# Simmering, Scorched, or Steady? Psychological Fortitude and Burnout Prevention

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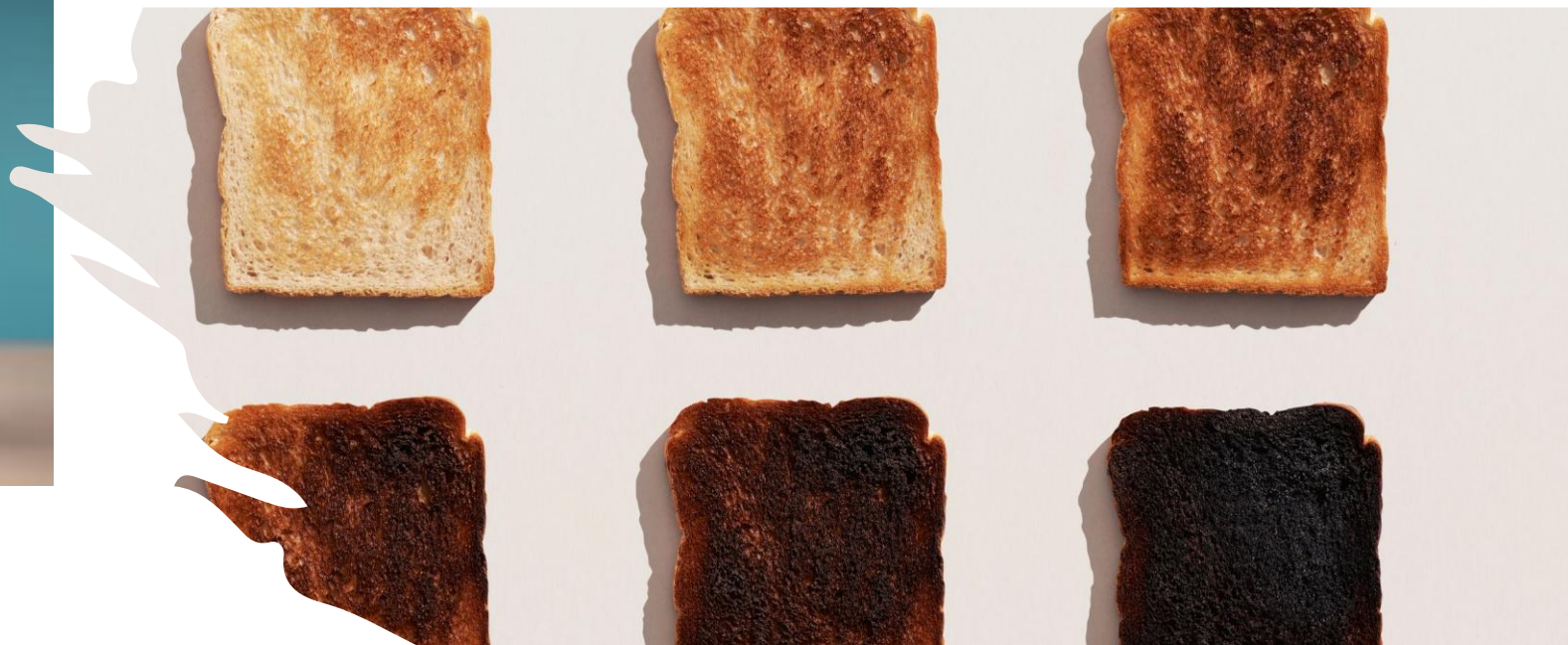
# How are we today?



