**Best Practices for Interacting with Students of Concern at IUPUI**

*Advisors and Faculty are NOT expected to serve as therapists. It is appropriate to refer students to experts, whenever necessary.*

This document is adapted from guidance produced by the Indiana University Office of Completion and Student Success.

**Adopted by the Campus Advising Council: December 6, 2016**

<table>
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| A. Student presents with behavior that seems unusual (for this student) or triggers a sense that “something is wrong” even if it can’t be quite identified. | In general, use words that can be interpreted in an open-ended way so that students can put their own interpretations on what you are asking and share their story  
  - I notice that something has changed with regard to (how you look, how you participate in class, etc.). I can’t quite put my finger on it but I’m wondering if you’ve noticed a change . . .  
  - Before we get started, I noticed that you don’t seem quite like yourself these days . . . I’m wondering if there’s a roadblock or a challenge in your life that we could talk about first . . .  
  - I sense that your mood has shifted . . . tell me about how you’re feeling . . .  
  - You seem to be (stressed out, tired) . . . what are you experiencing? Are you sleeping okay?  
  - This can be a stressful time of year for students. I am hoping you’re doing alright . . . how are things with you?  

  Students from some cultures may feel suspicious or challenged that you even ask such a question so it helps to clarify why you’re asking:  
  - It’s common that if a student is (tired, stressed, transitioning to a new culture, etc.), it could have an effect on his/her ability to succeed academically. Since I want you to succeed, I’m curious about how you’re feeling . . .  
  - The health center might be able to help you sort out what you need to do to rest better . . .  

  **Cautions**  
  - DO NOT make physical contact with student  
  - DO NOT try to diagnose, diminish or over-dramatize by saying:  
    - You look depressed  
    - You seem angry  
    - You look like a mess  
    - What’s the matter with you  
    - You seem to have a problem  

  **AdRx Notes: Advising Comments Tab**  
  After I asked how _____ was doing, she/he/they stated that she/he/they was/were feeling somewhat ________.

  We discussed her/his/their resources and support . . .  

  _____ made some comments about his/her/their current feelings that led me to refer her/him/them to _____ (e.g., CAPS, AES, Mentor, student support program, etc.).
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| **B. Student states that she/he/they has/have ______ and is/are struggling with school as a result of:**  
- depression  
- bi-polar disorder  
- anxiety disorder  
- ADHD  
- eating disorder  
- etc. | **In general, acknowledge the student’s self-awareness in mentioning the issue and move toward a professional referral**  
- I’m glad that you’re acknowledging your situation and that you came in to talk with me about this . . .  
- I’m glad you felt you could talk with me about this.  
- What’s changed in your situation recently?  
- Is there something that is making things more difficult for you right now?  
- Is there a doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist that you can contact?  
- Shall we contact CAPS/AES to get you some immediate help?  
- Do you want me to walk to CAPS/AES with you?  
- Shall we call over to CAPS/AES to see if you can get an appointment?  
- Let me know how it goes after you see CAPS/AES.  
- Given what you’ve told me, I’d like to be sure that you get the right help. Since this isn’t my area of expertise, would it be okay if I called CAPS/AES to find out what they would recommend?  
- You have a lot going on right now and I’d like to get you to someone who can help you sort it out. Would you be willing to walk down to CAPS/AES with me? Or, talk with CAPS/AES? | **Cautions**  
- **DO NOT make physical contact with student**  
- **DO NOT assume you know what’s going on or downplay the situation, by saying:**  
  - I’m guessing you’ve quit taking your meds since you got to college  
  - You probably don’t really have a problem – you just need to get a grip on yourself  
  - Given that you’re acting paranoid, I think you need psychological help, badly.  

**AdRx NOTES: Advising Only Tab**  
_____ made some comments about his/her/their medical situation and current feelings that led me to refer her/him/them to _____ (CAPS, Student Health Services, AES, etc.) or other [medical, psychological, or other professional].  
_____ disclosed that she/he/they has/have [medical condition] that is affecting his/her ability to _____; they have/will submit documentation in the AES office. I encouraged him/her/them to see (medical, psychological, or other professional).  

