
FEUP
Healthy Minds

You deserve it



Contacts

spo@fe.up.pt | psispo@fe.up.pt

Psychological support by appointment:

Mondays to Fridays, from 9:30 to 15:30

PSYCHOLOGY AND GUIDANCE SERVICE

FEUP FACULDADE DE ENGENHARIA
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

Helping a colleague...
Warning Signs



It's important to be **aware of those around you** and to **act by offering support or seeking specialized help** if someone is causing you concern.

To know when you need to act and how, you need to be able to **recognize and respond to signs** of distress that may indicate that a colleague is experiencing a mental health problem or crisis and/or is considering hurting themselves or others.

It's possible to distribute warning signs in 3 levels. Concern

Changes in different areas of the individual's life:

- **Academic**
 - Consecutive absences;
 - Decline in the quality and quantity of work performed;
 - Failure to meet deadlines or frequent requests for postponement
- **Physical**
 - Sudden changes in physical appearance and/or hygiene;
 - Attending classes under the influence of alcohol or other substances;
 - Tiredness/exhaustion;
 - Obvious cuts, burns or wounds;

- **Emotional**
 - Excessive worry;
 - Crying outbursts;
 - Sadness, irritability;
 - Significant lack of self-confidence;
 - Disproportionate response to grades or assessments;
- **Social**
 - Isolation or withdrawal;
 - Frequent conflicts;
 - Difficulties getting along with others (e.g. work groups);
- **Experiencing significant negative events**
 - Serious illness or death of someone significant in the person's life;
 - Trauma of any kind;
 - Physical or verbal aggression;
 - Discrimination;
 - Natural disasters;
 - Significant life changes.

Urgency

Obvious suffering with the possibility of risk and requiring professional intervention.

- Multiple signs of concern that escalate consecutively and are not resolved;
- Expressions of despair and hopelessness;
- Ideas about suicide or aggression towards others, expressed orally, in writing, on social media, etc;



- Worsening symptoms of psychological distress:
 - extreme social isolation;
 - intense agitation;
 - worsening of depression;
 - increased anxiety/panic attacks;
- Blurring of reality:
 - paranoia;
 - hallucinations;
 - delusions;
 - extreme euphoria.

Emergency

Immediate threat of danger to self and/or others.

- Situations of imminent danger to self and/or others;
- State of non-responsiveness;
- Need to call for immediate assistance.

You may notice one or more of these signs and realize there's a problem, witness some particularly disturbing behavior or just have a "gut feeling" that something is going on.

Whatever the case, you should take your suspicions seriously and try to intervene in the best way possible. Most people who commit or attempt suicide, self-harm or violence give some warning of their intentions.