related injuries.

Physical injuries will be managed within the scope of practice for Health Services and may require other services at another facility.

In the event the victim has identified a student or student organization as the responsible party of the victimization, please contact the Department of Student Community Ethics (227.7234) to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary.

Injuries related to criminal acts will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency as required by North Carolina statutes.

LOCAL RESOURCES

REACH of Jackson County | 828.586.8969

REACH (Resources, Education, Assistance, Counseling and Housing) of Jackson County provides emergency shelter and counseling services to victims of domestic violence. The program has a 24-hour, 365-day-per-year hotline. There is no pressure to report or take legal action and confidentiality is maintained.

Mobile Crisis (community) | 828.315.2880
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is sexual contact initiated against a person without consent.

WCU defines consent as follows:

- Consent must be informed, freely and actively given, and an understandable exchange of affirmative words or actions that indicate a willingness to participate in mutually agreed upon sexual activity.
- It is the responsibility of the initiator to obtain clear and affirmative responses at each stage of sexual involvement.
- The lack of a negative response is not consent.
- Consent may not be given by any individual who is intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs and/or alcohol either voluntarily or involuntarily consumed.
- Past consent of sexual activities does not imply ongoing future consent.

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT INCLUDE:

- Completed or attempted rape
- Threats of rape
- Sexual coercion
- Unwanted sexual contact with force or threat of force
- Unwanted sexual contact without consent

Although most assaults are committed by men against women, men can be assaulted by women, and same-sex assaults also occur.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Listen without conveying judgment and be aware that victims can feel shame and anger.
- Refer the student to the appropriate members of the SCRT
- If the student needs immediate medical attention, refer to the University Health Services (227.7640) for testing for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and if requested, Plan B emergency contraception.
- Refer the student to Counseling and Psychological Services (227.7469) for assessment and counseling options.
- If the student wants to report the assault to the police, the student must go to the hospital so evidence can be collected.
- If the student needs help addressing academic issues as a result of the sexual assault, refer the student to the Office of Student Affairs at 227.7234.
- In the event the victim has identified a student or student organization as the responsible party of the victimization, please remind the student that the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) is a resource (227.7234).
- Inform the student of other resources.

AVOID

- Expressing judgment even when high-risk behaviors on the part of the victim (e.g., voluntary intoxication) were involved.
- Pressuring the student to file a police report.

Abusive Relationships

Abusive relationships often involve a repeating pattern of verbal, sexual, emotional, and physical abuse that increases over time.

INDICATORS OF ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS INCLUDE:

- Verbal abuse
- Isolation from friends and family
- Fear of abandonment
- Fear of partner's temper
- Fear of intimidation
- Acceptance of highly controlling behavior
- Assuming responsibility for partner's abusive behavior
- Feeling trapped
- Fear of leaving the relationship

In the event the victim has identified a student or student organization as the responsible party of the victimization, please remind the student that the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) is a resource. Please contact the Department of Student Community Ethics (227.7234) to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- See the student in private.
- Recognize that the student may be fearful and vulnerable.
- Remember that abusive relationships involve complex dynamics, including high levels of denial and are difficult to change.
- Be aware that interventions from a variety of sources increase the chances for change.
- Refer the student to the appropriate members of the SCRT
- Encourage the student to connect with family and friends.

AVOID

- Downplaying the situation.
- Lecturing the student about poor judgment.
- Expecting the student to make quick or any changes.
- Pressuring students to follow any particular course of action.

Hate Incident

FACTS ABOUT HATE INCIDENTS

- A hate crime is a criminal act against a person or her/his property because of that person’s actual or perceived race, color, religion, nationality, disability, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- A bias or hate incident is an act that, while not meeting the legal definition of a crime, involves the same types of behavior and targeting of underrepresented groups. Bias/hate incidents are more common on college campuses than hate crimes.
- Be aware of the cultural resources available on campus. Your sensitivity to the unique needs of international students, LGBTQ students, students of color, nontraditional-aged students and other underrepresented groups can be important in helping students impacted by a bias/hate incident or crime.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the victimized student in private.
- Recognize that the student is probably experiencing a range of intense feelings including shame, anger, fear and denial.
- Refer the student to the Office of Student Affairs at 227.7234.
- Bias, harassment & hazing complaints may also be referred to bias.wcu.edu
- Explain the importance of notifying WCU Police.
- In the event the victim has identified a student or student organization as the responsible party of the victimization, please remind the student that the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) is a resource. Please contact the DSCE (227.7234) to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary.