**NOTE:** If student indicates they have an immediate plan to end their life, call IUPUI Police Department at (317)274-7911. Also inform your supervisor.
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| **C. Student makes a comment about suicide or not wanting to live** | • Are you thinking about killing yourself?  
• Do you have a plan to end your life?  
• I’m quite concerned about what you’ve said and I’m really glad you felt you could tell me about it.  
• I don’t have the skills to help you but I can definitely get you to those who can, confidentially, help you.  
• Would you like to walk down to CAPS with me?  
• Shall we call CAPS to see if someone can see you right now?  
• If student declines all help and leaves, immediately contact supervisor/administrator who will contact the appropriate administrator or police department.  

*NOTE: If student indicates they have an immediate plan to end their life, call IUPUI Police Department at (317)274-7911. Also inform your supervisor.* | **Cautions**  
• **DO NOT make physical contact with student**  
• **DO NOT diminish or downplay the student’s comment, by saying:**  
  - You don’t really mean it  
  - You’re too young to think about that  
  - Oh, come on, it’s not that bad |

**AdRx Notes: Advisor Only Notes**  
_____ made some comments about his/her/their thinking that concerned me and led me to refer him/her/them to CAPS; I walked him/her there. I also submitted a concerned persons report at [http://bct.iupui.edu](http://bct.iupui.edu)  
_____ made some comments about his/her thinking that concerned me. She/he/they declined going to CAPS so I called CAPS immediately after the appointment to share what I knew. I also submitted a concerned persons report at [http://bct.iupui.edu](http://bct.iupui.edu) |
| **D. Student makes comment or displays evidence of physical self-harm (cutting, burning, hitting self, etc.)** | • When you hurt yourself in this way, are you thinking about killing yourself? (if yes, see above)  
• Do you need medical attention?  
• I am concerned about your health and well-being. I am really glad you felt you could talk with me about this.  
• I don’t have the skills to help you but I can definitely get you to those who can, confidentially, help you.  
• Would you like to walk down to CAPS with me?  
• Shall we call CAPS to see if someone can see you right now?  

| **Cautions**  
• **DO NOT make physical contact with student**  
• **DO NOT judge or criticize by saying:**  
  - You shouldn’t do that!  
  - That doesn’t make sense  
  - Oh that’s terrible!  
  - You poor thing! |

**AdRx NOTES: Advisor Only Notes**  
See example notes in row C. above.  
_____ displayed some evidence of physical harm that concerned me. She/he/they declined going to CAPS so I called CAPS immediately. I also submitted a concerned persons report at [http://bct.iupui.edu](http://bct.iupui.edu) |
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| **E. Student makes comments about physically harming or killing others** | - Are you thinking about killing/hurting this person?  
- What are you planning to do?  
- I’m quite concerned about what you’ve said and I’m glad you felt you could tell me about it.  
- I am concerned for your safety.  
- Would you like to walk down to CAPS with me?  
- Shall we call CAPS to see if someone can see you right now?  
- If student declines all help and leaves, immediately call the IUPUI Police Department at (317) 274-7911. Also, immediately contact your supervisor/administrator. | **Cautions**  
- **DO NOT** make physical contact with student  
- **DO NOT** escalate the situation by:  
  - Arguing  
  - Trying to physically restrain the student (unless you are defending yourself)  
- **DO NOT** minimize or discount the threat by saying:  
  - You don’t mean that  
  - I know you are joking |

**AdRx NOTES: Advisor Only Notes**  
_____ made some comments about his/her/their thinking that caused me to be concerned for the safety of others and led me to refer him/her/them to CAPS; I walked him/her/them there. I contacted IUPUI Police Department and also submitted a concerned persons report at [http://bct.iupui.edu](http://bct.iupui.edu)

