

# Responding to Employees in Distress

The Office of Campus Culture and Compliance (OC3) has developed this informational guide to aid in assisting employees in their response to those who may pose a threat to self or others. (Issues relating to students in distress should be directed to the Student Reponse Team).



## If any Individual Appears Dangerous or is Threatening Harm to Self or Others

**CALL 911** (If dialing 911 from a campus phone, you must dial 9+911)

- › Safety is an immediate concern; verbal or physical threats to harm others; active threats of suicide and resists help.



## If You Encounter a Disruptive or Distressed Employee

### CALL BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM MEMBER

- › Safety is not an immediate concern; may pose a threat of harm to self or others, but does not present an imminent safety concern. (e.g. demonstrates bizarre behavior or communication; disruptive to the work environment.)



## Behavioral Intervention Team Members

**DE ACKER**  
*Director of Campus Climate*  
t: 209-228-2598 e: dacker@ucmerced.edu

**FUJI COLLINS**  
*Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Health and Wellness*  
t: 209-228-4331 e: fcollins@ucmerced.edu

**ELISABETH GUNTHER**  
*Campus Counsel*  
t: 209-228-2406 e: egunther@ucmerced.edu

**CHOU HER**  
*Captain*  
t: 209-228-7941 e: cher@ucmerced.edu

**LUANNA PUTNEY**  
*Associate Chancellor and Senior Advisor to the Chancellor*  
t: 209-228-2407 e: lputney@ucmerced.edu

**ALBERT VASQUEZ**  
*Assistant Vice Chancellor, Campus Safety and Chief of Police*  
t: 209-228-4770 e: avasquez39@ucmerced.edu



## Campus Resources

- › **Academic Personnel Office**  
209-228-7948
- › **Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)**  
See contact information to the left. (*non-emergency*)
- › **CARE Office**  
Campus Advocate for sexual violence, domestic violence and stalking. (*confidential*)  
Call OR text 209-386-2051
- › **Human Resources Business Partner**  
209-201-7059, Fabiola Elizalde  
209-205-8253, David Ellington
- › **INSIGHT Employee Assistance Program**  
559-266-7437 or  
800-422-5322 (*toll free and confidential*)  
[www.insighteap.com](http://www.insighteap.com)
- › **Office of Ombuds Services**  
209-228-4410 (*confidential*)
- › **Student Response Team**  
[studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/student\\_response\\_team](http://studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/student_response_team)
- › **UC Merced Police Department**  
Call 911 when you believe there could be an imminent risk of harm to self or others. Call 209-CAT-COPS (228-2677) for non-emergencies

# Helping a Distressed Colleague

A coworker is often first to observe signs of distress or trouble. Be aware of the following indicators of distress. Early recognition, intervention and referral are keys to getting someone help. Look for patterns or changes in behavior, not just isolated symptoms.



## When to be Concerned

- › Dramatic changes in personal hygiene, work performance or social behavior
- › Isolation or withdrawal, alienating members of their support systems
- › Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance
- › Intoxication, hangovers or smelling of alcohol
- › Disoriented or seeming “out of it”
- › Garbled, tangential, disconnected or slurred speech



## Signs and Symptoms of Distress

- › Self-disclosure of personal distress such as family problems or financial difficulties, or talk of grief or suicide
- › Unusual/disproportional emotional response to events
- › Colleagues expressing fear, concern or worry about a coworker
- › Irritability or unusual apathy



## Safety Risk Indicators

- › Unprovoked anger, hostility or aggressive behavior
- › Physical violence (shoving, grabbing, assault)
- › Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- › Stalking or harassing behavior
- › Making threats via email, text or phone
- › Extreme anxiety or panic
- › Talk of guns or other dangerous, violent topics



## What You Can Do

If you find yourself worried or alarmed about an employee who is troubled or distressed, you have resources:

- › Speak with your supervisor.
- › Contact a member of the Behavioral Intervention Team (*see other side for details*).
- › Insight Employee Assistance Program ([hr.ucmerced.edu/benefits/other-benefits/insight-eap](http://hr.ucmerced.edu/benefits/other-benefits/insight-eap)) is available for non-emergency help.