

We all face challenges from time to time, and as an instructor, you may be among the first to recognize a change in a student's mood, motivation and/or progress. Even in a digital learning environment, there may be signs that a student needs support.

In the last months, our lives have been turned upside down; isolation from friends and family, loss of income, and significant changes in the way that we work and study. Is there anyone who is not distressed right now? Now, more than ever, we need to be compassionate and observant to the needs of our students while ensuring that we also care for ourselves.

At NIC, we have many resources to support student success including academic, financial and personal supports. You will find these listed below along with other tips **Recognize, Respond and Refer** students in distress.

Recognize: Look out for changes in behaviour or performance.

- Difficulty keeping up with course work
- Suspected learning difficulty or disability in the areas of reading, writing, and comprehension
- Significant discrepancy between potential and performance
- Assignments late, failed, or not submitted
- Frequent requests for extensions
- Insufficient test preparation
- Problems with organization or time management
- Failing, especially if there has been a drop-in performance
- Change in motivation or attendance
- Physical signs of distress or low mood (mild situational depression is a very likely outcome of the current situation with COVID 19)

Respond: It is OK to ask questions.

When responding to students in distress, consider an **appropriate balance** of providing care and respecting students' autonomy and capacity. **Care** is the desire to help the student, and the NIC community to be healthy and successful. **Respect** involves the belief that the student is separate from you – that they have the right to make their own decisions, the capacity to respond to their own problems, and perspectives and values that are valid for them.

When care and respect are out of balance, both you and the student will suffer. When care and respect are in balance, you offer the student **connection** and the opportunity to gain a sense of **empowerment** in the face of their situation (and both you and the student will live happily ever after 😊)

Refer: You are not alone; it is OK to call in the experts.

- **Early Assist** is an online referral system used to connect students with support services including counselling, academic supports, advising and financial aid. NIC faculty and staff can make referrals through Early Assist, please contact your faculty or a staff member to make a referral. Early Assist is confidential and does not appear on student records. Learn more at: mynic.nic.bc.ca/student/Documents/early-assist-info.pdf
- **The Red Folder:** A list of NIC and community resources. A Red Folder icon can be found on every NIC employee's desktop.
- **Financial, Educational or Aboriginal Advisors** are available through phone appointments on each campus and appointments can be booked online at [NIC Educational Advising Appointments](#)
- **Elders in Residence** are here to support Aboriginal Students. Contact information can be found at: [Elders in Residence | North Island College](#)
- **Counselling Services** are available on each campus through telephone, email and video appointments and can be booked online at: www.nic.bc.ca/student-services/counselling/. If you need counselling support outside of regular office hours, please call the Vancouver Crisis Line at 1.888.494.3888 and other community/provincial supports indicated in the student support document below or in the Red Folder.
- **Department of Accessible Learning** supports are available on each campus. Contact information can be found at: [Accessible Learning Services](#)

For more information on supporting students in distress, contact:

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