



# Faculty & Staff Guide to Supporting Students of Concern

## STUDENT OUTREACH AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Outreach and Support Services (SOSS) staff work collaboratively with students, parents, faculty, and staff to provide support for students through a variety of challenges that they may encounter while at Boston College. We connect students to the resources that will best support their individual needs and assist staff and faculty who are concerned about a student.

### WHO IS A STUDENT OF CONCERN?

#### ACADEMIC INDICATORS

- Repeated absences
- Missed assignments, exams, or appointments
- Deterioration in quality or quantity of work
- Extreme disorganization or erratic performance
- Written or artistic expression of unusual violence, social isolation, despair or confusion, preoccupation with suicide or death
- Continual seeking of special provisions (e.g., extensions on papers, make-up exams)
- Patterns of perfectionism (e.g., inability to accept any grade but an A)
- Overblown or disproportionate response to grades or other evaluations

#### BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL INDICATORS

- Personal tragedy or significant problems
- Family problems
- Severe anxiety or depression
- Expressions of hopelessness
- Angry or hostile outbursts or aggressive comments
- Financial burden
- Isolation or inability to locate student

#### PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Self-harm or threat to harm others
- Deterioration of physical condition
- Frequent or chronic illness
- Disorganized confused speech
- Excessive fatigue or falling asleep in class

### WHEN SHOULD I REFER A STUDENT OF CONCERN?

- If you are concerned about the welfare of a student, yourself, and/or other students.
- If a student asks for help in dealing with personal issues that are outside the scope of your role as a faculty or staff member.
- If your efforts to manage a concern has not resolved the problem.
- If you have referred the student in the past and there seems to be no improvement or things are getting worse.
- If you are unsure where to refer a student or how to address concerning behavior.

### HOW TO REFER A STUDENT OF CONCERN

#### Step 1: Speak directly with the student

- Meet individually and in a quiet place
- Set a hopeful tone
- Express your concern and caring
- Point out specific behaviors you've observed
- Listen attentively to the student
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality
- Suggest resources and referrals

#### Step 2: Connect Student to Resources

- Explain the limitations of your knowledge and experience
- Provide name, phone number, and office location of the resource OR walk the student to the resource
- Frame any decision to seek help as a smart and mature choice
- Realize that your offer of help may be rejected
- Follow up with the student

#### Step 3: Consult and Report

- When in doubt, consult!
- There are many staff with expertise on campus who can support you, including the SOSS team, UCS, BCPD, and resources listed here.
- You must report any concerns about a student's current or previous suicidality to the SOSS team
- Call 617-552-3470 OR fill out our online form at [bc.edu/outreach](http://bc.edu/outreach)

#### THE SITUATION IS URGENT IF:

- There are written or verbal statements that mention despair, suicide, or death
- Severe hopelessness, depression, isolation, and withdrawal are observed
- Statements are made that suggest the student is "going away for a long time"
- If a student is exhibiting any of these signs they may pose an immediate danger to self or others. You should stay with the student and contact University Counseling Services at 617-552-3310
- After hours you can access the Psychological Emergency Clinician on-call via Health Services (617) 552-3227 or BCPD 617-552-4444

#### THE SITUATION IS AN EMERGENCY IF:

- Physical or verbal aggression is directed at self, others, or property
- The student is unresponsive to the external environment; s/he is incoherent, passed out, disconnected from reality/exhibiting psychosis, or displaying disruptive behavior
- The situation feels threatening or dangerous to you or others
- There are imminent threats to safety

**CALL BCPD EMERGENCY LINE 617-552-4444**



**BOSTON COLLEGE**

Division of Student Affairs

STUDENT OUTREACH AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Maloney Hall, Suite 445  
617-552-3434 | [www.bc.edu/soss](http://www.bc.edu/soss)



*College can be a very stressful time, and at BC, many students face difficult academic and personal challenges as they venture through a rigorous academic environment and an increase in accountability and responsibility.*

*As a Boston College faculty or staff member, you are in a unique position to assist students who are experiencing multiple stressors.*

### MANDATORY REPORTING REGARDING SUICIDALITY

Suicide is a leading cause of death among 15–24 year-olds and is taken very seriously by the Boston College community.

If you are concerned about an imminent safety risk, always care for the student first. Please walk the student to University Counseling Services or call BCPD at 617-552-4444.

In Massachusetts, it is imperative that all staff and faculty address these concerns and then also report them to the Student Outreach and Support Team. If you are made aware of or have knowledge of a student's previous suicide attempt or a student has communicated to you thoughts of or a plan to commit suicide, you are obligated to connect the student to immediate support if needed and then notify SOSS staff at 617-552-3470 or by completing our online form at [bc.edu/outreach](https://bc.edu/outreach). We will discuss the situation with you and proceed with care.

### INFORMATION FOR AN EFFECTIVE REFERRAL

- Your name and relationship to the student of concern
- A phone where the SOSS team can reach you
- The student's BC ID# and name
- A summary and explanation of your concern, observations, including key dates, and locations
- What has been done so far to address the situation.

**If the student is in imminent harm to self or others please call:** 911 or Boston College Police Department at emergency line 617-552-4444

We treat every report of concern with care and respect, and will work with you to create a plan to move forward.

### IMPORTANT RESOURCES

**Student Outreach and Support Services**  
617-552-3434 | Maloney Hall 445 | [bc.edu/soss](https://bc.edu/soss)

**University Counseling Services**  
617-552-3310 | Gasson 001 | [bc.edu/counseling](https://bc.edu/counseling)

**BCPD (non-emergency line)**  
617-552-4440 | Maloney Hall | [bc.edu/bcpd](https://bc.edu/bcpd)

**Women's Center**  
617-552-3489 | Maloney Hall 441 | [bc.edu/wc](https://bc.edu/wc)

**Sexual Assault Network**  
617-552-2211 | Maloney Hall 441 | [bc.edu/sanet](https://bc.edu/sanet)

**University Health Services**  
617-552-3225 | 2150 Commonwealth Ave. | [bc.edu/uhs](https://bc.edu/uhs)

**Campus Ministry**  
617-552-3475 | McElroy 233 | [bc.edu/ministry](https://bc.edu/ministry)

**Disability Services**  
617-552-3470 | Maloney Hall 445 | [bc.edu/disability](https://bc.edu/disability)

### SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT FERPA WHEN MAKING A REPORT TO THE SOSS TEAM?

No! The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which, protects the confidentiality of student records, allows you to disclose your observations about a student's behavior and permits you to disclose any information about a student with other BC employees for a legitimate educational purpose, which includes disclosures made in connection with maintaining the safety of the University, providing a service or benefit to the student, or any task related to the effective functioning of the University. FERPA also permits disclosures in connection with any health or safety emergency if the disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or others.



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