



RECOGNIZING AND INTERVENING WITH STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY OR CRISIS

RECOGNIZING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

As a teacher or staff member, you may be approached by students who confide in you, or you may be one of the first people to observe indicators of distress in a student. This document aims to help front-line workers recognize a crisis situation, take action and refer the student to the right resource, according to the type and severity of the situation.

ACADEMIC	PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	RISK FOR SAFETY
• Repeated absences • Sudden drop in quality of work and grades • Disturbing content in writing or presentation • Systematically seeks personal rather than academic advice • Does not respond to repeated requests for contact or meetings • Repeatedly requests extensions or special considerations	• Marked change in physical appearance (poor hygiene, sudden weight changes) • Strange and bizarre behavior indicating loss of contact with reality • Visibly intoxicated or smelling of alcohol or marijuana. • Rapid speech or manic behavior • Lethargy • Observable signs of injury (cuts and burns without explanation)	• Disclosure of personal distress • Unusual or disproportionate emotional reaction to events • Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions • Verbal abuse (teasing, harassment) • Rejected from the rest of the group • Peers expressing concern about the student	• Verbal or written references to suicide, homicide, aggression or self-injurious behavior • Unprovoked anger and hostility • Use of physical violence (grabbing, assaulting, using a weapon) • Stalking or harassing others • Communicating threats or disturbing comments in person or by email, text message or phone call.

DEALING WITH A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

If a student confides in you, take the time to listen. You can also initiate a conversation with the student if you are concerned about him or her.

- Demonstrate **empathy** and **active listening** (eye contact, nodding to show interest and rephrasing what the student has just said to make sure you've understood).
- Don't hesitate to **ask direct questions** to validate the presence of suicidal thoughts in the student.
- Make sure you **respect your comfort level**. You are not a mental health professional. As a front-line responder, your job is not to intervene, but rather to refer.
- **Refer the student to the appropriate resource**. (See next page). If you have difficulty assessing the student's needs or risk level, refer to your program coordinator or **Alexandre Boudry**, the psychosocial counselor (intervention@tav.ca), so they can guide you. Be sure to maintain student confidentiality at this stage, unless the student's safety or that of others is at risk. You can also initiate a conversation with the student if you are concerned about him or her.

If a student presents a risk to their safety or that of others, please contact 9-1-1.

RESOURCE PAGE

TAV COLLEGE'S PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES:

Alexandre Boudry

Psychosocial Counsellor

intervention@tav.ca

B-306.1



<https://www.tav.ca/psychosocial-counselling-services/>

For immediate NON-URGENT help: Dial 8-1-1, option 2

For an EMERGENCY (life-threatening or life-saving):
Dial 9-1-1 and notify the front desk

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Suicide Prevention Centre of Montreal

Helpline for people with suicidal thoughts

1-866-277-3553 or 9-8-8

Tel-Aide

Listening line

514-935-1102

Drugs: help and referral

514-527-2626

SOS Violence conjugale

Helpline for people living with domestic violence

1-800-363-9010



<https://www.tav.ca/external-resource-centre/>