THE DEMANDING STUDENT

Description:
Typically, the utmost time and energy given to this student is simply not enough. He/she often seeks to control your time and unconsciously believes that the amount of time received is a reflection of personal worth. In many instances, these people feel incompetent to handle their own life. Usually, they present as immature and self-centered. You may find yourself increasingly drained and feeling responsible for this student in a way that is beyond your normal involvement. It is important that this student be connected with many sources of support on campus and in the community in general.

Response:

It may be helpful to utilize the following actions:

1. Set clear and precise limits with them and stick to the limits no matter how much the student protests.
2. Let the student make his/her own decisions. Don’t take responsibility for them. If you do, they may attempt to trap you into solving more and more of their life problems.
3. Do not let them use you as their only means of support. Refer them to other students in class, their friends or some particular group on campus.
4. Set limits to your contact with the student (e.g., “I am able to spend 10 minutes with you now. My regular office hours are…”)

The following actions may not be helpful:

1. Get trapped into giving advice or special considerations.
2. Avoid the student as an alternative to setting and enforcing limits.