



# **Supporting a Student in distress.**

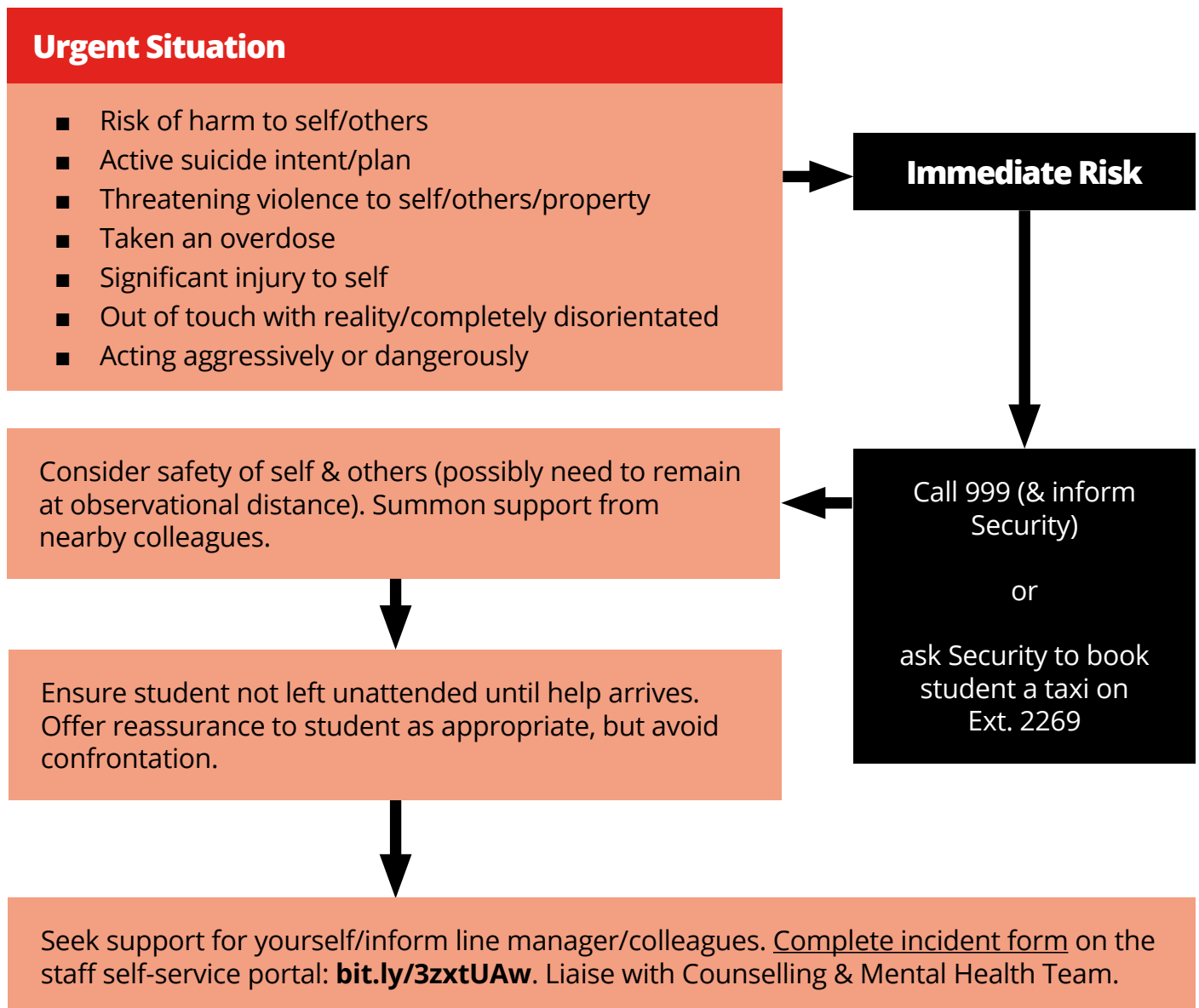
**University of  
Northampton**



**Guidance for staff  
on supporting and  
managing a student  
in distress.**

# Quick referencing guide to managing students in distress

The items on these two pages below are a flowcharts outlining the process for managing a student in distress in both an urgent and non urgent situation. [The long description for these flowchart can be accessed here.](#)



