



Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

Recognizing and Helping Students in Distress: A Guide for Faculty, Staff and Administration to Assist Students in Need at Trinity

**Trinity College Counseling and Wellness Center
135 Allen Place, Hartford, CT 06106
860-297-2415**

<https://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/HealthWellness/counseling/>

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Recognizing and Helping Students in Distress

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August, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

The Counseling and Wellness Center is beginning our fifty-sixth year this fall, having been in existence since 1963. We are available to all Trinity students at no charge. We typically see about 40% of the student body each year, and most students who come to the Counseling and Wellness Center do so of their own accord. However, sometimes they are referred by others. Faculty and staff members who have frequent contact with students are often in an excellent position to identify troubled students and assist them in obtaining appropriate help. A student might directly confide their concerns to you; another student might share concerns about a classmate or roommate; or through observing the student's behavior you might infer that they are emotionally distressed.

Our students struggle with anxiety, depression, stress-related disorders, eating disorders, physical illnesses, family and relational problems, financial crises, learning disabilities, and other significant challenges. Of course, all of these have the potential to significantly affect their academic performance. It is easy to feel overmatched by the challenges our students may present. Recent news events and tragedies (both on and off college campuses) such as Orlando, Sacramento, or right here in Connecticut in the tragic Newtown shootings of 2014, have also given rise to concerns about early identification of students in trouble.

Also, since Trinity, like all colleges and universities, complies with the 1973 Americans with Disabilities Act, many faculty members have had questions about how these accommodations affect their classes and what their responsibilities are with regard to students with special accommodations.

While we in the Counseling and Wellness Center frequently consult with faculty and administrators on these and many other matters, we believe it is helpful to collect much of this information in an accessible document that we hope can answer many of these questions, provide information on helping students who face emotional difficulties, and to describe how faculty members and administrative staff can help by referring students to the Center, something many of you do frequently, for which we are grateful. Your work with students involves honest and compassionate conversation that ultimately helps a student in trouble find understanding, support, and the appropriate services they need.

This document is the ninth edition of what has become an annually revised and updated publication. It is also available online on the Counseling and Wellness Center web site. If you have questions, concerns, suggestions about topics that should be included in the next revision, we encourage you to be in touch with us. We hope to provide the information in as succinct but complete a manner as possible and we invite your feedback.

Thank you,

Randolph M. Lee, Ph.D., Director

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Counseling and Wellness Center General Information

About the Counseling and Wellness Center

The Counseling and Wellness Center provides a full range of counseling and psychological services at no cost to all students who desire assistance in coping with personal and emotional difficulties and social relationships. In addition to counseling and psychotherapy, we offer medication consultation and evaluation for students who are in counseling or psychotherapy with our professional staff, referral to off-campus providers where indicated or requested, as well as other services.

The Counseling and Wellness Center staff members are also available to consult with staff, faculty members and administrators, including but not limited to those who interact with students after hours (AOCs) on how to deal with emotionally distressed and/or distressing students.

The Counseling and Wellness Center can provide help with problems such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, sexual assault, stress management, social adjustment issues, homesickness, alcohol and drug issues, eating disorders and concerns, identity issues, relationship problems, and grief and anger management, to name just a few examples.

The Center is also responsible for the evaluation of documentation submitted to the College requesting special academic accommodations for identified learning disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In conjunction with the Coordinator of Accessibility Resources, our recommendations are forwarded to the Dean of Students who officially grants the accommodations.

Members of the Center staff are available to talk on a variety of issues for classes, residence halls, fraternities and sororities, athletic teams, and other faculty, student, or administrative groups. Some topics presented in the past include mindfulness and meditation, depression and anxiety, eating disorders, coping with stress, test anxiety, alcohol and drug use, suicide, date rape, assertiveness training, adults with ADHD, learning disorders, and coping with grief.

The Counseling and Wellness Center is staffed by four licensed psychologists: Randolph Lee, Ph.D. (Director), Kristine A. Kennen, Psy.D. (Associate Director), Sarah M. Kopencey, Psy.D. and one person to be hired this summer, three clinical social workers, T'Kai Howard, LCSW, Maryam Parvez, LCSW, and Erica Ronald, LCSW, one post-doctoral fellow, and two advanced graduate students in the Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Hartford. Our medication consultations are managed by Eliza Hedegaard, APRN who is available for medication consultations for students who are in active therapy with one of the members of the Center staff.

Making a Referral

The Center is located at 135 Allen Place, accessible from the rear of the Campus Safety parking lot. Our telephone number is 860-297-2415. To make an appointment a student may call our office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and Ms. Kate Morrell, our office coordinator, will help to set up an appointment. Students may also access us via email, but should phone us directly to arrange an appointment, since,

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when a request is made by email for a time, if we respond with available times, they may get booked before the student can reply. Also, students usually feel more committed to the process if they make the appointment themselves and are more likely to show up for the appointment they make, so it is our policy not to permit others (faculty, friends, parents, deans, etc.) to make appointments for students. For this same reason, the Counseling and Wellness Center will not call students into the office.

In some instances, faculty and staff who are making a referral to the Counseling and Wellness Center might remain with the student while they make the phone call to set the appointment or they may even accompany the student to the Counseling and Wellness Center if there is urgency and they wish to make sure the student physically contacts us.

