

How to Refer

If you wish, feel free to consult with counselor prior to meeting with a student. It may help with questions regarding the best approach. When making a referral:

- Assure student that seeking counseling is an indication of strength, not weakness.
- Share your knowledge of the counseling services. If possible, offer a counselor name and offer an explanation of the counseling office function; it was created specifically to serve students' needs. This can decrease the student's anxiety.
- If the student accepts a referral, ideally the student would place the call. If unable, place the call with the student; a student may be too inexperienced or distressed to initiate the call. This action is caring and models how to make a call.
- After you explain situation to counseling staff, invite student to complete the call. If someone else starts the call, often the student can finish the call. Confirm the appointment time with student.
- If the matter is urgent, share this with the counseling office. Emergency appointments and walk-ins are accommodated whenever possible.
- If the matter is urgent, accompany the student to the counseling office. If the student is too distressed, ask if counselor can come to you and the student.
- Respect the student's right to decline the referral suggestion or to think about it first - UNLESS THERE HAS BEEN TALK OF SUICIDE. It is not unusual to initially avoid taking action.
- If suicide is not a concern, but the student is hesitant; suggest additional options, such as an older sibling, trusted family member, adult family friend, physician or religious leader.

When to Submit a Concern Report

When your inner voice tells you that information about a friend or anyone on campus should be shared with another, even if you have not spoken to this person, submit a Concern Report. When in doubt, submit.

When to Submit an Incident Report

Incident Reports should be completed if you see or know of a violation of the Student Conduct Code by an L&C student or anyone on campus. (See Student Conduct Code in the L&C Catalog.)

How to Submit a Report

Go to: www.lc.edu. Click "About L&C" at the top of the page. Click "Safety and Security" in the brown box to right. Scroll down to "File a Concern Report" or "File an Incident Report." Your report goes to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who works with other staff to fact-gather and to respond to the situation.

Emergency – On Campus

If your friend's safety is at risk, contact Security Office by dialing 0 from any campus phone or call (618) 468-7000 - Ext. 0.

Emergency – Off Campus

If your friend's safety is at risk, contact 911 or Emergency Mental Health Services:

County	Number
Jersey, Greene & Calhoun:	(618) 498-6881
Madison:	(618) 465-4388
Macoupin:	(217) 854-3135 Ext. 1

Confidentiality and Cost

Counseling services are confidential - UNLESS A STUDENT IS A DANGER TO SELF OR ANOTHER, or if the student has directed staff to share information.

Other services provided: special learning needs, disabilities, advising, study skills, time-management skills, test anxiety, general student questions and assistance, and community referrals and resources.

There is **no** cost for counseling services.

What Can I Do?

Recognizing and Helping Students in Distress: *A Guide for Faculty and Staff*

Student Development and Counseling
Caldwell Hall – Room 2320

(618) 468-4121

(618) 468-4125

Lewis and Clark Community College

5800 Godfrey Road

Godfrey, IL 62035

(618) 468-7000

www.LC.edu



STEP 1

Recognize Warning Signs

Recognizing the warning signs of someone in distress does not require special training. However, it requires an awareness of what to look for. Warning signs generally fall into three categories: academic, physical and psychological.

Academic

- Dramatic drop in academic performance
- Persistent class absences or missed appointments
- Continuous seeing of accommodations, such as assignment and exam extensions
- Inappropriate disruptions in a classroom or lab

Physical

- Marked changes in concentration, attentiveness or energy level
- Increases use of alcohol, drugs or over-the-counter and prescription drugs
- Sudden withdrawal from interactions with faculty, staff or peers
- Inappropriate or exaggerated behavior, such as an aggressive, angry or emotional outburst, crying or other “out of control” behavior

Psychological

- Disabling lack of confidence or lack of motivation
- Great frustration or distress with lack of career goal
- Verbal or written statement regarding suicide or harm to another

- Verbal or written statement regarding hopelessness, despondency, depression, anger or rage, an eating disorder or abuse – physical, mental or sexual
- Direct statement of substance or chemical dependence with self or family members
- Direct statement indicating humiliation, a personal crisis, or a loss, such as the illness or death of a friend or family member, loss of a relationship with a boyfriend, girlfriend or spouse, loss of custody, loss of job or housing
- Continuous need of your time to talk about personal or family issues
- Expression of concern about another student
- Great frustration or distress with lack of career goal
- Your own sense, however vague, that something is serious amiss with the student

STEP 2

Listen

A student may share concerns with you through voicemail or e-mail. Respond as soon as possible and, whenever possible, follow-up in person.

When meeting with a student, it is important simply to listen: openly, patiently and receptively.

When listening, “be yourself,” as much as possible. Your conversation will be more comfortable for both of you if you are focused on hearing what is being said, rather than what you are going to say. This will allow you to better hear if warning signs are present

Remember it is not necessary for you to solve the student’s problem. The support you provide is in the listening. A student may walk away feeling valued that someone took time and really listened, and that his or her concerns were heard and understood, perhaps for the first time.

STEP 3

Express Concern Engage Student

Avoid negative comments about character or personality. **Don’t** say, “I’ve noticed you been really slacking off lately.” Avoid negative comments about his or her life. **Don’t** say, “It seems like your life’s a mess right now.”

Express concern. **DO** say, “I’ve noticed you haven’t been yourself lately. Is everything OK?”

Continue with a specific positive follow-up. **DO** say, “Most of the time you contribute in class I’ve been missing that recently. Wait a moment to see if the student offers a response.”

Explain that information he or she has shared and your observations lead you to believe that talking with a counselor could be helpful, and that the college has counselors available **DO** say, would be glad to assist you with this.

STEP 4

Make a Referral

In addition to warning signs listed above, consider a referral when:

- You have reached the limits of your ability to help the student
- You identify too closely with the student or the problem
- A student has physical complaints, such as insomnia, headaches, dizziness or stomach ailments: symptoms may be manifestations of medical or psychological problems
- A student expresses thoughts of suicide ethical, assertive intervention on your part is necessary.