

COUNSELLING & CLINICAL SERVICES

Identifying, Helping, & Referring Students in Distress

Counselling & Clinical Services

2-600 SUB

780-492-5205

mentalhealth.ualberta.ca



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
UNIVERSITY WELLNESS SERVICES

Agenda

Introductions

Mental Health Concerns in Context

Common Concerns

Indicators of Distress

How to Help Those in Distress

Referrals

Questions

Statistics Canada (2013)

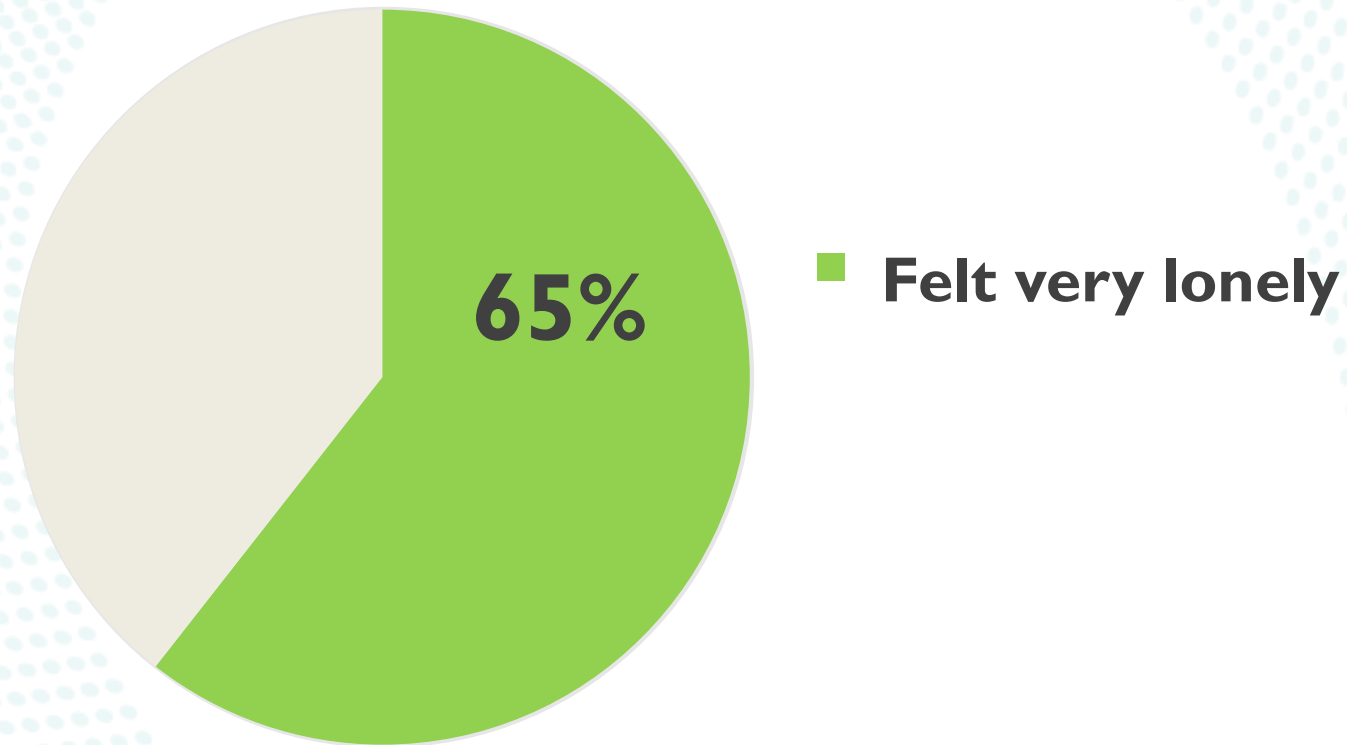


- Met criteria for mental health or substance abuse disorder:
 - 1/3 Canadians: at some point in their life.
 - 1/10 Canadians: in 12 months prior to survey.
 - 1.2% experience mental AND substance use concurrently in the previous year
 - Highest rate of both were youth **aged 15-24.**

