



## Recognizing a Bruin in Distress

A student in distress might indicate a need for assistance with:

- Repeated requests for special consideration, extensions, etc.
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses or actions
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Significant change in physical appearance
- Declining academic performance
- Excessive absences, especially if attendance was previously consistent
- Perfectionism, procrastination, excessive worrying
- Noticeable change in patterns of interaction (avoiding participation or dominating discussion)

These signs might indicate a student is in severe distress:

- Depressed mood
- Marked changes in personal hygiene; swollen, red eyes; falling asleep in class; excessively active and talkative
- Inability to communicate
- Garbled, slurred, disjointed or incoherent speech
- Loss of contact with reality
- Seeing/hearing things that do not exist
- Suicidal thoughts or intentions
- Overtly discussing, joking or hinting that suicide is a current and viable option
- Highly disruptive behavior in class
- Homicidal threats
- Hostile, threatening or violent behavior

### *HOW TO SHARE YOUR CONCERN WITH A STUDENT*

If you have a concern, and DO NOT feel comfortable addressing it with the student, simply submit a [Bruins Care Concern Form](#). Once form is submitted, KCC counselors will contact the student.

If you wish to speak with a student about your concerns, we recommend you:

- Talk to the student in private when both of you have time
- Give the student undivided attention

- Express your concerns in behavioral terms “
- Share an observation “*I’ve noticed you’ve been acting differently than you usually do and I’m concerned*”
- Listen in a non-judgmental, non-threatening way
- Communicate your understanding by repeating back the core of what the student has said
- Avoid judging, evaluating, or criticizing
- Respect the student’s value system, even if you disagree
- NOTE: If at the end of the conversation you feel concerned for the student’s safety, overall well-being, or just think they would benefit from talking to someone else, submit a [Bruins Care Concern Form](#).

### *WHEN TO MAKE A REFERRAL*

You are encouraged to submit a [Bruins Care Concern Form](#) to make a referral if students:

- Do not respond appropriately when you share your concern
- Exhibit erratic or sudden changes in classroom performance
- Exhibit uncharacteristic behavioral, mood, attitude or appearance changes
- Are uncharacteristically inattentive, unresponsive, angry, argumentative or aggressive
- Disclose mental health concerns and indicate a need for assistance
- Exhibit behavior that is getting worse

You may also choose to make a referral when you:

- Feel overwhelmed or unsure of how to proceed
- Need to talk with someone about your observations or concerns

### *HOW TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SEEK ASSISTANCE*

- Let students know that it is not necessary to know exactly what is wrong in order to seek assistance
- Assure students that seeking help does not mean their problems are unusual or extremely serious
- Show students how they can seek assistance by using the [Bruins Care Concern Form](#)