

Students in Distress:

A Guide for Faculty and Staff



**Learning and Student Success
Counseling Services**
www.pierce.ctc.edu/dist/counseling/

Fall 2016

Students in Distress:

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Introduction

As Pierce College faculty or staff, you will eventually encounter a student in distress. Your role as a possible helper is not only valuable; it could prove to be crucial. This resource is offered to help you recognize signs indicating that a student is in distress, to suggest basic guidelines for helping the student, and to outline how to make appropriate, effective referrals.

Our campus and community provide many resources to meet the needs of our students. Links to referral sources for frequently encountered student problems can be found at the end of this document and the counseling webpage with information for faculty, staff, and students can be found at www.pierce.ctc.edu/dist/counseling/.

Signs and Symptoms of Students in Distress

Although not always disruptive, some student behavior can alert us to serious situations that may merit intervention.

Possible Concerns

- Serious grade problems or academic probation
- Inconsistency with quality of previous work
- Dependency or repeated requests for special consideration
- Listlessness, lack of energy, or falling asleep in class
- Poor classroom attendance
- Marked changes in personal hygiene, appearance, or behavior
- Change in social behavior, e.g., isolation from others
- Inappropriate emotional response, e.g., excessively tearful
- Signs of alcohol or other drug abuse

Greater Concerns or Crisis

- Communication problems, e.g., garbled or incoherent speech
- Threat of harming self or others, including overt statements, ideation, or gestures
- Behavior that regularly interferes with effective management of class
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional response, e.g., highly irritable or anxious
- Inability to make decisions, despite repeated attempts to clarify and encourage
- Bizarre or strange behavior or writings obviously inappropriate to the situation, e.g., talking to “invisible” people

Guidelines for Interaction

- Talk with the student privately, listen attentively, showing concern, interest, and respect
- For clarification, paraphrase or summarize the student's statements
- Avoid criticizing or judging
- Be culturally sensitive, e.g., stigma related to mental health services
- If appropriate, consider referring to the campus Faculty Counselor
- If the student resists help and you are worried, consult with the campus Faculty Counselor or your Program Coordinator to discuss your concerns
- Involve yourself only to the extent that you feel comfortable, but involve appropriate others

Making a Referral to a Campus Mental Health Counselor

Suggest the student make an appointment to meet with the Faculty Counselor. Faculty Counselors are Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHCs) in the state of Washington. Provide the phone number, email, and location of the Faculty Counselor's office.

- You could call the Faculty Counselor while the student is in your office and then hand the phone to the student to arrange the appointment date and time. Write down the Faculty Counselor's location and phone number for the student.
- Sometimes it is useful or necessary to walk a student to the Faculty Counselor's office or to another campus department. Call ahead, if possible, to check on availability.
- Follow up with the student, but in a general way, not probing.

Fort Steilacoom
Currently Vacant
Call the Welcome Center for
Assistance
Faculty Counselor
Cascade Bldg. Welcome Center
Room C301A
(253)912-3644

Puyallup
Jennifer Wright
Faculty Counselor
Student Success Center
Room A106H
253-840-8443
jwright@pierce.ctc.edu

Follow-Up and Confidentiality Procedures

Students can be assured that counseling sessions with the campus Faculty Counselor are confidential. We understand that you might be interested in the progress of a student you referred; however, the ability to share information about a student is governed by confidentiality laws and ethical guidelines.

The Faculty Counselor can

- Answer questions about steps in referring students to counseling
- Offer information about psychological concerns and problems in general

The Faculty Counselor cannot

- Discuss the content of sessions
- Say whether a student is being seen or has kept an appointment
- Discuss treatment plans or progress

In some cases, students may find it in their best interest for information to be shared with a faculty, staff, family member, or significant other. This is done with the student's written authorization, which includes a clear explanation of the purpose and content of the disclosure. An exception to confidentiality would be a counselor's determination of imminent danger to the student or others.

Reasons for Referral Failure

On occasion, despite good intentions and accurate knowledge of resources, a referral for counseling is not successful. Before you judge yourself, the student, or the referral source too harshly, consider the following possibilities:

- The student might not have been ready to receive the kind of help offered. Readiness is an essential component of receiving help.
- There might have been a disparity between the student's expectations and the actual nature and extent of help provided by the referral source.
- The referral source might not have been appropriate for the type of help needed.
- The referral source might not have been aware of the student's actual needs due to misunderstanding, misinformation, or poor communication.