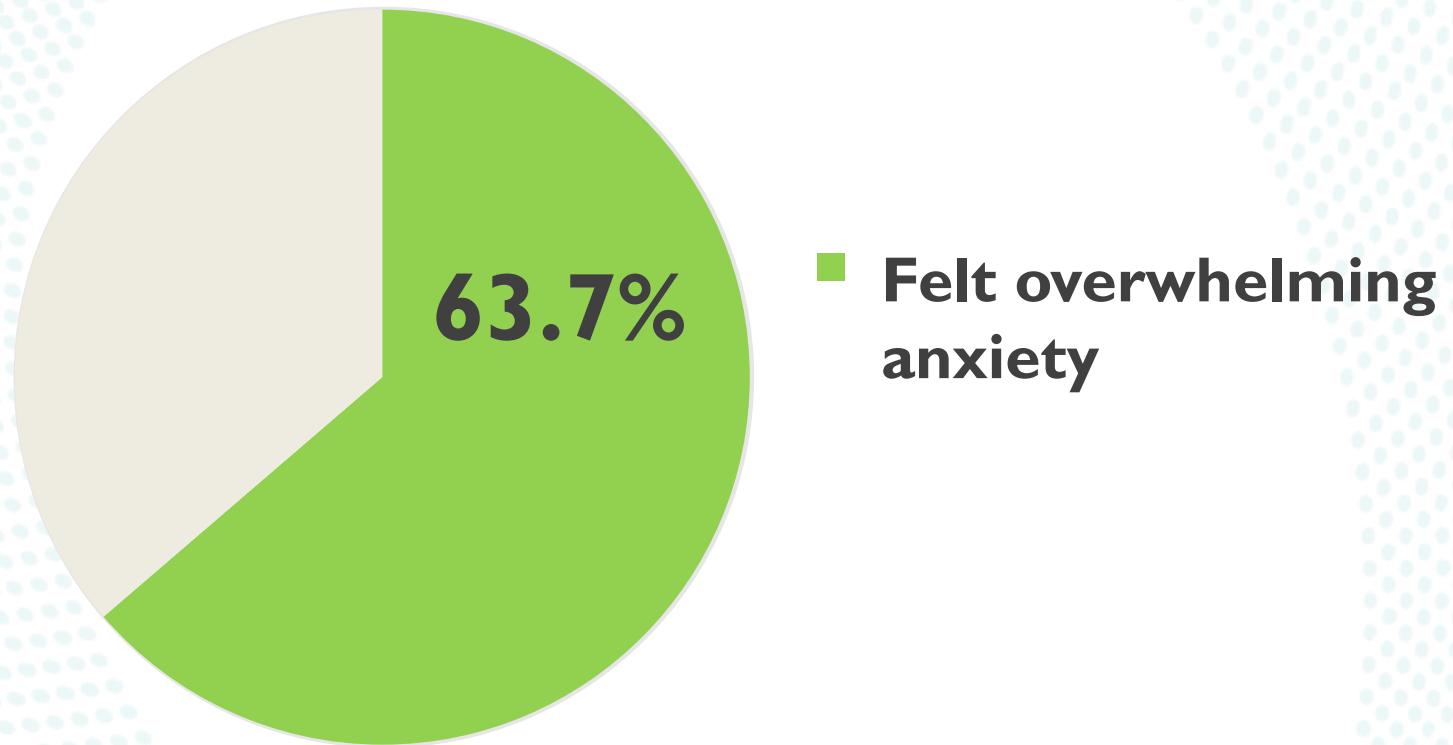
Pop Quiz!



