



## Mental Health Crisis and Response Plan Checklist

### 1. **Identify** that a student is in distress

*Possible indicators of emotional distress: infrequent class attendance, dramatic decrease in academic function, lack of enthusiasm for various aspects of student life, lack of energy or falling asleep in class, sadness, tearfulness, marked change in personal hygiene, alcohol and/or drug use, high levels of irritability, including undue aggressive or abrasive behavior, bizarre or strange behavior, expressed thoughts of death/suicide, or suicide attempts.*

### 2. **Connect** with the student

- Request to see the student in private
- Briefly acknowledge your observations and perceptions of their situation
- Express your concerns directly and honestly
- Listen carefully and acknowledge his/her pain
- If any evidence of possible suicidal thinking, ask directly, “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”
- If you are uncertain about how to work with a specific student – contact University Counseling at 229-4716 and ask to speak to the crisis or on call counselor for consultation

Further guidance regarding intervention strategies can be found in UWM’s [Assisting the Emotionally Distressed Student](#) guide found on the UWM Mental Health Resources webpage: [uwm.edu/mentalhealth/](http://uwm.edu/mentalhealth/)

### 3. **Assess** the student’s immediate needs

#### ✓ **Is there an imminent risk of self-harm or harm to others?**

*The individual has a weapon and is threatening to use it; the individual is threatening immediate harm to self; and/or the individual has engaged in a behavior that requires medical attention*

#### **IF YES –**

**FIRST** Call University Police: 9-911 (university phone) or  
414-229-9911 (mobile or other phone)

**LATER** Document the situation, and inform your supervisor if appropriate. **ALWAYS** submit a report to the Dean of Students Office at [uwm.edu/reportit/](http://uwm.edu/reportit/) to help the Dean of Students staff identify students who show signs of distress in multiple offices, and enable a coordinated and collaborative intervention.

✓ **Is this student acutely distressed or suicidal?**

*In non-emergency but urgent situations, there is a clear risk but no evidence that suggests the student will be taking action at that moment*

**IF YES–**

**FIRST** Refer the student to one of the following resources:

- University Counseling at (414)229-4716
- Columbia-St. Mary's Hospital Emergency Room (414)291-1200
- Milwaukee crisis line (414)257-7222
- 24/7 Suicide Prevention Hotlines:
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24/7) – 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
(TTY Accessible – 1-800-799-4TTY)
  - Veterans Crisis Line (24/7) – 1-800-273-TALK, Press 1
  - Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQ Youth (24/7) – 1-866-488-7366

If you are uncertain about how to proceed or need further consultation:

- Consultation services are available through University Counseling at (414)229-4716
- After business hours, you may call one of the referral numbers above for further consultation

