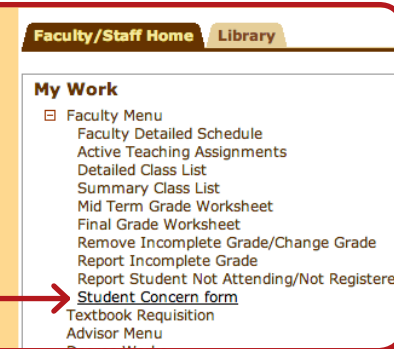


# Concerned about a student at WMU?

**Emergency?**  
Dial 911 or  
WMU Public Safety  
(269) 387-5555

There may be times when faculty, staff or students find themselves concerned about a student's welfare or observe uncharacteristic behavioral changes.

**To submit a concern and make a referral, click on the "Student Concern Form" link in the faculty/staff tab at [gowmu.wmich.edu](http://gowmu.wmich.edu).**



The most effective way to get help for students is to submit a concern using the online form.

## How to recognize a student 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
- Withdrawal from activities or friends
- Significant change in sleep or eating patterns
- Declining academic performance
- Excessive absences, especially if attendance was previously consistent
- Perfectionism, procrastination, excessive worrying
- Markedly changed patterns of interaction (avoiding participation or dominating discussion)

## These signs might indicate a student 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
- Homicidal threats
- Hostile, threatening or violent behavior

## How to share your concern with a student

If you have a concern, talk to the student first. The student may have an explanation for the behavior or may ask for assistance.

- 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

# Make a referral for assistance

**Still unsure?**  
Ask your department chair or director for guidance.

## When to make a referral

You are encouraged to submit a 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 concern form to refer themselves

## After you submit a concern

You will be contacted by email to confirm that the concern was received. The submitted concern will be reviewed by trained staff in student affairs who will contact students to let them know a concern has been expressed about them and determine the kind of assistance needed.

Depending on the nature of the concern, a referral may be sent to a multidisciplinary team of trained professionals with medical, mental health and legal expertise.

Student affairs staff will confirm to the referring person that the student has been contacted. Students do not always respond to offers of assistance. If students accept assistance or share personal information with student affairs staff, privacy regulations will be followed to determine any subsequent sharing of the information.

## Resources

<b>Aggressive or threatening behavior</b>	<b>WMU Public Safety</b> wmudps.wmich.edu	(269) 387-5555 or 911
<b>Disruptive behavior</b>	<b>Student Conduct</b> wmich.edu/conduct	(269) 387-2160
<b>Emotional / psychological distress</b>	<b>Counseling Services</b> wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling	(269) 387-1850
	<b>Case Management</b> Office of the VP for Student Affairs wmich.edu/studentaffairs/casemanagement	(269) 387-2186
<b>Medical or psychiatric illness</b>	<b>Sindecuse Health Center</b> wmich.edu/healthcenter	(269) 387-3287
<b>After hours:</b>	<b>Borgess Hospital ER</b> <b>Bronson Hospital ER</b>	(269) 226-4815 (269) 341-6386
<b>Sexual assault support</b>	<b>FIRE Place</b> wmich.edu/healthcenter/healthpromotion/fireplace <b>YWCA</b>	(269) 387-2990 (269) 385-3587
<b>More resources</b>	<b>Behavioral Health Services</b> formerly University Substance Abuse Clinic wmich.edu/unifiedclinics/behavioral/	(269) 387-7000
	<b>Disability Services</b> wmich.edu/disabilityservices	(269) 387-2116
	<b>Gryphon Place</b>	(269) 381-HELP
	<b>Suicide Prevention Program</b> This program does not provide counseling services. wmich.edu/suicideprevention	(269) 387-1887

## If attendance in class is the concern

Do not use the referral form if the concern is specifically or mostly an attendance issue.

Follow the link to [Report student not attending / not registered](#) on the Faculty tab at [gowmu.wmich.edu](http://gowmu.wmich.edu)

