



How to identify and refer a student in distress

If you're interested in learning more about supporting students mental health please visit: www.smu.ca/counselling
(Information for Faculty and Staff tab on the right)



**Saint Mary's
University**

COUNSELLING CENTRE
STUDENT AFFAIRS & SERVICES

The Counselling Centre
Saint Mary's University
counselling@smu.ca
902-420-5615

Counselling Resources

Please note that there are many options for mental health support available for students virtually. Consider the options below and please provide to students who would benefit from them.

The Counselling Centre: counselling@smu.ca or 902-420-5615. *Offering In-Person, Video and Phone Counselling Sessions.*

Student Health Services: 902-420-5611 (or register for Pomelo Health)

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team (24 hour Crisis Support Via Phone)

902-429-8167

1-888-429-8167 (toll-free)

Mental Health Advocates is a program where students can learn about a variety of mental health related issues; while also earning co-curricular hours!

Visit– <https://smu.ca/campus-life/e-mental-health.hmt>

www.healthymindsns.ca—resources available free of charge to all students attending Saint Mary's University. Resources include:



Therapy Assistance Online (TAO) - online mental health library with interactive modules to help you understand and manage how you feel, think and act. Also contains assessments to track progress and a mindfulness library to build skills.

Good2Talk—confidential post-secondary student helpline that provides professional counselling, information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being to students in Nova Scotia, 24/7/365. Call **1-833-292-3698**



CRISIS TEXT LINE |

powered by

Kids Help Phone 

Crisis Text Line Powered By Kid's Help Phone—Canadian text-based volunteer-support services available 24/7/365. **Text: Good2TalkNS to 686868** to be connected.

Wellness Together - <https://wellnesstogether.ca/en-CA>

Free resources for people residing in Canada and students enrolled in a Nova Scotia post secondary institution (even if residing out of the country). Services include:

- Peer Support
- Self Assessments to track progress
- Professional counselling—**1-866-585-0445 (adults)** or **1-888-668-6810 (youth)**
- Courses, apps, articles, videos and more

WELLNESS TOGETHER
Canada

Mental Health and
Substance Use Support

Situations requiring prompt referral/reporting

Direct or Indirect Reference to Suicide

Regardless of the circumstances or context, any reference to suicide should be taken very seriously and a mental health professional should be contacted.

Warning signs might include:

- » Expressed feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- » Expressed thoughts that the world, family, & friends would be better off without them
- » Expressed feelings of powerful guilt
- » Expressed desire to die or references to suicide

In the event of an actual suicide attempt, immediately call 911 & University Security 902-420-5000

"I just can't take it anymore"

For situations requiring immediate response:

EMERGENCY SERVICES

911

**University Security
Emergency Line
902-420-5000**

For non-emergency situations:

- University Security Non-Emergency Line..... 902-420-5577
- The Counselling Centre (8:30-4:30)..... 902-420-5615
- Student Health Services (9-4:30)..... 902-420-5611
- Sexual Violence Case Manager..... 902-496-8778

» If you are concerned about a student please go to The Counselling Centre webpage and click on the tab "Are You Concerned about a Student" to obtain more information.

Threats and/or Disruptive Behaviour

Immediately report any of the following:

- » Any type of physical violence causing bodily harm (self or other)
- » Specific threats of violence or harm

Afterwards, you may want to do the following:

- » Complete an Occupational Health & Safety Incident Report and forward to OHS Office
- » Seek Employee & Family Assistance Program for support if necessary

OHS Office

➔ Email: Valerie.wadman@smu.ca if you have any questions relating to report.

Contact the Union Office to determine available options

➔ unionoffice@smufu.org or 902-496-8090

EFAP for Staff 1-800-387-4765

Consult Your General Practitioner

**University Security Emergency Line
902-420-5000**

Drug and Alcohol Abuse or Misuse

Immediately report any of the following:

- » Potential drug overdose
- » Potential alcohol poisoning

If the student appears to have a pattern of substance abuse, try to refer them to the following resources:

**University Security
Emergency Line
902-420-5000**

Behaviours of Concern

If the student:

- » Is incoherent or unintelligible
- » Cannot be calmed

- University Security Emergency Line 902-420-5000
- Non-Emergency Line..... 902-420-5577
- Student Health Services 902-420-5611

The Counselling Centre: counselling@smu.ca

Student Health Services: 902-420-5611

<http://www.nshealth.ca/mental-health-addictions>

Other situations that require attention (non-immediate)



Marked Changes in Mood or Behaviour

Changes in an individual's typical behaviour such as:

- » Withdrawal from social interactions or significant deterioration in academic work
- » Notable changes in energy levels or appearance
- » Disruptive behaviours in the classroom or on campus

