WHEN A STUDENT IS UNDERPERFORMING OR NEEDS HELP

Despite intelligence and past academic success, students may underperform or struggle to reach their full potential. Faculty members can be key to overcoming roadblocks to success.

WARNING SIGNS

- Receives lower test grades, misses classes or labs, or submits tardy assignments
- Exhibits change in interpersonal behavior, appearance, hygiene, and/or functioning
- Demonstrates lack of concentration and/or engagement in class
- Avoids assuming personal responsibility

POSSIBLE CAUSES

- Ineffective study/test-taking skills
- Difficulty adjusting to a new program, location, job, or culture
- Conflict with a faculty member
- Unrealistic expectations
- Problems with a significant relationship
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- The death/loss of a loved one

EFFECTS OF STRESS

- Everyone experiences stress, but feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope may lower one’s performance
- Empirical evidence suggests that memory, critical thinking, and performance are adversely impacted by stress
- Given that stress and burnout are rarely revealed at school or work, poor academic performance may indicate a more serious problem

OPENING A DIALOGUE

- Attempt to talk to the student with concern and care
- Encourage the student to seek support through a mentor or other academic support service
- Consult a Learning Specialist or Psychologist at Counseling and Educational Support Services (CESS)
- Emphasize that psychological counseling services at CESS are confidential

PROVIDING DIRECT ASSISTANCE

- Express concern and a desire to help
- Invite the student to share their thoughts and feelings regarding their difficulties
- Cite specific behaviors that concern you
- Paraphrase their words to demonstrate that you understood them
- Convey that you are listening
- Help the student create an action plan
- Follow-up with the student concerning your recommendation (i.e., Did they follow through?)

KNOWING YOUR LIMITS

Despite your best efforts, you may find it challenging to intervene. Some of these difficulties may include the following:

- The student may not be willing to discuss or address certain issues
- You do not have the time or resources to intervene
- The student may become overly reliant on you and would benefit from a different perspective
- The problem presented is outside your scope of competency and counseling may be a more appropriate avenue of help

It is reasonable to state your limitations and offer other options for support.

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COUNSELING AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Appointments: (913) 588-6580
Online Scheduling: https://medconsult.kumc.edu
Educational Support Services: G012 Dykes
Counseling/Psychiatric Services: G116 Student Center

COUNSELING AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

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Referring to CESS
- Be direct and convey that the best way to address the student’s concern is through consultation with a CESS counselor
- Normalize the use of counseling and provide information:
  - Services are confidential
  - 1,000+ students and residents attend counseling yearly
  - During the initial appointment, staff will help the student identify their problem(s), establish goals, and develop strategies to succeed
- If the student agrees, provide CESS contact information or assist them in making an appointment
- If the student denies your recommendation, request they give counseling further consideration and explore alternatives

Assessing progress
- A decrease in the signs you observed initially may indicate improvement
- Greater academic performance
- Increased motivation
- Better hygiene/appearance
- The student relays directly that he/she is feeling better

Confidentiality
Due to HIPAA/FERPA, CESS staff may not be able to disclose information about a specific student without written consent. Please follow up with the student directly.

Other helpful contacts/resources
Student of Concern Form
www.kumc.edu/soc

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Graduate Studies  •  5004 Wescoe
mjones@kumc.edu  •  (913) 588-1238

Dr. Pamela Barnes
School of Nursing  •  G020 SON
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Dr. Jeff Radel
Health Professions  •  G04 SON
ljunge@kumc.edu  •  (913) 945-7333

Dr. Mark Meyer
School of Medicine  •  3040 Murphy
mmeyer@kumc.edu  •  (913) 588-1483

KU Police Department
115 Support Services Facility
(913) 588-5030

Student Health Services
1012 Student Center
(913) 588-1941

Academic Accommodations
Cyn Ukoko  •  G020 Dykes
cukoko@kumc.edu  •  (913) 588-7035

Equal Opportunities Office
Discrimination/Harassment Concerns
1018 Delp  •  (913) 588-8011