



*the*  
**RAISE HIGH**  
Guidance for Faculty & Staff to Support  
Student Wellbeing  
*folder*



Student Affairs

# *About Student Wellbeing*

To be well at the George Washington University is to honor the dynamic process of change and growth that involves building resilience, persistence, and positivity in the face of challenges. Faculty and staff play an important role in supporting students' well-being and referring students to the appropriate well-being resources.

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The mission of the Student Support team is to help students succeed at the George Washington University by connecting them to support resources, helping them develop plans of action to meet their goals, and navigating challenging circumstances. The Student Support team aims to create an inclusive and welcoming environment to support students in building skills around self-awareness, self-advocacy, resilience, and navigating the university to maximize their GW experience. We work with students who are going through challenges during their time at GW, such as navigating long term illness, family emergencies, substance use violations, and recovery, as well as many others.

***For questions and consultation, please  
contact the CARE team at  
[gwcares@gwu.edu](mailto:gwcares@gwu.edu).***

# *How Should I Respond to a Student In Distress?*

## **VALIDATE** their feelings.

Let them know that what they're feeling is okay and that you believe them. When someone reaches out to you, validate their feelings and acknowledge that whatever they are going through is okay. Even if you cannot relate with what they are going through, it's real to them.

*This can sound like:*

- "I've noticed \_\_\_\_ and I want you to know that I'm here to support you."
- "I care about your wellbeing, and wanted to check in on how you are doing. I want to know how I can be most helpful for you."
- "Hey, it sounds like you've been managing a lot. I am here to support you if you'd like to talk about it."

## **APPRECIATE** their concerns.

Speaking up can be a challenging step – let them know it's a good one. Your priority is to provide a space for the student to speak and to be heard. You can use this opportunity to let them know you care and they're not alone. While you should focus on listening, sometimes questions can be helpful to learn more context.

*This can sound like:*

- "Thank you for sharing. Would you be open to sharing a little bit more about that?"
- "I'm sorry, that seems like a difficult situation to be in, what has that been like for you?"
- "That sounds really hard, how has it been affecting you?"

## **REFER** them to support.

An important element to supporting students is to normalize and encourage help-seeking. Your role in supporting students is to be present for the student, validate their experience, and connect them to additional resources. Let them know that help is available and refer them to appropriate resources that will work best for them in this moment.

*This can sound like:*

- "What do you think can help you find balance with everything going on?"
- "Thank you for being so open with me. I want to continue this conversation and make sure you get the help you need. I really think \_\_\_\_ can address some of your concerns. How can I help you with connecting you to them?"
- "Reaching out to \_\_\_\_ for the first time can be scary. Would you like help connecting to \_\_\_\_?"

# *Indicators of Distress*

It is important to remember that students experience distress in different ways and may not always be obvious and overt. Faculty and staff should look for not just isolated signs but also, patterns, duration, and severity to flag students who may be in distress. Some examples of indicators of distress are included below. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

<i>Academic Indicators</i>	<i>Physical Indicators</i>	<i>Psychological Indicators</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden decline in quality of work and grades</li> <li>• Repeated absences</li> <li>• Disorganized performance</li> <li>• Multiple requests for extensions</li> <li>• Overly demanding of faculty and staff time and attention</li> <li>• Bizarre content in writings or presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight loss/gain</li> <li>• Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance</li> <li>• Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol</li> <li>• Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech</li> <li>• Behavior is out of context or bizarre</li> <li>• Delusions and paranoia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-disclosure of personal distress such as family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief</li> <li>• Unusual/disproportionate emotional response to events</li> <li>• Excessive fearfulness, panic reactions</li> <li>• Irritability or unusual apathy, verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)</li> <li>• Expressions of concern about the student by his/her peers</li> </ul>

# *Student in Distress Response Protocol*

**Does the student's behavior present a potentially imminent risk to the health and safety of themselves and/or others?**

*YES*



The student's conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening -- including self-harm behavior



Call GWPD at  
202-994-6111

*MAYBE*



The student shows signs of distress, but I am unsure how serious it is. My interaction has left me feeling uneasy and/or really concerned about the student



Submit a CARE referral,  
or reach out to the  
Student Support team  
during business hours

*NO*



I am not concerned for the student's immediate safety, but having the individual is having significant academic and/or personal issues and could use some support



Submit a CARE referral,  
or refer directly to the  
proper resources

**WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK**  
**Email [gwcares@gwu.edu](mailto:gwcares@gwu.edu) with any  
comments and questions**

# Campus Resources

Campus resources noted as **CONFIDENTIAL (C)** will not be able to share reciprocal information to you regarding a student. All resources are available to both undergraduate and graduate students unless noted as (UG).