We sometimes get calls from students or faculty and staff on students' behalf requesting a specific member of our staff. While we realize that this is always done with the best intentions, there are often reasons why this may not be in the student's best interest, and the faculty member has no way of knowing that. For example, scheduling issues, or conflict of interests with friends of a student who may be seeing one of the staff members, may make your specific request inappropriate, and we are not always able to tell you that for reasons of confidentiality. While we try to be as responsive as possible to such requests, we ask your understanding in letting us make the decision about who will see a student. Of course, we value your input about this issue, but there may be other reasons that we cannot discuss with you for a different choice.

Usually an appointment can be set up for no later than the next few days, although in busy periods, or if a student wishes an appointment with a specific person or at a specific time of day, there may be a longer wait before a time can be scheduled. If a student is in crisis, we will ALWAYS arrange to see him or her very quickly, immediately if necessary. Regular appointments are routinely scheduled from 9:00 am with the last regular one scheduled at 4:00 pm but may be made as early as 8:00 a.m. or as late as 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Of course, our staff can also be reached by email.

Availability

The Counseling and Wellness Center has a longstanding policy of being available to students and staff without difficulty. Unlike almost any other college or university, we have routinely provided our cell phone numbers on our voicemail messages so that students, faculty, administration, and staff can reach any of us as needed within a very short time for urgent situations or consultation. Whereas most colleges require that after-hours consultation be made with a single "on-call" staff member or, increasingly, a third-party service, we have provided extended "on-call" availability for over half a century with direct access to a Counseling and Wellness Center staff member. Our regular patients know this and have immediate access to our cell phones.

In almost all cases, the first person on the published schedule will be available either immediately or within a very short time, and if necessary, the second person on the list can be called. If the person you call does not answer immediately, please leave a message with some detail (including the name of the student about whom you are calling if possible). This allows us to determine if a specific member of our

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staff should return the call, depending on the situation. But note that any staff member may be contacted at any time with urgent consultation needs. Also, if a student indicates he or she is in treatment with a particular staff member and wishes that person to be contacted, that person may be called.

Important notes:

- If a student is in obvious and immediate risk of harm to self or others, transportation to hospital should be made immediately without waiting for contact with our staff.
- Confidentiality and privileged communication laws prevent us from confirming or denying to a caller whether a particular student is a current patient.
- When a student is admitted to the hospital, the hospital understands (and should be reminded) that it should be in touch with the Counseling and Wellness Center before discharge to facilitate discharge planning and follow-up.
- Of course, in any immediate and life-threatening emergency, emergency responders (Campus Safety, fire, police, ambulance) should always be contacted first.

Confidentiality

According to professional ethics, as well as Connecticut and federal law, except in circumstances of imminent life-threatening danger, all contact with the Counseling and Wellness Center is privileged and confidential. Information about whether a student is in counseling, and information communicated to the Counseling and Wellness Center staff by a student cannot be disclosed to anyone outside the Counseling and Wellness Center without written consent from the student.

We understand that at times, this may seem strange: If you have expressed concern for the well-being of a student whom you have referred to the Counseling and Wellness Center, we understand that you may want to know how he or she is doing. In this case, most often simply following up with the student and asking if she or he contacted the Center will provide you with the confirmation that the student is seeking services. Students may also sign a release of information so that relevant information may be shared with you that could help the student academically.

Consultation

If you suggest that a student come to the Center, and she or he declines, we are still happy to talk with you about your concerns, offer general advice, and suggest ways that you may be able to encourage the student to come in, at least for one session. It is actually often the case that the student whom you want to refer may already be coming. While we cannot let you know this without the student's permission, we can still talk with you in general about your concerns and about the kinds of issues that you may be seeing in your student.

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What to Look For

Many faculty and staff have asked what the most frequent signs of emotional distress are. When should you be concerned? What should you look for?

While, of course, there are no absolutes, and while some students exhibit few obvious signs of distress and can be quite distressed while others can appear to act in some unusual ways who may not be in distress at all, we offer some general observations.

The following signs may help identify those in need of professional counseling:

- The student remains distressed despite repeated attempts by you and others to be helpful.
- The student becomes more isolated, unkempt, irritable or disconnected.
- The student's academic or social performance deteriorates, despite your efforts to be supportive.
- The student's behavior reflects an increased sense of hopelessness or helplessness.
- You find yourself doing ongoing counseling rather than academic consultation or advising.
- The student shows significant and marked changes in behavior and mood, in either direction.

What to avoid:

- Do not ignore or trivialize warning signs of potential mental health problems.
- Do not intentionally or unintentionally become the student's therapist or rescuer.
- Do not give in to inappropriate requests that may allow the student to avoid the problem.

Distressed vs. Distressing Students

It may be helpful to clarify the difference between students who are in emotional distress from those whose behavior is distressing to others. Students who are in distress are experiencing emotional pain, which may be generated by internal or external factors. A distressed student may appear highly distracted, publicly tearful, withdrawn, anxious, irritable, and hypersensitive, may be missing classes or may openly state they are having problems. Distressed students can certainly be referred to the Center and generally find counseling helpful in addressing their concerns.

Students who are distressing, on the other hand, are those who cause distress for other people (e.g., instructors, classmates, administrators, roommates), due to their inappropriate behavior. Examples of such behaviors include disruptive outbursts in class, inappropriate expressions of anger, threats of harm to self or others, etc. It is appropriate for faculty and/or staff to alert their department heads and/or the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156) regarding these students if approaching them directly and expressing concern does not seem possible.

