

# ACADEMIC ADVISER

## HOW TO GUIDE

### STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

#### HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY A STUDENT IN DISTRESS?

Sometimes it is very easy to spot a student in distress, they may well be visibly upset, crying or angry. However they may not present as visibly distressed, but you might notice changes in their behaviour which alert you to a potential issue.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

LISTEN

DO THEY NEED HELP IMMEDIATELY?

No

Information for students about wellbeing services and self-help can be found here: [www.shu.ac.uk/wellbeing](http://www.shu.ac.uk/wellbeing)

Information for staff on how to support students can be found on the Students in Distress blog:

<https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/sites/3007/SitePages/Supporting-Students-in-Distress-Guide.aspx>

Yes

IS IT WITHIN WORK HOURS / ON CAMPUS?

No

#### Contact Security

who are all mental health first aid trained and are able to provide initial support  
0114 225 2000 (external)  
888 (internal)

Yes

If unavailable

If unavailable

#### Seek initial support from:

- Hallam Help (x2222)
- Your Academic Advising Lead

Where there are concerns about a student complete the Student Support Adviser Referral form on the Student Support Triangle Intranet Page .

<https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/sites/4066>

Or you can email ! **Student Support Advisers On Duty** with the title **Concern About a Student**.

Contact an external agency > refer to the Useful Contacts page

#### What happens next?

The student will receive the required support. This may include ongoing Wellbeing appointments, they might be included in the "Cause for Concern" monitoring process, or receive a range of other support interventions.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### STUDENT WELLBEING

Confidential service for students providing personal support and guidance

0114 225 2136

[student.wellbeing@shu.ac.uk](mailto:student.wellbeing@shu.ac.uk)

### REPORT & SUPPORT

If you have experienced sexual violence, harassment, abuse or hate crime report it either anonymously or get support from an adviser.

<https://reportandsupport.shu.ac.uk/>

### SECURITY SERVICES

Responsible for all aspects of safety and security within the University, available 24-hours a day

888 (internal)

0114 225 2000 (external)

[security@shu.ac.uk](mailto:security@shu.ac.uk)

### THE CHAPLAINCY

Co-ordinates the process after a student had died.

Reverend Helena Roulston

Tel: 01142253153

Email: [H.Roulston@shu.ac.uk](mailto:H.Roulston@shu.ac.uk)

A full range of materials to support Academic Advisers and academic staff more broadly including a link to Students in Distress intranet page can be found at the Student Support Triangle Intranet page: <https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/sites/4066>

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### SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Whenever we encounter someone in distress, most of us feel the need to help in some way but sometimes we worry about being equipped to manage the situation and may question 'am I going to do or say something that will make it worse?'. If someone has chosen to speak to you about their distress, the likelihood is that they see you as a supportive person who they trust to share the information with. It is very unlikely that you will make the situation worse for that person if you approach it with compassion and take the time to understand what is going on for them. Here are a few tips for responding to distressed students.

#### LISTEN

Give the student time to allow them to talk through their distress. Giving them this time will allow them to express and explain, from this you can more easily ascertain what their wants, needs and expectations are.

#### Tips for effective listening

- **Give them time** to allow them to think and express themselves– avoid jumping in with suggestions
- **Be patient** and non-judgemental
- **Avoid asking too many questions**
- **Show empathy** – 'listen To understand' rather than being preoccupied by what to say and do next. You can show that you understand (or that you are trying to) by giving information back to the student e.g. 'so you have been feeling unable to cope since your last exam result'. You can also use phrases to like 'it sounds like there is a lot going on for you at the minute' to show that you are listening.

### RESPOND WITH REASSURANCE

This is not always about having the answers, in fact, it can be unhelpful to suggest that there is a 'quick fix' to a situation that has led someone to experience emotional distress. What tends to be reassuring is that someone is taking the time to listen and understand what is going on for the individual. It can be helpful to acknowledge that what they are experiencing would be difficult for anyone to manage, so that they don't feel like distress is an individual weakness. Assure them that they have done the right thing in sharing how they feel and acknowledge the courage that this can take. Reassure them that there is support available and that you can help them to access it.

### DISCUSS SUPPORT AND SIGNPOST

Talk to the student about who their support network is, do they have family or friends that they can / do talk to about what is going on for them. Ask about what has been helpful to them in the past when they have faced these sorts of challenges. How are they looking after themselves (are they eating well, getting enough sleep, doing things they enjoy etc.). Talk to them about the support that is available to them and how to access it. [Shu.ac.uk/wellbeing](https://shu.ac.uk/wellbeing) has a range of wellbeing resources available as well as information and links to register with the wellbeing service.

#### Who Can Support You?

- You can discuss the situation with your Line Manager or Academic Advising lead in the first instance.
- You can get assistance from Employee Assistance Programme if required:  
<https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/sites/3005/polproc/eap/SitePages/Home.aspx?web=1>