## Useful contact numbers

Security (if 999 called, <b>ALWAYS</b> inform)	2269
Welfare and Safeguarding Advisor ( <a href="mailto:concerns@northampton.ac.uk">concerns@northampton.ac.uk</a> )	3639
Student Information Desk	2833
Residential Life Team	2265
NHS urgent medical advice (non-life threatening)	111
Police (non emergencies)	101
Northamptonshire Mental Health Number 24/7	0800 448 0828

## Non Urgent Concerns

- Upset
- Worried
- Significant changes in behaviour or appearance
- Worrying disclosure, e.g. self-injury, isolation
- Anxious
- Academic lack of progression

## Unwilling to seek help

## Willing to get help

Explain you can't agree to absolute confidentiality if risk issues are shared. Highlight your concerns for their Mental Health. Encourage & support to make appointments with GP or relevant University staff. Make aware of helpful resources on University web pages

Make a record of advice given.  
Discuss concerns with line manager and/or Counselling & Mental Health Team. You may wish to offer a follow up meeting to check on progress.

Give information on support services to take away.

Respect confidentiality (if no immediate risk).

Discuss concerns for student with manager for own support. Complete a Student Health & Wellbeing Emerging Concern form:  
**[bit.ly/3i5fYrr](https://bit.ly/3i5fYrr)**

## Helpful Webpages

Staff Intranet: Supporting Students: **[bit.ly/3QKAQDU](https://bit.ly/3QKAQDU)**

Counselling & Mental Health Team: **[bit.ly/3AEgRP7](https://bit.ly/3AEgRP7)**

Sexual Violence Liaison Officers: **[bit.ly/3S5RA8B](https://bit.ly/3S5RA8B)**

## Useful contact numbers

Northamptonshire Mental Health Number 24/7	0800 448 0828
Samaritans 24/7	116 123
SANEline	0300 304 7000
Refuge 24/7 (Domestic violence)	0808 2000 247
Drugs Helpline	0300 123 6600
Serenity 24/7 (Sexual violence)	01604 601713
No Panic	0300 772 9844

# Supporting a student in distress

## Understanding when a student is in distress and how to help them will aid you in managing difficult situations.

### Listen

Try to find a quiet, private place to sit and establish the cause of the distress.

### How much time?

Enough for the student to feel their concerns have been listened to. Half an hour or less is usually adequate.

You should consult the Directory of Resources on page 9 with the student, for possible sources of support. Alternatively ring the Student Information Desk Ext. 2833 for advice.

Arrange to meet with the student in a few days to follow up on their progress. If the student needs a quiet space to gather their thoughts/composure, then the Multi-Faith Centre offers quiet space at Waterside Campus.

## Common causes of distress.

### Academic worries

Encourage the student to contact their Personal Tutor in the first instance. If they would like further academic advice and support then encourage them to speak to the Student Support & Advice Team by emailing [studentsupportofficers@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupportofficers@northampton.ac.uk) or attending one of the team's appointment sessions.

### Financial or accommodation worries

Support the student in contacting Student Information Desk.

### Relationship or bereavement distress

Encourage the student to see a University Counsellor or Chaplain.



# Examples of difficult situations and guidance on managing them

## Suicidal thoughts or intent

If at any time the student tells you that they have been thinking of taking their own life, or have plans to do so, then they are at risk of suicide. They must speak with someone who has the time and experience they require as soon as possible.

