

Colgate Maroon Folder

*A peer-to-peer guide on how to respond to,
support, and refer fellow students in distress*



Statement of Purpose

Colgate University's Mental Health and Wellness adopted best practices from other institutions to bring this booklet — based on the Red Folder Initiative launched by the University of California in 2012 — to Colgate. The Colgate Maroon Folder serves as a reference guide to mental health resources and provides a framework of compassion for supporting students in distress. The framework in this booklet highlights how to recognize symptoms of distress, respond appropriately and compassionately, and how to identify appropriate referrals to campus resources.

College students may feel alone, isolated, and even hopeless when faced with academic and life challenges. Peers exhibiting concerning behaviors in your presence are likely to be experiencing difficulty coping with life stressors. Trust your instincts, say what you see, show that you care, and follow up if someone leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened. Get help yourself if you could use assistance.

Learning the symptoms of distress will allow you to recognize them when they surface within your friends. This framework of compassion will guide you to act in a caring and proactive way.

In this booklet, you will find:

- Distress-level indicators
- Actionable steps to take when supporting a peer in distress
- Campus resources available for students
- A guide for appropriate intervention

Safety first: Your welfare and the welfare of the campus community are top priorities when a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior. Do not hesitate to call **the Department of Campus Safety at 315-228-7333** for help.

A Guide for Appropriate Intervention

1. Say what you see

Be direct. Let the peer know that you've noticed a change and you want to talk. Say what you've noticed, share facts not opinions, and avoid making any judgments or assumptions. Start this conversation in a setting where the peer will feel safe to be open and honest with you. Follow up with residential life staff, the administrative dean's office, or the counseling center if you still have concerns.

INDICATORS OF DISTRESS

Interpersonal

- Inappropriate and disruptive behavior
- Writing or creative work that includes disturbing content and/or themes of despair, hopelessness, suicide, violence, death, or aggression

Physical/Behavior

- Marked changes in physical appearance, including changes in hygiene or excessive weight loss/gain
- Repeatedly appearing ill, excessively fatigued, or lacking motivation
- Obvious changes in mental state and/or apparent intoxication

- Appearing disoriented; garbled, tangential, or slurred speech
- Excessive cuts, bruises, or other injuries
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Self-injurious, destructive, or reckless behavior

Psychological

- Drastic change in interactions with others; withdrawing from social groups/support; loss of interest in activities, etc.
- Direct comments about distress, family problems, etc.
- Extreme changes in personality and/or mood; unprovoked anger or hostility; excessive tearfulness, panic reactions, irritability, or unusual apathy; signs/expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness, or shame
- Implied or direct threats of harm to self/others
- Expressions of concern by peers
- Disturbing social media content

2. Show that you care

Be warm. We all need to know others care about us. Showing you care about peers' well-being can have a positive impact on their mental well-being and increase the likelihood they will seek help if needed. Build trust. Ask what they need. The kind of support your peer needs will change based on the context, and the only way to know what they need from you is to ask. Sometimes they may not know what they need in the moment, but giving them your time and assuring them that you are there to figure it out together can make a huge difference. Everything you do should show them that you care about them and that you're a safe person to whom they can reach out.

This is not a script, but rather a guide to what you might say in a conversation with a peer. It is important that you use language that feels natural to you and fits the context of your interaction with your peer. →

3. Hear them out

Be there to listen. Your priority is to provide a space where your peers can speak and be heard. They need you to be warm, compassionate, and fully present. Listen patiently as you try to understand where they're coming from and take time to affirm their feelings. This is about them, not you.

Be curious. As an active listener, ask open-ended follow-up questions that might help you understand your peers and ensure they feel heard. Most importantly, listen and let them speak.

Share carefully. Most of the time it may not be helpful to share your experiences. Your role is to listen and learn so you can connect the peer to resources. Sometimes, however, it can be helpful for a peer to hear about your experiences with your own well-being or interactions you've had with mental well-being resources, but you do not need to go into much detail.

4. Connect to help

Determine need. Does the peer need resources for social connection, specialized professional help, or is this an emergency?

Reaffirm your connection. Sometimes communicating to peers that they may benefit from professional help can make them feel like they are being passed off as a problem or burden. Prevent this by explicitly affirming your connection with them. Again, show you care.

Help them connect to resources. Peers in distress may need help connecting with a resource. Showing them how to access the resource increases the likelihood that they actually do so. If able, physically accompany your peer to the resource or office.

Follow up. If possible, reconnect with peers to make sure that they successfully connected with the resources that you suggested.

SAY WHAT YOU SEE

- “Hi _____, I just wanted to check in. I’ve noticed _____ and wanted to see if you want to talk about it.”
- “I’ve noticed _____ and I want you to know that I am here to support you.”