_____ made some comments about his/her/their thinking that caused me to be concerned for the safety of others. She/he/they declined going to CAPS so I contacted IUPUI Police Department and my supervisor. I also submitted a concerned persons report at [http://bct.iupui.edu](http://bct.iupui.edu)
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| F. Student says that she/he/they has/have been sexually assaulted | • (If the student isn’t present in your office) – Are you in a safe place now?  
• I’m so sorry that this happened to you and I’m so glad you felt you could tell me about it.  
• Remember that this is NOT your fault . . .  
• Have you contacted anyone about it, yet?  
• Have you had a chance to see a doctor?  
• I can get you in touch with those who can help you, including a confidential resource if you prefer. At IUPUI, our confidential resources are CAPS and the Sexual Assault Education and Prevention Specialist (advocate).  
• Would you like to walk down to CAPS/to the advocate with me?  
• Shall we call CAPS/the advocate to see if someone can see you right now?  
• Here’s the number for the sexual assault assistance line if you want to talk with someone anonymously, first.  
• How would you like for me to help?  
• I want to make you aware that I am here to help. I may not be able to keep everything we discuss in complete confidence. I may have to share this information with a small number of people on campus who can help. I do have an obligation to ensure that you can be connected to those on campus who can be of most help to you. | **Cautions**  
• **DO NOT make physical contact with student**  
• **DO NOT blame the victim, by saying:**  
  o Are you sure you didn’t misinterpret what she/he/they intended?  
  o How did you get yourself into a situation where this could happen?  
  o You wouldn’t want to get this other student in trouble, would you? |

**AdRx NOTES: Advisor Only Notes**  
_____ made some comments about a recent personal experience that led me to refer her/him/them to CAPS and to our Sexual Assault Education and Prevention Specialist (Campus Center 270, 317-274-2503). I also referred her/him/them to the website through which she/he/they could report the incident: [http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/report/iupui.html](http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/report/iupui.html)  
YOU MUST REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT TO THE CAMPUS DEPUTY TITLE IX OFFICIAL AT (317)274-4431.  

**NOTE:** Academic Advisors are considered both Campus Security Authorities under the Clery Act and Responsible Employees under Title IX. More information can be found on reporting obligations here: [http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/employee/index.html](http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/employee/index.html)  
Sexual misconduct includes sexual assault, rape, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, andexploitation.
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| G. Student presents with dilated or pinpoint pupils, slurred or rapid speech, and/or sweating profusely | • I notice that you’re talking rapidly and sweating profusely. Do you know why? Are you okay? This could be caused by several things and I’m concerned. Shall we walk to the health center?  
• I’m not sure I’m understanding what you’re saying. Could you repeat that more slowly?  
• You seem really upset. I want to help if I can. Help me understand what is going on for you right now.  
• Are you able to calm down enough for us to have a reasonable conversation?  
• Do you need to come back when you’re calmer?  
• I am willing to continue this conversation with you and demonstrate respect by maintaining a calm tone of voice; I’d like you to show me the same respect.  
• I need to ask you leave my office now (if student doesn’t calm down). | **Cautions**  
• **DO NOT make physical contact with student**  
• **DO NOT touch student or respond by saying:**  
  o You aren’t completing your sentences, you seem unfocused, and you aren’t responding to anything I’ve said. I think you have a mental problem.  
  o Given that you’re acting paranoid, I think you need psychological help, badly.  
  o Yes, I think someone is following you (support the delusion)  
  o There is no one there (countering the delusion)  
**AdRx NOTES: Advisor Only Notes**  
_____ was sweating profusely and talking rapidly. His/her/their eyes appeared to be unfocused. His/her/their speech was slurred. I mentioned that these things concerned me and suggested that we walk to CAPS. He/she/they said “__________” and agreed/declined to go to.*  
_____seemed confused and agitated, which led me to refer him/her/them to _______; we walked there.*  
_____seemed confused and agitated, which led me to refer him/her to CAPS. She/he/they declined so I called CAPS immediately after the appointment.*  
_____ was stumbling, talking incoherently, and seemed impaired; I contacted the campus police who intervened.  