AVOID

- Downplaying the situation.
- Expressing personal biases.
- Getting caught up in a discussion of the technicalities or legalities of the situation.

Stalking

FACTS ABOUT STALKING

- Stalking is repeated following or harassment of an individual that is designed to instill a sense of fear or danger.
- Stalkers often have an irrational obsession with the victim and try to gain power and omnipotence through control and intimidation.
- Stalking behavior includes tailing the victim, harassment via phone, mail, FAX, letters, unwanted gifts and unwanted attention.
- Stalkers can be male or female and targets can be of the same or opposite sex.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Encourage the victimized student to trust his/her instincts.
- Advise the student to contact the University Police at 227.8911.
- Advise the student to document unwanted contacts and maintain evidence of harassment.
- Advise the student to maintain a list of possible witnesses to the incidents.
- Often there will be no witnesses, but any witness to any act of stalking can reinforce the victim’s stance when the case is handed over to authorities or to the court system.
- Advise the student to take precautions to ensure safety, including a change in routine travel routes and schedules.
- If you feel overwhelmed or unprepared to help a victim of stalking, call the Office of Student Affairs at 227.7234. Someone in the Office of Student Affairs will maintain your confidentiality and arrange a meeting with that student.
- In the event the victim has identified a student or student organization as the responsible party of the victimization, please remind the student that the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) is a resource. Please contact the DSCE (227.7234) to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary.

AVOID

- Ignoring or minimizing the situation.
- Suggesting that the victim is responsible for the unwanted attention.
- Taking responsibility for protecting the student.
- Failing to alert the proper authorities.

Hazing

NORTH CAROLINA'S HAZING LAW

It is unlawful for any student in attendance at any university, college, or school in this State to engage in hazing or to aid or abet any other student in the commission of this offense.

For the purposes of this section hazing is defined as follows:
“to subject another student to physical injury as part of an initiation or as a prerequisite to membership into any organized school group, including any society, athletic team, fraternity or sorority, or other similar group.”
(North Carolina General Statutes § 14-35)

WCU CODE OF CONDUCT HAZING DEFINITION

Hazing, defined as an act which endangers the health or safety of a student, or which destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation, admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization. The express or implied consent of the victim will not be a defense. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of hazing are not neutral acts; they are violations of this rule.

FACTS ABOUT HAZING

- Hazing is prohibited at WCU.
- Rites of passage or initiation into organizations may become hazing in some situations.
- Hazing can be psychologically damaging and presents serious physical risks (including death) to students.
- Hazing has been known to occur in organizations not just limited to Fraternities and Sororities but also Marching Band, Athletic Teams, Intramural Teams, Club Sports, Service organizations, etc.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the victimized student in private.
- Recognize that the student may be feeling vulnerable and experience a range of emotions.
- Advise the student to report the incident to the Office of Student Affairs at 227.7234.
- Advise the student to report the incident to the WCU Police at 227.8911.
- Refer the student to the office that oversees the organization in question.
- Understand many students are involved in hazing incidents and may not even know the incident is hazing.
- Understand the student may not want to come forward with the accusation for fear of not being included in the organization
- Refer student for follow-up counseling at Counseling and Psychological Services, 227.7469.
- In the event the victim has identified a student or student organization as the responsible party of the victimization, please remind the student that the Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) is a resource. Please contact the DSCE (227.7234) to document the situation and determine if student disciplinary action is necessary.

Below are contacts for offices that work with many student organizations:

- Athletics, 227.7338
- Center for Student Involvement, 227.2393
- Greek Life, 227.3635

AVOID

- Minimizing the situation.
- Agreeing to maintain confidentiality.

