GUIDE TO MAKING A COUNSELING REFERRAL

AT SOME TIME, EVERY STUDENT FEELS STRESSED, ANXIOUS OR DEPRESSED.

However, when these feelings persist over a prolonged period there may be a problem which is greater than those faced by the general student population. The following will guide you in deciding if a student should be referred to counseling.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A TROUBLED STUDENT

A student in crisis may:

- Be agitated or even aggressive.
- May be withdrawn or uncommunicative.
- Speak incoherently with unconnected thoughts.
- May talk about suicide or not wanting to be alive.
  - DO NOT ignore such talk.

WHAT TO DO FOR A STUDENT IN CRISIS

IF AGGRESSIVE OR HOSTILE –

- Call 911 (University Police)
- Stay safe by whatever means necessary.

IF THE STUDENT IS SUICIDAL, UNCOMMUNICATIVE, OR INCOHERENT –

- Do not leave the student alone.
- Contact the University Police at 911.
- Stay with the student until help arrives.
- Reassure the student.
- Be calm, maintain eye contact and listen nonjudgmentally.

WHAT TO DO FOR A STUDENT WHO IS UPSET, BUT NOT SUICIDAL, VIOLENT, OR AGGRESSIVE

- Try to get the student to tell you what is troubling them.
- Listen carefully and without judging the student.
- If the student is willing to talk to a counselor, call MU Counseling Center at 717-871-7821 and ask for an appointment to speak with a counselor.
• You may also accompany the student to the Center if this would facilitate their seeking help.

OTHER WARNING SIGNS FOR A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

• Struggling academically
• Tearful
• Withdrawing from other contact with people
• Issues with hygiene or looking unkempt
• Not eating
• Lack of focus
• Depressed or anxious mood
• Increase in substance use
• Risky behavior

MAKING A REFERRAL TO COUNSELING CENTER

• If possible do not hold the discussion in a public place.
• Be calm, maintain eye contact, focus on what is said without making judgments.
• Validate the student's concerns as important.
• Inform student of the free and confidential counseling services on campus.
• Offer them your phone to make an appointment or even walk with them to the Counseling Center if the need is immediate.
• If they refuse a referral, accept their decision with respect. Say something like: "Please take the telephone number and should you change your mind you can reach specially trained people who have helped many other students."
• Remind students that the Center has “Walk-in” crisis hours from 1-3pm each weekday OR they can call the Center # if emergency.
• They can report any potentially endangering behavior, whether to themselves or others to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) on the website or at 717-871-7070.