**FACULTY AND STAFF GUIDE   
FOR FACILITATING PERSONAL COUNSELING AND CRISIS INTERVENTION FOR STUDENTS AT CPTC**

**Staff, Faculty and Administrator Role**

* As a school of higher education we (Staff, Faculty and Administrators) have a strong connection and access to our student body. It’s within our daily interactions that we build relationships and a strong community. We are in an exceptional position to recognize behavioral changes within our educational community. When daily behavior changes occur in our students, we can provide support and possible interventions. Your ability to recognize the signs of emotional distress and your ability to reach out to a student in need can be one of the strongest first steps to helping a student be successful!
* You are not expected to be a counselor to our students, but rather an observer of behavior. It’s at this time you can offer our students steps to support by offering them resources.

**How to talk to Students who are Displaying Personal or Academic Distress**

* Ask to speak to the student in private.
* Let the student know that you are sincerely concerned about their welfare and the welfare of the others around them and that you would like to help them.
* Openly acknowledge your observation of their behavior and/or performance
  + Be direct, honest and respectful.
* Listen carefully to the student’s responses. You don’t need to agree, disagree or relate with what the student shares. You can simply acknowledge that they are in emotional distress. A simple statement such as *“I can see you are upset”* or *“I can see that this situation is painful for you”* can provide support for the student.
* If you feel the student’s concern is beyond your assistance please refer to the Counseling and Advising office.

**Key Points about Personal Counseling**

* Personal counseling at CPTC is **NEVER** mandatory.
  + It is an option of support. Let the student know that they will NOT have a negative consequence in the classroom if they choose not to see the counselor.
* Personal counseling sessions are confidential for the student:
  + The counselor will **NOT** report back to the instructor, employer, family or Financial Aid about the sessions.
* The student can talk about the issues that they are currently experiencing in a safe, nonjudgmental environment.
* The counselor may have community supports/resources that can help.

**When to Refer Students to Personal Counseling**

***A student is in need of assistance with personal, family or other social concerns that is negatively affecting their educational experience.***

* You might recommend that students seek personal counseling for issues including but not limited to :
  + Increased stress
  + Depression
  + Performance or behavior changes in class due to personal or family concerns
  + Substance abuse concerns
  + Grief and loss
  + Relationship Issues

**What does personal counseling at CPTC look like?**

* 1 appointment for a basic assessment
* Up to 3 (50 minute) sessions
* Possible referral to community supports/resources
* If continued support is needed, a referral to more extensive counseling will be offered.

**When to Refer Students for Crisis Intervention**

***A student is in need of immediate assistance due to behavior that could injure or harm themselves or another. This could be expressed in action, spoken words or written form.***

* You might call Advising and Counseling for crisis intervention for issues including but not limited to :
  + Reported self harm or harm to others
  + Delusional behavior
  + Disorientation
  + Extreme anxiety
  + Extreme depression

**What does crisis intervention at CPTC look like?**

* Referring person believes the student’s concerns/behavior is so immediate that it cannot wait for the next available opening.
* If the referring person is not sure if this is a true crisis, he/she is encouraged to call and consult with a counselor.
  + **253-589-5541 or 253.589-5548 or 253-589-5534**
* Depending on the need of the student the counselor will:
  + Request that the student come to Counseling and Advising to meet with a counselor
  + Meet the student at their location on campus (Lakewood or South Hill)
  + Call 911 in support of the student

**How talk to a Student in crisis**

**Potential Suicidal Student**

* **Indicators that a student may cause themselves harm are:**
  + Increased feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
  + An experience of severe loss or a strong fear of loss
  + Feelings of isolation or alienation
  + Reporting a plan of suicide or reporting history of attempted suicide
  + A strong focus on the topic of death
* **DO**
  + Talk to the student in private
  + Take the student seriously
  + Be direct, but without confrontation or shame
  + Ask the student if they have plans to harm themselves
  + Be available to listen, but refer the student to Advising and Counseling
  + If the student is not willing to go to Advising and Counseling, offer them community crisis service: 1-800-576-7764
* **DON’T** 
  + Don’t minimize the situation
  + Don’t be scared of giving the student the suggestion of suicide
  + Don’t ignore your limitations – offer the student more support of trained professionals
  + Don’t offer the student ways to ‘fix’ his/her feelings or situation

**Depressed and Anxious Student**

The needs of family, work and school can create a demanding life for our students. It is safe to assume that students may have times of reactive depression and anxiety. It’s when these times of emotional distress begin to interfere with their education, their relationships and their work that you may become aware of their concerns through their conversations or the quality of their work or their attendance.