# Your happiness is tied to:

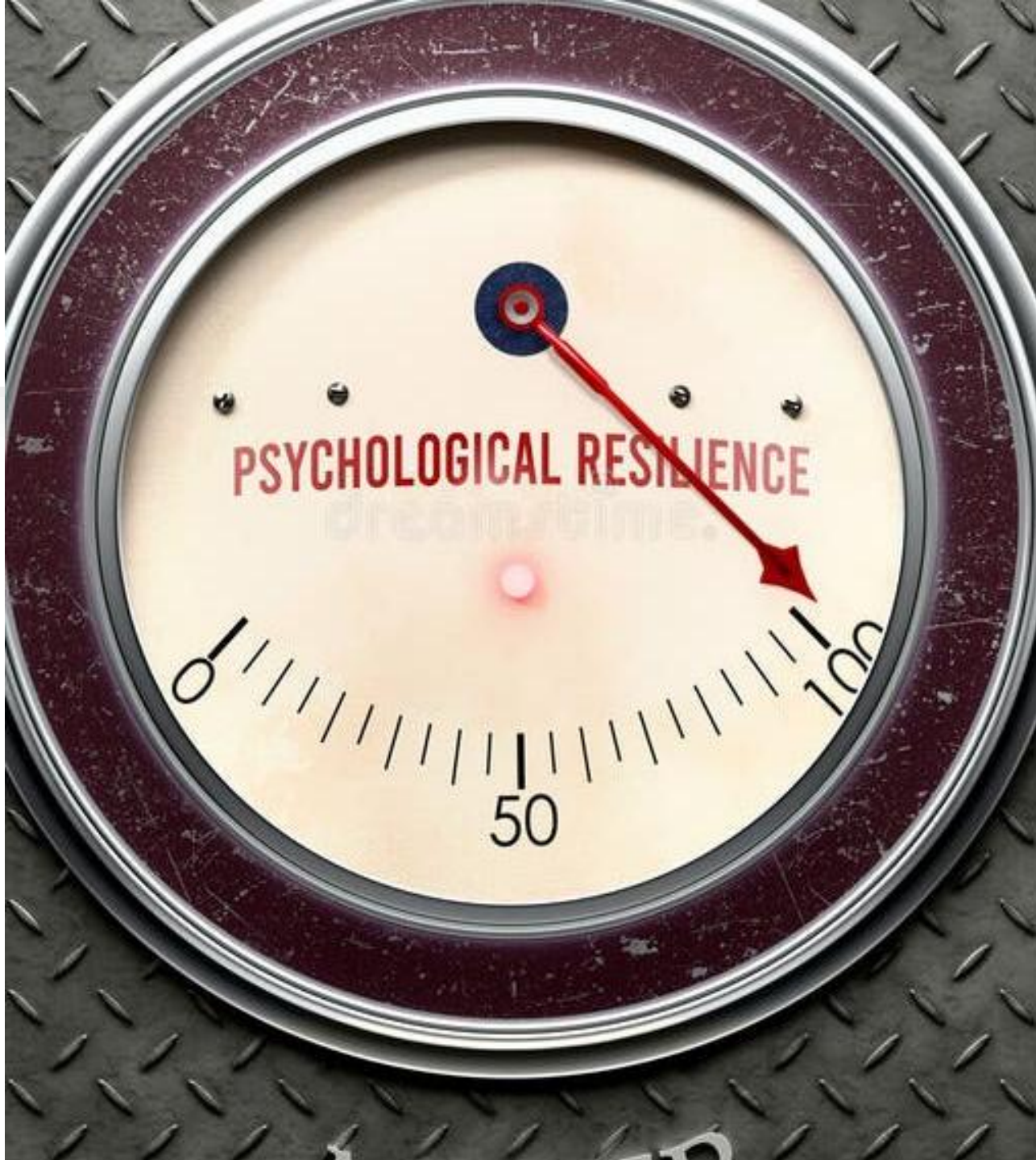
- Health and Immunity
- Love & Connection
- Work, Career & Wealth
- Your Happiness is a social justice issue and critical to your survival

# Psychological Fortitude

- Protective Armor
- Sunscreen
- Think of a scale of 1-10 or 1-100 and where you may find yourself today?

*-Walker, R. (2020). The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health: Navigate an Unequal System, Learn Tools for Emotional Wellness, and Get the Help you Deserve. New Harbinger Publications.*

https://ocdalecarnegie.com/the-power-of-psychological-fortitude/



# We start to feel impact at PF 6 or 60 (your scale)

- Prolonged wear and tear on your mind negatively impacts it
- Your PF is your protection
- It needs your attention constantly

# Opportunity for Change: Fault vs. Responsibility

## Increase

- Move our bodies
- Immerse self in water (bath, lake)
- Ground self in awe/spirituality
- Make something grow
- Journal
- Sing, hum, dance
- Be silly
- Rest

## Remove or Limit

- Say no to what doesn't serve you
- Turn off the noise (subjective)
- Disconnect from tech
- Delegate responsibility
- Mind-numbing substances or behaviors (self-care vs. self-numbing)
- Cruel automatic thoughts (replace)

# What happens if I’m scorched?

Let’s talk about Burnout

# Burnout

- Burnout and emotional exhaustion are common and need managed
- One cause of emotional exhaustion is feeling stuck in a tunnel of emotion and awaiting completion of a stress cycle.
  - *We need tools*
- Putting those “complete the stress cycle” strategies into practice will produce change for you and these incremental ways that we move through a stress cycle make us more capable to manage the next need that requires our attention.