- Direct the student to attend the Counselling & Mental Health Team Drop-in Session that same day or
- Encourage the student to make an emergency appointment with their GP. UoN Security Ext 2269 will organise a free taxi to take a student to an emergency appointment with a GP if requested by a staff member. But do suggest a follow up appointment with a University Counsellor or Mental Health Adviser to ensure they are receiving adequate support with external services and/or at UoN.
- The student may need your support in doing any of the above.
- If the student lives in Halls of Residence contact the Residential Life Team Leader Ext 2265 who may be able to offer the student further support.
- Inform the Counselling and Mental Health Team of the incident ([mha@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mha@northampton.ac.uk)) and the advice given so they can follow up on the student's wellbeing and offer you support. Encourage the student to come back to you in the next day or two and check if they have made contact with a University Counsellor, Mental Health Adviser or GP. If not encourage them to do so

## Attempted Suicide

If a student has taken an overdose, ask them what they have taken and how much so you can pass this information on to the ambulance crew. Ring for an ambulance on 999.

Notify Security at Waterside Ext. 2269 so they can allow access and direct ambulance appropriately.

Ring a First Aider for assistance via Security Ext. 2269

Inform Counselling and Mental Health of the incident ([mha@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mha@northampton.ac.uk)) and the advice given so they can follow up on the student's wellbeing and offer you support.

## A student has experienced a panic attack

If the student is in a state of panic, stay calm and offer them a seat. Reassure the student that the feelings will pass and encourage them to breathe slowly and evenly. If there are no signs of improvement you may want to seek advice/support from a First Aider via Ext. 2269.

- If they have just left an examination before the end then advise them to see:
  - » Their personal tutor and or The Student Support & Advice Team at the earliest opportunity
  - » A Mental Health Adviser who could offer information and advice and authorise adjustments in exams, which may help to reduce anxiety in future examinations
  - » Their GP who can offer advice and refer on to appropriate services, or prescribe medication to relieve symptoms if necessary
- You may need to write down any advice given as people find it very difficult to concentrate and retain information when feeling anxious.
- If the student needs a quiet space to compose themselves then the Multi-Faith Centre at Waterside Campus offers a quiet room.





## Student is a victim of an attack or assault

It is possible that a student may be in distress because of an attack or assault.

- Ask the student if they would like to contact the police.
- If the student is unwilling to contact the police they may prefer to talk to a University Counsellor (encourage the student to use our team's Drop-in Sessions) or receive support from Serenity (sexual assault), The Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service or Victim Support.
- If the assault has happened on site, with the student's consent contact:
  - » Security Ext. 2269
  - » Head of Student Services Ext 2255 or
  - » Out-of-hours contact Residential Life Officers and Advisors:
    - 07740 716592 Boughton Green Road Halls
    - 07740 716593/07712691674 Waterside Res Life
    - 07925 893597 St John's Hall

## Student has self harmed

- If a student has harmed him/herself by cutting and the cuts are minor, give the student the opportunity to reveal what has caused the distress, and support them in making an appointment with a Mental Health Adviser [mha@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mha@northampton.ac.uk) or a University Counsellor [counsellors@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:counsellors@northampton.ac.uk)
- If the wounds are more severe and you are unsure whether treatment is required, call a First Aider to assess the situation via Ext. 2269
- If necessary arrange for the student to attend Accident and Emergency OR see their GP OR NHS 111 - the out of hours urgent care advice service. Ask Security to call a taxi Ext. 2269 to transport the student to the appointment if appropriate. Again, support the student in making an appointment with a Mental Health Adviser [mha@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mha@northampton.ac.uk) or a University Counsellor [counsellors@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:counsellors@northampton.ac.uk) who can monitor the student's progress
- If the student lives in Halls they may appreciate follow up support from a Residential Life Officer or Advisor at this time. Contact the Residential Life Team Leader Ext. 2265

