

RESPONDING TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

DURING AN UNDERGRADUATE DIETETICS PLACEMENT

If you suspect that a student is distressed, always contact the College. To initiate a conversation with a student you suspect is distressed, keep the following in mind.

Use a suitable setting

Use a space that is appropriately private and unlikely to be interrupted

Put time limits in place

Set a time limit, e.g. "We have about 30 minutes, or until 4.15pm, to chat." Doing this will:

- Help focus you and the student
- Set appropriate boundaries

Objectively outline your concerns

- Specify 2-3 instances where their behaviour or performance has flagged your attention
- Gently clarify any professional consequences of these instances
- Ask the student if they are experiencing any issue that would benefit from extra support

Listen

If the student chooses to disclose, tactfully get a sense of the:

1. Main issue
2. Magnitude and urgency of the issue
3. Type of risk, if any, to the student

Let them know that you are not permitted to offer absolute confidentiality, as the College must be informed whenever student welfare is at risk.

Plan

1. If appropriate, agree on 1-2 measures to support their training until the College is informed
2. Make clear what information will be disclosed to College
3. Encourage them to engage with relevant College supports (outlined in placement handbook)
4. Clarify when you will touch base with them again, if needed

Send a brief summary of what was discussed and agreed to the placement contact in Trinity.