# What is Burnout?

According to Herbert Freudenberger (’75)

1) Emotional Exhaustion – fatigue from carrying too much and for too long
2) Decreased Sense of Accomplishment – feeling nothing you do makes a difference
3) Depersonalization – decrease in empathy

# What do emotions have to do with it?

**Emotion**: Neurological events, these are cycles that occur internally – they are an involuntary response, and they have a beginning, middle and end. They are *tunnels* and you must go through them to get to the end. We really are emotional beings that do not live our whole lives in the logical, rational lane.

1)Feeling exist in your body, we carry emotions physically

2) Stress can be more dangerous than the stressor itself

3) There is a big difference between a stressor (needing to get immediate intervention for a student) and stress (the feeling that exists, even after the stressor has passed)

4) When you're feeling stuck, in a tunnel, or burned-out: what your body is craving is a completion of a stress cycle. *Exhaustion is when we are stuck in an emotion.*

# Fight, Flight, Freeze, Flock, Fawn

- Imagine that you've been in a stressful situation, whether it's being chased by a predator or offering 1:1 support to a person in crisis.  Often the crisis ends but our body has not finished moving through the natural bodily cycle that occurs because of the stress.

# Complete your Stress Cycle

- To move through a tunnel of emotion we must do something tactical.
- What signs might you tune into to notice you're stuck?

# Physical Activity

Honestly, anything will do.  Standing up from your computer and tensing every muscle in your body until you're shaking and then a full relax of those muscles can help your body complete the stress cycle.  Any movement will do.  Dancing, running, cycling, lifting weights.  Walking is the most effective, consistent, sustainable way to help your body move through your stress cycle.

# Breathing

Down regulates your regulatory system, you can practice just a 90 second practice of a gentle breath in, a hold and then a breath going out.  You can do this intentionally when you're in difficult circumstances too.

# Positive Social Interaction

- Imagine after you've gone through a very stressful experience you see the face of a person who cares deeply about you.  It's a reminder that the whole world is not rotten.  The natural inclination to connect with another human tells your body it's somewhere safe.
- Talk to the person at the next gas pump, compliment a stranger's umbrella, ask someone to be your "witness" when times are tough

# Laughter

Key here is that this can't be social nicety/inauthentic laughter; must be a belly kind of true laughter for it to really help you move through the stress cycle. Helps us make and maintain our social bonds – it's a universal language. You can fake MANY things in life, but you can't fake a true laugh

(*just ask Gloria Steinem)

# Hugs

A **Hug** in a safe and trusting context – does as much to help you feel you've really made it through a difficult scenario as a jog –a long hug where you hold your center of gravity and help yourself shift into relaxation and knowing it's safe is the goal.

# The Big Cry

A healing way to experience the emotion that is associated with the stressor.  This is a physical way to let the emotion go all the way to the end of it's cycle and not get stuck in your body.

Trick to cry – whatever is making you feel overwhelmed; set it aside, and turn to the physical experience of crying (notice how warm you feel, what your tears are like) and don't feed it any more thoughts, if you focus on the cry the cry will end

# Creative Expression

Taking whatever is inside you and bothering you and placing it outside yourself – can be art, movement, writing, coloring, putting something that is feeling difficult inside yourself out into the world in a creative way can change our experience of it.

# Resources

- Employee Assistance Program: https://hr.psu.edu/current-employee/health-wellbeing/supportlinc
- Hinge Physical Therapy: https://hr.psu.edu/hinge-health
- Discounts: https://hr.psu.edu/current-employee/benefits/discounts
- Employee Resource Groups: https://hr.psu.edu/current-employee/deib/ergs
- if you're managing students who need support don't forget the Red Folder, the Penn State Crisis Line and Crisis Text Line

PennState
University Park

# RED FOLDER

Brought to you by
Student Affairs/Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) &
University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA)

A quick reference guide for recognizing, responding to, and referring distressed students.