* In all these cases it would also be appropriate to submit a concerned persons report at [http://bct.iupui.edu](http://bct.iupui.edu)  

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<th>H. Student appears agitated, demonstrates “disorganized” thinking, or makes comments that seem unduly suspicious (or paranoid)</th>
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| **I. Student is raising his/her/their voice, swearing, making accusatory or threatening comment** | **•** I understand you are very upset. If you can walk me through your situation, I might be able to help.  
 **•** Would it be helpful to take a break and we can schedule a time to meet tomorrow?  
 **•** It is not ok for you to continue to yell and swear. If you are able to talk more calmly, I am willing to continue this conversation.  
 **•** If you aren’t able to talk about this in a calm manner, I am going to ask you to leave.  
 **•** I’d like to get someone else who can help you. Hold on – I’ll be right back.  
  o Leave room  
  o Call campus police  
  o Do not re-enter room alone  
 **•** If student behaves in a threatening manner and you cannot get out of the room, say “I need to get some help in order to respond to your concerns” and:  
  o Send Lync message to _______ (containing pre-arranged emergency code)  
  o Press 911 on your phone | **Cautions**  
  **•** DO NOT make physical contact with student  
  **•** DO NOT touch student or respond by saying:  
  o (yelling) I won’t put up with this – get out of my office now!  
  o Shut up and get over it | **_____ raised his/her/their voice and stated “______” I asked him/her/them to calm down; after she/he/they did so, we continued our conversation**  
 **_____ raised his/her/their voice and stated “______” I asked him/her/them to calm down; she/he/they chose to leave the office, saying “______” I contacted IUPUI Police Department and my supervisor. I also submitted a concerned persons report at [http://bct.iupui.edu](http://bct.iupui.edu)**  
 **_____ raised his/her/their voice and stated “______” I asked him/her/them to calm down and communicate less emotionally; when she/he/they refused to do so and refused to leave the office, I contacted IUPUI Police and she/he/they were/were escorted from the office** | **_____ was carrying and displaying a gun/knife/weapon; I contacted the campus police who intervened** | **J. Student is carrying/displaying a gun/knife/weapon** | **•** I see that you’re carrying a gun. Did you know that, even if you have a license, you are not allowed to carry a gun on campus? I can’t continue our conversation until you take it off campus. (Contact IUPUI police anytime you see a weapon on campus)  
 **•** If student behaves in a threatening manner, say “I need to get some help in order to respond to your concerns” and/or “hold on, I’ll be right back” and:  
  o Leave room to get help; do not re-enter  
  o Call 317-274-7911  
 **•** If you cannot get out of the room, say “Let me contact someone who can better help with our concerns.”  
  o Send Lync message to colleague (pre-arrange an emergency code)  
  o Call IUPUI Police at 317-274-7911 | **Cautions**  
  **•** DO NOT make physical contact with student  
  **•** DO NOT try to grab the weapon, or say:  
  o (yelling) take that out of my office right now!  
  o Hey, you know you can’t have a gun in here – why don’t you just hand it to me?  
  o I can’t believe you brought a gun into my office! Are you out of your mind? | **_____ was carrying and displaying a gun/knife/weapon; I contacted the campus police who intervened** |
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| K. Student says that she/he has been partying or “out with friends” too much   | - It sounds like you’re saying that some of your social activities and choices are interfering with your other goals and priorities. Is that right?  
- I appreciate your openness and recognition that (these behaviors) seem to be a problem.  
- I’m wondering if you’d like some help in sorting out those priorities and creating a different balance in your life.  
- I know that they have numerous resources at CAPS for students in your situation.  
- You’ve taken the first step by admitting that you have a problem – good for you!  
- What resources have you tapped already?  
- Do you know about the other resources that CAPS provides? Let’s look at the website together.  
- Will you go over there by/on ____ and let me know how it goes? Or, would you rather that I walked down to CAPS with you right now?  
- Have you contacted CAPS?  
- It smells like you might have been using alcohol/marijuana prior to our meeting.  
- I’m concerned that use of alcohol/marijuana might impair your ability to perform well academically. | Cautions  
- **DO NOT make physical contact with student**  
- **DO NOT criticize the student by saying:**  
  - So, you’re drinking too much  
  - Well, you need to get some new friends  
  - You’ll never graduate from college if you keep this up  
  - Well, no wonder your grades are suffering  
  - It’s about time you figured this out  
  - That’s the problem with joining a fraternity  
  - Looks like you have an alcohol problem  
  - How much have you been drinking or drugging lately? |
| L. Student says that she/he has been using alcohol or drugs too much             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | **AdRx NOTES: Advisor Only Notes**                                                                                                                                                     |
| M. Student presents smelling like alcohol or pot                                | **___** made some comments about his/her/their habits and behavior that concerned me. I referred him/her/them to CAPS. We walked there together (OR, I gave him/her the contact information and she/he will follow up). | **_____** came to the advising appointment smelling of alcohol/marijuana. I expressed my concerns and referred him/her/them to CAPS. She/he/they said, “__________.”  
**_____** was stumbling, talking incoherently, and seemed impaired; I contacted the IUPUI Police who intervened |