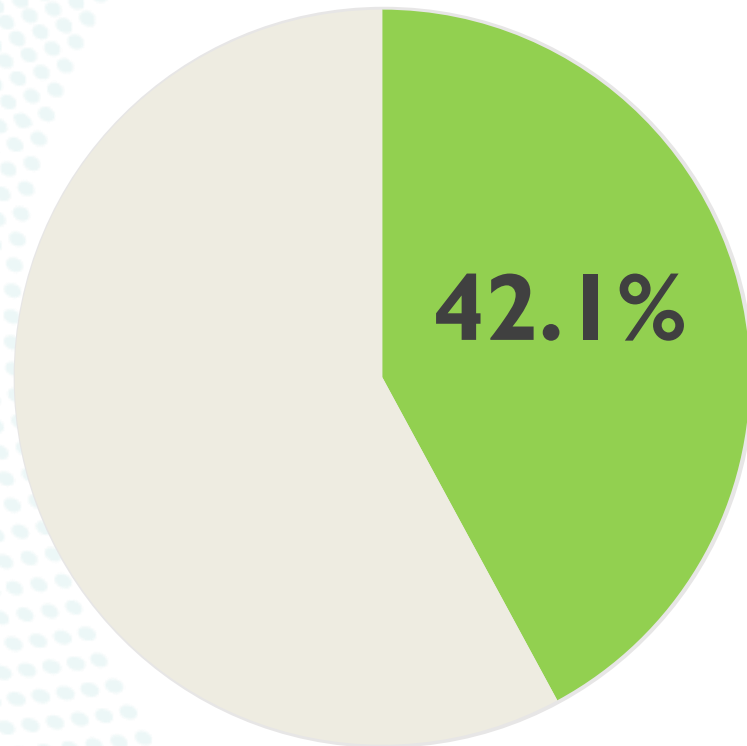
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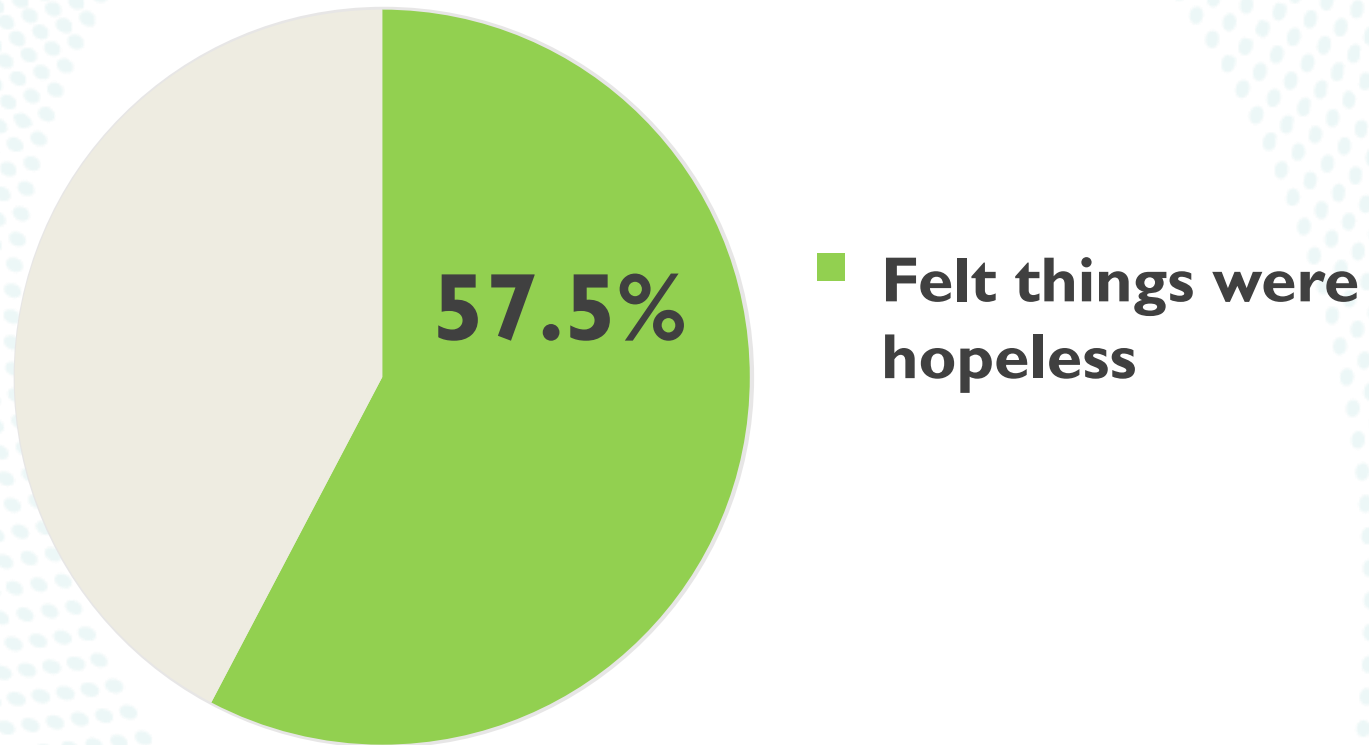