RECOGNIZE

RESPOND

REFER

## HOW TO USE:

**1. Recognize indicators of distress**
Common indicators are listed inside. Students may present with indicators not listed.

**2. Respond appropriately**
Each situation is unique. Use the tips and decision tree to determine the most appropriate response.

**3. Refer the student**
Use the list of resources on back cover to refer the student to the most appropriate campus resource.

# RECOGNIZE
## Indicators of Distressed Students

Look for groupings, frequency, and severity of behaviors, not just isolated symptoms.

### Academic

- ☐ Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- ☐ Frequently missed classes and assignments
- ☐ Disturbing content in writing or presentations
- ☐ Classroom disruptions
- ☐ Consistently seeking personal rather than professional advice
- ☐ Multiple requests for extensions/special considerations (a change from prior functioning)
- ☐ Doesn't respond to repeated requests for contact/meetings

### Physical

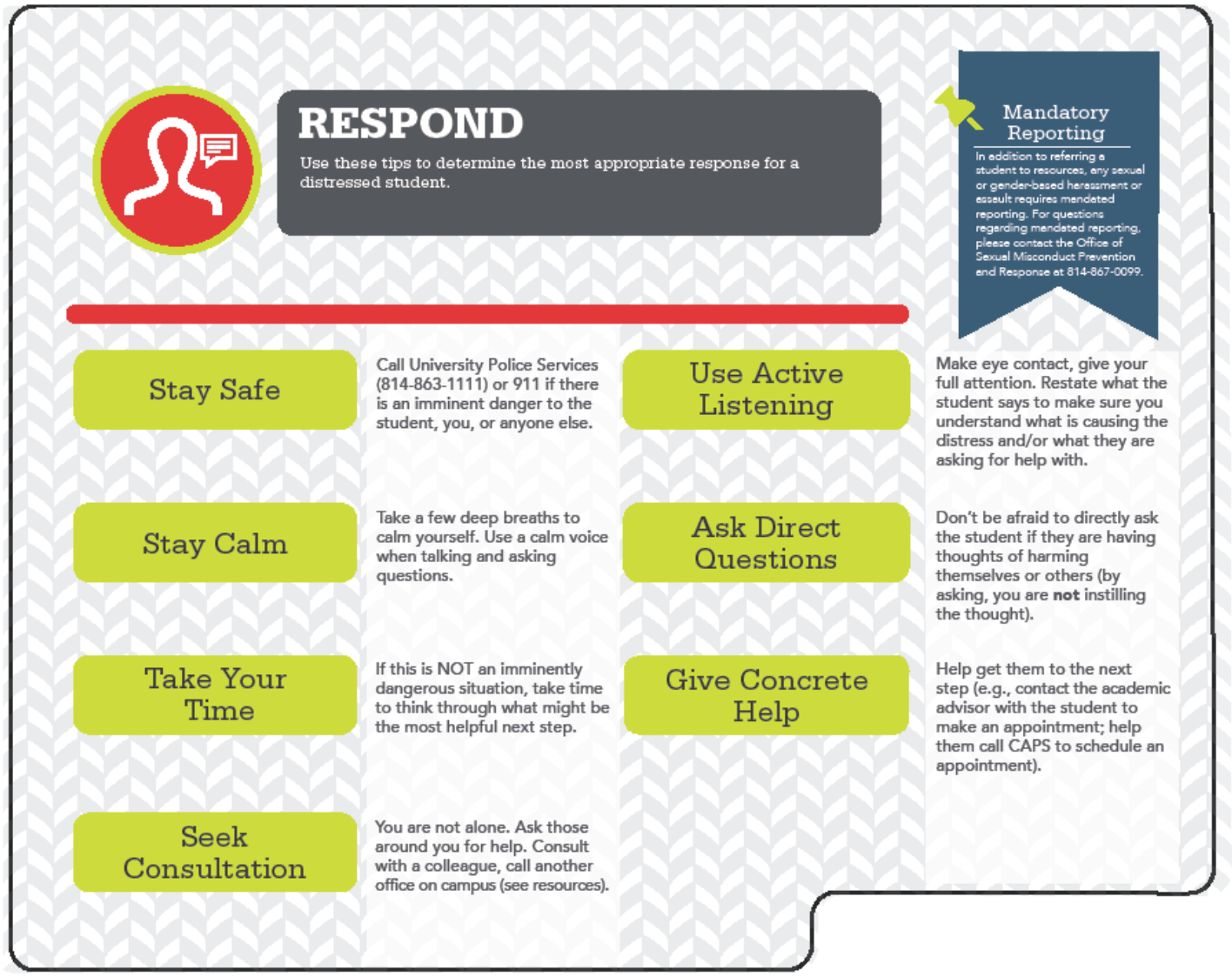
- ☐ Marked changes in physical appearance (e.g., poor grooming/ hygiene or sudden weight loss/gain)
- ☐ Strange or bizarre behavior indicating loss of contact with reality
- ☐ Visibly intoxicated or smelling of alcohol or marijuana
- ☐ Rapid speech or manic behavior
- ☐ Depressed or lethargic mood or functioning
- ☐ Observable signs of injury (e.g., facial bruising or cuts)