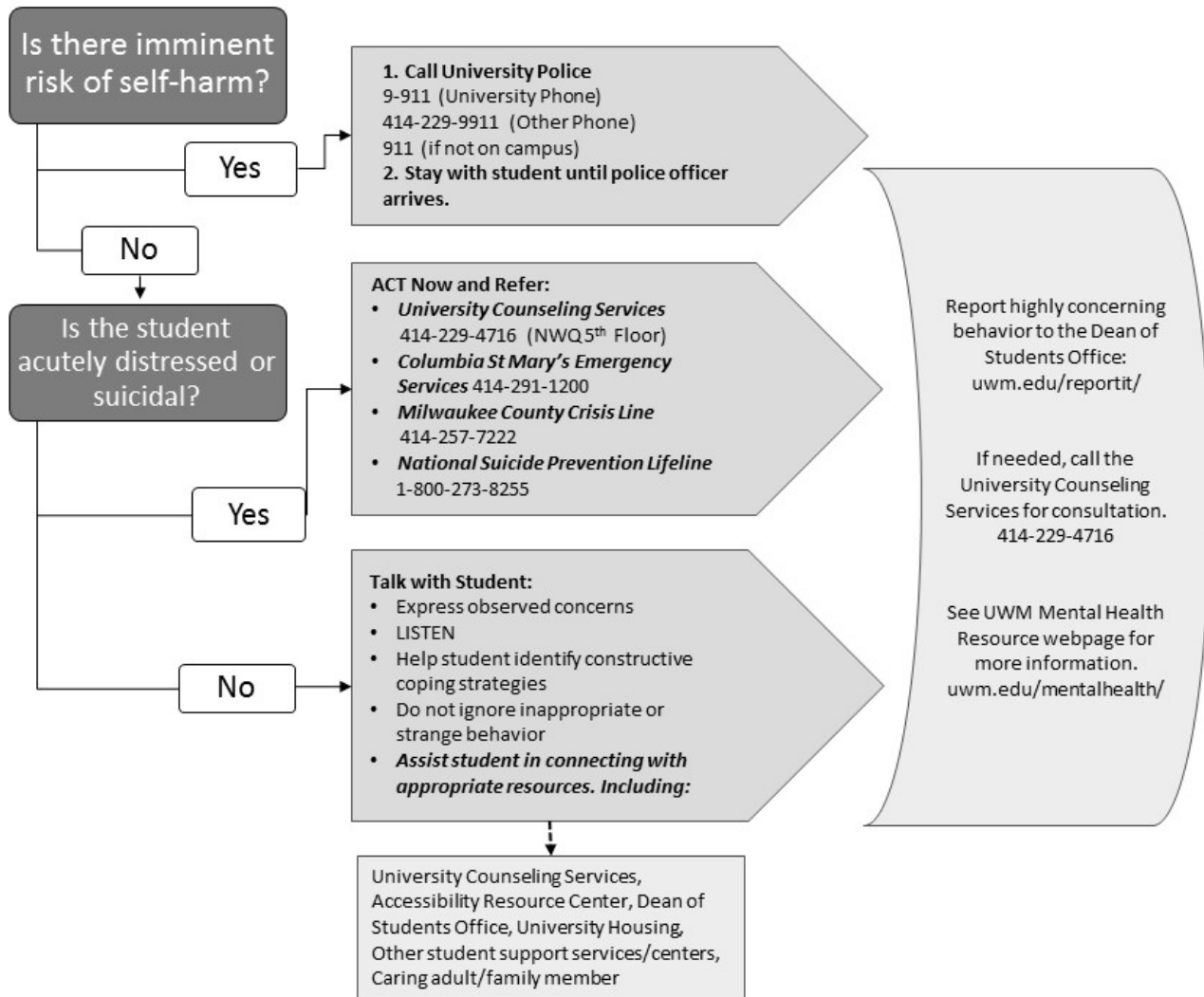
**Ensure that the link is made between the student and an appropriate resource for help**

**LATER** Document the situation, and inform your supervisor if appropriate. ALWAYS submit a report to the Dean of Students Office at [uwm.edu/reportit/](http://uwm.edu/reportit/) to help the Dean of Students staff identify students who show signs of distress in multiple offices, and enable a coordinated and collaborative intervention.

**4. Follow-Up**

- Check in directly with the student if you would like more information about the student's well-being or the success of their connection with a mental health provider.
  
- If you remain concerned about this student :
  - Consult with University Counseling staff at 414-229-4716 regarding best strategies for approaching the specific situation
  - Consult with others who know the student and/or should be made aware of the situation (a colleague, supervisor, Department Head, Dean, etc.)
  - Contact the Dean of Students office at 414-229-4632 or [dos@uwm.edu](mailto:dos@uwm.edu) for guidance. If not yet completed, submit a report at [uwm.edu/reportit/](http://uwm.edu/reportit/)
  
- Seek support for yourself. You may be experiencing a variety of emotions as a result of your efforts to support and assist this student. UWM has contracted with Empathia LifeMatters to provide Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services for all permanent employees. Participation is voluntary, confidential, and free. For immediate assistance call LifeMatters at (800) 634-6433 or access on-line information at <http://www.mylifematters.com/> (UWM's "Company password" is SOWI ).

## Assisting a Student in Distress



Please keep in mind, each situation is unique. This framework provides a general guide in assisting students in distress using campus and community base resources. *Seek additional support if unsure of how to respond to a certain situation.*

The Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Mental Health developed this document in collaboration with the UWM Suicide Prevention Project (funded by SAMHSA). The document is currently being considered for adoption by various UWM governance groups and departments/units.

This document was developed in part under a grant number 1U79SM060465-01 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.