

On-Campus Support

Health & Wellness

Student Health and Wellness Provides health services, counselling, mental health support and health promotion.	Prettie Residence 807-343-8361
Indigenous and Cultural Support Services Academic, personal, and financial services including cultural services and activities	University Centre UC 1007 807-343-8010 ext. 8085

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	Student Centre SC 0003 807-343-8047
Student Success Centre Offers academic support such as academic skill development, career exploration and leadership development Includes the Academic Support Zone for tutoring and writing support	Student Centre SC 0008 807-343-8018 Chancellor Paterson Library LI 2004 Academic Support Zone 807-343-8010 ext. 8859
Student Central Provides academic advising, financial planning and budgeting assistance, OSAP, degree audits, exam coordination and graduation assistance	University Centre UC 1002 807-343-8500

Legal and Conduct

Security Services Offers 24 hour security to the campus community	University Centre UC 1016 807-343-8911
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 with students, employees and volunteers to prevent and respond to allegations of discrimination, harassment and sexual and gender-based violence.	Chancellor Paterson Library LI 5012 807-343-8010 ext. 7765 (basic human rights) ext. 7785 (sexual and gender based violence)
Office of the Ombudsperson Consults on academic or non-academic concerns with a goal to ensure that all members of the Lakehead University community are treated fairly and equitably.	ATAC 5031 807-343-8010 ext. 8061
Office of Student Affairs Assists with non-academic behavioural student conduct matters	ATAC 5031D 807-343-8010 ext. 8163

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

Other

International Student Services Services and support for international students	Chancellor Paterson Library LI 0008 807-346-7848 Emergency On-Call Advisor: 1-807-627-8701
Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU) Offers various centres on campus including Campus Food Bank, Pride Central and the Gender Equity Centre. Administers extended health care benefits package	Student Centre SC 0001 807-343-8259
Residence Life Provides guidance on issues and concerns that relate to the well-being of students living in residence	Bartley Residence Front Desk 807-343-8010 ext. 8612

Off-Campus Support

Community

Thunder Bay Crisis Response Mental Health Emergencies	24 hrs, 7 days/week 807-346-8282
Sexual Abuse Centre	807-345-0894 (business hours) 807-346-8282 (24/7 Crisis Line)
Good2Talk Post-Secondary Helpline	24 hrs, 7 days/week 1-866-925-5454
Beendigen Crisis Line Counselling and assistance for First Nations	(807) 346-4357
Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre Emergency Room	24 hrs, 7 days/week Located across the street from the Lakehead University Fieldhouse/ Hangar



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

Student
Affairs



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

Student
Affairs

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

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 coming 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 807-343-8911 or extension 8911
- Keep your Chair/Director, Dean informed