## **Student's behaviour is worrying/unusual/unmanageable**

- Check with colleagues to see if they have similar concerns/difficulties
- Alert Course Leader/Line Manager to your concerns and discuss a way forward
- You or another member of staff may feel comfortable addressing your concerns with the student, and checking if they are aware of how they are presenting. Are they feeling stressed? Would they like to access support available from Student Services?
- Check the student's records to see if they have disclosed a disability
- If you have general welfare or safeguarding concerns about a student please contact Ben Miles, Welfare and Safeguarding Advisor. Ben can help in discussions around the issues and to coordinate a wider response and support.
  - » Ext. 3639 or email [concerns@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:concerns@northampton.ac.uk)
- If so has the student accessed support available within Student Services?
- Discuss concerns with a Mental Health Adviser or ASSIST (Additional Student Support & Inclusion Services) Team Leader Ext. 2390
- If the student resides in a Hall of Residence, then the Residential Life Officers and Advisers could offer support and encourage the student to contact appropriate services. Residential Life Officers and Advisors Tel:
  - » 07740 716592 Boughton Green Road Halls
  - » 07740 716593 / 07712 691674 Waterside
  - » 07925 893597 St John's Hall or
  - » the Residential Life Team Leader Ext. 2265.

## **Managing Aggressive Behaviour**

As this document is concerned with people experiencing mental distress, it is important to note that such people most commonly present a risk to themselves than others. A very small minority present a risk to others. However, aggression can be encountered in any situation when someone has responsibility for dealing with members of the public.

- Aggressive outbreaks rarely erupt without warning and one of the best precautions is to be aware of non-verbal signs that a person is becoming agitated eg. Frowning, gritted teeth, eyes narrow or staring, sharp loud voice.
- Remain calm, do not stare, maintain a safe distance and never touch an angry person.
- Suggest the person leaves and returns when calmer and able to talk about what is troubling them.
- If you feel at risk or unable to manage the situation leave immediately and discuss with a senior member of staff.
- If you are concerned for your safety or that of others contact Security immediately Ext. 2269 who will assess the situation and contact the Police if necessary OR contact Police via 999 and inform security of your actions.



A young man with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket, dark jeans, and a necklace with a cross, stands on a modern staircase. The staircase has a metal railing and a concrete wall. The floor is made of dark, textured metal plates. The stairs are visible in the foreground, with yellow and black striped safety markings on the edges.

## Support for you

**You may feel upset by the contact you have had with the student, or worry if you did or said the right things.**

- Talk with a trusted colleague about events, or
- Contact a Mental Health Adviser [mha@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mha@northampton.ac.uk) or Counsellor [counsellors@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:counsellors@northampton.ac.uk) to discuss
- If you find your experience is affecting your work then talk with your line manager and/or contact the Employee Assistance Helpline 0800 328 1437
- If your worries are ongoing and you feel you may require an additional health assessment or support then contact HR Ext. 2453 or [HR@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:HR@northampton.ac.uk) to discuss the options available.
- University Chaplains are available for staff to speak to in confidence. Contact them on Ext. 2488 or email [chaplaincy@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@northampton.ac.uk) or view Student Services Hub page for individual Chaplains' telephone numbers.



# Directory of resources

## Health and incident-related emergencies

### In case of serious incident, injury or illness:

Ring 999 only if:

- a person is seriously ill, injured or their life is at risk
- if a crime is in progress
- or violence is being used or threatened.

Northampton General Hospital Trust Accident  
Emergency open 24 hours: 01604 634700

Non Emergency Medical Care and Advice. NHS: 111  
[bit.ly/39GwzNz](https://bit.ly/39GwzNz)

Northamptonshire Police (non- emergency): 101

Northamptonshire Mental Health Number 24/7 support & advice: 0800 448 0828

## Internal contacts

### Student Information Desk

Ext. 2833

### Welfare and Safeguarding Advisor

Ben Miles Ext. 3639

email: [concerns@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:concerns@northampton.ac.uk)

### Counselling Service

Counselling aims to support students experiencing distress and offer them an opportunity to develop alternative ways of dealing with situations that have caused distress or difficulty. Drop-in sessions are offered by Counsellors and Mental Health Advisers Monday - Friday. Email: [counsellors@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:counsellors@northampton.ac.uk) or see the Student Hub. [bit.ly/39zud37](https://bit.ly/39zud37)

