



**Responding to
Distressed Students:
A Guide for Staff**

STAGE 1: Listen

If the student is agitated, angry or upset

- Try to appear calm and in control of the situation, even if you don't feel that way.
- Allow the student space to talk about what is distressing them. If there is only limited time available, offer more time later.
- Discuss with the student where they can access support in the future.
- If the student is creating a disturbance or if you are concerned about your personal safety, contact Security on +44 (0)191 208 6817.
In an emergency, contact security on +44 (0)191 208 6666.

Listening in the right time and space

- If the student appears to be agitated or upset, could a brief meeting be offered immediately?
- If you have an urgent deadline or an imminent appointment, say so and offer a specific time later. Alternatively, could the student be directed to someone who can offer time immediately?
- Make clear how much time is available.
- Try to ensure the time offered is free from interruptions and is in a private space.
- Maintain a professional relationship e.g. do not give a student your private mobile phone number, avoid sharing personal details about yourself, maintain appropriate boundaries.



Listening with purpose

- What seems to be the main issue?
- Is this the whole story or are there other problems?
- Is the issue having a major impact on the student's wellbeing?
- How does the student think/hope you can help them?
- How do you think you can help the student as they might not know for themselves?

Key points

Sometimes, listening will be enough.

Be clear about what is realistic for you to deal with yourself. Decisions about what support to offer will depend on your role, whether you have relevant expertise and the time available to you.

Be clear about the limits of confidentiality and information sharing e.g. do not disclose personal information about the student to parents or third parties.

Situations requiring immediate action are rare. If you are in doubt about how to respond to a student, it is nearly always possible to give yourself time by saying that you need to think over what is the best way to help and arranging to see them again.

Consult with others or contact the Student Health and Wellbeing Services if you think the student's problems may be serious or if you are uncertain what action to take.

Ensure that you have information about other services on campus that you can pass on to students.

Keep a note of Security contact details to hand.

Agree with the student what, if anything, needs to happen next.

Keep a record of your meeting/interaction and notify your line manager or the Student Health and Wellbeing Services if necessary.

Emergency situations and out of hours

Emergency services

If you are worried about a student's safety or feel they are at risk of harming themselves, you need to access help immediately.

If you feel there is imminent danger, you should call **9-999** and notify Security on **86666**

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Out of hours

For any other out of hours concern, that cannot wait until the next working day, call Security on **+44 (0)191 208 6817**.

Helplines

Nightline: available every night during term time 20.00 – 08.00 on **+44 (0)191 261 2905** and **www.nusu.co.uk/nightline**

Samaritans: available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day on **116 123** and **www.samaritans.org**

Campaign against living miserably (CALM) (offering support and suicide prevention to UK Men): available every night 17.00 - 00.00 on **0800 58 58 58** and **www.thecalmzone.net**

PAPYRUS – Prevention of young suicide: available Monday to Friday 10.00 – 22.00, weekends 14.00 – 22.00 and bank holidays 14.00 – 17.00 on **0800 068 4141** and **www.papyrus-uk.org**

Useful contact details:

Student Health and Wellbeing Services WHW:HOIDUHSSRUWHDP	Tel:+44 (0)191 208 3333 www.ncl.ac.uk/wellbeing
Dr. David O'Leary, ULF Manager Disability and Specialist Learning Team Leader Director of Student Health and Wellbeing Services	Tel: +44 (0)191 208 3333 Tel: +44 (0)191 208 3333 Tel: +44 (0)191 208 3333
ChaplaincyDDWRUDOSSRUW	Tel: +44 (0)191 208 3333

All of the above are available during office hours.

Newcastle University Security (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)	Tel: +44 (0)191 208 6817 Tel: +44 (0)191 208 6666 (emergency number)
Emergency services (24 hour emergency calls)	Tel: 999
Northumbria Police (24 hour non-emergency calls)	Tel: 101
NUSU emergency taxi service for students	Tel: +44 (0)191 298 5050 and quote reference NEWO2

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With thanks to Nottingham Trent University for permitting use of original layout and content.

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