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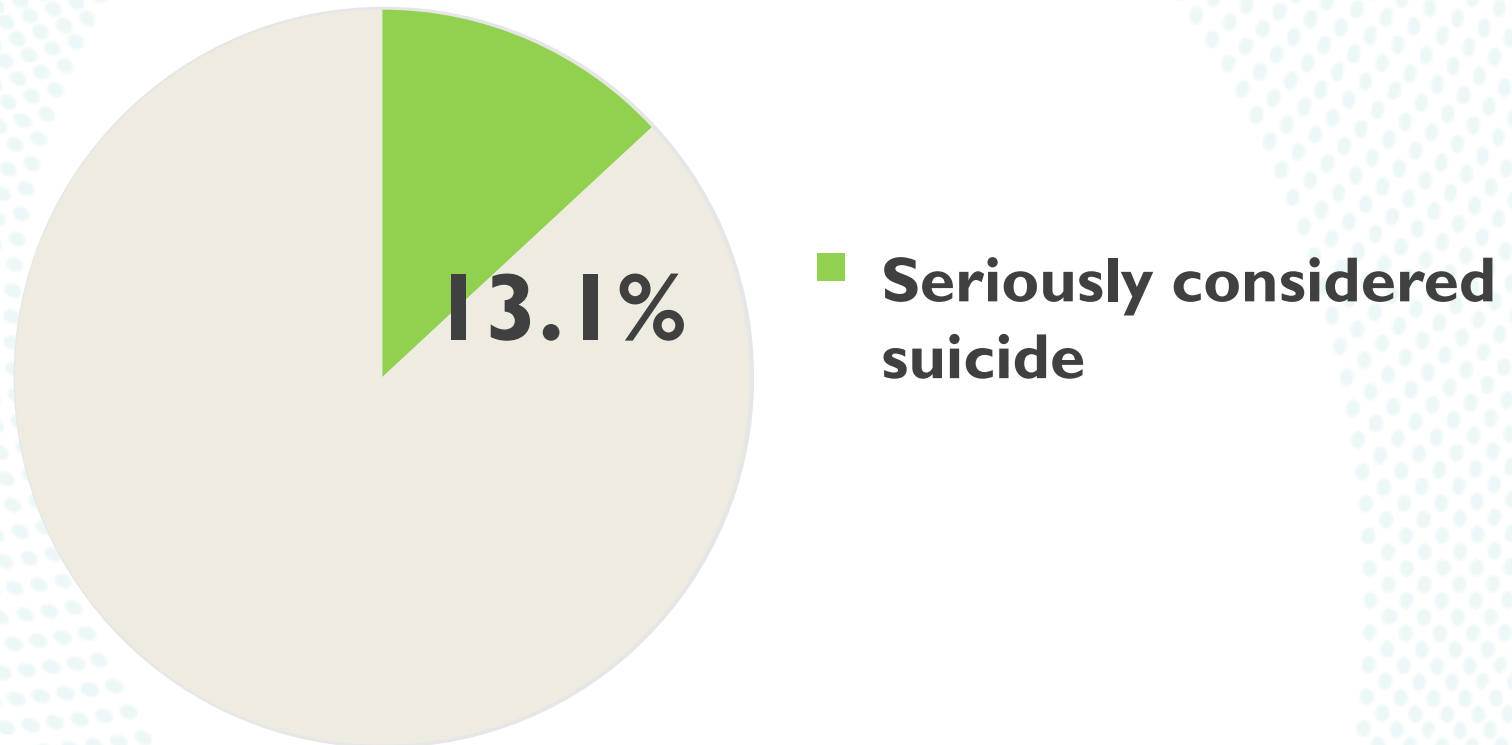


- **Felt so depressed that it was difficult to function**

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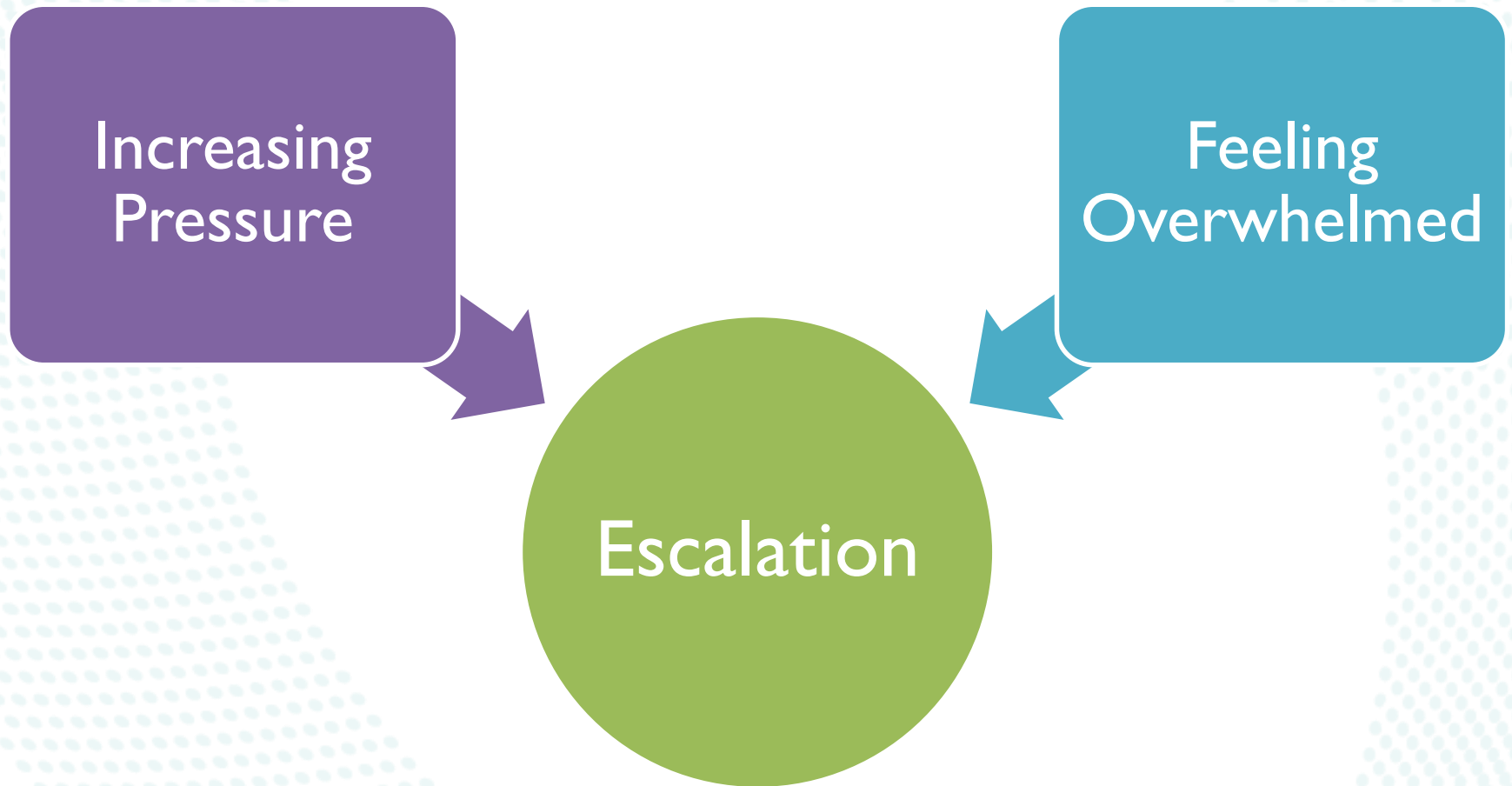
Top 3 Presenting Concerns at CCS

