

On-Campus Support

Health & Wellness

Student Health and Wellness Provides health services, counselling, mental health support and health promotion.	Residence Building OR 1012 and 1015 (705) 330-4010 ext. 2116 orluwell@lakeheadu.ca
Indigenous and Cultural Support Services Academic, personal, and financial services including cultural services and workshops.	Residence Building OR 1019 (705) 330-4010 ext. 2018 orillia.ii@lakeheadu.ca

Academic Services/Disability Services

Student Accessibility Services Supports students with permanent or temporary disabilities/medical conditions (including mental health) which affect their academics, through academic accommodations.	Simcoe Hall • OA 1030 (705) 330-4010 ext. 2018 Book appointment by emailing oraccess@lakeheadu.ca
Student Success Centre Offers academic support such as academic skill development, peer mentorship and leadership development. Includes the Academic Support Zone for group tutoring and writing support.	Residence Building OR 1021 (705) 330-4010 ext. 2118 orillia.ssc@lakeheadu.ca
Student Central Provides assistance with academic advising, course registration, financial aid including OSAP, scholarships, awards, bursaries, financial literacy, and more.	Simcoe Hall (705) 330-4010 ext. 8500 studentcentral@lakeheadu.ca

Legal and Conduct

Security Services Offers 24 hour security to the campus community.	Simcoe Hall • OA 1035 (705) 330-4010 ext.2009 orsecure@lakeheadu.ca Heritage Place OH 1001A (705) 330-4008 ext.2002
Office of Human Rights and Equity Ensures that Lakehead University is a human rights compliant, inclusive and accommodating space that champions diversity. OHRE office works to prevent and respond to discrimination, harassment and sexual violence.	(705) 330-4010 ext.7765 humanrights@lakeheadu.ca
Office of the Ombudsperson Consults on academic or non-academic concerns with a goal of ensuring that all members of the Lakehead University community are treated fairly and equitably.	(705) 330-4010 ext.8061 ombudsperson@lakeheadu.ca
Office of Student Affairs Assists with non-academic behavioural student conduct matters.	807-343-8010 ext. 8163

Other

International Student Services Services and support for international students .	Simcoe Hall • OA 1031 (705) 300-4010 ext. 2141 or.international@lakeheadu.ca
Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU) Offers supports for students through advocacy and club activities. Administers extended health care benefits package.	Simcoe Hall • OA 1027 (705) 330-4010 ext. 2181 vporillia@lusu.ca
Residence Life Provides guidance on issues and concerns that relate to the well-being of students living in residence.	Residence Building 705-330-4009 orilliaresidence@lakeheadu.ca

Off-Campus Support

Community

24-Hour Mental Health Crisis Line	24 hours /7 days a week (705) 728-5044
Rape Crisis/Sexual Assault Centre Crisis Line	24 hrs, 7 days/week 1-800-987-0799
Good2Talk Post-Secondary Helpline	24 hrs, 7 days/week 1-866-925-5454
Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital	170 Colborne Street West (705) 325-2201 Crisis Service ext. 3536

Special acknowledgement to Carleton University for creating the original Supporting Students in Distress Guide to which this was adapted for use at Lakehead University.



got questions?

we've got answers.

Supporting Students in Distress

We all have an interest in the well-being of our students.



Health & Wellness

Often, Lakehead University faculty and staff will be the first ones to notice a concerning behaviour which may indicate a student is having difficulty and may need help.

This guide outlines how to recognize when a student is in distress and how to respond effectively when a student approaches you looking for help.

Guidelines for Supporting Students in Distress

Support is noticing when someone is struggling and having the confidence to engage them.

1. Notice

You may be the first person to recognize a student is in distress or to notice a change in their behaviour.

Distress or difficulty describes the emotions or feelings that interfere with a person's ability to carry out daily activities.