Student Counseling Services

The Pierce College District provides mental health counseling to enrolled students at both the Fort Steilacoom and Puyallup Campuses. Faculty Counselors are Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC) with the state of Washington. The Pierce College counseling services include the following:

- Crisis intervention
- Short-term individual counseling
- Consultation and referral
- Outreach programs (e.g., communication skills, time/stress management, career development, eating disorders, substance abuse, sexual abuse, self-esteem issues)

Facility Counselors are on a facility contract with limited availability between quarters and during the summer. We suggest calling or emailing before sending a student to the office to verify the availability of the counselor. If the Facility Counselors on your campus is currently unavailable, please feel free to call the Facility Counselors at the other location.

Fort Steilacoom

253-912-3644

Welcome Center, Room C301A

Currently Vacant, call Welcome Center for Assistance

Puyallup

253-840-8443

Student Success Center, Room A106H

jwright@pierce.ctc.edu

For emergency assistance, call:

9-911 or 253-964-6751 for Campus Safety

Located in Cascade Bldg., Room 311, Fort Steilacoom

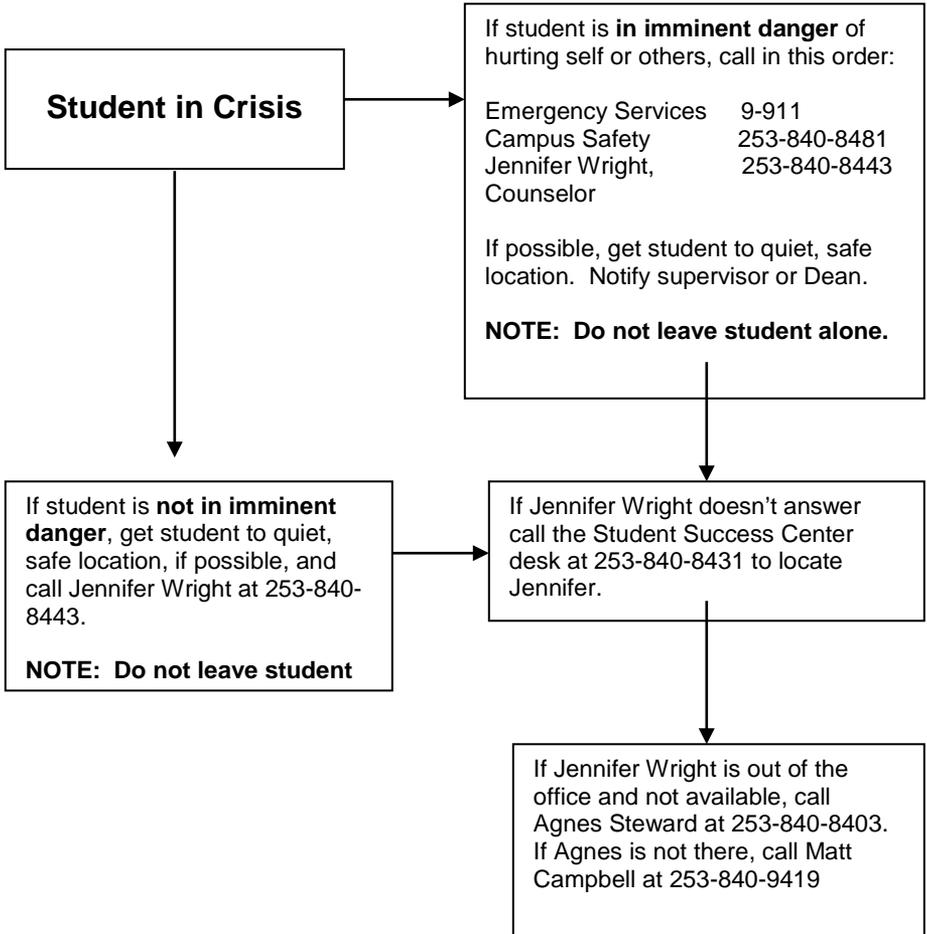
OR

9-911 or 253-840-8481 for Campus Safety

Located in, Gaspard Bldg., Room ADM117, Puyallup

Mental Health Crisis Protocol

Puyallup Campus

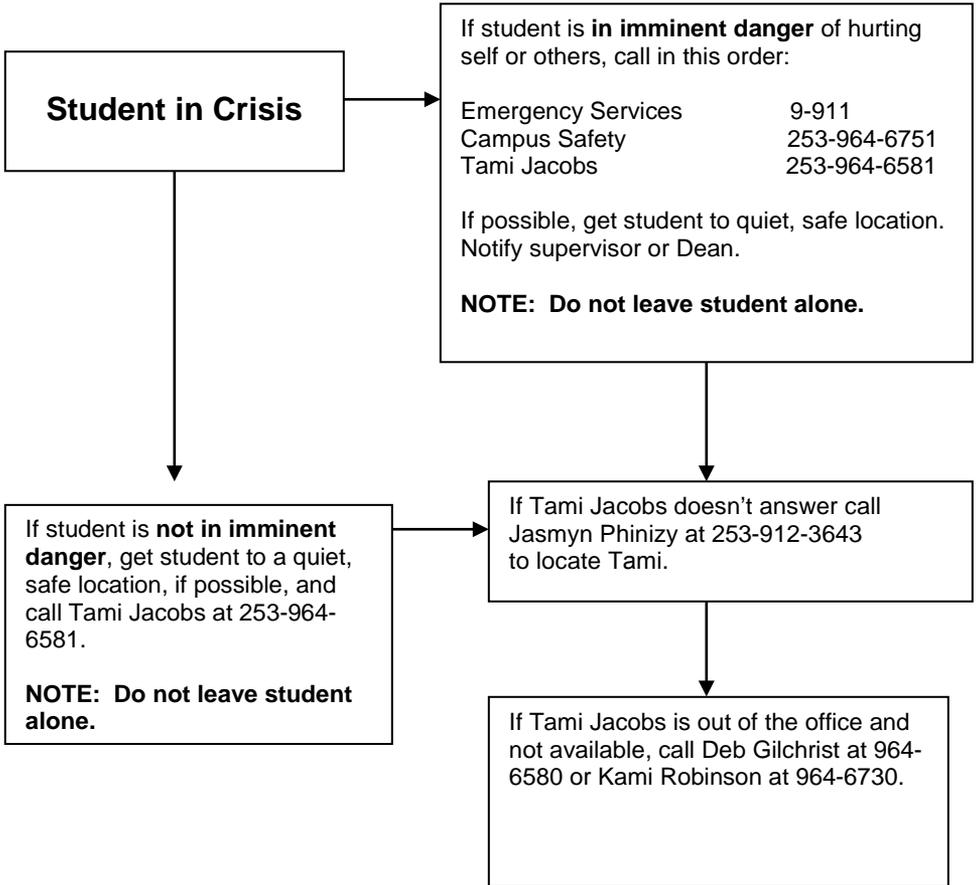


Additional Resource Personnel:

Agnes Steward, Dean of Student Success PY – 253-840-8403
Christine McMullin, Director of Advising and Entry Services – 253-864-3333
Chris MacKersie, District Campus Safety – 253-964-3655
Tami Jacobs, Dean of Student Success FS- 253-964-6581
www.pierce.ctc.edu/dist/counseling/

Mental Health Crisis Protocol

Fort Steilacoom Campus



