Adjusting to life at Northwest

College is an exciting time filled with many new experiences and opportunities. However, it can also be filled with a variety of challenges and stressors. Most students learn to deal with these stressors in healthy ways and go on to have positive and successful experiences at Northwest. However, some students struggle with stress, become overwhelmed and experience crisis.

Students in crisis

Students in crisis lose perspective and the ability to effectively deal with issues that are causing stress. Sometimes this can lead to unhealthy and even destructive means of coping.

Resources for students

Emergencies:

If you or someone you know is suicidal: Please dial 911 for assistance.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

This hotline is free and available 24/7/365.

Helping Friends in Crisis: A Guide for Northwest Students

How students can help

Knowing signs of crisis, talking openly with your friends about their problems, and referring them to appropriate resources are three ways that you can help your friends deal with crisis and succeed at Northwest.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK
1-800-273-8255
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

University Wellness Services

Personal Development and Counseling Services, Health Services, Health Promotion Services

M–F 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Ph. 660.562.1348
www.nwmissouri.edu/wellness

For more information about PROJECT HOPE, please contact: Beau Dooley, MS, MPH 660.562.1348 or bdooley@nwmissouri.edu
Northwest students in distress

On campus surveys, Northwest students reported the following during the previous school year:

- Depression and stress were listed among the top six leading impediments to school performance.
- 45% experienced overwhelming anxiety.
- 10% reported having suicidal thoughts.
- 6% reported having seriously considered suicide.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among college students.

Sources:
National College Health Assessment (2009)
Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (2009)

PROJECT HOPE was created to prevent suicide and suicidal behavior among Northwest students by doing the following:

1. Helping students build skills to adjust to college life in healthy ways.
2. Destigmatizing mental health issues and help-seeking behavior.
3. Educating the campus on suicide-related issues.
4. Strengthening protocols for students in crisis.
5. Forging strong campus/community partnerships centered on suicide prevention efforts.

How to respond if a friend is in crisis

Communicate

If you suspect suicidal thoughts, discussing suicide openly helps suicidal persons sort through their problems and provides a sense of relief. Talking about suicide will not encourage someone to attempt suicide!

Listen

Be calm, non-judgmental and willing to listen. Allow your friend to speak freely about anything – even if what you hear is frightening or painful.

Encourage

Talk with your friend about available resources and find out concerns they may have about receiving professional help. If your friend is in immediate danger, call 911 or University Police at 660.562.1254.

Keep it up

Continue to have conversations with your friend and continue to encourage the use of professional resources.

Know your resources

Be aware of available resources at Northwest and in the community. Please know that all currently enrolled Northwest students have access to free counseling at University Wellness Services and that counselors are on call 24/7/365.

Additional resources are listed on the back of this brochure and at the PROJECT HOPE website at: www.nwmissouri.edu/ProjectHope

Signs of crisis

- Periods of crying
- Abrupt changes in behavior (sleep, appearance, energy, etc.)
- Low self-esteem
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Talk or online postings about suicide or self-harm
- Sudden decline in school performance
- Mood swings and irritability
- Depression and anxiety
- Feelings of being helpless, hopeless, or worthless
- Reckless behavior that threatens personal health and safety

Risk factors for suicide

- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Talking about suicide, violence or death
- Giving away possessions; saying good-bye
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Signs of feeling trapped—like there is no way out
- Signs of an abusive relationship
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Difficulty adjusting to gender identity
- Family history of suicide