

 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA	Chemical and Physical Sciences Department	Revision #	1
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RESPONSE GUIDE:

Identifying and Responding to Students in Distress

1. Purpose: To help department members identify and respond to students in distress.

2. Scope: This resource guide provides information about what to do and how to effectively respond to a student in distress. This guide includes examples of situations requiring immediate attention, referral, and/or reporting, as well as contact information for resources, both on and off campus.

3. Prerequisites: In addition to this guide, the University of Toronto's Identify, Assist, and Refer (IAR) online training is strongly recommended and can be accessed at <https://iar.utoronto.ca/main/>

4. Responsibilities: The Department of Chemistry believes it is the responsibility of all department members to respond to students in distress and refer them to appropriate resources on- or off-campus.

5. Procedure: In the examples below, department members are strongly encouraged to consult with the Course Instructor, Supervisor, or appropriate University administrators about the situation or student.

A Department member is behaving aggressively:

First, ensure your safety and that of other department members. Stay calm and set boundaries by explaining clearly and concisely what behaviours are acceptable. For example, you could say, "You certainly have the right to be angry, but using abusive language is not okay." If the situation is escalating, contact:

- **Campus Police (24/7; emergency)**
 - Phone: 905-569-4333
 - Website: police.utm@utoronto.ca

- **Peel Police (24/7; emergency)**
 - Phone: 911

A Department member or you are being bullied, threatened, or stalked:

The Community Safety Office provides assistance to those who are dealing with personal and/or workplace issues that impact their personal safety.

- **Walk Safer** (A student employed by Campus Police or a UTM Building Patroller will come to your location and escort you to your destination. They will wait with you for the bus if you wish.
 - Phone: (24/7) 905-569-4333
 - Website: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/campus-police/safety-programs/work-alone-walksafe-programs>

A student is exhibiting signs of being in distress:

You may notice one or several indicators that could suggest that a student is experiencing difficulty. Any single safety risk indicator (e.g., a student writes a paper expressing hopelessness) or a cluster of lesser signs (e.g., emotional outbursts, repeated absences) indicates a need to act to support the student. Do so outside the class/tutorial and remember: (1) **You should not be taking on the role of counsellor.** (2) **It is important to respond in ways that do not compromise anyone's safety.** If you believe that a student poses an immediate danger to her/himself, you, or others, contact campus police/Toronto police immediately.

- **Campus Police (24/7; emergency)**
 - Phone: 905-569-4333
 - Website: police.utm@utoronto.ca
- **Peel Police (24/7; emergency)**
 - Phone: 911
- **Student Crisis Response** (Available to consult with staff and faculty concerned about a student in distress or difficulty)
 - Phone: 416-946-7111 (9:00am – 5:00pm);
- **Health & Counselling Centre** (Confidential mental health and physical health services provided by an interdisciplinary team of health professionals)
 - Phone: 905-828-5255 (Mo, Tue, Fri 9:00am – 4:30pm; Wed, Thu 9:00am – 7:30pm; Summers hours: check website)
 - Website: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/health/our-services>

A department member is making unwelcome sexual overtures to you or another student:

If you or a student is experiencing sexual harassment, sexual violence or sexual assault by another member of the U of T community, you should immediately seek advice from the Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre.

- **Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre**
 - Phone: 416-978-2266

- Website: www.svpscentre.utoronto.ca

A department member or you are facing online harassment:

If you get a message online from a member of the U of T community that upsets, annoys or frightens you, do not respond immediately. Your first reply to the sender should be a brief and courteous request to stop. If the unwelcoming messages persist, do not reply to them. Do not delete them—save them and make a hard copy. Seek advice from the Community Safety Office and/or the Sexual Violence Prevention & Support Centre.

- **The Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre**
 - Phone: 416-978-2266
 - Website: www.svpscentre.utoronto.ca

A student asks for accommodation:

Students with disabilities may receive accommodation from the University and need to register with accessibility services on their campus. Course Instructors and TAs are notified with a request for accommodation and can give the request consideration. For best practices around accommodations, visit Accessibility Services.

- **Accessibility Services**
 - Phone: 905-569-4699
 - Website: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/>

6. Additional Resources:

Campus Resources:

- **Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre** (Helps with navigating the University, building academic skills, staying focused and organized, and flourishing)
 - Phone: 905-828-3858
 - Website: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/our-mission>
- **Good-2-Talk Student Helpline** (Professional counselling, information, and referrals helpline for mental health, addictions, and students' well-being)
 - Phone: 1-866-925-5454 (24/7)
 - Website: <https://good2talk.ca/>

Community Resources:

- **Anishnawbe Health Toronto Mental Health Crisis Line** (Improves health & wellbeing with Anishnawbe Health Toronto traditional healers, Elders and medicine people, and other health professionals)
 - Phone: 416-360-0486 or 416-920-2605
 - Website: <http://www.aht.ca>
- **Assaulted Women's Helpline** (Offers a 24-hour telephone and TTY crisis line to all women who have experienced abuse)
 - Phone: 1-866-863-0511 (24/7)

- Website: www.awhl.org/home
- **Distress Centres** (Provides crisis and emotional support as well as suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention services)
 - Phone: 416-408-4357 (24/7)
 - Website: <https://www.torontodistresscentre.com/>
- **Drug & Alcohol Helpline** (Provides confidential and free information about drug and alcohol addiction services in Ontario)
 - Phone: 1-800-565-8600 (24/7)
 - Website: <https://www.ementalhealth.ca/>
- **Gerstein Centre Mental Health Crisis Line** (Provides mental health crisis support, strategies for addressing immediate problems, and connections to services offering support)
 - Phone: 416-929-5200; TTY-416-929-9647 (24/7)
 - Website: <http://gersteincentre.org/>
- **LGBTQ Youthline** (Confidential, non-judgmental & informed LGBTTQQ2SI peers support)
 - Phone: 1-800-268-9688 (24/7)
 - Website: <https://www.youthline.ca/>
- **Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Care Centre** (A comprehensive service that assists women, men, and trans people who are victims/survivors of sexual assault and domestic/intimate partner violence)
 - Phone: 416-891- 8606
 - Website: <https://www.womenscollegehospital.ca/programs-and-services/sexual-assault-domestic-violence-care-centre/>
- **Toronto Rape Crisis Centre Crisis Line** (A grassroots, women and non-binary run collective working towards a violence-free world by providing anti-oppressive, feminist peer support to survivors of sexual violence through support, education, and activism)
 - Phone: 416-597-8808 (24/7)
 - Website: <https://trccmwar.ca/>

Online Resources:

- **Big White Wall** (An online chat-based mental health and well-being service offering self-help programs, creative outlets, and a community that cares)
 - Website: <https://www.bigwhitewall.ca/>
- **Bounce Back Ontario** (A free skills-building program designed to help adults and youth manage symptoms of depression and anxiety)
 - Phone: 1-866-345-0224
 - Website: <https://bouncebackontario.ca/>

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SOP-Material taken from: University of Toronto “Identify, Assist, Refer” Training Module (2018) and “Fostering Safe, Equitable, an Accessible Learning Environments,” Teaching Assistants’ Training Program (2018).

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