



GUIDELINES FOR HELPING THE DISTRESSED STUDENT AND REFERRING TO STUDENT OUTREACH & SUPPORT

Staff may come into contact with students in a state of distress. Learn to identify signs of distress and how to interact with and assist students.

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Information used in the development of this guide was adapted from materials from The University of British Columbia & The University of Central Florida

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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our students well-being, creating this guide became a top priority for Student Outreach and Support (SOS). The information used in the development of this guide was adapted from materials from The University of British Columbia & The University of Central Florida.

The following individuals also provided valuable input and oversight during the creation:

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Dr. Carlos Cervantes, Associate Dean, Academic Support & Retention Services

Ruben Ibarra, Director, University Safety Operations

Introduction

The University of La Verne is committed to the health, safety and well-being of all students. To support this commitment, the SOS Behavior and Wellness Referral Report was developed to share concerning information with the appropriate offices so students can receive the support they need.

This resource defines the SOS Behavior and Wellness Referral Report, offers suggestions for best practices, and identifies frequently used resources on campus. **Hyperlinks accompany resources throughout the guide to quickly connect staff with additional information.** It is our hope in developing this guide that staff will 1) feel better prepared to work with students experiencing difficult circumstances and 2) be aware of the systems in place that can support them as they support students.

Lastly, please note that SOS reports become a part of a student's academic record. With this in mind, it is important to be mindful about *what* and *how* information is documented when submitting a report.

PART ONE

SOS Behavior and Wellness Referral Report

SOS is a collaboration of student support departments working together to ensure the well-being of students

When there is a concern for a students' well-being, staff are encouraged to share their concerns using the [SOS Behavior & Wellness Referral Report](#). Once a report is received, SOS can begin the process of supporting the student with resources and guidance.

HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

The [SOS Behavior & Wellness Referral Report](#) is a public form listed on the [SOS webpage](#). Faculty, staff, students and community members can utilize the form to advise SOS of a concern regarding a students' well-being.

CONFIDENTIALITY CONSIDERATIONS

[FERPA](#) does not prohibit the disclosure of personal or behavioral observations of students. Additionally, anything expressed verbally by a student is not part of the "educational record" and can be shared. Should the student disclose concerning information in writing, it can be shared with someone with an "educational need to know" as described by FERPA regulations, which would include SOS. For more information regarding FERPA, staff are encouraged to contact the [Office of the Registrar](#).

YOUR ROLE

Though staff have specific roles, such as explaining financial aid or assisting with signing up for the correct classes, students bring their entire life experience and current stressors into these meetings. As staff work with students and build trusting relationships, they may have students turn to them in times of distress, sometimes sharing concerning, personal information. Your expression of interest and concern may be a critical factor in helping a student connect with the appropriate resources. SOS asks that you listen to and empathize with students that reach out to you, referring them to SOS as needed.

WHEN TO REFER

- ⇒ Student admits there is a problem, but they do not want to share it with staff
- ⇒ Staff have helped as much as they can and further assistance is needed
- ⇒ Problem is more serious than staff is comfortable or qualified to handle
- ⇒ Staff's personal feelings about student will interfere with objectivity

WHAT TO EXPECT

- ⇒ SOS makes multiple attempts to contact a student
- ⇒ SOS identifies & provides available resources to student
- ⇒ SOS develops an action plan with student and determines appropriate interventions to ensure safety
- ⇒ SOS provides staff with appropriate updates when possible
- ⇒ SOS provides guidance & consultation to staff

LIMITATIONS

- ⇒ Students will not be mandated to meet with SOS
- ⇒ SOS may not be able to solve all issues a student is experiencing
- ⇒ SOS cannot force a student to receive help
- ⇒ SOS may not be able to provide staff with detailed updates regarding the action plan that is developed

Transparency is key for an effective referral

Though it is not preferred, SOS reports may be submitted anonymously. SOS understands there will be instances when staff are concerned for a student, but do not feel comfortable with the student knowing they submitted a report. When this is the case, SOS will respect the staff's decision; however, it is important to note that based on the information shared, it may be obvious who the reporter is regardless.

Because transparency is key for referrals to be effective, SOS highly recommends staff discuss the need for a referral with the student.