**Overall Strategies on Next Page**
OVERALL STRATEGIES

Bookmark and review Protect IU: https://protect.iu.edu/index.html

REMEMBER: Advisors and Faculty are NOT expected to serve as therapists. It is appropriate to refer students to experts, whenever necessary.

SAFETY

- USE 317-274-7911 for emergencies
- Agree, with your colleagues, on an emergency code that can be sent via LYNC (so they can call 911)
- Contact Campus Police when you have a concern about someone’s safety or a crime. https://protect.iu.edu/police-safety/ij-police/campus-police/index.html
- Understand your role as a CSA (Campus Security Authority) https://protect.iu.edu/police-safety/clery/csa.html
- Review what you need to report to the campus Title IX official http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/employee/employee-faq.html

INTERACTIONS

1. Ask open-ended questions
2. Listen
3. Paraphrase to make sure you understand
4. Suggest/Recommend/Act
5. Document

BEAR IN MIND

- Before you type anything, ask yourself: As an academic advisor, what am I qualified to report? EXAMPLES: You are qualified to state what the student said and what you observed/smelled but you aren’t qualified to diagnose what it means.
- Put sensitive AdRx notes in Advisor Only Notes (any advisor at any IU campus can view them).
- If the student discloses a medical or psychological condition, you may put this in the notes as “_____ stated that . . .” Although you want to be sensitive in how you describe what the student said, this is not HIPAA protected if it’s disclosed to you by the student.
- If the student shows you medical or disability documentation, refer to it in your notes but ask the student to keep the documentation and/or help the student find out how to file the documentation with the appropriate person or office (CAPS, Student Health Services, AES, etc.).

OTHER POPULATION-SPECIFIC RESOURCES ON CAMPUS
The list below is not exhaustive; it merely serves as a reminder that sometimes students’ needs don’t rise to the level of CAPS resources. Sometimes a student would benefit from simply talking with a peer or staff member who really understands that student’s unique experiences and concerns.

- Office for Veterans and Military Personnel (OVMP): http://veterans.iupui.edu/
- Diversity Enrichment and Achievement Program (DEAP): https://deap.iupui.edu/
- LGBTQ+ Center: https://diversity.iupui.edu/offices/lgbtq/index.html
- Multicultural Center: https://diversity.iupui.edu/offices/mc/index.html
- 21st Century Scholars Success Program: http://21stcentury.uc.iupui.edu/