The most complicated situations involve students who are both distressed and distressing. Sometimes they may not be fully aware of how others perceive them or how their behavior impacts others. These students should also receive appropriate intervention through their academic department and/or the Dean of Students Office. The Counseling and Wellness Center is available for consultations regarding the possible need for psychological intervention. These students should also be encouraged to seek

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counseling. When working with these challenging students it is important to seek consultation and to know your own limits. The Counseling and Wellness Center can provide you with some helpful consultation.

When and How to Intervene

Students may reveal to you directly that they are emotionally distressed, or you may simply notice that there have been changes in their behavior that indicate some distress. Depending on how you become aware of the problems, you may or may not choose to approach the student. This decision depends on such factors as what behaviors are concerning you, how troubled the student seems to be, your relationship with him or her, how approachable the student seems to be, as well as your personality style and feelings about intervening.

If you believe the student might be open to discussing her or his concerns with you, generally the best approach involves letting the student know that you've noticed that she/he seems upset lately, and you're interested in helping him or her if they wish to talk to you about it. Asking a student if they have been struggling will not make them worse. Keep your comments "open-ended" rather than asking questions that can be answered with a simple "yes or no" response.

Be aware that some students may reject your efforts, may deny any troubles, and/or may feel intruded upon. Generally speaking, most students will feel appreciative of your interest and concern and your contact with them might be an important step toward them dealing with their problems. If you have questions or concerns about approaching a particular student, feel free to call the Counseling and Wellness Center for help.

Responding to Students Who Confide in You

The most appropriate response to students who disclose their personal concerns to you is to:

- Empathize with the feelings being expressed. Try to understand what the student is saying from his/her perspective (which does not mean you have to agree with that perspective). Be as genuinely supportive as feels appropriate to you.
- Keep your own limits in mind; for example, don't get more involved in the student's life than is comfortable.
- Except in cases where you may reasonably suspect that there is a potential for self-harm or danger to others, a student has the right to refuse treatment.
- When you sense reluctance, encourage the use of the Counseling and Wellness Center by suggesting that others have found it helpful, it's free and easy to get an appointment and they may want to at least try going for one session.
- Check back with the student to see if they are doing better, especially when they have declined the initial suggestion of treatment.

Remember, whenever you are in doubt, the therapists at the Counseling and Wellness Center are available for consultation, which can be done over the telephone or in person. Feel free to call upon us

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with your concerns. You as faculty are a valuable referral resource and we want to work with you in any way we can.

Counseling and Wellness Center Staff, 2019-2020

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Kate Morrell, Office Manager (297-2415)

Eliza Hedegaard, APRN, Psychiatric Consultant (860-297-2415)

Web Site: <https://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/HealthWellness/counseling/>

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Responding to Students in Emotional Distress

Responding to Anxiety

One of the most common problems facing college students is anxiety. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders affect forty million adults (18% of the U.S. population), but only about one-third of those receive treatment. Certainly, the added pressures of being in a new environment, being away from home and the stress of wanting to do well in college can overwhelm some people. Anxiety disorders are among the most common or frequently occurring mental disorders. Typically, anxiety disorders involve disturbances in mood, thinking, behavior and physiological activity. In the college student they may take many forms. Often, they present as adjustment disorders with anxious features, test/performance anxiety, social phobia, and substance induced anxiety disorders. Like depression, anxiety disorders and panic disorders often run in families. Therefore, genetics, biochemical and environmental factors may all be involved. It is important to remember that with help the symptoms are treatable and one can learn alternative ways of coping with anxiety. It may help to tell students not to try to pretend that it will simply go away on its own.

Of course, some mild anxiety is appropriate regarding certain events like an exam, an important or new event like an interview or speaking in front of an audience. It usually causes one to become more alert and to be prepared. However, when the worry or anxiety becomes overwhelming and interfere with one's daily living and ability to cope effectively, then it is unhealthy and may require the intervention of a mental health professional. Panic attacks may be one way in which these overwhelming feelings of anxiety are expressed. Panic attacks are usually brief episodes of intense fear that present with physiological symptoms, such as heart palpitations, dizziness, stomach discomfort, etc., that occur unexpectedly in the absence of any external threat. They can occur in conjunction with social phobia, generalized anxiety and major depression. Often an individual will recognize that the fear they are experiencing is excessive or unreasonable. However, they are unable to cope with the anxiety that is generated. At least two unexpected panic attacks with persistent concern or worry about further attacks, changes in one's behavior to avoid or minimize the attacks that create difficulty in daily functioning is often a sign that there can be significant anxiety underlying the attacks. It is best to seek treatment early to help prevent it from progressing to later stages.

There are many types of treatment approaches for dealing with anxiety, including various stress reduction and relaxation approaches, psychotherapy, and medication. If you suspect that a student is struggling with anxiety, referring them to the Counseling and Wellness Center for support may help motivate them to seek out treatment.

