

Managing a Crisis

DO



- Validate
- Ask "Do you want me to just listen or help you problem solve?"
- Offer options/suggestions, if needed
- Use empathy and active listening skills

DON'T



- Try to "fix" everything
- Make promises you can't keep
- Pass judgment or dismiss the student's needs
- Wait to refer if you are concerned about a student

Identifying Indicators of Distress

Psychological

- Self-disclosure of personal distress, including family problems, financial difficulties, suicidal thoughts, grief
- Unusual/disproportional emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness
- Panic reactions
- Irritability or unusual apathy
- Verbal abuse (e.g. taunting, badgering, intimidation)

Physical

- Marked changes in physical appearance (deterioration in grooming or hygiene, significant weight gain/loss)
- Excessive fatigue or sleep disturbance
- Intoxication, hangovers, smelling of alcohol
- Disoriented or "out of it"
- Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech

Academic

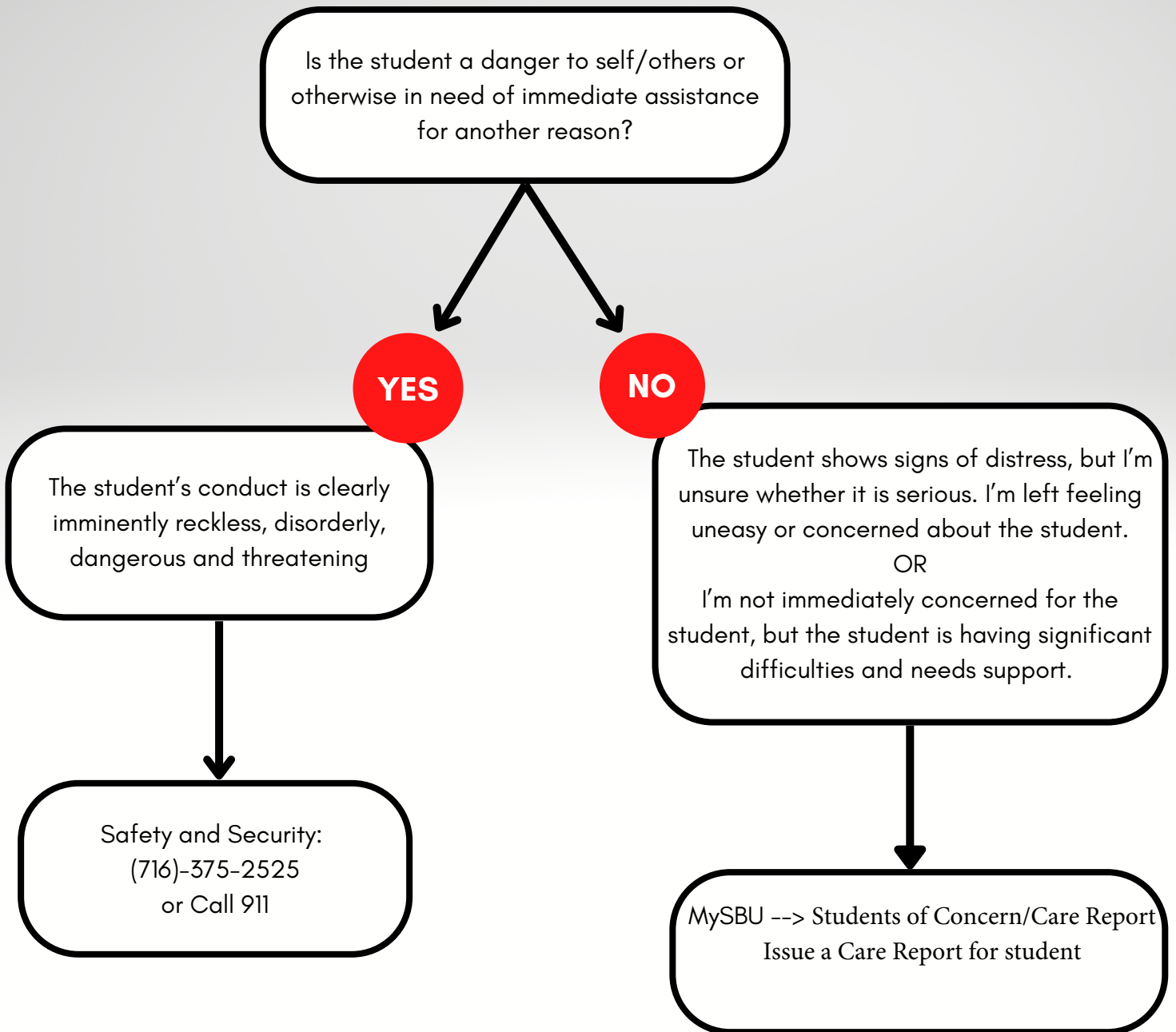
- Sudden decline in quality of work/grades
- Repeated absences
- Disorganized performance
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Disengagement through failure to hand in assignments, missing exams, and lack of participation
- Overly demanding of faculty/staff time and attention
- Bizarre content in writing/presentations
- Increased need for personal (rather than academic) counseling

Safety Risk

- Physical violence (shoving, grabbing, assault, use of weapon)
- Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations, violent behaviors, or other "cries for help"
- Stalking or harassing
- Communicating threats via email, texting, phone calls

Respond/Refer

Follow the chart to determine next steps



You may also encourage the student to go to the Center for Student Wellbeing or offer to walk the student to Doyle Hall to be seen for crisis intervention by the counselor on-duty during normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:30). Consultation related to concerns about a student's emotional or psychological wellbeing is available to staff and faculty. You can call 716-375-2310, option 1 and ask to speak with the counselor on-duty to consult about a student of concern.