

## SUPPORT SERVICES ON CAMPUS

### STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES

E23, third floor

617-253-2916

[medical.mit.edu/mentalhealth](https://medical.mit.edu/mentalhealth)

MIT Medical's Student Mental Health and Counseling Services provides evaluations and consultations, crisis intervention, and treatment, including individual and group psychotherapy and medication management. Staff members have experience and expertise in a variety of issues facing students, including stress, isolation, academic pressure, difficulty in coping with traumatic events, eating problems, insomnia, fatigue, alcohol and substance abuse, and general problems of daily living. Student Mental Health and Counseling Services sometimes refers patients to outside providers or helps them make connections with other helpful resources within the Institute community.

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (S<sup>3</sup>)

617-253-4861

[studentlife.mit.edu/s3](https://studentlife.mit.edu/s3)

Student Support Services is a low-key place for undergraduates to ask for help. The S<sup>3</sup> deans can talk with students about a wide variety of concerns, write "extenuating circumstance" notes for students who cannot attend class or complete work due to personal or medical issues, and consult with professors about excused absences during the last two weeks of classes.

### GRADSUPPORT

617-253-4860

[oge.mit.edu/gradsupport](https://oge.mit.edu/gradsupport)

Staff in the Office of Graduate Education provide advice and counsel on a variety of issues, including faculty/student relationships, conflict negotiation, funding, academic progress, interpersonal concerns, and a student's rights and responsibilities. They can also help with excused absences.

### VIOLENCE PREVENTION & RESPONSE (VPR)

617-253-2300 (24-hour hotline)

[studentlife.mit.edu/vpr](https://studentlife.mit.edu/vpr)

Violence Prevention & Response is a campus resource for preventing interpersonal violence, including sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. VPR offers support to survivors, including emotional support and help in obtaining medical and legal assistance.

## OTHER MIT RESOURCES

Community Wellness at MIT Medical

617-253-1316

[medical.mit.edu/community](https://medical.mit.edu/community)

Urgent Care at MIT Medical

617-253-1311

[medical.mit.edu/urgentcare](https://medical.mit.edu/urgentcare)

MIT Medical/Lexington

781-981-7080

[medical.mit.edu/lexington](https://medical.mit.edu/lexington)

MIT Police

617-253-1212 or 100 (from campus phones only)

Dean on Call

Call MIT Police: 617-253-1212

or 100 (from campus phones only)

Ambulance

Call MIT Police: 617-253-1212

or 100 (from campus phones only)

MIT Chaplains

[studentlife.mit.edu/orsel](https://studentlife.mit.edu/orsel)

ULifeline

*Mental health information for students*

[ulifeline.org](https://ulifeline.org)

MIT MedLinks

[medlinks.mit.edu](https://medlinks.mit.edu)

LBGTQ+ Services

[lbgtq.mit.edu](https://lbgtq.mit.edu)

MIT Ombuds Office

[ombud.mit.edu](https://ombud.mit.edu)

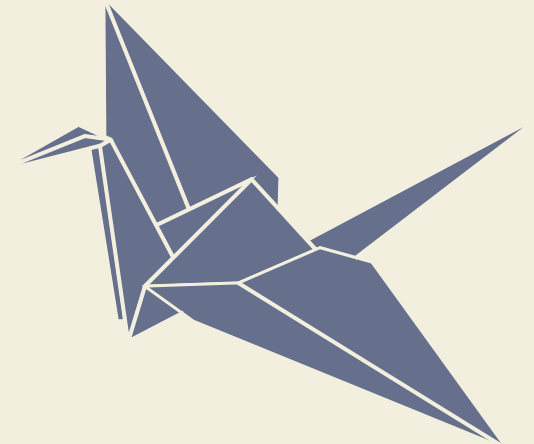
The heads of house, GRTs, or RAs in each living group may also be a useful resource for a student in distress.



rev. 2019-08-02

# WHEN YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE

*how to help someone in distress*



Stress is a fact of life at MIT. We all try to support each other, but sometimes it's hard to know when it's reasonable, even crucial, to suggest that a friend seek help.





## WHEN SHOULD I BE WORRIED?

A friend in distress will usually give off clues that they need help. Here are some things to look out for:

- Frequent absences from class or work, especially when this is a change
- Marked decline in academic work or job performance
- Expressions of hopelessness and helplessness in conversations, emails, or postings on social media
- Change in sleeping or eating habits or dramatic weight gain or loss
- Depressed appearance, isolation, or withdrawal
- Apathy or lack of energy
- Excessive anxiety or panic
- Marked changes in personal hygiene, work habits, or social behavior
- Cutting and other self-injurious behaviors
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Anger, irritability, or interpersonal conflict

Taken alone, any one of these indicators doesn't necessarily mean that an individual is experiencing severe distress. And some of these clues are more obvious warning signs than others. But regardless of what you observe, if you are feeling worried about someone, never ignore your concerns. Trust your instincts.

## WHAT IF IT SEEMS URGENT?

If you believe your friend is thinking about suicide, you should contact a mental health clinician right away.

- **You can contact MIT Police** by dialing 100 on a campus phone, or 617-253-1212 on any other phone. The police can arrange to have the person transported to MIT Medical or to a hospital emergency room.
- **You can speak with a clinician at MIT Medical's Student Mental Health and Counseling Services** about an urgent concern any time. We are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Just dial 617-253-2916.

## HOW TO TALK TO A FRIEND IN DISTRESS

Your friend may resist asking for help. Your friend may resist receiving help. And even if your friend really wants help, he or she may not know how to ask for it or where to find it. Here are some tips for expressing your concerns in a caring, non-judgmental way:

- **Be discreet.** Find a private, comfortable place to talk in person.
- **Don't judge.** Share what you have observed, and explain your concerns honestly, but don't criticize or offer advice.
- **Ask open-ended questions, and listen.** Try asking, "How is it going?" Your friend may not answer but may feel relieved to know that you care, are trying to understand, and are offering to help.
- **Don't feel the need to solve the problem.** If your friend shares personal feelings with you, you don't have to offer a solution or opinion. The important thing is to listen and try to understand what your friend is going through.
- **Encourage your friend to contact MIT Medical's Student Mental Health and Counseling Services** or other MIT resources such as Student Support Services (S<sup>3</sup>). Feel free to share the list of resources in this brochure and discuss the various sources of support on campus.

- **Offer to help your friend make an appointment.** If your friend agrees, you can make the initial contact with Student Mental Health and Counseling Services by calling us at 617-253-2916 while your friend is with you. Write down the appointment details, including the time, the location, and the clinician's name. You might even offer to walk your friend over to MIT Medical for the appointment.
- **Gently counter resistance.** A person may have many reasons to resist seeking help. Your friend might feel ashamed, worried about being viewed as weak, or concerned about taking up valuable resources. You can explain that Student Mental Health and Counseling Services, Student Support Services, and GradSupport are here to help everyone, regardless of the nature or severity of their difficulties.
- **Remind your friend that it's confidential.** Everything your friend tells a mental health clinician is "privileged information" and cannot be shared with any other person without permission. The only exceptions are if the clinician believes that the patient or other people are in serious danger.

Students sometimes worry that seeing a counselor could affect future job prospects or security clearances. You can assure them that information about mental health is kept confidential. For more information, visit [medical.mit.edu/mentalhealth](https://medical.mit.edu/mentalhealth).

**Feel free to ask us for advice.** You can always call Student Mental Health and Counseling Services to discuss concerns about a friend or acquaintance. You can share concerns about someone with us without violating medical confidentiality. But, of course, we cannot share information about your friend without their permission.

