# Assisting Students in Distress

Always approach each interaction with authenticity and non-judgement. See resources on reverse side for student referrals. Call 911 if a student poses an immediate danger to themselves or others.

## Manageable Stress

Student has a reasonable amount of stress and reports engaging in effective self-care strategies.

- "I've been pretty stressed, but finding time to exercise has made things feel more manageable."

### May Look Like

- Foster a supportive relationship with student.
- Ask about their school-life balance & self-care practices.
- Put resources in your syllabi.
- "How have you been feeling lately?" or "How are you carving out time to care for yourself?"

### May Sound Like

- Provide general information about wellness resources such as Hokie Wellness workshops, support groups, or healthy coaching through TimelyCare.

### What you can do

- "That sounds difficult. What are some things you can do in the coming days to feel a sense of balance?"

### What you can say

- "I can see how hard you've been trying to manage it all."
- "You said you've been struggling lately, tell me more about what's been going on. I want to help."

### Where to refer

- Connect student to support groups & workshops that help build stress management skills through Hokie Wellness, Cook Counseling, or TimelyCare.

## Mild Distress

Student shows early signs of poor performance, inconsistent attendance to class / meetings, some difficulty managing tasks.

- "I'm just feeling a bit overwhelmed right now." or "I'm juggling a lot on my plate."

### May Look Like

- Ask clarifying questions. Use active listening skills to identify stressors & barriers. Affirm students' strengths. Identify a realistic step together. Follow up.
- "I just can't do this. Could I have another extension?" or "I'm just struggling to get it together."

### May Sound Like

- "I've been pretty stressed, but finding time to exercise has made things feel more manageable."
- "I just can't do this. Could I have another extension?" or "I'm just struggling to get it together."

### What you can do

- Connect student to support groups & workshops that help build stress management skills through Hokie Wellness, Cook Counseling, or TimelyCare.

### What you can say

- "That sounds difficult. What are some things you can do in the coming days to feel a sense of balance?"

### Where to refer

- Refer student to Cook Counseling, Dean of Students, or TimelyCare for 1:1 support. Additionally, a campus support group may be appropriate.

## Moderate Distress

Student shows signs such as continuous inability to complete tasks, inappropriate emotional responses, or poor communication.

- "I just can't do this. Could I have another extension?" or "I'm just struggling to get it together."

### May Look Like

- Calmly voice your care & concern. Know your limits. Do not guarantee confidentiality. Remain with them until they're connected to help.
- "I hear that you're hurting right now & I care about you. Getting help can feel scary; we could call Cook together to talk to someone?"

### May Sound Like

- "I don't want to be here anymore, it's not worth it." or "Everyone would be better of without me."

### What you can do

- Call Cook with student & communicate acute concerns. If student refuses and/or you are unsure of next steps, you can call Dean of Students to consult.

### What you can say

- "I can see how hard you've been trying to manage it all." or "You said you've been struggling lately, tell me more about what's been going on. I want to help."

### Where to refer

- Call Cook with student & communicate acute concerns. If student refuses and/or you are unsure of next steps, you can call Dean of Students to consult.

## Acute Distress

Student shows signs of complete withdrawal or hopelessness. Student expresses direct threat to themselves or others.

- "I don't want to be here anymore, it's not worth it." or "Everyone would be better of without me."

### May Look Like

- Student shows signs such as continuous inability to complete tasks, inappropriate emotional responses, or poor communication.
- "I just can't do this. Could I have another extension?" or "I'm just struggling to get it together."

### May Sound Like

- "I've been pretty stressed, but finding time to exercise has made things feel more manageable."
- "I just can't do this. Could I have another extension?" or "I'm just struggling to get it together."

### What you can do

- Calmly voice your care & concern. Know your limits. Do not guarantee confidentiality. Remain with them until they're connected to help.
- "I hear that you're hurting right now & I care about you. Getting help can feel scary; we could call Cook together to talk to someone?"

### What you can say

- "I can see how hard you've been trying to manage it all." or "You said you've been struggling lately, tell me more about what's been going on. I want to help."

### Where to refer

- Call Cook with student & communicate acute concerns. If student refuses and/or you are unsure of next steps, you can call Dean of Students to consult.

# Spectrum of Distress

Adapted in part from Active Minds and the JED Foundation.

Updated 2/22/2023. To access the most current version visit: [hokiewellness.vt.edu/distressguide](http://hokiewellness.vt.edu/distressguide)
# Resources for Students in Distress

Distress & well-being are multidimensional, so the resources considered should be as well. Stress is influenced not only by academics, but experiences with mental illness, financial difficulties, relationships, sexual violence, substance use, identity, & more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency</th>
<th>Available Crisis Support</th>
<th>Additional Campus Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virginia Tech Police</strong></td>
<td>VTPD Provides campus security and conducts wellness checks on students in need. Call if a student poses an immediate danger to themselves or others.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dean of Students Office</strong></td>
<td>Provides support, conducts follow-ups, and determines intervention during crisis.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cook Counseling Center</strong></td>
<td>Offers 24/7 non-appointment crisis counseling, individual &amp; group counseling, psychiatry, and identity-based support groups.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TimelyCare</strong></td>
<td>24/7 online access to mental health support, coaching, and self-care tools. Brief 1st time registration required.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VT Women’s Center</strong></td>
<td>Support for anyone impacted by gender-based harassment or violence. For after hours crisis support contact the Women’s Resource Center of the New River Valley.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title IX Coordinator</strong></td>
<td>Receives &amp; conducts follow-ups on complaints of sexual misconduct and violence.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services for Students with Disabilities</strong></td>
<td>Provides accommodations, support, and services to students on a case-by-case basis.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Scholarships and Financial Aid Office</strong></td>
<td>Provides short-term loans for emergencies or changes in financial situations.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hokie Wellness</strong></td>
<td>Offers trainings, workshops, support groups, &amp; consultations for mental, physical, &amp; financial well-being (includes substance use support).</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advising: Navigate Referral Guide</strong></td>
<td>Guide of campus offices (&amp; their services) that can be found in the Navigate referral system.</td>
<td><strong>Additional Campus Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a full list of mental health and other Virginia Tech wellness related resources visit: [well-being.vt.edu](http://well-being.vt.edu)