

GIVING A WARM REFERRAL

HOW TO RESPOND TO PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS

Lecturers are often the first to notice when students are not doing well. How do you respond when they come to you with personal issues? What can you say or do to lead them to the appropriate support? And how can you set your own boundaries without losing commitment?



FOUR STEPS TO OFFER A STUDENT A WARM REFERRAL TO MORE SPECIALIZED HELP.

What do I do?

1.

- Give your student your undivided attention
 - X Find or create a quiet space
 - X Avoid distractions, like your mobile phone
- Adopt an open body language
 - X Remain calm and patient
 - X Uncross your arms & legs
 - X Take a comfortable distance
 - X Make eye contact
- Show active listening
 - X Nod, ask open questions
 - X Summarise or paraphrase
 - X Try not to interrupt, silence is okay

How do I respond?

2.

- 'It is good that you came to talk to me'
= I acknowledge your courage and appreciate your confidence.
- 'It sounds like you are going through a difficult time'
'That must be really hard for you'
= I hear you, I am involved and I try to empathise with your point of view.
- 'I notice you have something important that you would like to discuss, unfortunately I have a class now. I would like to see you during the break.'
= I give you a concrete alternative if I don't have time now.

How do I refer?

3.

- Explain why you are referring
 - X Express your concern
 - X Define your own role and limitations
As a lecturer, you are not bound by professional secrecy and you still have to evaluate the student in the future
- Frame what support can do or mean
 - X Normalize the call for help
 - X Inform your student about the support services available within the institution and express your confidence in them
 - X Do not make any guarantees or promises
- Let the student maintain control
 - X Do not push your student
 - X Give your student room to choose what feels right
 - X Show you are still available
- Lower the threshold to reach out
 - X Give the contact details of a person, not a role
 - X Send an email to the support service yourself, with the student in cc
 - X Drop the student off at the support office

What can I expect?

4.

Not every student that reaches out for help, needs or takes the next step. So don't worry if the student does not respond as you had wished.

- In general you have four types:
 - X The passer-by – Ignores the referral
 - X The prospector – Explores the support, without trying
 - X The try-out person – Accepts the support and acts
 - X The co-expert - Knows and tried the support before

OFLA
Onwards from Learning Analytics

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Sources

- X Rode Kruis Vlaanderen (2019), Eerste hulp bij psychische problemen. Mechelen: Vandekerckhove.
- X D'Ansembourg T. (2005), Stop met aardig zijn. Utrecht: Ten Have.
- X Isebaert L. (2007), Praktijkboek Oplossingsgerichte cognitieve therapie. Utrecht: De Tijdstroom.
- X Onwards from Learning Analytics, <https://oflaproject.eu>

Where to refer to?

"PASTE THE QR-CODE OF YOUR STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE WEBSITE HERE"

WATCH OUT - 7 CONVERSATION KILLERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| Do not finish your student's sentences | 'I guess I'm thinking about...!' - 'Quitting, you want to quit?' |
| Do not argue with what the student thinks or feels | 'This is nothing to feel this worried about.' |
| Do not minimise what the student says | 'How can you feel so bad, you are in the prime of your life!' |
| Do not criticise or accuse | 'It's a bit unfair to say that about your parents.' |
| Do not apply the situation to yourself | 'I've been through that too.' |
| Do not offer quick fixes | 'Go and get some fresh air, that will help.' |
| Do not give too much well-meant advice | 'If I were you, I would...' |

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