SHOW THAT YOU CARE

- “I care about your well-being, so I just wanted to check in to see how you’re doing. I want to know how I can be most helpful.”
- “Thanks for taking some time to talk with me. I wanted to have this conversation because I care about how you’re doing and want you to know that I’m here to support you in the ways you need.”

HEAR THEM OUT

Listen. Ask questions if appropriate:

- “Wow, I’d like to hear more about that.”
- “That sounds difficult; how is that affecting you?”

CONNECT TO HELP

- “Thank you for being so open with me. I want to continue this conversation, and I also want to make sure that you’re getting the help you need. I really think you may find _____ to be a very helpful and comforting resource.”
- “Reaching out to _____ for the first time can be a little confusing. Would you like help connecting to _____?”
- “I really think _____ can address some of your needs, but sometimes it takes several tries to find a place that is the best fit. For any reason, if it doesn’t feel like a match, then ask [the resource] what other resources may be a better fit for your needs.”

Responding to a Peer of Concern

KNOW YOUR ROLE

Safety first. Do not hesitate to call the Department of Campus Safety for help. Your safety, and that of our peers and community, are our top priority. Campus safety can also direct you to other resources on campus, such as the dean or counselor on call.

CONSULT

Contact the counseling center during walk-in hours Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. if you are concerned about a friend and need consultation on next steps. You may also contact the administrative dean's office for additional support.

SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Set boundaries around anything that helps to preserve your own mental well-being. You can't give your peers the support they need if you are suffering. You're not their therapist.

BE DIRECT

Let the peer know that you've noticed a change and you want to talk. Say what you've noticed, share facts not opinions, and avoid making any judgments or assumptions. Start this conversation in a setting where the peer will feel safe to be open and honest with you. Consider getting support for yourself if you are worried about talking with a peer about something distressing that you have observed. We are here to help you, and we know that this can be difficult and uncomfortable. Please consider talking to a residential life staff member, somebody in the administrative dean's office, or a counselor at the counseling center if you have concerns

BE WARM

We all need to know others care about us. Showing you care about peers' well-being can have a positive impact on their mental well-being and

increase the likelihood they will seek help if needed. Build trust. Ask what they need. The kind of support your peers need will change based on the context, and the only way to know what they need from you is to ask. Sometimes they may not know what they need in the moment, but giving them your time and assuring them that you are there to figure it out together can make a huge difference. Everything you do should show them that you care about them and that you're a safe person to whom they can reach out.

BE PROACTIVE

Have conversations about well-being with your peers early and often. This normalizes the process of accessing help and becoming well.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Supporting peers' well-being can take a toll on our own. If this happens, please do what you need to recover and recharge.

SET EXPECTATIONS ABOUT RESOURCES

Help your peers be realistic about what to expect from the resource and on what timeline. No resource can meet all needs, and it may take patience to access a resource and/or to experience the benefits from that resource.

If the resource wasn't helpful for your peer, ask follow-up questions to understand what about the resource didn't fit their needs and to help determine next steps. Consider calling a support resource to help this student if you don't have the answers.

If the severity of the situation is unclear, and/or you don't know which resource is the best fit, consult with an administrative dean or a counselor.

Urgent Consultation Resources

When using a University phone to reach an off-campus line, dial “91” before entering the phone number.

Support available 24/7:

Administrative dean on call

315-228-7333

Counselor on call

315-228-7385

Campus safety

315-228-7333

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline offers free and confidential support for people in distress. Call 988.

For all emergency situations, call:

Campus safety — Emergency line

315-228-7911

OR 911

(from any University phone)



Student Resources

Resources marked with an asterisk (*) offer confidential support.

Administrative Deans assist students in navigating and understanding administrative policies and procedures and offer advice regarding personal and/or academic matters or information on the many support resources available at Colgate. Contact 315-228-7368 or admindeans@colgate.edu. After working hours, the dean on call can be reached by calling campus safety at 315-228-7333.

The **ALANA Cultural Center** serves as a learning and social space that provides multicultural exploration, social justice education, and campus community building for Colgate students, faculty, and staff. Contact 315-228-7330 or alana@colgate.edu.

Alcohol and Other Drugs Services* are designed to educate students about the negative consequences of substance use by utilizing harm-reduction strategies and skill building, as well as correcting misperceptions that many students hold about college alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use. Contact 315-228-6403 or wellness@colgate.edu.

Athletics and Recreation is home to the NCAA Division I Raiders, plus more than 50 club and intramural sports programs, numerous fitness facilities, and organized outdoor activities. Visit colgate.edu/campus-life/athletics for more information.

The **Department of Campus Safety** is committed to maintaining the safety and security of the campus community in a caring, respectful, and professional manner. Campus safety can be reached 24/7 at cusafety@colgate.edu or 315-228-7333 (for campus emergencies: 315-228-7911).

The **Office of Career Services** empowers students and alumni to engage in strategic exploration, preparation, and action, translating the liberal arts into a lifetime of meaningful work. Staff members offer opportunities to connect with alumni for networking, professional development, and social connections. Contact 315-228-7380 or ccs@colgate.edu.