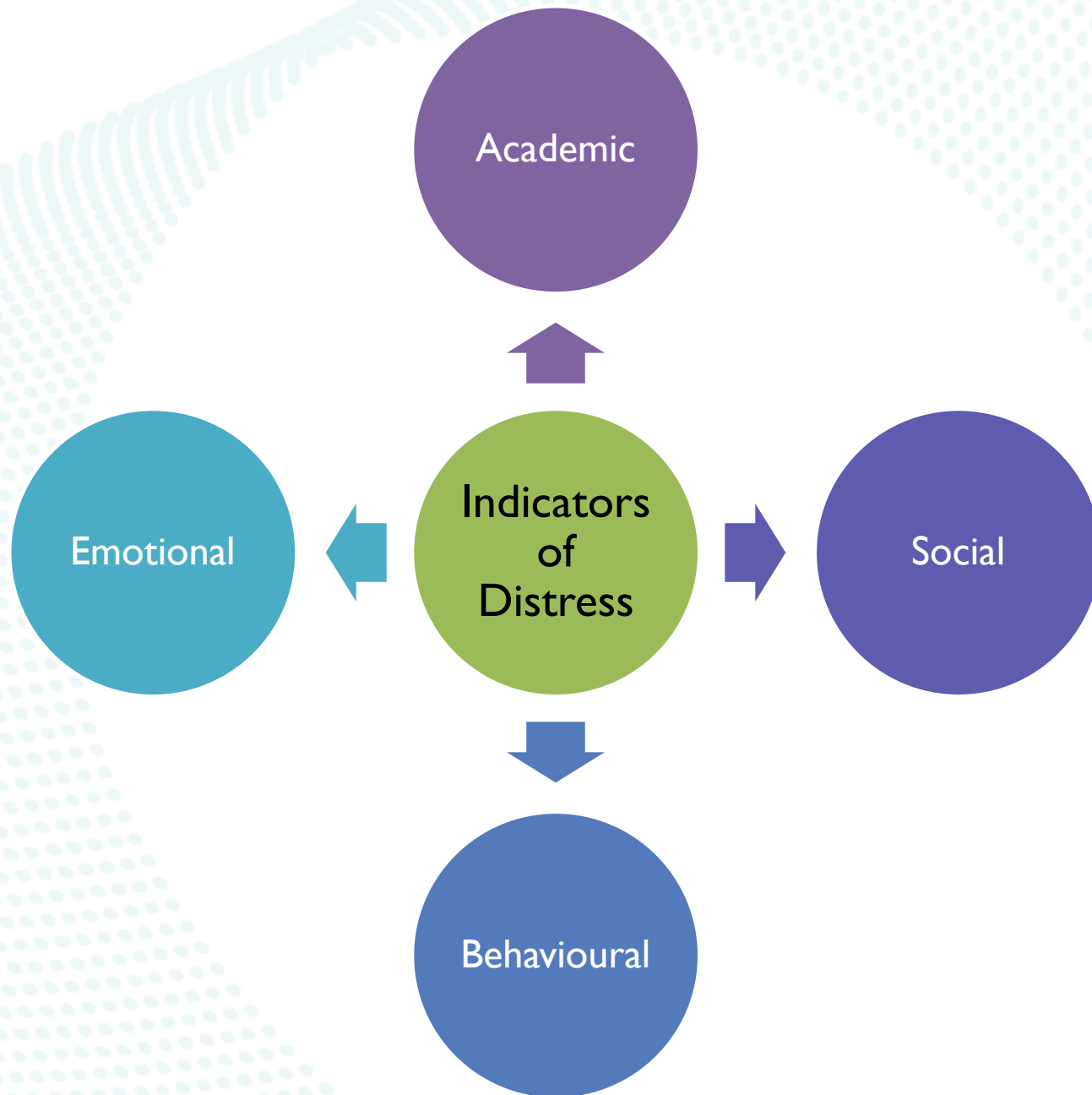
Depression

Anxiety/Panic

Social &
Relationship
Problems

Why identifying distress is important...