Responding to Depression

Depression is often misunderstood but is more than just feeling blue or the usual ups and downs of everyday living. It is a major problem in our society, on college campuses and elsewhere. The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that over sixteen million people (7% of the U.S. population) had at least one major depressive episode in the United States last year, and about 20% of those develop

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psychotic symptoms. It is a very treatable condition. However, if left untreated, the symptoms may worsen and ultimately be more resistant to treatment. Most depressions are not something that you can simply “snap out of.” It is often this very notion of feeling "down or blue" and unable to get yourself out of the slump that alerts people to the possibility that there is more going on that requires intervention.

Some of the most common symptoms include: a prolonged sense of sadness or moodiness, irritability or anger, anxiety, difficulty sleeping which may include sleeping too much, having difficulty falling asleep, early morning awakening, etc.; loss of appetite or an increase in appetite; difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, lack of desire or motivation to engage in usually pleasurable activities, social withdrawal, chronic worry, feelings of despair, hopelessness and possibly thoughts of suicide. If someone is experiencing feelings of hopelessness and thoughts of suicide they need immediate attention. If any of the other symptoms have persisted for more than two weeks on a fairly consistent basis, then counseling is strongly recommended.

All the causes of depression are not known, however, there are biological and emotional factors that can increase the likelihood that someone might develop depression. Research has shown that there is a genetic component to depression and that it does run in families. Certain life events may trigger a depressive episode such as losses and separations like deaths, moving away, divorce, romantic break-ups, sexual, physical or emotional abuse, chronic illnesses, abuse of alcohol and drugs. There are also certain medical conditions and medications that can also cause a depression such as thyroid disorders, diabetes, and some others. An unrecognized depression can lead to poor academic and work performance. Students may at times find that they do not have the energy or motivation to attend classes, or they may find it difficult to concentrate or focus on their work.

The Counseling and Wellness Center can help students sort out what may be going on and provide appropriate help. If you sense the student is hesitant about seeking out treatment, telling them that other students with similar struggles have experienced success with treatment may help motivate them to get help.

Responding to Eating Disorders

While many college students know something about the major eating disorders, anorexia nervosa (restricting food) and bulimia nervosa (purging, often with bingeing), there is also much misinformation available. Also, there are other important eating issues that cause problems for many students.

Eating disorders can be confusing and misunderstood by parents, faculty, peers, and even the student her or himself. (While more women than men struggle with eating disorders, 15% are male.)

Here are some general facts about eating disorders:

- The causes of the eating disorder usually are present years before there are symptoms
- Individuals with significant eating disorders are not being stubborn or controlling – they really can not easily stop the behaviors even though they often want desperately to do so.

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- Talking with a student about what you notice will not make them worse.
- Even if a student denies that there is a problem, expressing concern in a supportive, non-judgmental way can often lead later to them getting some help.
- Students struggling with eating disorders often have a secondary problem with depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or other emotional disorder.
- Students who you believe have lost a significant amount of weight or who may be purging (with vomiting, laxative abuse, etc.) excessively (often multiple times each day) should be brought to the attention of the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415), the Health Center (860-297-2018), or the Dean of Students (860-297-2156), since these conditions can be very serious physically and can ultimately lead to serious medical complications (e.g., sterility, heart disease, kidney or liver disease, or death).
- At the same time, students may often experience these disorders and remain in generally acceptable health, so it is often a difficult issue to get them into treatment, since they have a right to refuse treatment of any kind unless they are in imminent danger.

The Counseling and Wellness Center is happy to consult with faculty about questions they have. Again, please understand that we can not discuss specific students, nor indicate that a particular student is or is not in treatment in the Center without a specific release signed by the student.

Responding to Psychotic Disorders

In relatively rare cases, students at Trinity as elsewhere may experience a psychotic episode and become quite detached from reality. This detachment may take the form of responding to hallucinations, delusions, or other seemingly strange behaviors. Here, as in all cases, if there is imminent danger to the student or someone else, call 911 or Campus Safety first, erring always on the side of caution. In the absence of apparent imminent danger, the Counseling and Wellness Center will provide whatever help is required and will help mobilize the resources appropriate to the situation. When you call the Counseling and Wellness Center, be sure to tell the person who answers the nature of the situation and your sense of its urgency.

Responding to Suicide Possibility

Sometimes emotional distress may become seriously debilitating and can lead to self-destructive thoughts and behaviors as a way of escaping emotional pain. Although suicide is a rare event, it is the second leading cause of death among college students. Suicidal states are often associated with major depression, acute anxiety with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder. Those who abuse alcohol or drugs have an increased risk of causing serious harm to themselves, including death even if their intentions were just to make a gesture. A student who confides in someone that he or she is feeling suicidal is often ambivalent about suicide and open to discussion and help. Those at high risk usually have a specific plan (and may refuse to tell you their plan), have the lethal means (e.g., medication, weapons, etc.) and tend to be or feel isolated.