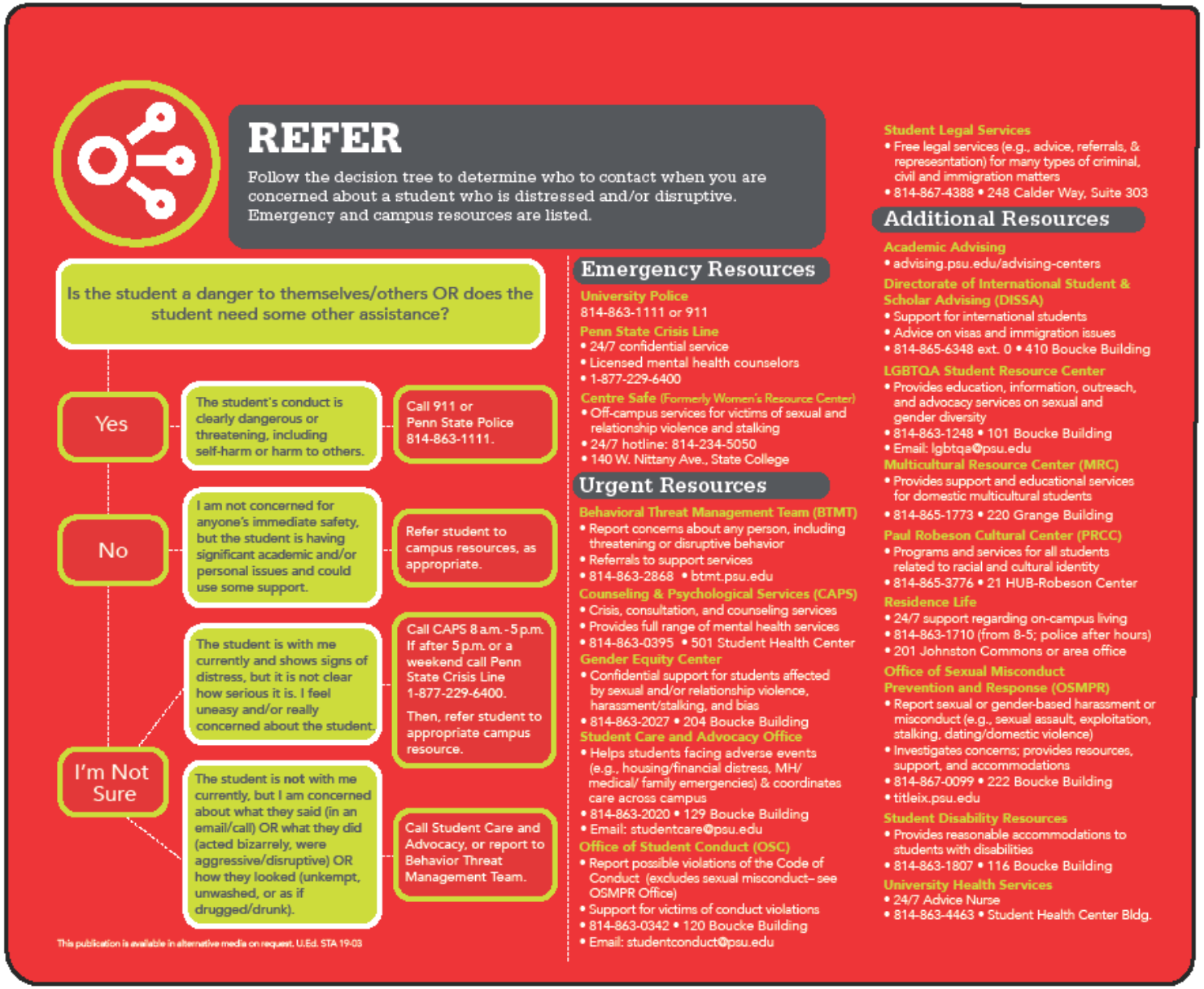
### Psychological

- ☐ Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g., family problems, financial difficulties, assault, discrimination, legal difficulties)
- ☐ Unusual/disproportionate emotional response to events
- ☐ Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions
- ☐ Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- ☐ Expressions of concern about the student by peers

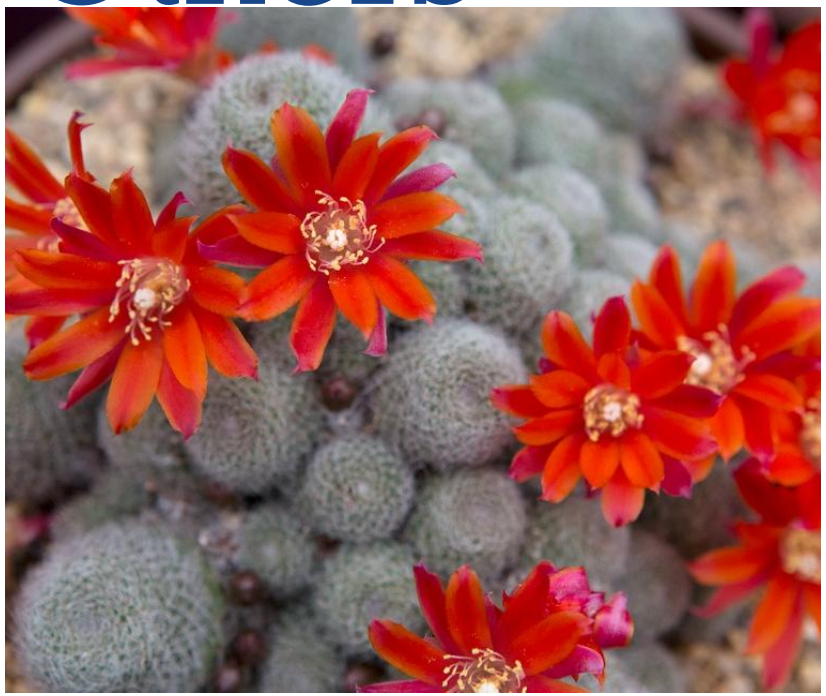
### Safety Risk

- ☐ Verbal, written, or implied references to suicide, homicide, assault or self-injurious behaviors
- ☐ Unprovoked anger or hostility/physical violence (e.g., shoving, grabbing, assaulting, use of weapon)
- ☐ Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, helplessness, isolation, rage, despair, violence, self-injury
- ☐ Stalking or harassing
- ☐ Communicating threats/ disturbing comments via email, correspondence, texting or phone call


RESPOND
Use these tips to determine the most appropriate response for a distressed student.
Mandatory Reporting
In addition to referring a student to resources, any sexual or gender-based harassment or assault requires mandated reporting. For questions regarding mandated reporting, please contact the Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response at 814-867-0099.
Stay Safe
Call University Police Services (814-863-1111) or 911 if there is an imminent danger to the student, you, or anyone else.
Use Active Listening
Make eye contact, give your full attention. Restate what the student says to make sure you understand what is causing the distress and/or what they are asking for help with.
Stay Calm
Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself. Use a calm voice when talking and asking questions.
Ask Direct Questions
Don't be afraid to directly ask the student if they are having thoughts of harming themselves or others (by asking, you are not instilling the thought).
Take Your Time
If this is NOT an imminently dangerous situation, take time to think through what might be the most helpful next step.
Give Concrete Help
Help get them to the next step (e.g., contact the academic advisor with the student to make an appointment; help them call CAPS to schedule an appointment).
Seek Consultation
You are not alone. Ask those around you for help. Consult with a colleague, call another office on campus (see resources).