Academic Indicators

Repeated absences,
tardiness

Missed assignments,
appointments, meetings

Disruptive classroom
behaviour, intoxicated in
class

Chronic procrastination,
repeated requests for
special consideration,
neglect of
responsibilities

Drop in grades
(deterioration in
quality/quantity of work,
erratic performance)

Written work –
inappropriate,
incoherent or bizarre
(violent, morbid, despair,
social isolation)

Emotional Indicators

Emotional outbursts;
extreme mood swings

High levels of anxiety,
dependency

Overt references to
suicide, self-harm, or
harm to others

Difficulty concentrating

Hopelessness,
helplessness

Extreme
suspiciousness/paranoia

Behavioural Indicators

Aggressive, demanding,
disruptive, or bizarre
behaviour

Deterioration in
personal hygiene

Dramatic weight
gain/loss

Seeing or hearing
things that are not
there

Agitation, restlessness,
or hyperactivity

Excessive Fatigue

Social Indicators

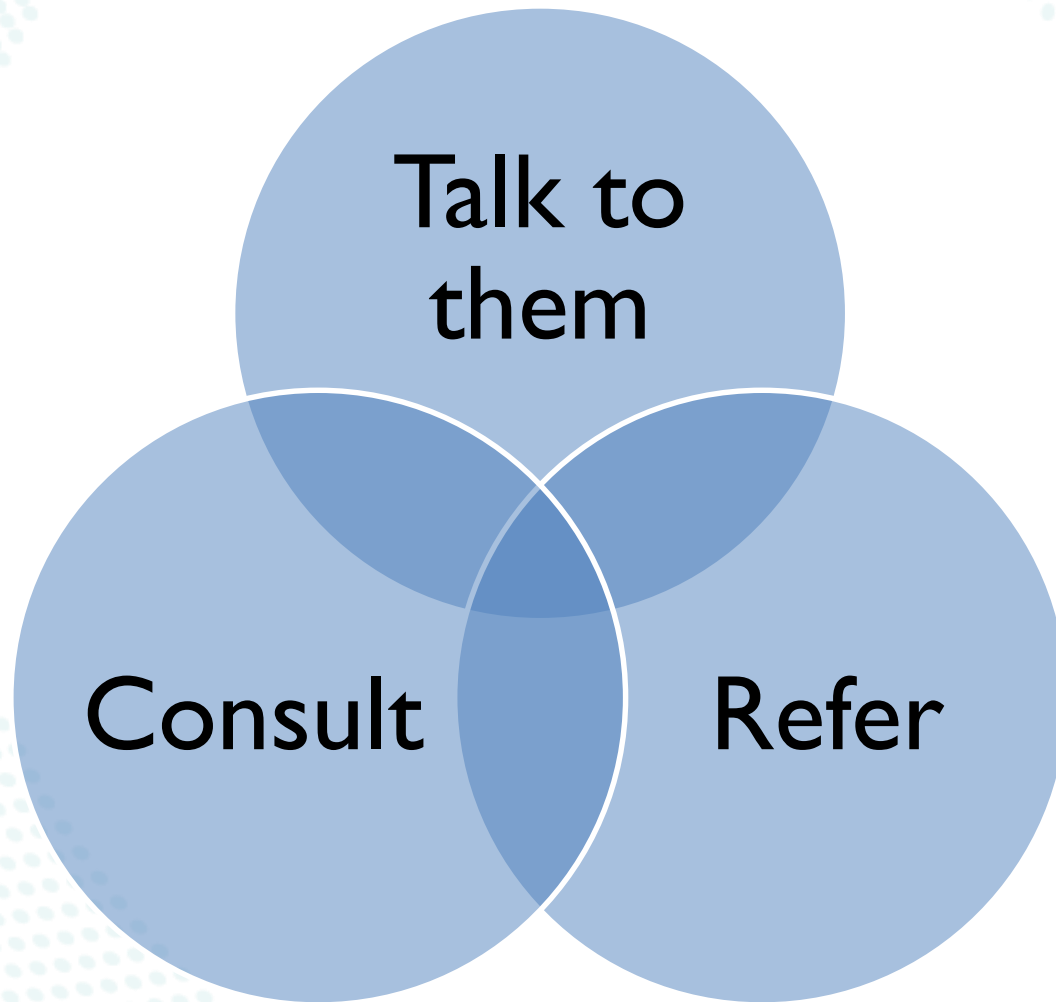
Open conflict with instructors,
students, staff


Isolation from other students,
highly withdrawn in class

Significant problems with
roommates, friends, family

Little or no contact with friends
or family

How can you help?