Adjusting to College Transition

FACTS ABOUT TRANSITIONS

- Transitions are times of change that usually involve both loss and opportunity.
- Entering college is one of life’s most demanding transitions and is arguably the most significant transition since starting kindergarten.
- College students face many challenging transitions, including graduating and entering the work force.
- The changes inherent in a transition produce stress and challenge a student’s coping resources.
- Students commonly experience a decline in functioning (academic, social, emotional) during transitions.
- Transition stress can be compounded by counterproductive coping mechanisms such as avoidance of stress-producing situations and people, excessive partying and alcohol abuse.
- Transitions can pose greater problems to students who have existing psychological problems or difficult life circumstances.
- Students going through a transition may benefit from counseling to enhance their coping efforts or to prevent the onset of serious problems.

SIGNS THAT A STUDENT IS HAVING TRANSITION PROBLEMS INCLUDE:

- Anxiety symptoms such as nervousness, irritability, tearfulness and sleep problems.
- Depression.
- Difficulty managing responsibilities or relationships.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Convey to the student that transition stress is normal and often brings a temporary decline in performance.
- Encourage the student to use positive coping strategies to manage transition stress, including regular exercise, social support, a reasonable eating and sleeping regimen and pleasurable activities.
- Refer the student to Counseling and Psychological Services at 227.7469 if performance problems persist beyond a reasonable amount of time, or if the symptoms are acute or if the student feels he/she could benefit by talking with someone about it.

AVOID

- Assuming that the student understands the impact of transitions and is aware of the source of stress.
- Minimizing or trivializing the student’s feelings and reactions.
- Discounting or overlooking factors that put the student at risk of more problems.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Many of the resource/support offices you may want to reference as you work with first-year students in transition, may be accessed on the First Year Experience Web site Faculty/staff page at www.wcu.edu/27933.asp

You may also want to contact our Residential Case Manager at 828.227.3498.

Struggling Academically

Faculty, students and staff with questions about academic support can call one of the Academic Success Centers, Math Tutoring Center: 227.3830, or Writing and Learning Commons: 227.7197 or 227-2274.

FACTS ABOUT THE STUDENT WHO IS STRUGGLING ACADEMICALLY

Students generally have one of three problems:

Content: they don’t understand the course material

- Many students are reluctant to ask for help from faculty.
- Students may be unaware of other campus resources that can assist them.

Study Skills: they are facing new challenges in time management, note-taking, organization, or effective reading

- Students are usually very motivated to succeed but lack the right tools or skills for college-level work.
- Students may be unable to balance work, social activities, and academic demands.

Learning: they have not yet defined their personal, effective learning processes

- Many students have not been exposed to the variety of learning skills necessary for college-level work.
- Some students fail to realize that they need to employ a variety of learning skills and strategies to fit the nature of their courses and the teaching styles of their instructors.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Determine if the student understands the course content and provide clarification of content, if needed.
- Include advice about effective study strategies for your course in your syllabus and call students’ attention to this at the beginning of the semester.
- Encourage students to be conscious of learning strategies and to adjust them as needed.
- Ask if students are utilizing other campus resources, particularly the Academic Success Centers.
- Stress the value of group study.
- Encourage students who are struggling academically to

speak with their course instructors.

- Ask students about their personal study time and study strategies.
- Encourage students to explore various strategies for analyzing and managing their time; paper and pencil techniques such as “to do” lists, schedules, calendars, and planners can be helpful organizational tools.
- Talk to students about the note-taking strategies they use in their classes. Effective note taking strategies such as making marginal notes, rewriting notes, giving visual emphasis to notes, and frequent review of notes can promote learning.

AVOID

- Assuming the student does not understand the course material or is in need of remediation.
- Believing the student should know how to learn course content.
- Thinking the student knows about available campus resources.

TUTORING RESOURCES

Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC)
30 Hunter Library | 227.7197 or 227.2274
writingcenter.wcu.edu

Skilled communication is essential to success. The Writing Center reviews academic papers and offers tutoring and online resources to help with the writing process from start to finish.

Catamount Academic Tutoring Center (CAT)
30 Hunter Library | 227.2274 | catcenter.wcu.edu

The CAT Center provides students with learning resources and small-group tutoring sessions for 100- and 200-level courses in a relaxed, informal setting. Peer tutors are dedicated to working with students in a supportive, collaborative learning environment.

Mathematics Tutoring Center (MTC)
455 Stillwell | 227.3830 | mathlab.wcu.edu

The MTC offers tutoring and study skills support geared to mathematics courses and courses with mathematics content.

