

Recommended Practices for Managing Individual Emotional/Mental Health Concerns

When a chapter becomes aware or concerned regarding an individual member's behavior that indicates that she may be struggling, it is recommended that they proceed using the following steps. Although specific offices and programming vary from campus to campus, these practices are applicable to most, if not all, university and college environments. If you would like assistance in determining what resources your campus offers, please contact your region's CDS.

Key tips to remember:

- Indicators of emotional or mental health challenges may include excessive crying, signs of depression, threats or talk of suicide, escalating episodes of fear and/or anger, abrupt mood swings, and a loss of interest in daily activities.
- While no one expects you or wants you to diagnose someone with a mental illness, as a sister, you can help guide them in the right direction.
- If at any time you think that a person poses an immediate danger to themselves or others, you should call 911 and follow up with the appropriate campus office immediately (e.g. Counseling Center).
- Honor Board can address behaviors that are disruptive to the chapter, but should not attempt to "diagnose" a suspected mental illness. Independent of any Honor Board involvement, individual chapter members are encouraged to speak to the member about their concerns. We cannot force a member to seek counseling, as this is her personal choice. Honor Board cannot recommend this as a sanction.

Step 1: Is the member of concern in imminent danger? Does her behavior imply that she may be a threat to herself or others?

YES

Call the campus police or 911. Follow up with the appropriate campus office (likely the Counseling Center or Public Safety). The chapter president should notify your ATC, HBA, RCS, and CDS via email.

NO

Step 2: Notify the chapter president of the concern. The chapter president will then notify your ATC, HBA, RCS, and CDS of the situation via email. If the member lives in the house, the House Director should also be included in this email. Work in collaboration with your ATC, HBA, RCS, and CDS throughout the duration of this process.

- Do not make a "spectacle" of the issue within the chapter. It is important to have those close with the member of concern check in with her every so often to see how she is doing, but this should not be common knowledge for the entire chapter. It is important to act as "normal" as possible, as we want the member of concern to be comfortable with her sisters, especially if she lives in the house.

Step 3: Identify someone within Delta Gamma who has a close and positive relationship with the member of concern. An example of this may be a big or little sister, a chapter adviser, a roommate, or a close friend.



Step 4: The identified person, if she is comfortable doing so, should determine a time to speak with the member of concern in private. Prior to having a conversation, she should be aware of the counseling services offered by the University. The vp: member education will provide the completed *Campus Resource Worksheet for Collegiate Chapters*, a summary of the campus resources.



Step 5: The identified person should have a conversation with the member of concern. This person should not feel that she has to take on the role of a counselor, and should avoid guaranteeing complete confidentiality. The chapter president should provide the person having the conversation with the conversation points to the right.



Step 6: After listening to what the member of concern has to say, the identified person should refer her to campus resources, which were identified in Step 4. The chapter president should provide the identified person with conversation points to the right.

- If the identified person wants guidance on how to conduct this conversation, she is encouraged to reach out to the campus' counseling center with her questions regarding confidentiality, or her role in the conversation and in helping the member of concern. Because of the stressful nature of these situations, it may be helpful for the identified person or others who may be close to the member of concern to utilize the counseling center for support if needed.
- Any additional questions regarding available resources on campus may be addressed by the chapter president through contacting the chapter's CDS.

- Tell the member of concern what you have observed and what changes you have seen in her, and why you are worried.
- Allow the member of concern to tell her own story while you listen attentively.
- Ask open-ended questions to clarify your understanding of the situation.
- Demonstrate your understanding by acknowledging or summarizing what the member of concern has said.

- Assure the member of concern that you are interested in what they are saying, but are bringing up these on-campus resources because you do not want to go beyond your own level of experience or expertise.
- Offer to walk with her to the counseling center on campus. This not only offers support, but also makes it more likely that the member of concern will follow through in seeking help, if she chooses to do so.
- If she is wary of counseling, you may want to mention that the counseling center sees all kinds of people for a wide range of personal issues and that counseling sessions are confidential and are often free or covered by insurance.
- Offer to check in with her in a few days to see how she is doing.