You may see some of the following indicators:

Academic/Work Indicators:

- Changes in quality of work, attendance, productivity or participation
- Inconsistency/changes in performance, responses to feedback, social interactions

Emotional and Behavioural Indicators:

- Emotional responses/changes in emotional responses (tearful or angry outbursts)
- Expression of suicide/despair/worthlessness
- Changes in behaviour (anxiety, withdrawn or extroverted, too little/too much sleep)

Physical Indicators:

- Changes in personal hygiene
- Frequent or chronic illness or absenteeism
- Disorganized, rapid or slurred speech
- Visible changes in weight (either loss/gain)

2. Engage

- Speak with the student in person and in private (unless it is unsafe to do so). Stay calm, be welcoming.
- Provide the student with your undivided attention and patience.
- Express concern and be specific about behaviour. *"I've noticed that you haven't been to class lately, I'm concerned about you."*
- Actively listen and ask questions. *"So what you're saying is... tell me more about that."*
- Listen to the content of the student's issues, not just the volume, tone and pace.
- Validate student's feelings/experience. *"It sounds like you feel lonely since coming to Lakehead." "I'm sorry you're going through this."*
- Convey caring and instill hope. Be cautious about giving advice. *"It sounds like there is a lot going on, there are some resources I can connect you with that may provide help."*

3. Refer

Encourage the student to get help.

- Emphasize what you notice and the reason for concern.
- Explain help is available and seeking help is a sign of strength and courage.
- Ask if they are connected to resources on or off campus. Offer a resource and/or make a referral to one of the services on campus. *"Is this something you would like help with? I can recommend resources."*

If the student seems hesitant to access resources, offer to contact the resource with the student present or offer to walk the student to the resource if on campus.



Can I share information with other members of the University?

You can share information with other University employees on a "need to know" basis. You can contact another department and disclose details necessary to ensure a student's safety and help them access support.

If a student says "no" to a referral:

Students may say no to a referral or not follow up with resources. Respect their decision and offer your assistance if they reconsider or need additional help.

Always Consider Safety!

An emergency is any reference to physical harm to self or others, violence or weapons. In the case of an emergency, the student needs immediate help, call 911 immediately. State your concern to the student. *"I'm worried about your safety, I need to get support for you."*

Important! A student who discloses sexual violence should be referred to the Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE). If a student declines to report to OHRE for any formal or informal resolution; encourage them to access contact Office to Human Rights and Equity still to access academic accommodation

Steps to Take with Students when Encountering Concerning Behaviour

You may be the first person to recognize that a student is in distress, your interest and assistance may play a crucial role in the student finding resolution to a problem.

Stressed

Student is showing some signs of distress and can identify a few coping strategies.

Signs may include: academic, financial, health or personal issues, homesickness, heightened emotions or lack of support.

Behaviours you may notice:

- Student states need for help
- Decline in appearance and personal hygiene
- Sudden change in attitude, withdrawal, disruptive behaviour in class, changes in energy levels, emotional outbursts or irritability
- Coming to class under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- Struggles with/withdrawal from or decline in academic work, difficulty learning, large disparity between assignment grades and test grades, request for academic accommodation comes directly from the student

What To Do:

- Provide student with information on appropriate resource (see next page)
- Offer encouragement and support
- Follow up with the student. Have they reached out to resources?
- Remind them of your support

Distressed

Student's coping strategies are not effective, needs are complex. No imminent risk of harm to self or others.

Signs may include: Significant changes in behaviour or appearance, recent trauma (relationship break-up, discloses sexual violence, harassment or discrimination, illness/death of family or close friend...), declining mental health, serious emotional difficulties, isolation/withdrawal, or alcohol/drug use.

Behaviours you may notice:

- Student states need for help
- Escalated/continued stressed behaviours
- Academic work affected negatively by student's state of distress; inability to attend class/to write tests/exams/complete assignments

What To Do:

- Connect and encourage student to access resources
- Provide information, offer to make call to resource and/or walk to resource
- Behaviours that cause concern for the safety of the student/yourself/others, consult Security to establish safety procedures
- Keep your Chair/Director, Dean informed

Emergency

Student's coping strategies are not effective, needs are complex. There is **IMMINENT RISK** of harm to self or others.

Student is threatening physical harm to you/others/self or is escalated to physical violence/threats/weapons.

Signs may include: Student is actively planning suicide or is at risk of immediate harm to self.

Behaviours you may notice (in person or in writing):

- Any direct or indirect reference to suicide
- Expressing feelings of worthlessness, despair; world, family, friends better without them
- Unreasonable feelings of guilt
- Threatening, violent or destructive behaviour
- Incoherent or out of touch with reality
- The situation feels unsafe
- Aggressive/extreme remarks or reactions
- Sabotaging projects or equipment
- Direct threat of harm
- Student discloses they are afraid of someone coming to harm them

What To Do:

- Immediate action is required
- Remain calm. Ensure your immediate safety
- Call 911 and then notify Security (705) 330-4010 ext. 2002
- Keep your Chair/Director, Dean informed