In Need of Additional Support Services

Some of our students may experience serious issues during their time at WCU, issues that you may not often encounter with the majority of students. Those issues could include losing stable housing, severe financial crisis, and major mental health, substance abuse or physical health needs. These students may experience difficulty in identifying or accessing community resources as well as completing the various application protocols / insurance approval processes. In some cases, students may experience serious life circumstances to the point that a hospitalization or withdrawal from the University is necessary. The “When Life Happens: Getting Back on Track After the Emergency Room or Other Mental Health Crisis” brochure can be a particularly useful resource for students facing these issues.

For any or all of these concerns, students can access specialized Case Management Services through Counseling and Psychological Services that target these kinds of serious issues. The purpose of Case Management within CPS is to offer brief stabilization and support while linking the student to appropriate resources in the community. If you feel that a student could benefit from Case Management, please call CPS and make a referral to our Case Manager at 227.7469.

In addition to the more serious, complex supports identified above, WCU offers comprehensive support services for qualified students through Student Support Services.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDES

- **Advising** – Academic advising, early registration, orientation and major declaration
- **Counseling** – Transition to college, academic counseling, career counseling and personal counseling
- **Tutoring** – Individual and small group
- **Mentoring** – Goal setting, organizational skills, career preparation and referral to additional resources
- **Teaching** – University experience class, career exploration class, academic probation contract class and tutor training class

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Students may qualify for the Student Support Services Program if they meet one of the following criteria:

- They are first-generation college students. That is, neither parent has a four-year degree.
- They meet income guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Education.
- They have a documented disability.

Student Support Services serves a limited number of students, but once accepted, a student may use the services for as long as necessary.

For those who qualify, all services are free. Students in the program are assigned to a counselor/advisor who will meet with them individually on a regular basis.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Student Support Services
138 Killian Annex | Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.7127 | sss.wcu.edu | sssprogram@wcu.edu

Attempting to Accommodate for a Disability

FACTS ABOUT DISABILITY

- Students with medically documented disabilities are eligible for accommodations through the Office of Disability Services (ODS) (227.2716).
- Students with physical disabilities may require alterations to the classroom layout associated with limitations in mobility, speaking, hearing, and/or vision.
- Students with medical disorders may experience difficulties participating in their academic programs due to the condition itself or the ongoing treatment protocol.
- Students with learning disabilities have neurological impairments that affect information processing, memory and retrieval, and output. These disabilities can impact reading, writing, math, attention, concentration and/or overall organization.
- Students with psychiatric disabilities have a condition that may affect their ability to participate in a routine educational program.
- Students with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) may experience inattentive, hyperactive and/or impulsive behaviors. These behaviors may compromise an individual’s social, vocational and academic performance.
- Students with disabilities may not realize that they have a particular problem and that treatment/ accommodations are available.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Speak to the student in private about your concerns.
- Treat each student with sensitivity and respect.
- Acknowledge the difficulties that the student is having.
- Refer the student to the ODS (227.2716).
- Follow up on your questions about accommodations for the student with ODS.
- In order to receive accommodations, a student must have valid documentation on file with ODS and present verification of approved accommodations.

AVOID

- Using patronizing language with the student.
- Underestimating or overestimating the impact of disability.
- Assuming the student qualifies for accommodations without ODS verification.

Choosing a Major or Concerned About a Career

CAREER SERVICES PROVIDES COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

For the student who is undecided about a major:

- The majority of the student population is undecided about choice of major.
- Many students change their major several times prior to choosing one that is right for them.
- Self-exploration is the course of action for students choosing to identify a potential major. Career Services can help students explore different options for majors.

For the student who is undecided about a career path:

- Many students will choose a major but need assistance with understanding traditional and nontraditional career paths.
- Students often associate the more well-known professions with their course of study and need assistance with career exploration to understand professions they did not know existed.
- Students will often need assistance in realizing that the path to a particular career is not necessarily linear. A major in “X” does not limit you to a profession in “Y.”

For the student who wants to gain experience or employment:

- Students may want to clarify their career goals and utilize experiential learning opportunities to confirm their choices of major and occupational interests.
- Students may need assistance with developing a comprehensive job search utilizing various methods and resources.