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What to look for:

Any expression of suicidal thoughts which may be verbal or in written material:

- Pessimistic view of the future
- Intense feelings of hopelessness, especially in combination with anxiety, feelings of alienation and isolation.
- Frequent talk of death as a means of escape from distress
- Previous suicide attempts
- Personal or family history of depression and/or suicide attempts
- Substance abuse
- History of self-mutilation

What you can do:

- All threats of suicide should be taken seriously (do not assume this is just attention seeking behavior)
- Talk to the student in private or in a secure area
- Listen attentively and empathically (this does not have to mean you agree with their perspective)
- Keep your own limits in mind; don't get more involved in the student's life than is comfortable or appropriate
- Generally speaking, those who engage in self-harming behaviors like cutting, burning, etc., are not actively suicidal but are still in need of treatment.
- Remain calm and take the lead, ask the student directly about feelings and plans
- Asking them about suicide will not put the idea in their head if it is not there already
- Express care and concern, and assure the student that you will help them reach a professional.
- Call Campus Safety (860-297-2222) and/or 911 if the student is in immediate danger, the student will be taken to the emergency room for evaluation
- Escort the student to the Counseling and Wellness Center if possible for immediate attention
- If you feel overwhelmed or unprepared to help a student that you think may be suicidal, call the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156) or the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415).

What to avoid:

- Minimizing the situation. All threats must be taken seriously.
- Arguing with a suicidal student about the merits of living
- Allowing friends to assume responsibility for the student without getting input from a professional.
- Assuming the family knows that the student has suicidal thoughts or is in this much distress.

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Responding to Aggressive, Threatening or Potentially Violent Students

Aggression may involve vague or specific threats to harm, verbal abuse and intimidation and physical abuse as well as property violence. Statements or behaviors that cause you to feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or in any way troubled are potential warning signs. It is very difficult to predict aggression and violence. However, the following may be possible indicators of potential violence:

- Paranoia and/or mistrust
- Prior history of violence or abuse
- History of substance abuse
- Impulse control problems
- Talk of violence or revenge comments
- Fascination with weapons
- Writings that over focus on violence or seem inappropriately out of context

What you can do:

- Assess your level of safety. Call 911 or Campus Safety (860-297-2222) if you feel any immediate danger.
- If you feel comfortable and that it's appropriate to stay with the student, remain in an open area with a visible means of escape
- Enlist the help of a co-worker or other available person.
- In a calm but firm manner explain to the student the behaviors that are unacceptable and offer them the opportunity to talk it through with a third party.
- Stay calm and set limits, it will convey that you are in control.
- Use a time-out strategy if the student remains agitated or uncooperative (ask them to reschedule a meeting at a later time when both of you have had a chance to calm down and think things over)
- Make sure a rescheduled meeting is done with the assistance of someone or in a neutral setting.
- Consult with the Dean of Student's Office (860-297-2156) or the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415)

What to avoid:

- Remaining in a situation in which you feel unsafe.
- Meeting alone or in a crowded space with a student who is threatening or aggressive.
- A dismissive demeanor, best to convey that you recognize they are upset.
- Do not engage in a discussion or behaviors that may escalate anxiety or aggression.
- Ignoring signs that a student's anger is escalating.
- Ignoring a gut feeling that you are in danger.

Responding to Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual contact that is initiated against a person without consent. Informed consent can not be given by an individual who is intoxicated or otherwise incapacitated. Prior sexual contact or

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consent does not imply ongoing future consent. Initial expressions of interest or flirtation do not constitute consent. Although most sexual assaults are committed by men against women, men can be assaulted by women and same-sex assaults also occur. Sexual assault may include any of the following:

- Completed or attempted rape
- Threats of rape
- Sexual coercion
- Unwanted sexual contact with force or threat of force
- Unwanted sexual contact without consent including inappropriate touching, talk or behaviors such as exposing oneself, etc.

What you can do:

- Listen empathically and without judgment, be aware that victims can feel much shame and anger
- Ask if they feel they are still in danger from the perpetrator(s), and if so, you or the student should contact campus safety (860-297-2222) and/or the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156).
- If the assault was recent, ask the student if they need immediate medical attention and refer them to the Health Center (860-297-2018) or emergency room.
- Refer to or escort the student to the Counseling and Wellness Center or the Women and Gender Resource Action Center (860-297-2408) for assistance.
- Ask that a SART member (Sexual Assault Response Team) accompany the person to needed services. Students may also call the New Britain YWCA/SACS (888-999-5545) who will send a volunteer to the hospital as an advocate for the student.
- Let the student know that they have options about reporting, getting help, etc., that can be discussed and be open to the possibility that the student may not want to report
- If the student needs help in dealing with academic issues as a result of the assault, or if they want to know more about their options, call the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156).

What to avoid:

- Expressing judgment even when high-risk behaviors on the part of the victim were involved (e.g., intoxication)
- Pressuring the student to call the police or take specific action

Responding to students who are victims of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as non-consensual sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other sexually related verbal or physical conduct on or off campus, when submission is made a condition of an individual's education or employment, or adversely interferes or with a person's education or employment. Trinity College affirms and upholds a policy which rejects the abuse of power through sexual harassment of students by faculty and discourages amorous relationships between faculty and

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students especially when the faculty member has responsibility for the student through teaching, advising, departmental, committee, or other professional obligations (*Trinity College Handbook*).

What you can do:

- Listen without judgment.
- Ask the student to speak candidly with the Dean of Faculty or the Dean of Students.
- Refer them to the Counseling and Wellness Center.
- Refer them to the Ombudsperson.
- Refer them to the Women and Gender Resource Action Center.
- Let them know that all informal communication will be verbal and one-on-one without confrontation of the faculty member, until a formal complaint is made using the guidelines found in Appendix A.4 of the Faculty Manual.

