

# WORKPLACE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## 3 STEPS TO ASSIST COLLEAGUES IN DISTRESS

### ▶ **Recognize signs of distress**

In your role as a UBC staff or faculty member, you may be the first person to see signs that a colleague is in distress, or they may come to you specifically for help. Use this guide to familiarize yourself with common signs of distress, and the steps you can take to offer assistance.

### ▶ **Respond with concern and empathy**

It's okay to be uncertain about how to respond. You don't need to have all the answers. Being there to support your colleagues is often the most valuable thing that you can do.

- If possible, move to a discrete and appropriate environment.
- Express concern and be specific about the signs and behaviours you've noticed (i.e. "I've noticed you don't seem like yourself at work lately.").
- Listen actively, ask open ended questions, and help them feel heard and understood.

### ▶ **Refer your colleague to available resources**

Your role is not to diagnose or treat, but you can share that confidential help is available. Early intervention plays a key role in creating healthy and respectful workplaces.

- Help make them aware of the range of support services available (SEE NEXT PAGE).

#### **If a colleague does not want help:**

- Respect their decision. Accepting assistance must be left up to the individual, except in emergencies.
- If they change their mind, they can access resources in the future.

### **Managers and Supervisors**

If you've observed concerning changes in behavior that are impacting the workplace, the university may have a legal "duty to inquire." Before taking any further steps, please contact the appropriate resource for support.

UBC Vancouver: Advisory Services or Faculty Relations, <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/contact>

UBC Okanagan: Human Resources, <https://hr.ok.ubc.ca/contact/>

You can also contact UBC's Employee and Family Assistance Program for confidential People Manager Consultations: 1-800-387-4765.



# CONNECT TO RESOURCES

## IMMINENT RISK OF HARM

Examples:

- Active thoughts of suicide, with a plan or suicide attempt.
- Behaviour that is violent, destructive, aggressive or threatening to self or others.
- Colleague is confused, hallucinating, or has trouble remaining conscious.



*"I am concerned about my colleague's immediate safety, or the safety of others"*

### STEPS TO TAKE IMMEDIATELY:

1. **First, call Emergency Services: 911**
2. **Then, call Campus Security:**  
UBC Vancouver: 604.822.2222  
UBC Okanagan: 250.807.8111

## HIGH LEVEL OF DISTRESS

Examples:

- Deterioration in personal appearance and hygiene, and significant impairment with daily tasks.
- Expressions of severe hopelessness or references to suicide.
- Substance use concerns.
- Loss of touch with reality/severely disorganized thinking.
- Increased interpersonal conflict and anger.
- Physical health concerns.



*"I am concerned about some recent behaviour that is out of character for one of my colleagues"*

### RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS:

- Employee and Family Assistance (EFAP) Program:** 1.800.387.4765 (free and confidential, 24/7)
- **Access and Assessment Centre**, Vancouver General Hospital 604.675.3700 (7:30am - 11pm)
  - **Mental Health and Substance Use Services, Interior Health** 250.868.7788 (11:30-9pm) or Kelowna General Hospital 250.862.4000
  - **Crisis Centre** 1-800.784.2433, [crisiscentre.bc.ca](http://crisiscentre.bc.ca)

## GENERAL MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

Examples:

- Low or irritable mood with change in energy, appetite, sleep, and/or concentration, which is impacting daily functioning.
- Persistent worry, obsessions, agitation, irrationality, racing thoughts, panic attacks.
- Flashbacks to a traumatic event, intrusive memories and thoughts.
- Interpersonal conflict.
- Lack of social support.



*"I am concerned about the general wellbeing of one of my colleagues. I'm not sure if it is serious but I would like to offer them some support"*

### RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS:

- **Employee and Family Assistance Program:** 1.800.387.4765 or [workhealthlife.com](http://workhealthlife.com)
- **Indigenous Mental Health Counselling and Crisis Intervention** 1.855.242.3310, [hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca)
- **HealthlinkBC:** 811 or visit [healthlinkbc.ca](http://healthlinkbc.ca)
- **Remain at Work - Return to Work & WRAP Programs:**  
**UBC Vancouver:** [www.hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing-benefits/workplace-health/stay-at-work-return-to-work/](http://www.hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing-benefits/workplace-health/stay-at-work-return-to-work/)  
**UBC Okanagan:** [hr.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellbeing/wrap/](http://hr.ok.ubc.ca/health-wellbeing/wrap/)
- **UBC employment groups and unions:** [hr.ubc.ca/faculty-staff-resources/employee-groups/](http://hr.ubc.ca/faculty-staff-resources/employee-groups/)
- **UBC Workplace Wellbeing and Benefits:** [hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing-benefits](http://hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing-benefits)

Thank you for playing a very VITAL ROLE in creating healthy and respectful workplaces at UBC.

### QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR COPIES:

Human Resources  
UBC Vancouver Campus 604.822.8111  
UBC Okanagan Campus 250.899.2442

### RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS:

[wellbeing.ubc.ca/supporting-students-distress](http://wellbeing.ubc.ca/supporting-students-distress)

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April 2, 2020