CAREER SERVICES’ RESOURCES TO ADDRESS STUDENTS’ CONCERNS:

- Career Services Staff: Professional staff who are skilled in career counseling and the job search are available to assist students developmentally from choosing a major to finding a job or beginning their career.
- Assessments: Available to assist students with identifying their interests, personality, values, abilities and relating that information to a major or career.
- Career Services website (careers.wcu.edu) is interactive and full of information and services available to students. The “What Can I Do With This Major?” is one feature from the site that has information about WCU majors including a direct link to the appropriate academic department.
- The Non-Work Study On-Campus Student Employment Office is located in this department as well. Students who want to find a job on campus can view available positions and instructions on careers.wcu.edu, Local Area Jobs link.
- Career Services Office is open from 8:00am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS AND EVENTS:

Career Services offers career-related programs and events. Topics include: developing job search skills – resume, cover letter and reference preparation; preparing for the interview; mock interviewing through the on-line program, The Perfect Interview; etiquette events, career fairs, and on-campus interviewing. Students should visit the website: careers.wcu.edu for dates and times.

- Career Fairs: Several recruitment events are held annually on-campus giving students multiple opportunities to connect with potential employers.
- Internships/Co-ops: Information and instruction is available to students on the importance of gaining an internship. Career Services also has resources available on-line to identify potential opportunities.

Refer students who are facing these issues to Career Services

205 Killian Annex | 227.7133 | careers.wcu.edu

Adapting to Cultural Differences

Race, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity and other cultural identities are important to keep in mind as you help a distressed student.

Reactions to racism, sexism, homophobia, etc., can affect the way in which emotional distress is manifested and also can impact help-seeking behavior. General barriers to seeking help – e.g., denial, fear of being labeled in a negative way, lack of information about campus resources – may be even more troublesome for students from underrepresented groups, especially if counseling is not a culturally relevant choice to make when help is needed.

Communicating support, concern and understanding is critical in reaching students who may feel isolated and marginalized.

Your sensitivity to the unique needs of international students, LGBTQ students, students of color, nontraditional-aged college students and other underrepresented groups can be important in helping students get assistance. Being knowledgeable about campus resources that address the unique needs of underrepresented students can help you feel better prepared.

RESOURCES

Intercultural Affairs

336 A.K. Hinds University Center
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2276 | intercultural.wcu.edu

International Programs & Services

109 Cordelia Camp
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.7494 | wcu.edu/9237.asp

Veterans Services – Military Education

Educational Outreach Center
138 Cordelia Camp
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2135 | wcu.edu/2830.asp

Safe Zone Program

336 A.K. Hinds University Center
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2276 | safezone.wcu.edu

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Di-Ga-Li-I

(Native American Student Organization)
Center for Student Involvement
331 A.K. Hinds University Center
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2617

Organization of Ebony Students (OES)

204 A.K. Hinds University Center
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2276

LASO Latin Appreciation Student Organization

Center for Student Involvement
336 A.K. Hinds University Center
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2276

Unity

(LGBTQ Student Organization)
Center for Student Involvement
336 A.K. Hinds University Center
Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2276

Adjusting to Sexual and Gender Identity Questioning/Transitioning

FACTS ABOUT TRANSITIONS

- LGBTQ is a colloquial abbreviation representing members of a community who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer and/or questioning.
- Transgender (TG) is an umbrella term for individuals who believe their gender or gender expression diverges from the gender they were assigned at birth while Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) refers to people who do not adhere to society’s rules about dress and activities for people based on one’s assigned gender.
- LGBTQ students who are able to identify a supportive staff member at their campus academically outperform peers who could not.
- Social Norms regarding gender and sex add to the difficulty of transitioning, questioning and asserting one’s identity and may foster feelings of shame, guilt or self-loathing.
- TG students are often the victims of harassment, assault, bullying and other forms of violence on campus. School personnel are less likely to intervene with these forms of violence.
- TG and GNC students may identify as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, etc.
- In 2010, the Center for Collegiate Mental Health demonstrates that transgender students were twice as likely to engage in self-harming behaviors and three times more likely to have engage in serious suicidal behaviors.

