

# BUILDING NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

College support networks help students cope with stress, overcome challenges, and connect to helpful resources. Encourage students to develop support networks that include advisors, support groups, and counselors. The following types of help are available:

## IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

**UMass Boston Police Department**  
617.287.1212  
public.safety@umb.edu

**Title IX at UMass Boston**  
617.287.6172  
civilrights.titleix@umb.edu

**Counseling Center**  
617.287.5690  
Counseling.Center@umb.edu

**Justice Bridge Legal Center**  
617.287.3190  
u-access@umb.edu

**University Health Services**  
617.287.5660  
uhs@umb.edu

**Dean of Students Office**  
617.287.5800  
dean.students@umb.edu

**U-ACCESS**  
617.287.3190  
u-access@umb.edu

**Ross Center for Disability Services**  
617.287.7430  
ross.center@umb.edu

## COUNSELING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

**UHS Support and Therapy Groups**  
617.287.5690  
Counseling.Center@umb.edu

**UMB-UR-BEST**  
UMB-UR-BEST@umb.edu

**Interfaith Campus Ministry**  
617.287.5838  
interfaith.campusmin@umb.edu

## ADDITIONAL ON-CAMPUS SUPPORT

**Center for Student Multicultural Affairs**  
617.287.7844  
mc.affairs@umb.edu

**Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
617.287.4827  
diversity@umb.edu

**Women's Center**  
617.287.7986  
womens.center@umb.edu

**Queer Student Center**  
617.287.7844  
QSC@umb.edu

**Veterans Affairs**  
617.287.5866  
veterans@umb.edu

**Office of New Student and Family Programs**  
617.287.5813  
orientation@umb.edu

**International Student and Scholar Office**  
617.287.6481  
iss@umb.edu

**Office of Off-Campus Living**  
617.287.6373  
offcampus@umb.edu

## NATIONAL RESOURCES

**Crisis Text Line**  
text HOME to 741741

**GLBT Peer Counseling National Hotline**  
1.888.843.4564  
help@GLBThotline.org

**National Drug Helpline**  
1.888.633.3239

**National Eating Disorders Association**  
1.800.931.2237

**National Council on Problem Gambling Helpline**  
1.800.522.4700

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
1.800.273.TALK (8255)

**RAINN (Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network)**  
1.800.656.4673

**SAMHSA National Helpline**  
1.800.662.HELP (4357)  
SAMHSAInfo@samhsa.hhs.gov

**Trans Lifeline**  
1.877.565.8860  
contact@translifeline.org

**TrevorLifeline (LGBTQIA + crisis intervention)**  
1.866.488.7386

# Helping Students in Distress

## DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

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UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

100 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02125-3393

umb.edu/deanofstudents  
617.287.5800

# RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

If you are concerned about a student, do not let uncertainty stop you from taking action. UMass Boston is committed to supporting students in distress. This folder has been developed to help you recognize, respond to, refer, and report troubling student behavior.

## WHERE DO I START?

### Stay Safe

When a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior, the safety of you, the student, and the campus community are the top priorities. Coordinated professional care and follow-up are effective in preventing suicide and violence.

### Play It Safe

If you are concerned about a student, consult your department chair, supervisor, or the Dean of Students Office. Promptly report safety concerns and Student Code of Conduct violations.

### De-escalate and Provide Hope

Distressed students can be sensitive. Avoid threatening, potentially embarrassing, or intimidating statements. Help students connect with the resources they need.

### Clarify Expectations

Set early limits on disruptive or self-destructive behavior. Remind students verbally or in writing of standards/expectations for conduct, and of possible consequences for disorderly behavior. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct and the Classroom Conduct Policy.

### Listen Sensitively and Carefully

Vulnerable students need to be heard and helped. They may find it difficult to articulate their distress. Ask directly if they feel their functioning is impaired or if they have thoughts of harming or killing themselves or others.

### Share What You Know

State and federal laws and university policies mandate reporting in many crisis situations. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows faculty and staff to report student health and safety concerns to relevant campus offices trained to handle situations with sensitivity and care. Taking appropriate action does not violate a student's privacy.

### Consult to Coordinate a Timely Response

Consult with appropriate university personnel to coordinate care for the student. Always report serious or persistent behavior to the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible. Misconduct may be formally addressed through the Student Conduct process, and additional campus resources may be necessary to help reduce or eliminate disruptive behaviors.

### Follow Up

Once you have referred a student in distress, it is helpful (but not obligatory) for you to follow up in their ongoing care. Your firsthand knowledge and personal connections to this student are invaluable in understanding and appropriately responding to the student's situation.

### Take Care

Helping a troubled student can take a toll on your personal well-being. Make sure you acknowledge what you've been through and receive adequate support.

