

## WHY BE CONCERNED?

Attending a university is an exciting and dynamic experience that can include making lifelong friends, engaging in exciting intellectual pursuits, and participating in the campus community.

It is a time to grow in self-awareness and to develop a sense of adult identity. It may also be a time of great stress. A student's troubles can show up in inappropriate or disturbing comments made in class, worrisome writings, excessive class absences, behavioral or mood changes, and even aggression or threats. Other factors, like relationship problems, health issues (e.g., weight loss, headaches, sleep problems, etc.), death of a family member or close friend, or balancing family, work, financial and other life obligations may severely stretch a student's coping skills.

In a caring campus community, each student and staff member must be concerned for the wellbeing of others. If you observe a student in distress, you may be in a position to offer assistance or at least guide the student to the right source of support. As it is often hard to tell when a student is having a serious problem, err on the side of caution and make the referral to SOCAT. The team will help identify and coordinate resources to ensure that each student has the opportunity to be successful in meeting their academic and life goals.

"If you have thoughts of harming yourself or others — STOP what you are doing and call for help. Both **9-1-1** and **2-1-1** are emergency numbers where you can get the help you need to stay safe."

**2-1-1** is a Crisis & Referral Hotline operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

## Students of Concern REFERRAL PROCESS:

### STEP ONE:

Gather your thoughts, observations and information. Be sure to know when, where, how, - in other words the details of your concern.

### STEP TWO:

Make the report one of three ways -

- (1) Website: complete the "Student of Concern" referral form  
[www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu](http://www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu)
- (2) Email: [socat@usf.edu](mailto:socat@usf.edu)
- (3) Phone: the Student Affairs Case Manager 813-974-6130

### STEP THREE:

The SOCAT team may:

- meet to review the concerns
- identify additional information needed
- request case manager to meet with student
- case manager & student may develop an Action Plan to address student's needs
- SOCAT review will follow-up on student's status through case manager services

SOCAT's focus is to render help and guidance to any USF Student who is struggling in order to avert a crisis and keep both the student and USF community safe.

### Student Affairs Case Management Services Division of Student Affairs

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[www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu](http://www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu)

E: [socat@usf.edu](mailto:socat@usf.edu)

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Division of  
**STUDENT  
AFFAIRS**

# Are you Concerned about a USF Student?



Getting Help is No Bull!  
It's Noble.

[www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu](http://www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu)

**USF** UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH FLORIDA

# STUDENTS OF CONCERN ASSISTANCE TEAM

The Students of Concern Assistance Team (SOCAT) is here to work with students who may be troubled or whose behavior is of concern to others. SOCAT was started as a way to identify and provide support to a student before more significant problems arise.

SOCAT is a multi-disciplinary campus committee and includes representatives from the following offices: Dean of Students, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Counseling Center, Student Rights and Responsibilities, University Police, Housing & Residential Education, Student Health Services, and the Student Affairs Case Manager. The team is chaired by the Assistant Vice President for Health and Wellness. Representatives of other USF offices may be consulted as needed.

SOCAT offers **supportive intervention and guidance** to any USF student who is struggling. The Case Manager is a member of SOCAT who reaches out to students to offer assistance, to help coordinate referrals to campus and community resources, and to develop an Action Plan for student success. The goal is to help the student focus on academic success, avert more serious difficulties, and ensure the safety of both the student and USF community.

## Other Campus Resources

University Police .....	9-1-1 or 813-974-2628
Counseling Center .....	813-974-2831
Student Health Services .....	813-974-2331
Dean of Students .....	813-974-6677
Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention .....	813-974-5756
Students with Disabilities Services .....	813-974-4309
Housing & Residential Education .....	813-974-0001
Student Rights & Responsibilities .....	813-974-9443
Veterans Services.....	813-974-2291

# HOW TO HELP

Each member of the campus community can offer assistance when one sees another in distress. Distressed or distressing behavior may actually be a “cry for assistance.” Here are some tips to help you approach a student you are concerned about.

If you decide to help, then do it with **H.E.A.R.T.**

## Hear:

- Stop what you're doing and really listen to what the student is saying.

## Empathize:

- Acknowledge what you have heard and let the student know you understand.
- Express concern and interest.
- Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental.
- Remember, even if the problem does not seem real to you, it may be very important to the student.

## Assess:

- Ask the student, “What have you thought about doing?”
- Discuss the pros and cons of different courses of action.
- Don't expect to have all the answers.

## Refer:

- Be honest about your concerns and limitations.
- The student may need professional help.
- Do not agree to be secretive about his or her problem.
- Help the student find appropriate resources.
- Offer to go with him or her to talk with a professional.

## Tell:

- Do not ignore comments about suicide, violence, or harm to others.
- Seek professional assistance.

**IF YOU THINK IT'S A CRISIS: CALL 9-1-1**

*Sections of brochure content gratefully adapted from: Queen's University (Canada)- 1/24/2010; Fairleigh Dickinson College (NJ)- 2/15/2010; and University of Texas at Austin-2/3/2010.*

# KNOWING YOUR LIMITS:

## How to protect your wellbeing

In dealing with a distressed person, personal safety and wellbeing are just as important as that of the person in distress. It's important to recognize the limits of what can be done to help someone in distress.

### WHAT CAN BE HELPFUL:

- Be genuinely concerned and supportive.
- Be honest about the time and effort you can afford to spend in helping.
- Be aware of personal needs and limitations.
- Maintain and respect healthy boundaries.

### WHAT ISN'T HELPFUL:

- Trying to control how another person is going to respond
- Attempting to force another person to change
- Forcing someone to take action to help themselves

**The Students of Concern Assistance Team can reach beyond your limits.**

**Getting Help is No Bull!  
It's Noble.**

[www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu](http://www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu)

**Our focus in the  
Division of Student Affairs is:  
Inspiring Learning,  
Changing Lives,  
One student at a time.**