

How To Help a Friend in Crisis

If you notice your friend seems low energy, has not gone to class in a few days or seems to have lost interest in things they used to enjoy, they may be struggling with depression.

As a friend, it is always a good thing to offer support, ask how they are doing and see if you can listen, invite them to do a fun activity or just sit with them for a while and be present. While you can be the friend that person needs, it is important to know when your friend needs a greater level of support than you can offer. To help you navigate this, enlist help from your RA or RD or other leader around campus.

Suicidal

Sometimes people may be depressed and moving toward thoughts to hurt themselves. You may notice they make passive comments that they do not want to be here anymore or hope they do not wake up in the morning. While this may not be evidence that they have actual intent to harm themselves, it is a sign that they are struggling and it is time to get help.

If this is an on campus student, it is best to go to your RD and report your concerns to find increased support for your friend.

If you believe this person is in danger you can do a wellness check. You can email wellnesscheck@gcu.edu and public safety officers will check on your friend, assess them for safety and get them to help if they need further support.

One thing to remember is when you are dealing with suicidal thoughts or statements to always take it seriously and know your own limits as a friend. Always ask for help you are not meant to carry this burden alone. It is important for you to find help so you are not the only one supporting a hurting friend.

High Distress

Maybe you have a friend who is experiencing a great deal of distress emotionally, crying uncontrollably or having difficulty focusing or calming down. If you are dealing with a friend who is in high distress and you don't feel safe or you are thinking you need to be with your friend on 24-hour watch or they express they don't feel OK being alone, it is time to reach out to get help for your friend. You can start with your RD, you can also contact Public Safety and if your friend is willing, they can come to the Student Care office during the hours of 8 am – 5 pm Monday - Friday for a crisis appointment.

If your friend does not want you to tell anyone, we realize this can be a tricky situation. However, it is always best to involve a qualified adult to help care for and support your friend. If you have a friend you are worried about, make sure you do not carry the burden alone and use the following resources:

- If you believe you are facing an immediate, life-threatening emergency, call 911 or Public Safety at 602-639-8100

- If you are experiencing a crisis that is not immediately life-threatening, come to the Office of Student Care and request to see a crisis therapist.
 - Crisis therapists are available Monday - Friday, 8 am - 5 pm
 - Outside of these hours, please call Public Safety at 602-639-8100
- If you would like to utilize community resources, call the La Frontera Empact Crisis Line at 480-784-1500 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255
 - EMPACT - Suicide Prevention Line: 480-736-4950
- Public Safety and these community crisis resources are available to you 24 hours per day, seven days per week

Depression affects everyone differently. If you have experienced any of these symptoms consistently for an extended amount of time, please seek additional support. Investing in effective solutions and counseling support can lead you toward happy health. The GCU Office of Student Care has counselors who provide short term, individual and group counseling where you can gain helpful support in learning to manage depression. Please come to our office on the second floor of Building 26 to make an appointment or click on the How to Make an Appointment tab above.