DISCUSSING REFERRALS

- ⇒ Express concerns directly with students
- ⇒ Normalize seeking additional support
- ⇒ Encourage student to connect with SOS
- ⇒ Be frank about your limits, energy, training and objectivity
- ⇒ For a concern that is less serious, ask permission to submit a report. If student does not want a report submitted, provide them contact information for SOS instead
- ⇒ For a concern that is more serious, tell student you will be submitting a report because you care for them and want them to connect with helpful resources
- ⇒ Coordinate a warm-hand off between SOS and student

If staff are concerned or unsure of how to inform a student a SOS report has been submitted, they are encouraged to contact SOS to discuss the specific situation with the case manager.

CHALLENGES STUDENTS FACE

- ⇒ Overwhelming demands
- ⇒ Navigating college as a first generation student
- ⇒ Unhealthy/unsupportive home environment
- ⇒ Financial concerns
- ⇒ Loss of a loved one
- ⇒ Peer pressure
- ⇒ Mental health issues
- ⇒ Impact of global events
- ⇒ Coping with transition to college (course load, homesickness, difficulty making connections)



Staff may be the first to see signs that a student needs support

Based on their relationship with a student, staff may choose to first work with a student independently; however, when the following indicators are present, staff should submit a SOS report. Staff may continue to take lead in working with the student, but it is important for SOS to be aware of the situation as the red flags the staff witness may be only one piece of the puzzle.

SIGNS OF A DISTRESSED STUDENT

- ⇒ Expresses stressful events have occurred in their life that are impacting their well-being
- ⇒ Displays decreased quality of work
- ⇒ Has increases absences
- ⇒ Makes repeated requests for special considerations
- ⇒ Displays anxiety
- ⇒ Is unable to provide for their basic living needs

Take Action: Talk directly with the student (if you feel comfortable) and inform them about available resources. Submit a SOS Report.

SIGNS OF A DISTURBING/DISRUPTIVE STUDENT

- ⇒ Has incongruent emotional responses
- ⇒ Displays bizarre behavior
- ⇒ Describes suspicious thoughts
- ⇒ Demonstrated irritable behavior
- ⇒ Reports sexual or physical assault
- ⇒ Has emotional or anger outbursts
- ⇒ Disrupts class

Take Action: Inform student you believe a SOS report is needed for their well-being. Submit a SOS report. If conduct related, please contact the Director of Residence Life and Student Conduct

SIGNS OF A DANGEROUS STUDENT

- ⇒ Expressed suicidal/homicidal thoughts or gestures
- ⇒ Makes threats to others
- ⇒ Displays self-mutilating behavior
- ⇒ Demonstrates intimidating behaviors

Take Action: For immediate threats, contact Campus Safety (909-448-4950). In life of death situations, contact 911. For consultations, contact CAPS (909-448-4105). After safety is established, submit an SOS report.

IF A STUDENT DOES NOT WANT HELP

There are times when staff have a valid reason to be concerned for a student; however, regardless of the avenue in which support is offered, students do not accept it. When this is the case, we must respect their decision. Accepting or refusing assistance must be left up to the student (**EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES**). Do not force the issue or trick a student into going to a referred resource; however, **do** leave room for reconsideration in the future should the student change their mind.

If a student is not accepting help and continues to be disruptive, staff are encouraged to consult with their supervisor and the Director of Residence Life and Student Conduct.

The most common way people mismanage a crisis situation is to respond in a reactive or emotional manner

Being comfortable responding to a student in distress comes with practice. Following these interactions, staff may feel overwhelmed, confused or simply frustrated. SOS and CAPS are available to consult with staff to discuss how to approach each unique situation, as well as process an incident after it occurs.

DO

- ⇒ **Stay calm.** You are the professional, do not lose control of yourself.
- ⇒ **Be objective.**
- ⇒ **Express empathy.** Enter into a conversation with students on an empathetic level.
- ⇒ **Know the limits of your role/expertise.** If you feel unequipped to assist a student, be transparent with them and refer them to SOS.
- ⇒ **Ignore challenge questions.** When a student challenges your position, training, policy, etc. redirect them to the issues at hand. Answering these questions often fuels a power struggle.

DO NOT

- ⇒ **Promise secrecy.** When it comes to safety concerns (suicidal/homicidal thoughts) and Title IX related issues, staff have an obligation to share this information with the appropriate parties.
- ⇒ **Get pulled into an argument or shouting match.**
- ⇒ **Minimize the students feelings, even if you do not agree with them.**
- ⇒ **Judge students for the decisions they are making.** Judgement will isolate the student and discourage them from receiving help in the future.
- ⇒ **Overreact.** Some students report not seeking help because doing so in the past led to excessive reactions that were embarrassing for them.