Faculty and staff are encouraged to share concerns about student well-being through official University channels. As a reminder, all faculty and staff are considered designated reporters and are required to promptly report any information they learn about suspected or alleged Title IX violations.

## Reporting Forms to Know

- [Academic Integrity Form](#)
- [Bias Incident Reporting Form](#)
- [CARE Referral](#)
- [Student Conduct Concern](#)
- [Title IX](#)

## Emergency/Urgent Resources

- GW Emergency Services (GWPD & EMERG): 202-994-6111. GWPD can loop in appropriate campus partners as needed.
- Sexual Assault Response & Consultation Team (SARC): 202-994-7222

## Physical Wellbeing Resources

- [Campus Recreation](#) provides programming in the areas of intramural and club sports, fitness and wellness instruction, and informal recreational opportunities.
- [GW Dining](#) is the main source of information on how to manage your dining plan, find vendors partnered with GW, and learn more about healthy nutrition.
- [Student Health Services \(C\)](#) is the first stop for all student medical care, including: diagnosis and treatment of illness, injury, and ongoing conditions. Contact at 202-994-5300, option 1.
- [The Store](#) is a student-run food pantry at the George Washington University that provides resources and support for students living with food insecurity.

## Emotional Wellbeing Resources

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(C\)](#) offers individual consults, skills, workshops, group therapy, community referral resources and crisis intervention. Contact CAPS at 202-994-5300, option 2.
- [GW CARE Team](#) is a pathway to connect students with the additional support and resources they may need to persist and succeed at GW and beyond.
- [Office of Advocacy and Support \(C\)](#) is a resource for GW community members experiencing trauma or any other form of violence through 1-1 support and prevention programming.
- [Title IX Office](#) responds to reports of sexual misconduct, and also provides prevention and response programming for the GW community.

# Campus Resources

## Financial Wellbeing Resources

- [Career Services](#) offers career coaching, self-assessment, online resume and cover letter development and assistance with networking and interviewing to help students.
- [Military & Veteran Services](#) provides student veterans, dependents, and military personnel with excellence in service through timely and accurate benefit processing, high-quality customer service, and supportive community-building activities.
- [Office of Student Financial Assistance](#) administers financial aid to both undergraduate and graduate students.
- [Student Accounts Office](#) provides information about a student's tuition bill and can help with creating payment options to pay their tuition.

## Spiritual Wellbeing Resources

- [GW Catholics](#) at the Newman Center makes it a priority to foster and encourage the spiritual growth of its community.
- [GW Engage](#) is the central platform at the University for all students to connect with any faith-based organization
- [GW Hillel](#) offers services and programming for Jewish students of all backgrounds and interests to plug into Jewish life at GW.

## Social Wellbeing Resources

- [Campus Living and Residential Engagement](#) (UG) seeks to create opportunities to engage in meaningful connections, continued self discovery, and responsible leadership through their housing facilities, residential programs, and student leadership opportunities.
- [GW Engage](#) is the central platform at the University for all students to connect with and learn more about the 500+ student organizations on campus.
- [Student Involvement](#) offers students the opportunity to create a home away from home through student organization, fraternity and sorority life, and leadership opportunities.

## Intellectual Wellbeing Resources

- [Academic Advising](#) is offered through each GW school and can assist you with helping to ensure that you are on track for graduation, and can help you navigate through academic policies at the University.
- [Academic Commons](#) connects the GW community to the academic services and resources throughout the university. Academic Commons includes peer tutoring and the Ask Us Desk.
- [Office for Student Success](#) (UG) embraces a holistic approach to student success to support the academic progress, student engagement, and well-being of all students.

# Campus Resources

## Environmental Wellbeing Resources

- Facilities Planning, Construction, and Management builds, manages, and maintains GW's property on all three campuses. Campus partners are encouraged to submit a FixIt ticket if maintenance or repair works needs to be done.
- Safety & Security is a comprehensive effort inclusive of the GW Police Department and University Resilience to provide a safe and secure campus for all.
- Sustainable GW supports efforts in action, academics, and research that promote healthy and thriving resource systems for all.

## Cultural Wellbeing Resources

- Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service seeks to integrate civ engagement into GW's educational work both on and off campus.
- International Services Office facilitates international educational exchange through its services and programs. It serves as the primary administrative, programming, and advising office for the GW international community.
- Multicultural Student Services Center leads university student diversity initiatives to ensure the same high quality university experience for all students through student leadership opportunities and cultural education.
- Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement provides leadership, resources, and support to advance and sustain inclusive environments for our faculty, staff, and students across the university.



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