Additional Resource Personnel:

Tami Jacobs, Dean of Student Success FS- 253-964-6581
Sam Loftin, Director of Advising and Entry Services- 253-964-6460
Chris MacKersie, District Campus Safety – 253-964-3655
Jennifer Wright, PY Faculty Counselor – 253-840- 8443
www.pierce.ctc.edu/dist/counseling/

Referral Sources

Additional Pierce College Resources

- Counseling webpage: www.pierce.ctc.edu/dist/counseling/
- Access and Disability Services, Fort Steilacoom, 253-964-6526
- Access and Disability Services, Puyallup, 253-840-8335 or 253-964-6527
- Student Success, Fort Steilacoom, 253-964-6705
- Student Success, Puyallup, 253-864-3227
- Veterans Resource Center, Fort Steilacoom, 253-964-6364

Community Crisis Resources

- Pierce County Crisis Team (24/7), 1- 800-576-7764

Additional Crisis Resources

- Chemical Dependency Treatment Information, 253-593-2740
- Domestic Violence Helpline, 253-798-4166 or 1-800-562-6025
- Gang Hotline, 253-798-4800
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Eating Disorders Association Hotline 1-800-931-2237
- Pierce County Sexual Assault Center, 253-474-7273 or 1-800-756-7273
- RAINN—Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- Recovery Response Center (Fife) 253-942-5644 or 1-877-780-5222
- Safe Place Olympia, 24-Hour Crisis Line, 360-754-6300 or 512-267-SAFE(7233)
- Veterans Information, 253-798-7449
- Victim Advocates (24-7), 1-800-822-1067 or 1-866-857-9889
- Victim Assistance National Center, 202-467-8700

Community Counseling Resources

- Greater Lakes Mental Health Center, Lakewood, 253-581-7020
- Good Samaritan Behavioral Health Center, Puyallup, 253-697-8400
- Comprehensive Mental Health, Tacoma, 253-396-5800

Faculty and Staff Counseling Assistance

- Employee Assistance Program: <http://www.dop.wa.gov/eap>
360-407-9490 (Olympia) or 1-877-313-4455 (State-wide)