The **Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research (CLTR)** houses many student resources and is a place where students can connect with academic support, peer tutoring, study skills, executive function challenges, and tips for time management and reading comprehension. Contact 315-228-7375.

The **Center for Women's Studies** is a multipurpose space where students, faculty, and staff can gather to discuss topics like feminist theory and praxis, intersectionality, privilege, and oppression. Contact 315-228-7156 or wmst@colgate.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services* provides compassionate mental health care and education for all students to support their success at Colgate. Contact 315-228-7385 or counselingcenter@colgate.edu. (After hours/emergencies: call 315-228-7385 and dial #2.)

Equity and Diversity staff members are available for questions regarding Title IX, equity, and diversity and reporting options associated with bias and discrimination. Contact 315-228-6161.

Fraternities and Sororities can provide students with a home away from home and a foundation for leadership, academic, athletic, service, and interpersonal opportunities. Contact 315-228-6525 or ofsa@colgate.edu.

Haven* is a sexual violence resource center that provides confidential care, support, advocacy, and trauma-informed clinical services for survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, child/family abuse, stalking, and/or harassment. Contact 315-228-7385 or haven@colgate.edu.

Human Resources is responsible for student employment and opportunities for students to fulfill work-study commitments and on-campus paid positions. Contact 315-228-7411 or humres@colgate.edu.

Privacy and information sharing: Mental health professionals are confidential resources. Although they will gladly accept any information you are willing to provide them about a student's well-being, they cannot share information with you without the student's written consent. Students sometimes grant permission for a counselor to speak with a faculty/staff member, but this is not always the case. It is important that you follow up with the student about your concerns and check in directly.

The **Max A. Shacknai Center for Outreach, Volunteerism, and Education (COVE)** fosters a commitment to social responsibility and engagement through mutually beneficial, community-centered partnerships. Contact 315-228-6880 or cove@colgate.edu.

The **Office of the Chaplains*** provides the Colgate community with a dynamic, friendly, and supportive place in which to seek answers to life's biggest questions. Contact 315-228-7682 or chaplainsoffice@colgate.edu.

The **Office of Student Disability Services**, located in the Center for Learning, Teaching, and Research (CLTR), provides students with disabilities equal opportunities to benefit from all services, programs, and activities. Contact 315-228-6955.

The **Office of Financial Aid** supports access to quality education for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds and is committed to lessening the burden of debt to better prepare students for opportunities after graduating. Contact 315-228-7431 or finaid@colgate.edu.

The **Office of LGBTQ+ Initiatives** works to enhance campus inclusion and provide support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and ally students, staff, and faculty through intellectual and leadership

development, building community, outreach, and visibility. Contact 315-228-6840 or lgbtq@colgate.edu.

The **Office of Residential Life** extends student learning and growth into the campus' residential community, promoting a purposeful and inclusive environment. Contact 315-228-7367 or reslife@colgate.edu.

The **Office of Student Accounts** manages collections and billing of student-related fees and payment plans. Contact 315-228-7812.

The **Office of Student Involvement (OSI)** advises student groups and their leaders in planning the year's educational and social events, facilitates collaboration, and promotes student leadership and skills development. Contact 315-228-6843, osi@colgate.edu, or visit.getinvolved.colgate.edu.

In the **Office of Sustainability**, students are vital contributors to the University's sustainability efforts through both independent involvement and curricular projects and research. Contact sustainability@colgate.edu.

The **Registered Dietitian*** is a resource for those with nutrition-related questions or concerns or any special dietary needs and/or food allergies, and can help you navigate the dining halls. Contact 315-228-6403 or wellness@colgate.edu.

The **Shaw Wellness Institute** is a centralized location for health and wellness resources on Colgate's campus. Contact 315-228-6403 or wellness@colgate.edu.

The **Student Government Association (SGA)** of Colgate University is made up of elected student representatives from each class and governs student groups, representing their interests to the larger Colgate community and administration. Contact sga@colgate.edu.

Student Health Services* is available to provide responsive, confidential, and high-quality medical care for the Colgate student community. Contact 315-228-7750.

Thought Into Action (TIA), Colgate's entrepreneurial program, helps students develop solutions that address the biggest challenges in business and society, supported by a rigorous liberal arts education, dedicated alumni and parent mentors, and action-oriented programs. Contact tia@colgate.edu.

An accessible PDF version of the Colgate Red Folder is available to download at colgate.edu/counseling.

COLGATE UNIVERSITY

Dean of the College

Counseling and Psychological Services

counselingcenter@colgate.edu

315-228-7385

Location: Conant House

Campus map available online at colgate.edu/map

Walk-in hours

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–noon and 1:30–4:30 p.m.

After hours

Call the counseling center.

For an emergency, call 315-228-7385 and dial #2.