We encourage you, whenever possible, to speak directly and honestly to students when you sense they are in academic or personal distress. Openly acknowledge to students that you are aware of their distress, sincerely concerned about their welfare, and willing to help them explore their alternative.

**Signs of Student Distress:**
- Inability to Concentrate
- Confusion
- Depression
- Persistent Worry
- Social Isolation
- Bizarre Behavior
- Increased Irritability
- Missed Classes/Assignments
- Procrastination
- Dangerous or High Risk Behavior
- Restlessness
- Disheveled Appearance
- Mood Swings
- Indecisiveness

**Guidelines for Interaction:**

1. **Request to see the student in private**, unless there is a potential for danger. This may help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness. It also minimizes environmental stimulation that could be stressful.

2. **Briefly acknowledge your observations and perceptions** of his/her situation and express your concerns directly and honestly.

3. **Listen carefully** to what the student is troubled about and try to see the issues from the student’s point of view without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing.

4. **Attempt to identify** the student’s problem or concern as well as your own concerns or uneasiness. You can help by exploring alternatives to deal with the problem.

5. **Strange and inappropriate behavior should not be ignored.** Comment directly on what you have observed.

6. **Flexibility with strict procedures** may allow an alienated student to respond more to your concerns.

7. **Involve yourself only as far as you want to go.** At times, in an attempt to reach or help a troubled student, you may become more involved than time or skill permits. Extending oneself to others always involves some risk, but it can
be a gratifying experience when kept within realistic limits. (See The Demanding Student/Stalking Student sections)

8. If you become uncomfortable or concerned that you or others are not safe, contact Campus Safety at 242-7910 or dial 9-911 for immediate assistance.

9. The student’s family or significant other will be contacted if it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other persons. If the student is under 18 years of age, parents MUST be contacted. (Information may be released based upon the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.)

10. If you are unsure how to handle a specific situation we encourage you to contact BIRT at birt@shastacollege.edu, the Psychological Counselor, College Nurse, or Campus Safety.