How to Talk to Someone In Distress

How to Talk to Someone in Distress

**Express
Concern**

**Empathize
& Listen**

**Know
your
Limits**

**Check for
Safety**

Express Your Concern

Meet
privately

Express
Care

Be Direct
& Honest

Be Specific

Ask Open
Ended
Questions

Empathize & Listen

Normalize

Validate

Allow for
Silences

Empathize
without
Agreeing or
Disagreeing

Avoid
Judgment &
Criticism

Empathy vs. Sympathy: What's the Difference?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEvwgu369Jw>

Know Your Limits

Avoid
Making
Promises

Be Aware
& Express
Limits to
Your
Knowledge

Maintain
Boundaries

Be Mindful
of Your
Safety

Consult

Check for Safety

Look for Signs
of Safety Risks

Ask Directly

Don't Promise
Confidentiality

How to Ask About Suicide

Do they have a
plan?

Do they
intend to act
on it?

Do they have a
timeframe?

Want to learn more?

- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)
 - community.ualberta.ca/Programs/QPR-Training.aspx
- Community Helpers
 - community.ualberta.ca/Programs/CommunityHelpersProgram.aspx
- ASIST
 - edmonton.cmha.ca/programs-services/applied-suicide-intervention-training-asist/

Urgent?

Protective Services
780.492.5050

911

Concerned?

Helping Individuals at Risk

Counselling & Clinical Services

Peer Support Centre

Sexual Assault Centre

Chaplain's Association

The Landing

24 Hour Distress Line

Helping Individuals at Risk (HIAR)

300 Campus Tower
8625-112 Street
Edmonton, AB T6G 1K8

Telephone: 780.492.4372

E-mail: hiarua@ualberta.ca



<https://www.ualberta.ca/vice-president-finance/audit-and-analysis/about-audit-and-analysis/helping-individuals-at-risk-program>

Counselling & Clinical Services

SUB 2-600

780-492-5205

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 8:30 – 4:30 pm

Tues/Wed 8:30 – 7pm

www.mentalhealth.ualberta.ca



Initial Consults

Individual & Group Counselling

Drop-In Workshop

Psychiatry Referrals

Community Referrals

Consults for Staff & Faculty

Outreach & Collaboration

Free Drop-in Workshops

Anxiety Management

Addressing Anxious Thoughts

Facing Fears and Gaining Control

Impostor Syndrome

Mood & Wellness

Cultivating Self-Compassion

Happiness: Moving to Wellness

How to Set Healthy Boundaries

Make Stress Your New BFF

The Student Life: Managing Stress

Understanding Depression & Addressing Unhelpful Thinking Patterns

Mindfulness

Introduction to Mindfulness

Yoga for Mental Hygiene

Yoga for Peace of Mind - Mindfulness, Meditation & Motion



***Check website for updated
schedule and registration
INFO**

ualberta.ca/current-students/counselling/workshops



Helping a Student in Distress

- How to help guide

General Interest

- Everything you wanted to know about couns

Anxiety & Stress

- Panic/Anxiety Attacks
- Social anxiety
- Stress management

Academic

- Psychologists Grad School Survival Guide
- Student self-help booklet
- Test anxiety
- Procrastination

Social

- Assertiveness
- Making small talk

Depression

- Depression coping strategies (short)
- Depression coping strategies (long)

Relationships

- Romantic relationship tips
- Surviving a relationship breakup
- How to Break Up With Someone

Other

- Anger management tips
- Body image
- Grief
- Isolation & loneliness tips
- "Normalizing" your eating
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Perfectionism
- Self-esteem
- Self harm
- Sleep

CCS - Faculty & Staff Consults

Outreach

Presentations

Consultations

Collaboration

Contact your Faculty Satellite Psychologist to schedule consult

- Arts – Suman Varghese
 - suman@ualberta.ca
- Engineering – Jasmine Bajwa
 - jbajwa@ualberta.ca
- Sciences – Maddi Genovese
 - genovese@ualberta.ca

Phone: 780.492.5205

Employee and Family Assistance Program

GSAP

- Homewood Health
- 780-428-7857
- www.homewoodhealth.com/health

- StudentCare – Counselling
- <https://psyvitaliti.ca/>

- Private Psychologist – Student Plan covers 80% max \$600/year

Additional Campus Resources: Counselling & Support

**Peer Support
Centre**

**Academic
Success
Centre***

**Sexual Assault
Centre**

The Landing

**Chaplains'
Association**

**Community
Social Work
Team**

**ACCESS
Open Minds**

**First Peoples'
House***

University of Alberta – Faculty and Staff Resources

- <https://www.ualberta.ca/provost/dean-of-students/faculty-staff-resources>
- Resource Guides:
 - How to help
 - Where to send for Academic Support
 - Responding to a Sexual Assault Disclosure
- “Digest” emails – students, academics, staff

how to help

Many members of the U of A community will experience stressors throughout the year. For most, speaking with someone and feeling understood will be enough. The following six guidelines are a framework on how to listen and communicate with care when assisting someone. The questions in steps two through five can also be useful when checking in with ourselves.

