

South Carolina State University
CRISIS INTERVENTION PROTOCOL
FOR MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES



In today's fast-paced environment where students are often pulled in different directions, it is not uncommon that some students will have difficulty coping (i.e., academic, social, family, work, financial) during the course of their educational experience. While most students are able to successfully navigate the demands of college life, for some the pressures can become overwhelming and unmanageable.

Students facing difficult times typically have a number of non-university resources available to them, including close friends, relatives, clergy, and coaches. However, when those resources are unavailable or insufficient to meet the student's needs, South Carolina State University is there to help with many resources, such as the Counseling & Self-Development Center (CSDC), Office of Student Affairs, and the University Police.

THE MERE EXISTENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES DOES NOT MEAN YOU CAN BE FORCED TO WITHDRAW AS A STUDENT AT SC STATE. DON'T LET FEAR STOP YOU FROM GETTING THE HELP THAT YOU NEED!

The University has established the following guidelines when dealing with mental health emergencies:

Recognizing Students in Crisis

All students have their ups and downs. However, when students exhibit behavior that suggests that the problems the person is dealing with are more than the "normal ones," intervention may be warranted. Such behaviors could include:

- **Specific threat of physical harm to self or to others**
- **Overtly Suicidal thoughts**
- **Highly disruptive behavior (hostile, aggressive, violent, etc.)**
- **Loss of contact with reality (seeing things, hearing voices, actions at odds with reality)**

Who Can Help

There are several avenues to take when a student has been identified as being “in crisis” depending upon his or her behavior. Some actions by a student may call for a more significant response particularly if the student poses an immediate and serious threat of physical harm to self or to others.

- Counseling & Self Development Center
 - Initial referral of students for conduct not involving a serious and imminent threat of physical harm to self or others
 - Services provided by the Center can be found here.
<http://www.scsu.edu/studentaffairs/counselingandselfdevelopmentcenter.aspx>

- University Police
 - Initial referral if there is a serious and imminent threat of physical harm to self or others.
 - If University Police determines that law enforcement intervention is not warranted, then:
 - University Police will consult with staff members from the (1) *Counseling & Self-Development Center* and (2) *Residence Life & Housing* to determine:
 - Whether on-call medical staff can assist student;
 - Whether student needs medical services that cannot be supplied by the University;
 - Whether emergency medical services should be summoned

- Office of Student Affairs
 - Issues that arise that may implicate at student’s status as a student on campus, i.e., housing, participating in extra-curricular activities, food services, class attendance.

Monitoring of Student:

If a student is transported off campus to a medical facility for services, the CSDC's on-call clinician or designee will serve as the key contact for SC State University regarding student mental health crisis, as follows

- Maintain contact with student and knowledge of student's medical condition;
- Consult with Office of Student Affairs to determine need to contact student's parent or guardian to inform him/her of student's status.
 - Office of Student Affairs to take the lead on decisions regarding contact of parents or guardians.
 - If student is not capable of calling parents, or refuses, Vice President of Student Affairs determines by whom contact will be made to parents/guardians to update them of current situation.
- Consistent with students rights under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and the HIPPA, manage other student concerns if students and friends in attendance at hospital;
- CSDC shall work with the student's medical providers to understand student's medical issues, to devise a Treatment Plan, and to communicate university procedures regarding the student's return to campus to the student and his/her parents/guardian, if applicable.
- CSDC and the Office of Student Affairs shall work together to devise a Treatment Plan for the return of the student to campus.

Return of Student to Campus

- All students are subject to the University's Involuntary Withdrawal Protocol.
- **Absent involuntary withdrawal, all students are entitled to return to campus if they required off-campus medical services due to a crisis intervention.** However, students requiring crisis intervention may be required to adhere and comply with a Treatment Plan by the CSDC upon their return to campus.
- Once the student is out of immediate danger and a plan has been established, Student Affairs personnel work together to assess whether someone should remain at the hospital (with a purpose for staying, e.g., meet parents who are on the way soon, wait for parents if still in the process of being contacted, student is not out of immediate danger and parents are not on site yet, friends are in the reception area and are in need of support, or student waiting for student to be transported to alternate aftercare facility).

Involuntary Withdrawal

If the CSDC and the Office of Student Affairs believes that there is sufficient evidence on an individualized, case-by-case basis that a student may need to be involuntarily withdrawn from the University, a process may be initiated under the University's Involuntary Withdrawal Protocol.

Resources

- University Police Department (803) 536-7188
- Student Affairs (803) 536-8190
- Residence Life (803) 536-7239
- Counseling and Self-Development Center (803) 536-7245
- 24-hour crisis line (803) 245-3000
- SCSU Health Center (803) 536-7053
- Rape Crisis Center (803) 541-1245
- Victim Services (803) 245-3011
- TRMC Hospital (803) 395-3700
- Orangeburg Reg. Hospital (803) 533-2200
- Orangeburg Public Safety (803) 793-4639