REFER
Follow the decision tree to determine who to contact when you are concerned about a student who is distressed and/or disruptive. Emergency and campus resources are listed.
Is the student a danger to themselves/others OR does the student need some other assistance?
Yes
The student's conduct is clearly dangerous or threatening, including self-harm or harm to others.
Call 911 or Penn State Police 814-863-1111.
No
I am not concerned for anyone's immediate safety, but the student is having significant academic and/or personal issues and could use some support.
Refer student to campus resources, as appropriate.
I'm Not Sure
The student is with me currently and shows signs of distress, but it is not clear how serious it is. I feel uneasy and/or really concerned about the student.
Call CAPS 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. If after 5 p.m. or a weekend call Penn State Crisis Line 1-877-229-6400.
Then, refer student to appropriate campus resource.
The student is not with me currently, but I am concerned about what they said (in an email/call) OR what they did (acted bizarrely, were aggressive/disruptive) OR how they looked (unkempt, unwashed, or as if drugged/drunk).
Call Student Care and Advocacy, or report to Behavior Threat Management Team.
This publication is available in alternative media on request. U.Ed. STA 19-03
Emergency Resources
University Police
814-863-1111 or 911
Penn State Crisis Line
• 24/7 confidential service
• Licensed mental health counselors
• 1-877-229-6400
Centre Safe (Formerly Women's Resource Center)
• Off-campus services for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking
• 24/7 hotline: 814-234-5050
• 140 W. Nittany Ave., State College
Urgent Resources
Behavioral Threat Management Team (BTMT)
• Report concerns about any person, including threatening or disruptive behavior
• Referrals to support services
• 814-863-2868 • btmt.psu.edu
Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)
• Crisis, consultation, and counseling services
• Provides full range of mental health services
• 814-863-0395 • 501 Student Health Center
Gender Equity Center
• Confidential support for students affected by sexual and/or relationship violence, harassment/stalking, and bias
• 814-863-2027 • 204 Boucke Building
Student Care and Advocacy Office
• Helps students facing adverse events (e.g., housing/financial distress, MH/medical/ family emergencies) & coordinates care across campus
• 814-863-2020 • 129 Boucke Building
• Email: studentcare@psu.edu
Office of Student Conduct (OSC)
• Report possible violations of the Code of Conduct (excludes sexual misconduct– see OSMPR Office)
• Support for victims of conduct violations
• 814-863-0342 • 120 Boucke Building
• Email: studentconduct@psu.edu
Student Legal Services
• Free legal services (e.g., advice, referrals, & represesntation) for many types of criminal, civil and immigration matters
• 814-867-4388 • 248 Calder Way, Suite 303
Additional Resources
Academic Advising
• advising.psu.edu/advising-centers
Directorate of International Student & Scholar Advising (DISSA)
• Support for international students
• Advice on visas and immigration issues
• 814-865-6348 ext. 0 • 410 Boucke Building
LGBTQA Student Resource Center
• Provides education, information, outreach, and advocacy services on sexual and gender diversity
• 814-863-1248 • 101 Boucke Building
• Email: lgbtqa@psu.edu
Multicultural Resource Center (MRC)
• Provides support and educational services for domestic multicultural students
• 814-865-1773 • 220 Grange Building
Paul Robeson Cultural Center (PRCC)
• Programs and services for all students related to racial and cultural identity
• 814-865-3776 • 21 HUB-Robeson Center
Residence Life
• 24/7 support regarding on-campus living
• 814-863-1710 (from 8-5; police after hours)
• 201 Johnston Commons or area office
Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response (OSMPR)
• Report sexual or gender-based harassment or misconduct (e.g., sexual assault, exploitation, stalking, dating/domestic violence)
• Investigates concerns; provides resources, support, and accommodations
• 814-867-0099 • 222 Boucke Building
• titleix.psu.edu
Student Disability Resources
• Provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities
• 814-863-1807 • 116 Boucke Building
University Health Services
• 24/7 Advice Nurse
• 814-863-4463 • Student Health Center Bldg.