This section is based on the Helping Skills™ content from the Community Helpers Program.

step 1: State Your Concern

- State specific behaviours you have witnessed.
- Express your concern and willingness to talk about what they are experiencing.
- Arrange an alternative time and place if either you or the individual do not have adequate time to talk.

Express your concern by saying:
"You look..." "You sound..."
"I heard..." "I saw..."

step 2: Identify the Problem

- Listen without judgment and give the person time to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Clarify that you understand the problem correctly by asking open-ended questions, such as, "What I hear you saying is..."

Start the conversation by asking:
"What is happening?"
"How have you been feeling?"

step 3: Explore Alternatives

- Explore alternatives and offer suggestions while respecting the individual and their experience.
- Discuss what they see as appropriate action on how to address their situation. The most sustainable action plans are those developed by the individual.

Explore solutions by asking:
"What ideas do you have?"
"Have you thought about..."
"How likely are you to do that?"

step 4: Consider Outcomes

- Encourage the individual to consider how their course of action might impact others, including how they might react.

Consider the impact of the solutions by asking:
"What would happen if you did that?"
"What might the impact of these actions be?"
"Is that a problem for anyone else?"

step 5: Determine What to Do

- Acknowledge that others in similar situations often feel the same way.
- Establish a sense of hope by offering support and encouragement while reinforcing that change is possible.
- Support them in their decision.

Inquire what the person is going to do by asking:
"What would you like to do?"
"How can I help you move forward with this?"

step 6: Express Support

- Suggest and accompany the individual to a helping resource, if desired.
- Inform the individual you will check in with them to see how they are doing.
- Believe what the person is telling you, and don't promise something that you can't deliver.

Express support by saying:
"Let me know what happens."
"Let me know if you need me."

assisting students in distress

how to help

Understanding the common behavioural indicators of someone in distress can help determine the appropriate level of response. By trusting your instincts and using the indicators listed below, you can help connect the individual to the support they need before their situation escalates.

concerning situations

Individuals showing signs of concerning behaviours and/or appear to be in moderate distress likely have support options, but may need to be reminded of them.

indicators

- Change in mood and attitude
- Isolating oneself from others
- Altered class participation
- Procrastination on personal commitments or academic assignments
- Slight drop in attendance and grades
- Lack of motivation
- Deterioration in personal hygiene or dress
- Dramatic weight gain or loss and/or change in appetite and food behaviours
- Heightened levels of stress and anxiety
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Increase in risk-taking behaviour

what to do

- Address the individual's situation empathetically and without judgment using the steps from the "How to Help" section.
- Provide resources and follow up, if required.
- Contact the Helping Individuals At Risk office at 780-492-4372 if the individual's behaviour continues to be of concern.

critical situations

Individuals showing signs of critical behaviours and/or appear to be in high distress likely need professional support due to the disruptive nature of their concerns. These situations need to be addressed and followed up with, but may not require immediate action.

indicators

- Extreme mood swings, aggression, or other disruptive behaviour
- Significant depressive state or devoid of emotion
- Acute emotional distress or high levels of anxiety and worry
- Bullying or harassment
- Dominating classroom discussion
- Hostile or sarcastic remarks
- Considerable problems with roommate, partner, friends, and/or family
- Disclosure of self-harm, disordered eating, substance abuse, current or prior sexual assault and/or partner/family violence
- Serious academic concerns (e.g. significant drop in attendance and grades)
- Severe/prolonged illness or injury
- Lack of food, shelter, and/or financial means

what to do

- Listen to the individual and connect them to appropriate support services using the "Quick Referral Guide".
- Contact the Helping Individuals At Risk office at 780-492-4372 to note concern, establish a follow up plan, and discuss further support for the individual.

urgent situations

If there is risk of immediate harm to self or others, contact 911.

Individuals showing signs of severe behaviours and/or appear to be in imminent harm are in need of immediate attention and intervention by other helping professionals and/or emergency services.

indicators

- Thoughts of suicide or suicidal behaviours
- Threats and actions of aggression towards others (i.e. physical, verbal, correspondence)
- Imminent threat or action of serious injury to others
- Serious actions of harassment towards others (i.e. physical, verbal, online)
- Persistence of unwanted/unwarranted contact or harassment/bullying
- Physical contact/attack
- Presence of or threat to use a weapon

what to do

- Contact 911.

If unsure who to refer to, contact the Community Social Work Team at 780-492-3342.



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

QUESTIONS?

Thank You!

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