What to avoid:

- Making judgments about the student or the faculty/staff member
- Minimizing the situation
- Choosing sides
- Talking with others about discussions held in confidence

Responding to Victims of an Abusive Dating Relationship

Abusive relationships:

- are more prevalent in a student population than many think
- can include emotional, physical, and sexual abuse
- are often characterized by extreme jealousy, intense anger, sexual coercion, verbal abuse, threats of abuse, physical violence, power and control games
- typically worsen over time
- typically escalates if the abuser perceives a threat to the relationship

Cycle of Abuse



Image Courtesy of www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

Warning signs

- Evidence of jealous, controlling, or possessive behavior
- Evidence of isolation from family and/or friends

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- Evidence of alcohol or drug use or abuse in one or both parties
- History of other abusive relationships
- Family and friends have verbalized concern about the relationship
- Evidence of worry about partner's possible reactions to things and assuming responsibility for their behaviors
- Evidence of angry outbursts or rage by partner
- Evidence of fear of abandonment by partner
- Evidence of a pattern of many break ups with the partner or fear of leaving the relationship

What you can do

- Arrange to meet with the student one on one
- Verbalize concern about the student's well-being and safety
- Understand that the student may not recognize the relationship as abusive
- Understand that there is often a significant level of denial that is very difficult to change
- Refer the student to the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415) or to a SART member.
- Encourage the student to gain support from friends and family

What to avoid

- Minimizing the situation
- Expecting the student to terminate the relationship
- Pressuring the student to take action

Responding to Substance Abuse

Signs that a student may have an alcohol problem may include:

- Failure to fulfill major work, home, or school obligations
- Poor work performance as indicated by class absences, low grades, or school related disciplinary problems
- Recurrent use of alcohol despite concerns by friends or family
- Use of alcohol in potentially dangerous situations, such as driving
- Legal troubles related to use of alcohol, such as being arrested for driving while intoxicated or arrested for fighting while intoxicated
- Continued use despite academic or social problems
- Changes in mood, such as depression or irritability
- Physical or mental difficulties, such as poor memory, inability to concentrate, bloodshot eyes, slurring of speech, or uncoordinated movement

Signs that a student may have drug problem may include:

- Evidence of withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, tremors, headaches, anxiety, sleep difficulties, or agitation

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- Neglecting school and/or work obligations
- Using the drug rather than engaging in other activities
- Engaging in high risk behaviors while under the influence of the drug
- Continued use despite academic or social problems
- Legal troubles related to the use of the drug, such as arrests for driving under the influence of the drug or breach of peace.

What you can do

- Treat the situation as serious
- Express your concern about what behaviors and/or changes you have observed
- Verbalize your concern for the student's well-being and safety
- Encourage the student to seek help
- Understand that substance users typically are in a state of denial and are unable to recognize or fully comprehend the seriousness of their use or potential life threatening consequences
- Refer the student to the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415)

Responding to Hate Crimes/Incidents

- Defined as “a crime which in whole or part is motivated by the offender's bias toward the victim's status” (Community Relations Service, 2000)
- A hate incident is “an action in which a person is made aware that her/his status is offensive to another, but does not rise to the level of a crime” (Community Relations Service, 2000)
- Motivation is to hurt or intimidate an individual(s)
- Use of verbal threats, physical violence, vandalism, or even weapons to incite fear in individuals because of their race, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation

What you can do

- Arrange to meet with the student one on one
- Understand that they will likely experience a range of feelings including anger, shame, and distress
- Report the incident to the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156)
- Explain to the student the importance of notifying Campus Safety, either directly, or by having the complaint-taker notify Campus Safety.
- Provide emotional support to the student by listening empathically to their experience
- Be aware of Trinity College's Safe Zone Program, which creates safe spaces for individuals in the community to seek information, resources and open-minded people. Over 300 faculty, staff, administration and students have participated in Safe Zone trainings, and display a Safe Zone sticker on their office/dorm door.
- Refer the student to the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415), their academic advisor, the Chaplain's Office (860-297-2013), or the Multicultural Affairs Office (860-297-4251) as appropriate

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What to avoid

- Minimizing the significance of this situation
- Assuming that you understand what they are experiencing based on something you experienced in your own life
- Getting caught up in the legalities of the situation

Responding to Victims of Hazing

Some basic information about hazing

- Hazing is strictly prohibited at Trinity College.
- Hazing has been defined by the College as: “any action or situation involving a pledge, new or associate member, affiliate, guest, or neophyte of any student organization or athletic team that produces mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule.”
- Hazing behaviors can lead to physical or emotional injuries. In serious cases, hazing has led to death.
- A student may be unaware that what is going on is considered hazing.
- Alcohol is often involved.
- Some examples of hazing incidents include sexual coercion, beatings, binge drinking, use of illicit substances, restrictions on sleep, eating, or hygiene, being required to be a personal servant, activities that interfere with academic pursuits, or public humiliation.
- Hazing is illegal in the state of Connecticut.

What you can do

- Arrange to meet with the student one on one
- Understand that the student may not label the behaviors as hazing or may be hesitant to report what is happening
- Encourage the student to report what is happening to the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156) and Campus Safety (860-297-2222)
- Encourage the student to report what is happening to the appropriate organization on campus: Athletics Department- Michael Renwick, Director (860-297-2055), or Student Activities (860-297-2011)
- Refer the student to the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415), if appropriate.