# Managing Distress in Others

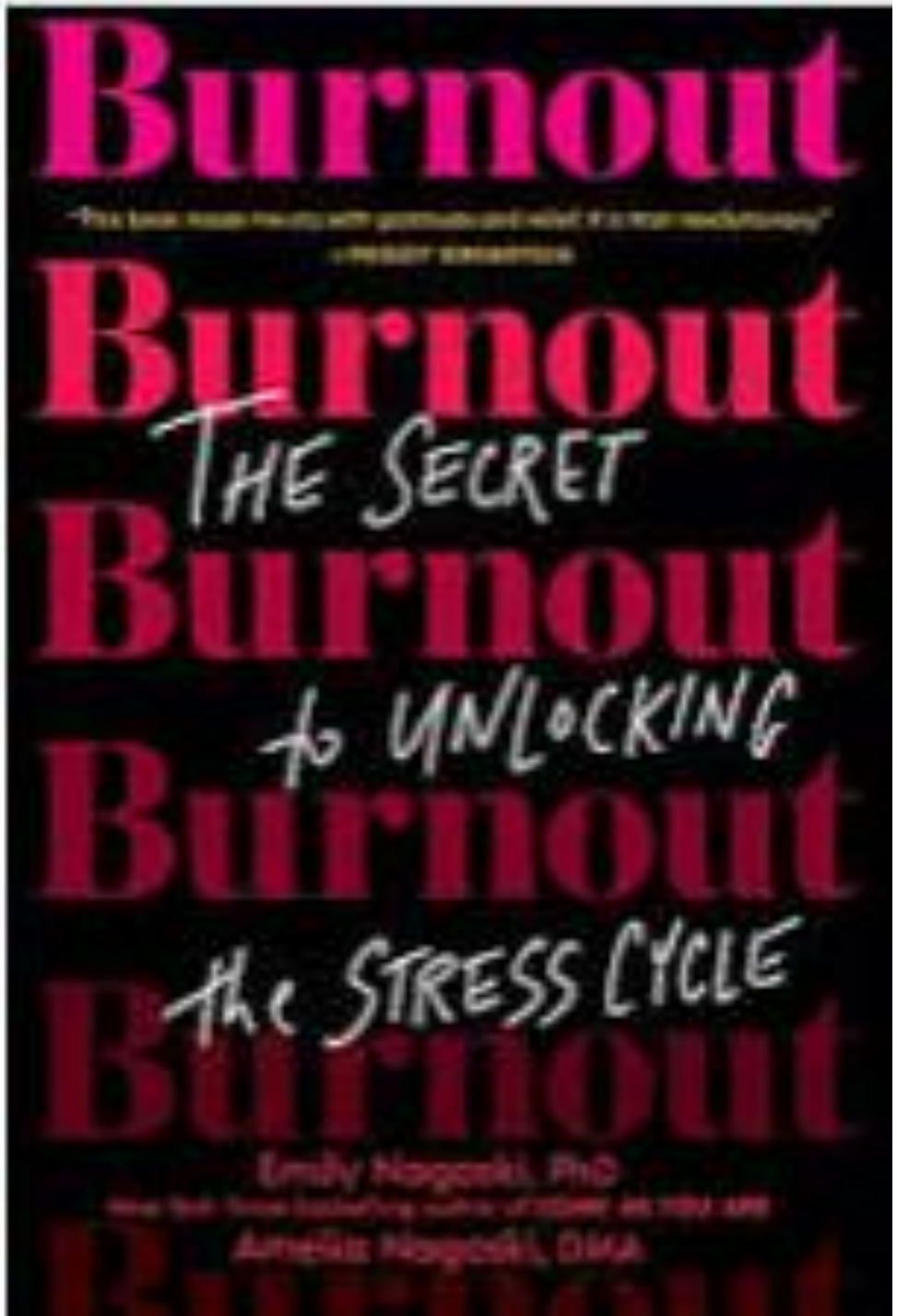


- Take a deep breath
  - Relax your body
- Speak in a calm tone
- Offer water or comfortable seat – even on Zoom!
- Listen and keep messages simple and grounding
- Offer student reminders to pause and breathe
- Be present and show active listening
- Know when to ask others for help/support

# You are not alone

- Remind yourself and student that help is available, if it becomes more than you're comfortable handling you can:
- Consult with CAPS
- Call the Penn State Crisis Line
  - 1-877-229-6400
- Contact Police
- Contact the Centre County Crisis Center
  - https://ccrinfo.org/

- CAPS is under the umbrella of FERPA and follows the ethic of HIPAA
- You can *always* call CAPS and share information. While providers may not be able to share clinical details, we can always discuss our policies/SOP with you




# For more

- Source: https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-emily-and-amelia-nagoski-on-burnout-and-how-to-complete-the-stress-cycle/

# Thank You!