SIGNS THAT A STUDENT MAY BE HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME

- Student displays a change in behaviors or affect such as withdrawing, sadness, anger, etc.
- Student displays a decline in hygiene and personal care.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Maintain neutral use of identifiers. Ask about preferred name and other preferred identifiers.
- Inquire about support networks.
- Recognize boundaries of competence while remaining a supportive party.
- Ask for clarification or permission to discuss further. Maintain rapport as much as possible.
- Refer students to Intercultural Affairs to offer additional forms of support.
- Refer student to Counseling and Psychological Services. Note there are some specialized services such as Rainbow Room, Gender Variant Services and other means of support if student exhibits a need or if there is a request for counseling services.

HARMFUL INTERACTIONS

- Associate all issues and concerns that student has to their sexual or gender identity.
- Avoid student’s discussion of sexuality or gender issues.
- Do not present being LGBTQ as a “lifestyle” or a phase.
- Advocate for normative expressions of sexuality and gender. Avoid expressing personal biases.
- Using terms/identifiers and other descriptors different than the student’s language.

Assisting Military Veteran Students

In general, veteran students are mature women and men who possess a global perspective and a realistic view of the world. They bring relevant real-life experience to the classroom and to the overall university experience. Their leadership skills have been honed to an instinctive level, and they are accustomed to being responsible for the welfare and safety of many. They have undergone intense and prolonged training, and they possess skills that are highly-technical and widely-applicable.

While some veteran students strongly identify with their military past and readily share their experiences with new acquaintances, others wish to establish a new identity for themselves once they arrive on the college campus. Veterans often shun recognition and avoid the spotlight.

Many veteran students are virtually the same age as many of their college classmates, but their experiences are vastly different. For this reason, veterans often feel a lack of connection on campus. They can also become frustrated with students and professors whom, in their view, are living sheltered lives. This impedes the ability of veterans to become fully engaged in their college experience.

The understanding of faculty, staff, and other students can go a long way towards helping veteran students make a successful transition from the military to college life.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Accept and respect veterans as you would any other students.
- Allow veterans the time and space to bring up their military experiences as they see fit, if at all.
- Listen with an open mind and heart to those who choose to share.
- Learn about the experiences of U.S. combat veterans and about the military culture in general.
- Be aware of the challenges veterans may face on campus.
- Be as understanding and flexible as possible with those students who are recalled to active duty.

AVOID

- Lay assumptions and preconceptions aside.
- Never try to goad or antagonize veteran students.
- Do not seek to engage them in meaningless or volatile debates, and don’t allow others to do so.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Military Student Services**
138 Camp Building, Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.2135

University Counseling and Psychological Services
225 Bird Building, Cullowhee, NC 28723
828.227.7469

Veterans Administration Community Based Outpatient Clinic
Franklin, NC 28734
828.369.1781

Veterans Administration Medical Center
Asheville, NC 28805
828.298.7911

Traveling as Representatives for WCU

FACTS ABOUT STUDENTS REPRESENTING AND TRAVELING ON BEHALF OF WCU

- Student government officers are often involved in official meetings coordinated by the WCU Board of Trustees, the University of North Carolina General Administration, or the Associated Student Government of North Carolina.
- NCAA student athletes represent WCU in the Southern Conference and travel under the supervision of the Athletics Department.
- Students participating in Campus Recreation Club Sports are not NCAA athletes, but represent WCU in many sports.
- Students majoring in music or performing arts, and/or students participating in various bands or choral groups travel as cultural ambassadors of WCU.
- Some students travel as part of research projects and/or attend conferences to present research and papers.
- Intern/externships in some academic programs require students to travel as part of their degree requirements.
- Students travel throughout the state and region on behalf of the university on recruiting trips for the Office of Admission.

ARE THESE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ALLOWED TO MISS CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE TO THEIR ROLE AS WCU REPRESENTATIVES?

Students in these leadership roles and participating in these experiences are still held to the same academic standards and policies as any other student. However, these students are encouraged to meet with their professors and instructors before missing any classes or assignments to discuss their travel obligations and make appropriate arrangements. It’s ultimately up to the individual faculty member as to whether any absence is excused or not.