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Learning Disabilities Information and Procedures for Faculty and Staff

Trinity College is in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Recognized disabilities which merit accommodation in the academic setting can be related to physical limitations, psychological conditions and learning differences. The Counseling and Wellness Center can make referrals to qualified professionals in the area for a complete neuropsychological evaluation, which is required for the granting of official accommodations related to learning differences. We also review previous testing and make appropriate recommendations to the Dean of Students regarding accommodation requests.

Trinity College works with students with disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations and to assist them in any way possible. The Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415), the Coordinator of Accessibility Services (860-297-4025), the Dean of Students Office (297-2156), the Health Center (860-297-2018), and other resources are available to assist students. While Trinity encourages its students to develop self-advocacy skills, these offices provide support and assistance throughout the student's years at the College.

The ADA requires organizations to make "reasonable accommodations" for individuals who have known physical or mental disabilities and who are "otherwise qualified." Accommodations, when granted, are individually based and vary from student to student. Many students have received informal accommodations previously without being formally diagnosed through neuropsychological testing, which may create some expectations in college that they will automatically be granted in a similar fashion. Copies of a high school IEP or 504 plan is not adequate documentation for college level accommodations. The complete document of procedures and requirements for receiving accommodations at Trinity is available on our web site at

<http://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/StudentAccessibilityResources/Pages/default.aspx>

What you can expect as a faculty member

At Trinity, our set of specific guidelines, which are essentially the same as those at most other colleges and universities, is based on the ADA guidelines. Basically, students submit their request for accommodations together with the appropriate complete and current documentation to the Coordinator of Accessibility Services, Lori Clapis. The information is then forwarded to the Counseling and Wellness Center or Health Center for review.

We then ask the student to come in for a brief visit to go over the results of our review. If approved, we will provide the student with an official letter outlining their approved accommodations. Each student is informed that it is her or his responsibility to present this letter to their professors at the beginning of each semester and discuss how these accommodations will be met in each class. The student is asked to retain the original letter, but faculty members are welcome to make copies for their own records. Students may opt to provide faculty with an electronic copy of their letter via email. Please note that Lori Clapis must be copied on the notification email to ensure authenticity. If the letter is provided

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electronically, students are strongly encouraged to also meet with their professors to make a plan for accommodations implementation. Please be advised that letters have expiration dates. If you notice that a student's letter has expired, please encourage them to contact Lori Clapis, the Coordinator of Accessibility Services.

Although each student's accommodations are individual, typical accommodations may include some or all of the following (This is not an exhaustive list.)

- Extra time on exams: faculty members arrange for students to be given time and a half or double time (depending on the accommodation) to complete their examinations. Typical reason for this accommodation: students have learning disabilities that compromise their processing speed, making it difficult to complete exams in the allotted time; students have a reading disability and need additional time to process the information they are reading; students have an attentional disorder, making the ability to focus on the task at hand challenging.
- Alternative, quiet spaces for exams: faculty members arrange for students to complete exams in a separate, quiet room. Typical reason for this accommodation: students have an attentional disorder, making the ability to focus difficult with outside distractions present.
- Extra set of notes: faculty members either provide students with a copy of their PowerPoint presentations/lecture notes or arrange for another student in the class to share their notes via Lori Clapis, Coordinator of Accessibility Services. Typical reason for this accommodation: students have an attentional disorder, making it difficult to focus, leading to them missing chunks of information during lectures; students have a slower processing speed or auditory processing challenges, making it challenging to translate the information from the lecture to written notes.
- Use of a recording device for lectures: students may use a device to record lectures. Typical reason for this accommodation: students with a slower processing speed, auditory processing challenges, or attentional difficulties may miss information during lectures and the recording device allows them to listen to parts of the lecture that they may have missed.
- Use of a laptop for note-taking: students may use their laptop during lectures for note-taking. Typical reason for this accommodation: students with a slower processing speed may find it challenging to keep up with handwritten notes.
- Use of a laptop for the written portion of exams: students may use their laptop to type out the written portions of exams. Typical reasons for this accommodation: students with a slower processing speed may find it challenging to hand write more lengthy portions of exams within the allotted amount of time; students with a Reading or Language disorder may be too distracted by compensating for difficulties that they run out of their allotted time or miss the main point of the assignment.
- Access to audiobooks: students are granted access to the college's Bookshare account to obtain audio copies of their textbooks. Typical reasons for this accommodation: students with reading disorders may find it challenging to comprehend the written word; students with dyslexia may

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become distracted by their compensation strategies that they miss the main point of the text.

- Use of a simple, 4-function calculator: students may use a simple, 4-function calculator during exams. Typical reasons for this accommodation: challenges with a slower processing speed/working memory or a Math Disorder, making it more challenging and time consuming to mentally compute equations.

Please note that the “typical reasons” listed are by no means an exhaustive list of potential difficulties. Rather, the most common reasons have been listed to help identify what learning disabilities a student may be struggling with. It is the responsibility of the student to meet with faculty and arrange for the fulfillment of any granted accommodations in a timely way. A student who tells a faculty member that extra time is needed for an exam the day before the exam, even if the faculty member has received a letter, is not acceptable and there is no requirement that such an accommodation be granted. Students are told that they must arrange a minimum of ten days in advance of any exam or expected accommodation.

