



RECOGNIZING AND INTERVENING WITH STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY OR CRISIS

RECOGNIZING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

As a teacher or staff member, you may be approached by students who confide in you, or you may be one of the first people to observe indicators of distress in a student. This document aims to help front-line workers recognize a crisis situation, take action and refer the student to the right resource, according to the type and severity of the situation.

ACADEMIC	PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	RISK FOR SAFETY
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeated absences• Sudden drop in quality of work and grades• Disturbing content in writing or presentation• Systematically seeks personal rather than academic advice• Does not respond to repeated requests for contact or meetings• Repeatedly requests extensions or special considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marked change in physical appearance (poor hygiene, sudden weight changes)• Strange and bizarre behavior indicating loss of contact with reality• Visibly intoxicated or smelling of alcohol or marijuana.• Rapid speech or manic behavior• Lethargy• Observable signs of injury (cuts and burns without explanation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disclosure of personal distress• Unusual or disproportionate emotional reaction to events• Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions• Verbal abuse (teasing, harassment)• Rejected from the rest of the group• Peers expressing concern about the student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal or written references to suicide, homicide, aggression or self-injurious behavior• Unprovoked anger and hostility• Use of physical violence (grabbing, assaulting, using a weapon)• Stalking or harassing others• Communicating threats or disturbing comments in person or by email, text message or phone call.

DEALING WITH A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

If a student confides in you, take the time to listen. You can also initiate a conversation with the student if you are concerned about him or her.

- Demonstrate **empathy** and **active listening** (eye contact, nodding to show interest and rephrasing what the student has just said to make sure you've understood).
- Don't hesitate to **ask direct questions** to validate the presence of suicidal thoughts in the student.
- Make sure you **respect your comfort level**. You are not a mental health professional. As a front-line responder, your job is not to intervene, but rather to refer.
- **Refer the student to the appropriate resource**. (See next page). If you have difficulty assessing the student's needs or risk level, refer to your program coordinator or **Patrick Girard**, the psychosocial counselor (p.girard@tav.ca), so they can guide you. Be sure to maintain student confidentiality at this stage, unless the student's safety or that of others is at risk. You can also initiate a conversation with the student if you are concerned about him or her.

If a student presents a risk to their safety or that of others, please contact 9-1-1.

RESOURCE PAGE

TAV COLLEGE'S PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES:

Patrick Girard

Psychosocial Counsellor

p.girard@tav.ca or Mio

B-306.1



<https://www.tav.ca/psychosocial-counselling-services/>

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Suicide Prevention Centre of Montreal

Helpline for people with suicidal thoughts

1-866-277-3553 or 9-8-8

Tel-Aide

Listening line

514-935-1102

Drugs: help and referral

514-527-2626

SOS Violence conjugale

Helpline for people living with domestic violence

1-800-363-9010



<https://www.tav.ca/external-resource-centre/>

For immediate NON-URGENT help: Dial 8-1-1, option 2

**For an EMERGENCY (life-threatening or life-saving):
Dial 9-1-1 and notify the front desk**