### Mental Health Advisers

Offer a confidential opportunity for students experiencing mental health difficulties to address current problems and ongoing support needs. They can refer to appropriate services if necessary and recommend adjustments to study. Email: [mha@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:mha@northampton.ac.uk) or see the Student Hub. [bit.ly/39zud37](https://bit.ly/39zud37)

### Doctors Surgery

Moulton Branch Surgery is based at Waterside campus. Appointments made via receptionist on Ext. 2582. Students registered with a different practice in Northampton will need to be seen by their own Doctor. If the student is not registered, Moulton Practice will see them as a temporary patient in an emergency.

- |                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| ■ Moulton Surgery off campus          | 01604 644126 |
| ■ Moulton Surgery at Waterside Campus | 01604 892582 |

### Residential Life Team Leader

Rebecca Duggan has responsibility for Residential Life Officers and Advisers. She may be able to help with concerns about a student living in Halls. Ext 2265

## Residential Life Officers and Advisers

- 07740 716592 Boughton Green Road Halls
- 07740 716593 / 07712 691674 Waterside Res Life
- 07925 893597 St John's Hall

or email: [residentiallife@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:residentiallife@northampton.ac.uk)

## Security

Waterside Campus Ext. 2269

## First Aiders

For Waterside first aid contacts ring Security Ext. 2269

## ASSIST

Emma Banks ASSIST Team Leader  
[Emma.Banks@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:Emma.Banks@northampton.ac.uk) Ext 2390

## Head of Student Services

David Fitzgerald Ext 2255

## Safety Health & Environment Team

[Safety@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:Safety@northampton.ac.uk) Ext 3565

## Multi – Faith Chaplaincy

[Chaplaincy@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:Chaplaincy@northampton.ac.uk) Ext 2488

## External Agencies

### Serenity

24/7 Sexual Assault Referral Centre  
01604 601713  
[nhft.nhs.uk/serenity](http://nhft.nhs.uk/serenity)

### Rape Crisis Centre

01604 250721 or Helpline 0300 222 59 30  
[northamptonshirerapecrisis.co.uk/](http://northamptonshirerapecrisis.co.uk/)

### Self-injury support

0808 800 8088 Text: 07537 432444 or  
email for support through the website  
[selfinjurysupport.org.uk/](http://selfinjurysupport.org.uk/)

## Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service

24/7 help line: 0300 012 0154  
[ndas.co/](http://ndas.co/)

## Victim Support

0808 168 9111  
[victimsupport.org.uk/](http://victimsupport.org.uk/)

## The Lowdown

Counselling, advice and information for  
young people aged 12-25 years.  
0164 634385  
[thelowdown.info/](http://thelowdown.info/)

## CGL

Substance to Solution (For people affected by  
drug and alcohol difficulties).  
0808 169 8512  
[changegrowlive.org/substance-to-solution-northamptonshire/northampton](http://changegrowlive.org/substance-to-solution-northamptonshire/northampton)

## Helplines

### Saneline

0300 304 7000 (4.30pm – 10.30pm)  
[sane.org.uk/](http://sane.org.uk/)

### Samaritans

116 123 (24/7)  
[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

### No Panic

(anxiety, panic attacks, phobias)  
0300 772 9844 (10am – 10pm)  
[nopanice.org.uk](http://nopanice.org.uk)

### Campaign against living miserably (CALM)

targeted for young men aged between 15-24  
years.  
0800 58 58 58 (5pm – midnight)  
[thecalmzone.net](http://thecalmzone.net)

## **Beat (formerly the Eating Disorders Association)**

0808 801 0677

[beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

## **HOPELine UK**

0800 068 41 41

[hopelineuk.org.uk/contact](http://hopelineuk.org.uk/contact)

## **The Mix**

Aimed at under 25's

0808 808 4994

Crisis 24/7 textline - Text THEMIX to 85258

[themix.org.uk](http://themix.org.uk)