TALKING TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

ACKNOWLEDGE

- ⇒ Be specific about the behavior that you noticed, express your concern
- * *“I’ve noticed you haven’t been showing up for your shifts/been attending our group meetings. I’m concerned about you”*

INQUIRE AND LISTEN

- ⇒ Ask open-ended questions, be patient, give your full attention
- * *“How is everything going? Are you okay?”*

PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- ⇒ Provide the student with information about resources, encourage they connect with at least one of them
- * *“I’m concerned about you and I want to support you. I’d like to share a few resources with you that might help.”*
- * *“I’m concerned for you and would recommend you meet with the SOS case manager. Can I submit a referral for you?”*
- * *“Because I am concerned for you and want to make sure you get support, I will be referring you to the SOS case manager. I hope you take some time to meet with them.”*

FOLLOW UP

- ⇒ Submit a SOS report, follow up with the student, but do not insist on knowing what the student has done
- * *“How are things since our talk last week?”*

PART TWO

Additional Resources

Supporting students in distress is a collaborative effort

Staff are not alone when it comes to supporting students who are struggling. The following is not an exhaustive list of services, though they are the resources used most often when a student is experiencing distress.

RESOURCES FOR STAFF

ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

Located within the Learning Commons, the ASC provides academic support across all majors and disciplines with the goal of preparing consultants, faculty, and staff to facilitate students becoming engaged, self-sufficient learners who are confident in their abilities to reach their academic goals. Please encourage students to utilize the ASC for individual or group consulting, brainstorming, etc. The ASC is also available to design course-specific workshops and to provide Student Learning Assistants to offer support during and/or after class sessions. If you are interested in arranging for a Student Learning Assistant for your class, please fill out this form.

Contact: asc@laverne.edu 909-448-4342

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Accessibility Services Department has been designated to ensure access for all students with disabilities to all academic programs and university resources. The goal of Accessibility Services is to support and encourage all La Verne students who have disabilities to participate fully in campus life, its programs, and activities. They emphasize growth and individual achievement and address this goal through the provision of academic accommodations, support services, self-advocacy, skill training, and disability-related education programming for the university community.

Contact: accessibilityservices@laverne.edu 909-448-4938

BEHAVIOR AND INTERVENTION TEAM CHAIR

BIT is one of three tiers of support. SOS offers. BIT can work with staff to identify individuals who demonstrate behaviors that may be early warning signs of possible disruptive/violent behavior. BIT members determine appropriate resources and implement a coordinated response with the goal of providing assistance to the individual while mitigating risk in an effort to keep the La Verne community healthy and safe. Staff are encouraged to consult with BIT whenever necessary.

Contact: Juan Regalado, Chief Student Affairs Officer

jregalado@laverne.edu 909-448-4448

CAMPUS SAFETY

Campus Safety is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays should staff have concerns for safety. Campus Safety can assist in managing and accessing a student in crisis.

In emergency, life or death situations, please call 911.

Contact: 909-448-4950

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

CAPS works to educate and to promote personal growth and psychological well-being for students at the University of La Verne. CAPS offers individual counseling via telepsychology, utilizing video sessions and phone sessions. Services are available free of charge to ALL currently enrolled ULV students (undergraduate, graduate, CAPS, Law and ROC). There are currently no session limits for services. Staff are encouraged to consult with CAPS whenever necessary.

Contact: 909-448-4105 CAPS@laverne.edu

LEO FOOD PANTRY

The Leo Food Pantry works to address food insecurity and alleviate student hunger on campus. The pantry provides a monthly box of food for University of La Verne students in need of food assistance.

Contact: leofoodpantry@laverne.edu

OFFICE OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

The Office of Academic Advising's Advisors help students plan their academic careers through the creation of a partnership. This includes preparing for registration, resolving academic problems, and offering academic/educational advice. Academic advisors should also be able to assist students with planning for internships and employment opportunities within their disciplines as well as advising about graduate and professional school applications.

Contact: advising@laverne.edu 909-448-4510

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID

The Office of Financial Aid supports all students to ensure an affordable University of La Verne education. If students have questions regarding their financial aid package, encourage them to connect with a counselor in this office.