Consider the following referrals for the student:

The Counselling Centre: counselling@smu.ca or 902-420-5615

Student Health Services: 902-420-5611 or student.health@smu.ca

Assault/ Violence & Harassment

- » Sexual violence
- » Harassment, bullying, physical or emotional abuse
- » Stalking
- » Discrimination

Consider the following referrals for the student:

University Security Emergency: 902-420-5000

Non-Emergency: 902-420-5577 or security@smu.ca

Sexual Violence Case Manager: sexualviolence@smu.ca

Avalon Sexual Assault Centre: 902-422-4240

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Response Line: 902-425-0122

Difficulties with Communicating and/or Distortions of Reality

- » Communication difficulties (e.g., troubles forming sentences, thoughts, irrational conversations)
- » Distortions of reality (e.g., disturbing material in academic work)

Consider referring the student to:

The Counselling Centre
counselling@smu.ca

Mental Health Mobile Crisis— 902-429-8167

Disordered Eating and/or Excessive Exercise

- » Excessive dieting
- » Uncontrolled binge eating
- » Self-induced vomiting after eating
- » Excessive exercise

Consider referring the student to:

The Counselling Centre
counselling@smu.ca

Eating Disorders Nova Scotia
info@eatingdisordersns.ca

Learning & Academic Difficulties

- » Serious academic difficulties
- » Considering withdrawal
- » In jeopardy of failing

Consider referring the student to:

Academic Advisors

Arts: smarts@smu.ca

Business: sobeyschool@smu.ca

Science: advisor.science@smu.ca

24/7 free counselling, crisis text line & educational resources

visit healthymindsns.ca

Other potential signs of distress:

- » Changes in personal hygiene or dress
- » Significant weight loss or gain
- » Difficulties concentrating or with communication
- » Listlessness, falling asleep in class, lack of energy, or apparent loss of interest
- » Apparent dependency on staff and/or faculty member
- » Others (faculty, staff, students) have expressed concerns about the student
- » High levels of irritability

Complaints about physical symptoms

- » Nausea, stomach aches, headaches, or problems with eating or sleeping

Changes in relationships or social behaviour

- » Social withdrawal, isolation, or excessive dependency on others

Changes in academic performance

- » Deterioration in quality of work, missed classes and assignments, excessive procrastination, avoidance of participation

Unusual behaviour

- » Laughing to self, unexplained crying, rapid speech, suspiciousness, disorganized thinking

How can you help?

Utilize the opportunities on campus to learn more about supporting students mental health. The skills below are discussed as part of the Mental Health Series (Mental Health 101, 202, 303 and International Student Mental Health). For more information please visit: smu.ca/counselling (Information for Faculty and Staff tab on the right) or to register for a session email: counselling@smu.ca

Approach

"I've noticed you've been absent from class lately and I'm concerned about you"

Seek a quiet, safe location and an appropriate time to speak to the student. If there is a safety concern, it is best to ask someone else to be present as well.

It is ok to ask and express concern

Be specific about the behaviour that worries you

Listen

"It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed"

Listen carefully and non-judgmentally

Acknowledge the student's thoughts and feelings in a compassionate way

Reflect back the essence of what they have said

Support

"Is there anything I can do to help you?"

Offer hope and reassure the student that you are concerned and want to help

Point out that there is help available and that seeking help is a healthy way to work through difficulties

Refer

"If you'd like, you could call and book the appointment while you are here with me"

Provide the students with resources such as: The Counselling Centre (counselling@smu.ca or 902-420-5615) or another outside counselling service.

In doubt about the resource best suited for the student's needs? Refer them to The Counselling Centre located in the Student Centre, 4th floor, room SC406. They can also email The Counselling Centre at counselling@smu.ca, or call 902-420-5615 for more information.

How to make a good referral

Research resources that might be helpful for the student

If the student appears reluctant, you can help by:

- » Offering to contact the resource on their behalf while they are in your office (Please note that students must make their own appointments for counselling)
- » Reminding them that there is no charge for using The Counselling Centre
- » Offering to sit with the student while they make the initial contact themselves
- » Accompanying the student to the appointment if appropriate and you feel comfortable

If the student says "no" to a referral

- » Respect their decision. Accepting or refusing assistance must be left up to the student, except in emergencies, when life is in danger
- » Don't force the issue or trick them into going
- » Try and leave the door open for later reconsideration
- » Provide the student with take-away materials and information (contact numbers, locations, etc.)
- » Offer to follow-up with the student, but don't insist on knowing what the student has done

"I respect your decision. I hope you will keep these options in mind. My door is always open."