ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

KEY STRATEGIES AND CONTACTS AT OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE

IDENTIFY

Concerning behaviors:

- Notable changes in work/academic performance or social behavior
- Persistent fatigue
- Self-disclosure of personal distress
- Irritability or apathy
- Feelings of anxiety/panic
- Frequent absences/tardiness

Particularly concerning behaviors:

- Extreme emotionality
- Agitation, intense restlessness, hyperactivity
- Aggressive, threatening or intimidating behavior
- Impaired speech or disjointed, confused thoughts
- Paranoia or suspicious thinking
- Thoughts of suicide or homicidal behavior

→ These behaviors warrant immediate contact with the **24/7 Oxy Crisis Line, Emmons, and/or 911.**

Never worry alone!

APPROACH

Approach with **care** and **curiosity**; avoid punitive or threatening language →	"I've noticed you've been withdrawn and quiet lately, and I just wanted to ask you how you are doing."
Find a time and place you can speak to the person **one on one** →	"Hey there, can we take a walk this afternoon? Nothing is wrong, I just want to check in."
Bring awareness of your own triggers; it's **okay to ask for help** →	"I'd really like to talk with you more about this, but I don't think I'm the best person. I'm going to go get my supervisor/a colleague."
Do **not** promise confidentiality →	"Our conversation is private, unless there's a safety concern."
Remember the **boundaries** of your role; you're not a therapist →	"I'm sorry, but this is outside the scope of what I'm able to do. I would love to help connect you to Emmons."

Emmons WELLNESS CENTER
(323) 259-2657
oxy.edu/emmons

Oxy's 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Line: (323) 341-4141

ENGAGE

Emmons WELLNESS CENTER

Use active listening methods:

Be present	Put away devices, talk in a private or quiet area, and pay attention
Withhold judgement	Judgement can cause shame and shut down a conversation quickly
Ask open-ended questions	“What has felt hard recently?” “How have you been coping with everything?”
Reflect, clarify, and validate	“It sounds like you’ve been feeling alienated by your friends. Is that right?”
Respond to feelings, not content	You can validate someone’s feelings even if you disagree with their point of view
Summarize	"Thank you for sharing. Things have been really hard, but that you’re open to getting help. Sounds like you have a plan to call Emmons today.”

REFER

Is the student or someone else in immediate danger?

YES

Displaying reckless, dangerous, or threatening behavior, and/or has stated intent to harm themselves or others

Call 911 and Campus Safety at (323) 259-2599

NOT SURE

Displaying signs of emotional distress, or an interaction left you very worried about the student’s well-being

Call Emmons during business hours/the Oxy Crisis Line after hours for a clinical consultation

Submit a Care Report via my.oxy -> My Gateway -> Oxy Care Report

NO

Not concerned for the student’s safety, but they are having significant personal or academic troubles and need support

Refer to appropriate campus resource

Submit a Care Report via my.oxy -> My Gateway -> Oxy Care Report

Oxy’s 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Line: (323) 341-4141

- You can call the crisis line to consult with a licensed professional about a student
- They will first assess for safety and can activate emergency services and Oxy’s crisis response

“You deserve support. If you want, we can call or email Emmons/submit a Care report together.”

"I am worried about your safety. I'm going to call the crisis line/emergency services."