HOW ARE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ABLE TO BALANCE THEIR ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THESE ACTIVITIES?

Most students in these situations have a variety of additional support systems that help them stay focused and successful. But some students struggle to balance all these demands on their time and may need assistance.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Listen to the student’s concerns and try to identify the specific assistance the student is requesting.
- Know the university’s policies for attendance in class and for student employees.
- Be flexible when possible but hold the student accountable for her/his responsibilities.
- Suggest that the student talk with their organization/ group/team adviser or coach about these problems.

AVOID

- Making exceptions that you don’t feel comfortable with or that seem unfair to others.
- Arguing with the student.
- Giving in to inappropriate requests.
- Ignoring inappropriate behavior that has a negative impact on you or other students.

SUPPORTING THE STUDENT

Jackson County Transit

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday - 7:00am until 5:00pm, except holidays

Jackson County Transit provides home pick up and delivery to and from destinations. Requests for service must be made before 2:00pm prior to the scheduled trip except for the Jackson Trolley which operates Monday through Friday from 7:00am until 5:00pm. Limited service is available to Asheville, Waynesville, Franklin and Bryson City.

Jackson County Transit requires a 24 hour notice for local service. To reserve a seat, call the Dispatcher at: 828.586.0233.

PUBLIC FARES DOOR TO DOOR

Location Fares (One Way). Rates are subject to change

Sylva - Local: \$1.00

Sylva - Between Areas: \$2.00

Cullowhee, Savannah, Barkers Creek and Ochre Hill: \$3.00

East LaPorte, Caney Fork, Tuckasegee, Pumpkintown, Whittier, and Balsam/Willets: \$3.00

Canada: \$4.00

Cherokee, Qualla: \$5.00

Glenville, Cashiers, Bryson City, Franklin and Waynesville: \$10.00

Asheville: \$20.00

Asheville Airport: \$25.00

The Jackson Trolley is a deviated fixed route serving the Sylva-Dillsboro-Webster areas, operating Monday through Friday from 7:00am until 5:00pm. The following scheduled times are approximate and you should be at the stop early. These times begin at the top of each hour.

- 1. River Park Apartments - :00
- 2. Jackson Village - :03
- 3. Nicol Arms Apartments - :06
- 4. Pine Tree Apartments - :09
- 5. Town of Sylva - :13
- 6. Sylva Community Building - :20
- 7. MedWest - Harris Hospital - :22
- 8. Kel-Save - :27
- 9. Wal-Mart - :32
- 10. The Haven at the Oaks - :37
- 11. Southwestern Community College - :43

Fares are \$.75 cents per boarding, per person. A booklet of 20 tickets may be purchased for \$12.00, (1 ticket = 1 boarding), or a monthly pass may be purchased for \$18.00 which may be used for an unlimited number of boarding’s during a month period.

For more information on all services provided by Jackson County Transit, please contact the office between hours of 7:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday, at 828-586-0233 or via email at infotransit@jacksonnc.org. The office is located at 876 Skyland Drive, Suite 1 in Sylva, NC.



Notes:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Notes:

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WCU CAMPUS RESOURCES ANY EMERGENCY – CALL 227.8911

Academic Affairs.....	227.7497	Office of Disability Services.....	227.2716
Administration and Finance (main office).....	227.7321	One-Stop	227.7170
Advancement and External Affairs (main office).....	227.7337	Provost's Office.....	227.7495
Advising Center	227.7753	Ramsey Center	227.7677
Campus Recreation Center.....	227.7069	Registrar's Office	227.7216
Career Services.....	227.7133	Residential Living.....	227.7303
CAT Card Office	227.7003	Service Learning.....	227.7184
Chancellor's Office	227.7200	Student Accounts.....	227.7334
Coulter Faculty Center	227.7196	Student Community Ethics.....	227.7184
Counseling and Psychological Services	227.7469	Student Support Services.....	227.7127
Financial Aid	227.7290	University Center	227.7206
Graduate School and Research Administration	227.7398	University Health Services	227.7640
Greek Life	227.3635	University Police	227.7301
Intercultural Affairs	227.2276	University Police – Emergency.....	227.8911
IT Services	227.7487	University Police – TIPS line.....	227.8477
Legal Counsel.....	227.7116		

