***Identifying and Supporting Students of Concern in a Remote Learning Environment***

With USF transitioned to remote instruction in response to the COVID-19 coronavirus, faculty teaching in this new environment may have questions about how to recognize students of concern. Depending on the nature of the course, the number of students enrolled, and the extent of contact faculty had with students in their physical classroom, recognizing students of concern may not be markedly different. Here are some FAQs to help guide faculty in determining when students may need extra attention or a referral to campus resources.

**How should I expect my students to adjust to remote instruction when coming from the classroom environment?**

This will depend on many factors. Many students have had online classes before, so the adjustment to remote learning may not be significant. Still, this environment is different, so we can expect students to be initially overwhelmed with moving all of their instruction online and then having to adjust to different instructional styles. Expect students to struggle initially with logging into class on time, working the technology, and learning how to meet your expectations now that instruction has moved entirely online.

**How should I address students’ concerns with assignments, exams, papers, and the challenges of working in an all-online environment?**

Be patient with your students, and with yourself. Expect technology glitches and problems, so you aren’t surprised by them. Empathize with students’ frustrations while also providing reassurance that we are all learning together and will get better as time goes on. Be reasonable with your expectations.

**What if a student demonstrates more adjustment problems than I might expect?**

This is a crucial concern. If, particularly after an initial period of adjustment, a student seems overly frustrated, overwhelmed, or distressed, take note. Encourage the student to speak with you during online office hours, or seek assistance from other campus resources (see [Student Toolkit](https://www.usf.edu/academic-continuity/student-toolkit/index.aspx)) to resolve technology concerns or frustrations with the online environment. If concerns appear to be more personal in nature (i.e., difficulty setting up an appropriate learning environment from home, personal and financial struggles), suggest the student check in with Student Outreach and Support, or the Counseling Center on their campus (see [Student Toolkit).](https://www.usf.edu/academic-continuity/student-toolkit/index.aspx)

**What support services are available to students in the remote learning environment?**

All student support services are providing services to students remotely. The most up-to-date information for essential student support services can be found on the [Student Toolkit](https://www.usf.edu/academic-continuity/student-toolkit/index.aspx).

**If a student demonstrates inappropriate classroom behavior during an online learning session, what are my options?**

Reach out to the student first and invite them to meet with you during online office hours. Talk with them to try to uncover the issues possibly behind the behaviors so you can have a better idea of an appropriate referral. Refer classroom disruptions to the office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, emotional of mental health concerns to the Counseling Center, and need for other services (on or off-campus) to Student Outreach and Support for their coordination. A referral to SOCAT (Students of Concern and Assistance Team) is always a good idea if there is a general concern about student well-being or if you are uncertain about where the student may be best served.

**How is recognizing a student of concern different in an online environment?**

In many respects, the same behaviors that concern you in a classroom environment continue to be concerning when learning remotely. Be particularly attuned to changes in behavior during this transition. Is a typically highly engaged student now seemingly disengaged? Are assignments late? Maybe the student has stopped showing up for instruction and is not attempting to engage you during office hours. Do they seem overly tired and now not interested in the course material? All of these changes may suggest that concerns are present or may be looming.

**What student behaviors are most concerning, and may warrant an immediate SOCAT referral?**

Increasingly withdrawn behaviors, expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness, loss of interest in previously important activities, drop in academic performance, abrupt changes in mood, indications of increased aggressiveness, and talk (even in a seemingly joking manner) of harming oneself could all be indicators of deeper, more serious concerns. The more behaviors present, the greater the risk to the student. If you have concerns, particularly if the student is unresponsive to outreach attempts from you, complete a SOCAT referral.

**What is the easiest way to make a SOCAT referral?**

You can make a referral right from the left panel in a Canvas course. Click on “Refer Student,” drop down the class list and choose the student you want to refer. Indicate it is a wellness/distress (SOCAT) referral. For further instruction see the video and PDF listed below:

Video: [https://youtu.be/27Hnq4wABDU](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2F27Hnq4wABDU&data=02%7C01%7Cdmcdonald%40usf.edu%7Cc8cbfb828585460f96ab08d7d2953830%7C741bf7dee2e546df8d6782607df9deaa%7C0%7C0%7C637209410782604581&sdata=weA2xai%2BePaufadpGUug26ln4VvNq6S2uCezR2kiBIY%3D&reserved=0)

PDF: <https://usf.box.com/s/n56h7c6nxrrdy6jndwbpwxhxo8m3rro4>