Contact: finaid@laverne.edu 800-649-0160

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCOUNTS

The Office of Student Accounts is responsible for billing and collecting tuition and fees, posting payments and disbursements, processing refunds and providing general assistance to student regarding their account with the university. If a student is having financial difficulty and needs assistance with a payment plan for tuition and fees, encourage them to connect with this office.

Contact: stuacct@laverne.edu 909-448-4060

RANDALL LEWIS CENTER FOR WELL-BEING AND RESEARCH

The Lewis Center provides resources for physical, emotional and mental well-being for students, faculty and staff at the University of La Verne and its surrounding region. Acknowledging the deep connections between well-being and higher education, the Lewis Center provides :

- ⇒ Wellness programming for students, faculty, and staff in areas including mindfulness, managing stress, sleep, hygiene, nutrition and sexual health
- ⇒ A fitness center, including indoor and outdoor fitness areas, studios for movement classes and locker rooms with showers
- ⇒ Spaces for students, faculty, and staff to gather and collaborate on issues of well-being
- ⇒ Online resources for the ULV community, including regional and online campuses
- ⇒ Teaching and collaborative research opportunities for students and faculty to advance knowledge about the field of well-being

Contact: lewiscenter@laverne.edu 909-448-4646

SOS CASE MANAGER/CO-CHAIR OF THE CARE NETWORK

Case Management Support and the CARE Network are the other two tiers of support SOS offers. The case manager meets with students to discuss current life stressors, need for support and available resources. Once connected with the student, an action plan will be developed to determine what long-term support should consist of. Staff are encouraged to consult with the case manager whenever necessary.

The CARE Network supports students in achieving emotional, physical, and social well-being, as well as their academic goals. The CARE Network and SOS case manager work together in responding to SOS Behavior & Wellness Referral Reports that are submitted.

Contact: **Adrienne Montero-Camacho, SOS Coordinator & Case Manager**

sos@laverne.edu 909-448-4520

STUDENT CONDUCT

The Student Conduct program within the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs is committed to an educational and developmental process that balances the interests of individual students with the interests of the University of La Verne community. The student conduct process is not intended to punish students; rather, it exists to protect the interests of the community and to challenge those whose behavior is not in accordance with our policies. Sanctions are intended to challenge students' moral and ethical decision-making and to help them bring their behavior into accord with our community expectations.

Contact: **Eugene Shang, Director of Residence Life and Student Conduct**

eshang@laverne.edu 909-448-4963

STUDENT HEALTH CENTER

Health and wellness is important for academic success at the University of La Verne. At the Student Health Center, all appointments are free of charge for students with our school insurance plan. The Student Health Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm during the traditional academic school year.

Contact: 909-448-4619

TITLE IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. Sex discrimination includes sexual harassment and sexual assault. Always remember as a staff (and/or faculty) of the university, you have a duty to report (mandated reporter) to the Title IX Coordinator if/when a student discloses to you a Title IX related incident. The Title IX Coordinator can discuss in greater detail with the student the differing options for someone raising a concern including where they can receive confidential services and how much privacy they will have in an investigation, including options for anonymity, or choosing not to participate in an investigation.

Should the student wish to speak with a confidential source (not a mandated reporter) they can be referred to CAPS and/or the University Chaplain (while they are serving in that role).

Contact: Alison Vicroy, Assistant General Counsel, Director of Student Civil Rights & Title IX

avicroy@laverne.edu

909-448-4012

UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN

Rev. Zandra Wagoner is available to provide confidential pastoral care and support to students, faculty and staff.

Contact: Rev. Zandra Wagoner, University Chaplain

zwagoner@laverne.edu

909-448-4446

WILSON LIBRARY

Wilson Library offers a variety of research resources for both undergraduate and graduate students. With a mix of group and individual study spaces available, the library is a great place to do homework, work on projects, and prepare for exams. Students also have access to the library's makerspace to utilize the 3-D printer, laser cutter, Raspberry Pi, and Arduino kits. Many workshops and events are also held at Wilson Library throughout the year. Our librarians are always available to help students find what they need. Students can contact a librarian through the 24/7 chat, email, text, phone or schedule an appointment with a tutor from the ASC.

HELPFUL DOCUMENTS/WEBSITES

- ⇒ [Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior in the Classroom and Around Campus– The NaBITA 2017 Whitepaper](#)
- ⇒ [Staff to Know List](#)
- ⇒ [How to Submit a SOS Report Video](#)

