

How to respond when the student-athlete approaches you. When an individual approaches you, he or she is indicating a need to talk with you. The best way to respond is to listen. Stop what you are doing, look at the student-athlete and listen. This posture communicates that you are ready and willing to listen. Listening is the most important part of communicating. It is hard to listen when you are talking. If you are listening, you will likely know when to talk and what to say. Generally, wait to speak until the student-athlete stops talking or appears to be waiting for you to respond. It is all right to ask questions for clarification, but be careful not to judge or be critical. Accept what you are given. It is okay to repeat back what you have heard to be sure you heard it correctly. Indicate that you are glad the person has chosen to speak with you. Ask if there is anything else that needs to be said. If not, or after he or she finishes what needs to be said, respond by saying that you want to help get the necessary assistance. You then make the referral.

Making a referral. Unfortunately, many referrals are not accepted or used by the student-athlete. There are aspects of making a referral that increase the likelihood of it being successful. Know or at least have some knowledge regarding the referral person or agency. Share that knowledge with the student-athlete. Also, referrals are more often accepted when the referral is made to a specific person. Either you make the call or have the student-athlete make the call at the time to make the necessary arrangements. If you feel the individual needs assistance at the time, take him or her to the referral person or facility.

How to respond when the student-athlete approaches you.

- The student-athlete's approach indicates a need to talk with you.
- Stop what you are doing, look at the person, and **listen**.
- **Listening** is the most important part of communication.
- It is hard to talk and **listen** at the same time.
- If you listen well, you will know when to speak and what to say.
- Accept what you are given. Ask questions for clarification **without judging**.
- When it appears the person has finished talking, ask if there is anything else he/she needs to say.
- Indicate that you are glad he/she came to you and that you want to help.
- Make the necessary referral and encourage/support its acceptance.

Centenary Counseling Services – Rotary Hall
318-869-5466 (have student leave message with contact information if no answer or after hours). or

www.centenary.edu/therapyiscool

Timelycare – TalkNow

988 – call -National Suicide and Crisis Line

It is best to approach the individual privately to decrease the likelihood of embarrassment and to avoid any other activity that might distract you or the student-athlete.

Behavioral Symptoms

Disruption of daily activities
Social withdrawal
Irresponsibility, lying
Legal issues, fighting, difficulty with authority
Decrement in sport or academic performance
Substance use

Cognitive Symptoms

Suicidal thoughts
Poor concentration
Confusion/difficulty making decisions
Obsessive thoughts
All-or-nothing thinking
Negative self-talk

Emotional/Psychological Symptoms

Feeling out of control
Mood Swings
Excessive worry/fear
Agitation/irritability
Low self-esteem
Lack of motivation

Physical/Medical Symptoms

Sleep difficulty
Change in appetite and/or weight
Shaking, trembling
Fatigue, tiredness, weakness
Gastrointestinal complaints, headaches
Overuse injuries

How to respond when the student-athlete is in need and has not approached you. Obviously, it is easier and better if the student-athlete with a mental health problem comes to you. However, it is probably more likely that you will need to initiate the contact, in part because the individual may not feel there is a problem, or because of being embarrassed or uneasy about approaching someone in authority regarding his or her difficulties. It is best to approach the individual privately to decrease the likelihood of embarrassment and to avoid any other activity that might distract you or the student-athlete. Sensitivity is a key in facilitating the discussion. Begin by saying that you are concerned about the individual's welfare and would like to help. Ask how he or she is feeling, and how school, practice and games are going. Hopefully, this approach will allow the student-athlete the opening to talk with you about his or her difficulties. If so, follow the same recommendations discussed above regarding when the individual comes to you. If not, then you should tell the student-athlete that you need to make sure he or she is okay. Relate to the person that in order to determine this, you need to have him or her talk with a healthcare professional and that you would like to help arrange the appointment. If the student-athlete resists, you should say that you simply want to arrange an evaluation to determine if there is a problem. Tell the student-athlete that you hope that the evaluation determines that he or she does not have a problem, and if that is the case, then we can all breathe a sigh of relief and go on with our lives. The student-athlete should be told that if the professional's evaluation indicates that a problem exists, then the professional will discuss treatment options.

http://s3.amazonaws.com/ncaa/files/ssi/mental-health/toolkits/student-athlete/story_html5.html

show your student athletes