FIVE SIGNS THAT MIGHT INDICATE SOMEONE IS IN EMOTIONAL DISTRESS AND IN NEED OF HELP:

> Their personality changes
> They seem uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated or moody
> They withdraw or isolate themselves from other people
> They stop taking care of themselves and may engage in risky behavior
> They seem overcome with hopelessness and overwhelmed by their circumstances

Counseling and Psychological Services

Carnegie Mellon University

Help a Friend in Distress
How to Help

**Be respectful.** Take the person aside and talk to him/her in private. Listen carefully and with sensitivity; be open minded.

**Be honest and direct, but nonjudgmental.** Take the initiative to ask what is troubling your friend and be aware there could be reluctance to talk about it.

**Share what you have observed and why it concerns you.** For example: "I’ve noticed that you’ve been missing classes a lot lately and you aren’t answering your phone or text messages like you used to. I’m worried about you."

**Respond in a caring way.** This may help the person feel less lonely and more hopeful. It can also prevent the distressed person’s situation from escalating into a crisis.

**Make a referral.** Consider helping your friend know all the different resources on campus. If appropriate, encourage your friend to consider visiting CaPS.

**If suicide is a concern:** Not everyone that is in distress is suicidal. However, most of us will consider suicide at some point over the course of our lives. Your awareness of suicide can play an important role in keeping someone safe. If you have reason to think your friend is considering this, express your concern and ask directly about it. Call immediately for assistance if you believe your friend may harm him/herself. If it feels safe to do so, remain with the person until she or he is connected to professional help.

Crisis Support

CaPS offers consultation for students worried about other CMU students. You may contact CaPS during the day or after hours in the case of urgency or crisis. During the day, students can be screened for same day urgent appointments Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Off-Campus Emergencies: 911
On-Campus Emergency Police/Fire/Medical: 412-268-2323
CaPS business hours and after hours support: 412-268-2922

For more detailed information please visit: cmu.edu/counseling

Carnegie Mellon University
Counseling and Psychological Services