* **Pattern of indicators that a Depressed Student may express:**
  + Tearfulness/ general emotionality
  + Drop in academic performance
  + Lack of energy/ motivation
  + Drop in attendance
  + Increased test or performance anxiety
  + Irritability
  + Drop in personal hygiene
  + Increase alcohol or drug use
* **DO**
  + - Talk to the student in private
    - Share with the student the changes (academically and personally) that you’ve noticed
    - Let the student know you wish to help
    - Encourage the student to talk about how he/she is feeling with a counselor
    - Offer the use of the supports in Advising and Counseling

* **Don’t**
  + - Don’t minimize the student’s feeling, e.g. “Don’t worry.”
    - Don’t offer the student ways to ‘fix’ his/her feelings or situation
    - Don’t reprimand the student for poor or incomplete work
    - Don’t be afraid to ask the student if he/she is suicidal
      * *If you are concerned that the student might be suicidal, offer the student support of Advising and Counseling. If the student is not willing to go to Advising and Counseling offer community crisis service: 1-800-576-7764*
* **Pattern of indicators that an Anxious Student may express:**
  + Reports of rapid heart palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, dizziness, sweating, trembling or shaking
  + Cold, clammy hands
  + Reports of difficulty concentrating, feeling on the edge, and/or difficulty making decisions
    - *Some of these physical symptoms can have more serious medical cause and 911 may need to be called*
* **DO**
  + Take the student to a private and quiet room
  + Let the student express his/her thoughts. This can give insight if their anxiousness stems from a concern with their academics. If the student expresses deeper issues offer them supports in the Advising/Counseling office.
  + Provide reassurance to the student that you are here to help them
  + Be clear and directive of what you can offer
  + Offer them the support of Advising and Counseling
  + If the student is not willing to go to Advising and Counseling offer them community crisis service: 1-800-576-7764
* **DON’T**
  + Don’t minimize the perceived threat to which the student is reacting
  + Don’t take responsibility for the student’s emotional state
  + Don’t offer the student ways to ‘fix’ his/her feelings or situation

**Students showing poor contact with reality**

A student who is showing poor contact with reality will have problems distinguishing fantasy from reality or a dream from a waking state. They will be confused or irrational in their thinking and communication. Their behavior may follow in their cognitive state. They could be experiencing the following indicators:

* Hallucinations (auditory /visual)
* Behavior that could be defined as bizarre or disturbing
* Their emotional responses maybe inappropriate (laughing or crying during odd times)

*Students in this type of distress can be frightening to others; they are generally not dangerous. These students tend to be more frightened of you then you are of them.*

* **DO**
  + Respond to the student with warmth and kindness, but with firm reasoning
  + Remove extra stimulation from the environment (turn off machines, allow the student to be in a quiet room – few people as possible)
  + Note to the student your concerns and state that you see they need help
  + Accept their feelings or fears without supporting their misperceptions
  + Focus on the “right now”
  + Contact Advising and Counseling for assistance
  + If you feel the student is immediate danger contact 911 and then Security
* **DON’T**
  + Don’t argue or try to convince the student of the irrationality of their thinking (this could increase the student’s connection to false perceptions)
  + Don’t support the student in the delusion
  + Don’t command, demand or order the student
  + Don’t expect the student to respond to you in a rational and appropriate manner even when you provide rational data

**What to do if a student is in need of assistance after hours**

If you feel a student is in need of assistance right away and Advising and Counseling is closed for the day, please contact the Pierce County Crisis Line.

* 24 hour Crisis Line: 1 (800) 576-7764
* Domestic Violence Hotline: 1(800) 562-6025

If a student is displaying aggressive behavior that gives you concern and s/he is in immediate danger of hurting him/herself or others please call **911 and then Security.**

* As soon as possible, please follow established policies and procedures for reporting the incident. For assistance, contact your supervisor.

**Instructor/Staff Self-Care**

When working with a student in need/crisis there can be a time after an event where you can find yourself experiencing what is called “Secondary Traumatization”. You might be feeling:

* Physical /mental /emotional exhaustion
* Decreased interactions with others
* Reduced sense of personal/professional accomplishment
* A disconnect from your environment
* Anger/sadness

If you find yourself experiencing these effects, there are many things you can do to help:

* Talk to a friend or professional
* Get exercise and eat healthy
* Get enough sleep
* Take some time off

**CPTC Counselor/Advisors are available to assist with:**

* Academic advising/counseling
  + Develop Ed Plans
  + Provide student success coaching/support academic adjustment
  + Counselor specialty assignments include personal counseling, Running Start, foster youth, veterans, worker retraining
* Career exploration resources
  + Provide information, resources and referrals to Career Center
  + Support students in narrowing down program major choices
* Limited personal counseling
  + Typically three sessions related to a personal issue interfering with a student’s ability to be successful at school
* Consultation and collaboration with faculty and staff
  + Counselors assigned as liaisons to instructional divisions
  + Consult with faculty/staff re: student concerns
  + Active involvement with ATD and other college committees and initiatives
* Crisis intervention
  + Provide crisis intervention to facilitate referral to appropriate resources
  + Danger to self or others and grave disability follow established emergency protocols

**Advising and Counseling Center**

**Bldg. 17, Room 150**

**253-589-5548**

[www.cptc.edu/advising](http://www.cptc.edu/advising)