**Awareness:**
recognition of distress

Here are some ways in which distress can impact a student:

- Interacting with peers less
- Interacting less with friends and more with a different group of peers
- Anxious, fidgety, or trouble relaxing
- Daydreaming or seems distracted
- Focused on the negative; fails to see the positive
- Not acting like themselves
- Racing thoughts; excessively energetic
- More irritable than usual; easily irritated
- Taking more risks or engaging in greater risk
- Talking about feeling hopeless or worthless
- Angry, sad or crying for seemingly no reason
- Talk about hurting themselves or others
- Use or increased use of alcohol or other drugs
- Self-injury like cutting, scratching, burning or punching

**Interaction:**
reaching out to a student in distress

Here are some pointers on how to interact with and engage a student who may be in distress:

- Keep it casual and treat it like a conversation
- Be respectful, compassionate and empathetic
- Ease into the conversation, it’s OK if they aren’t ready to talk yet
- Ask open-ended questions when possible
- Avoid offering advice or trying to fix the problem
- Be nonjudgmental
- Keep trying and check in with the student regularly

**Direction:**
connecting a student with resources

- Contact your building principal if you suspect a student is experiencing mental health issues (if a student is in crisis, do not leave them alone)
- Self-Help Resources (for non-emergency situations)
  - Crisis Text Line, text 4HOPE to 741-741 (free, anonymous 24/7 access to a live crisis counselor via text)
- Other Resources
  - Apps to Help Manage Mental Health: [www.kent.edu/mhsu/help](http://www.kent.edu/mhsu/help)
  - National Suicide Prevention Hotline, call 1-800-273-8255 (free, 24/7, confidential support)
  - The Trevor Project: Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678 (free, 24/7, crisis/suicide intervention to young LGBTQ students)

**Hear to Help**

Hear to Help identifies individuals who have completed a mental health awareness training and who have agreed to be a point of contact for individuals who may need information about mental health resources.

[www.kent.edu/H2H-Medina](http://www.kent.edu/H2H-Medina)

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**Center for Public Policy and Health**

Division of Mental Health and Substance Use

Mental health self-help tools can be found at: [kent.edu/mhsu/help](http://kent.edu/mhsu/help)