

## Responding to Students with Mental Health Concerns

Recent studies have shown that there is a rise in the number of college students with psychological and mental disorders. While the role of a professor or instructor is not that of “therapist” there are some ways that they can contribute to the success of these students. The following are some suggestions to help aid campus faculty in this endeavor:

### Learn about your legal responsibilities

- If the student has not disclosed a disability to you, you are not liable.
- If a student becomes a threat, even if the disability has been disclosed, confidentiality is suspended.

### Provide space for students to express needs and be willing to make necessary accommodations

- Devise alternative assignments and ways of responding.
- Students may find particular assignments trigger emotions or memories related to past traumas or events. Allow students to choose an alternative assignment without fear of scrutiny or retribution.
- Keep a professional distance and set limits
- Seek Professional Consultation When Necessary

### Refer student to appropriate resource

- Know what professional support is available for students at USF and locally.
  - Counseling and Psychological Services
  - Student Disability Services
  - Learning and Writing Center
  - SF Mobile Crisis Treatment Team
- Indicate support services in your syllabus, including phone numbers, location, and names if possible.

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These suggestions were adapted from: Valentino, Marilyn. (2007) Responding When a Life Depends On It: What to Write in the Margins When Students Self-Disclose.