The provision of accommodations is required when the faculty member has been presented with the formal accommodations letter and the student has made timely arrangements individually with each instructor.

If a faculty member has any questions about accommodations, how they might be fulfilled, problems in compliance, or questions about whether a student has a particular accommodation, he or she may contact the Coordinator of Accessibility Services, Lori Clapis (860-297-4025), the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156) or the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415). There is more information about accommodations and how to implement them on the disability website, <http://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/StudentAccessibilityResources/Pages/default.aspx>

Students may also talk with you as an adviser or trusted teacher before applying for accommodations. Depending on how or at what point in their academic difficulties a student presents themselves requesting accommodation, the following may be help guide you as you sort out how to be most helpful to your students.

Academic Accommodation Procedures for Students

You may want to inform students who speak with you about learning differences about these facts:

- Notifying the College of the presence of a disability and obtaining accommodations is the student's responsibility. Initiating and following through on this process is up to the student.
- The student should print out a copy of the Academic Accommodations Request Form from the Counseling and Wellness Center website and complete the top portion to send in with their documentation.
- Forward the Accommodations Request Form and documentation of the disability to Lori Clapis, Coordinator of Accessibility Services, in the Health Center. Please see the subsequent section on

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"Documenting Your Disability" to avoid problems by ensuring the documentation meets our requirements.

- Students should notify the Accommodations Coordinator as soon as possible if they may require special housing or physical access. All requests for special housing or dining arrangements should be submitted with appropriate documentation with the Student Life Accommodations Request Form to Lori Clapis, Coordinator of Accessibility Services, who will process the request. Requests for special housing consideration should be submitted well in advance of the housing lottery. First year students will be asked to indicate on the Roommate Questionnaire if they have medical considerations and to forward that material to the Health Center by July 1st of the year in which they will arrive. All students will be required to renew their applications for special housing accommodation by April 15th of each year in order to provide the appropriate offices with sufficient time to review the requests and make the appropriate assignments in a timely fashion. Students should know in advance that it is rare for special housing to be granted for any reason other than a significant, documented physical disability and that most dietary needs can be met within the existing meal plan. First year students will be asked to submit an application:
<http://www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/AccommodationServices/students/applicationanddocreq/Documents/Accommodation%20Request%20Form%20-%20Student%20Life.pdf> along with documentation for any housing, meal plan or other physical requests by June 30th. All students will be required to renew their applications for housing accommodations by April 15th of each year in order to provide the appropriate offices with sufficient time to review the requests and make the appropriate assignments in a timely fashion. Students should know in advance that it is rare for housing to be granted for any reason other than a significant, documented disability and that most dietary needs can be met within the existing meal plan.
- After documentation is submitted to the Coordinator of Accommodation Services, it will be reviewed within 10 days and any appropriate and reasonable accommodations will be determined.
 - An email will be sent to the student's Trinity email requesting that they schedule an appointment with an Accommodations Council staff member to go over the request, discuss the accommodations that may be granted, and explain other resources that may be available.
 - If a student qualifies for academic accommodations, they will be provided with an official letter from the college detailing the approved accommodations. Each dated letter will be valid for as long as the student's documentation is considered current.
 - It is the student's responsibility to notify faculty of their accommodations no less than 10 days from when they would like their accommodations to take effect. If this is not done, accommodations may not be granted.
 - The student should notify the Dean of Students Office if they are having any difficulties obtaining accommodations or if the accommodations have received are not meeting their needs.
- Students should contact the Dean or the Coordinator of Accessibility Services at any time if they encounter obstacles, have difficulties, want guidance, or want to share successes! The Dean will act as mediator should any conflicts arise in securing accommodations. Note that it is the student's responsibility to notify the Dean of any difficulties they are having obtaining accommodations or if the accommodations you have received do not meet your needs.

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What you can do

- If the student has documentation, refer them to the Coordinator of Accessibility Resources to submit their documentation for review.
- If the student has no documentation, refer them to the Coordinator of Accessibility Resources if they have questions about the process of receiving accommodations at the college.
- Please refer to the website for more detailed information about our procedures.
- Encourage students to utilize other resources on campus for academic support, including the Dean of Students Office (860-297-2156), the Counseling and Wellness Center (860-297-2415), the Health Center (860-297-2018) the Writing Center (860-297-2468), and the Math Center (860-297-5316).

Campus Resources

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| • Immediate Emergences | 911 |
| • Campus Safety | 860-297-2222 |
| • Athletic Department | 860-297-2057 |
| • Residential Life | 860-297-2305 |
| • Career Development | 860-297-2080 |
| • Chaplain's Office | 860-297-2013 |
| • Computing Center Help Desk | 860-297-2100 |
| • Coordinator of Accessibility Resources | 860-297-4025 |
| • Counseling and Wellness Center | 860-297-2415 |
| • First Year Academic Experience | 860-297-5331 |
| • Dean of Students Office | 860-297-2156 |
| • Health Center | 860-297-2018 |
| • Quantitative Center | 860-297-2522 |
| • Multicultural Affairs | 860-297-4251 |
| • Ombudsperson | 860-297-4234 |
| • Queer Resource Center | 860-987-6273 |
| • Student Activities | 860-297-2171 |
| • Women & Gender Resource Action Center | 860-297-2408 |
| • Writing Center | 860-297-2468 |