## HOW TO HELP

Talking with someone in distress can be challenging. These tips can make it easier to reach out:



### Start

Find a quiet, comfortable place to talk. Don't promise to keep your discussions secret.



### Connect

Pay attention and avoid distractions.



### Ask

Use phrases that show you want to help. "I wanted to check in, because you haven't seemed yourself lately."



### Listen

Take in what the person is saying without judgment or interruptions. Let them know you believe them. Paraphrase their words to make sure you fully understand.



### Ask questions

"When did you begin feeling like this?" "How can I best support you?" Avoid saying: "I know how you feel!"



### Offer hope

Let the person know you care and that help is available. Before ending the conversation, agree together on a next step, like a follow-up conversation or professional help.



### Know your limits

A situation may be more than you can handle. Get help from a crisis line or a mental health or medical professional. If the person is reluctant to call, offer to sit with them while they do, or call for them.



### Act in an emergency

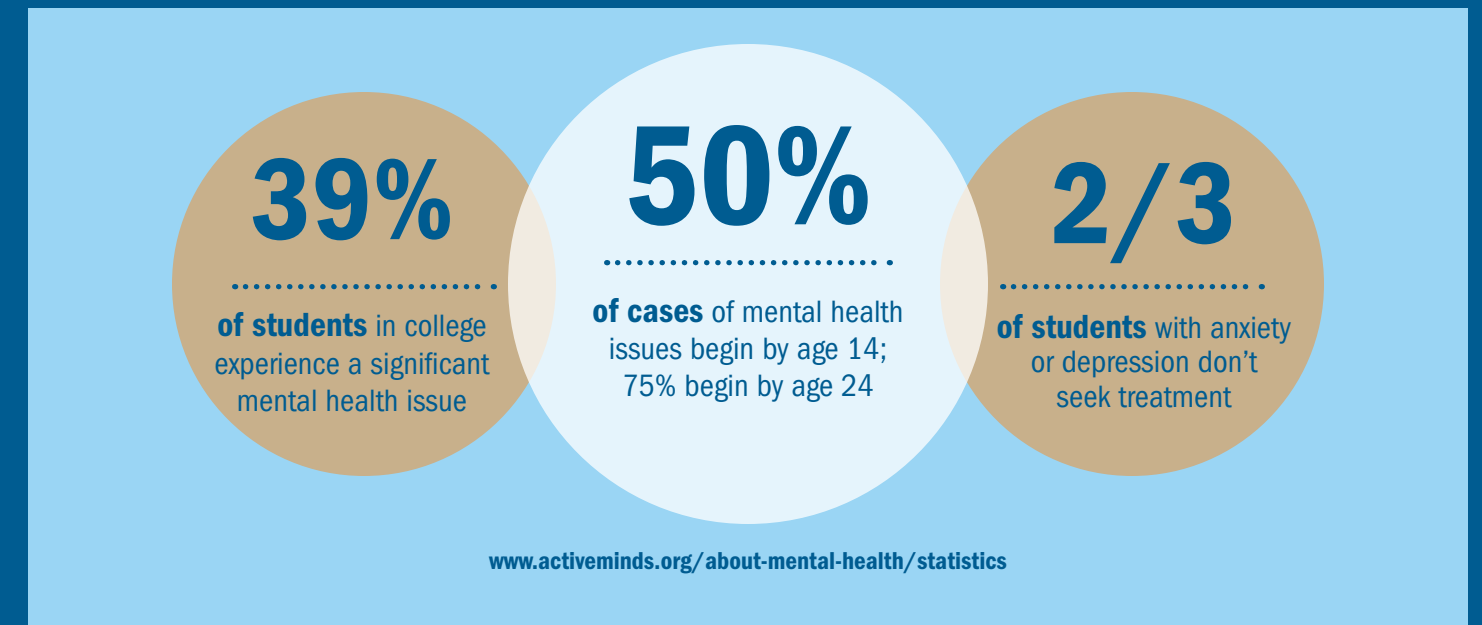
If someone is in danger, call the UMass Boston Police Department on campus at **617.287.1212**, or **911** off campus. If it is safe to do so, stay with the person in distress until help arrives.

# MAINTAINING COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UMass Boston has adopted numerous policies that protect and support our students, as well as our faculty and staff. Such policies include the following:

- Academic Honesty Policy
- Clery Act
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Hazing
- Tobacco-Free Campus Policy
- Nondiscrimination Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Title IX
- University Alcohol, Marijuana, and Drug Policies

More information on these policies as well as others can be found at [umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/policies](http://umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies).



## TAKE US WITH YOU!



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Report online at [www.umb.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.umb.edu/deanofstudents).