Access and Disability Services (ADS)

Pierce College supports an integrated learning experience for students with disabilities. Support services for students with disabilities have been developed to ensure compliance with policies based on The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), 2008 (ADAAA) and The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sections, 504 and 508. These acts and laws for the State of Washington prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

Guidelines for Interaction

- Keep student information confidential
- When students seek accommodations, refer them to ADS

Signs for Concern

- Difficulty with concentration
- Testing difficulty
- Absenteeism
- Visual and hearing impairments

Academic Adjustments, Auxiliary Aids, and Services (may include, but not be limited to, the following)

- Alternate format of educational materials
- Alternate testing procedures
- Sign language interpreters
- Readers and scribes for tests
- Volunteer note taker
- Adjustable tables and chairs

Making a Student Referral to ADS

As a faculty or staff concerned with meeting a student's needs in the classroom, please encourage your student to schedule an appointment with or to access walk-in hours with the Access and Disability Services Manager at your college.

Fort Steilacoom

ADS Program Coordinator
253-964-6526 (appointments)

Currently vacant
ADS Program Manager

Cascade Building, Welcome Center

Puyallup

ADS Program Coordinator
253-840-8335 (appointments)

Susan McPhee
ADS Program Manager
253-964-6527

Gaspard Building, Room A106
smcphoe@pierce.ctc.edu

Veterans Resource Center

The Veterans Resource Center provides veteran students with wraparound services at the Fort Steilacoom campus to assist them in completing their certificate or degree program. Services include the following:

- A designated space for veterans to network with other veterans
- Referrals to academic support services and tutoring
- Textbook lending library
- Funding for transportation and childcare
- Assistance with applying for educational and healthcare benefits

Some veterans may be suffering from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Listed below are a few signs that may indicate that a student referral to the Veterans Resource Center, Counseling Services, and/or Access and Disability Services would be beneficial.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Concentration problems

Attention difficulties

Memory problems

Headaches

Dizziness

Fatigue

Lack of motivation

Irritability

Slowness in thinking or speaking

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Hyper alert to noise or movement

Avoidance of people or places

Sleep issues

Anger problems

Depression

Concentration and memory problems

Substance abuse and self-medication

Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

The Veterans Center hours of operation are 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m., Monday—Friday. To ensure that staff will be available, please call ahead or email before sending a student to the Center.

Veterans Resource Center

Vickie Bell

Veteran Advisor/Resource Center Manger

253-964-6364 or 6455

Cascade Room 425

vbell@pierce.ctc.edu

Student Code of Conduct

While some behaviors may be of concern and related (or not) to mental health concerns, they may also need to be addressed administratively through the Student Code of Conduct. The full document can be found at <http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/about/policy/studentrr>. A few of the situations addressed by the Student Code of Conduct are listed below.

1. Assault, reckless endangerment, intimidation, physical abuse, harassment, coercion and/or other conduct which threatens or endangers the health and safety of any person.
2. Disorderly, lewd, indecent, or other behavior which breaches the peace, interferes with the rights of others or which obstructs or disrupts teaching, research, administrative functions, or other college-authorized activities and otherwise interferes with the learning environment.
3. Failure to follow the reasonable instructions of faculty members, staff member, Pierce College official thereby infringing upon the rights and privileges of other members of the college community.
4. Engaging in hate incidents and/or hate crimes to include conduct, speech, other expressions and actions motivated by bias against a victim based on his or her actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation or disability. Examples of behaviors that may constitute a hate incident or crime include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Threatening phone calls or text messages;
 - b. Hate mail to include all forms of electronic messages;
 - c. Physical assault;
 - d. Threats of harm or violence;
 - e. Arson;
 - f. Vandalism;
 - g. Cross burning;
 - h. Bombing and bomb threats.
5. Use, possession or distribution or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, except as expressly permitted bylaw and college regulations.
6. Use, possession, distribution, or being demonstrably under the influence of narcotics or other controlled substances, except as expressly permitted by law.
7. Possession or use (to include exhibiting, displaying or drawing any weapon) of firearms, explosives, other weapons or dangerous chemicals or any other device or substance which can be used to inflict bodily harm on college premises or at college-sponsored or supervised activities, except for authorized college purposes or for law enforcement officers.
8. Any act of misconduct, which substantially disrupts any college function or renders it difficult or impossible to continue such a function in an orderly manner.

For questions or clarification on Student Code of Conduct, please contact Tami Jacobs, Fort Steilacoom, at 964-6581 or Agnes Steward, Puyallup, at 840-8403.