

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a white lab coat and a necklace, smiling warmly. She is looking towards another person whose back is to the camera. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clinical or laboratory setting.

# The Care Team



## Overview

UNTHSC cares about our students' success, not only academically, but emotionally and physically as well. Because of our commitment, we provide services across campus that support and respond to our students' unique needs.

The **UNTHSC Care Team** receives referrals and supports students experiencing personal, emotional, and/or medical concerns and is made up of representatives from various departments on campus so that a well-rounded, holistic support system is in place for the UNTHSC community. The Care Team serves as a centralized reporting source for any individual (students, faculty, staff, parents, etc.) who is concerned about a student and would like assistance.

**OUR MISSION** is to create solutions for healthier communities by assisting in promoting the health, safety, and well-being of the UNT Health Science Center community.

## Overview (cont.)

The Care Team is designed to support students by connecting them with resources and serving as an on-campus source of support. The Care Team often collaborates with other offices, including the Office of Student Affairs, Center for Academic Performance, and the UNT Health Science Center Police Department. The Care Team operates under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in a non-clinical, case management capacity, and does not provide psychotherapy. Information may be provided to appropriate faculty and staff members based on a business need to know and/or for health and safety reasons, the Care Team always works to respect the privacy of the student.



### We created this information to accomplish the following:

- Educate you about the Care Team and how it works;
- Provide you with information and tips about how to deal with situations you may encounter; and
- Provide additional resources on our campus and in our community.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Care Team, call **(817) 735-2740** or email **CareTeam@unthsc.edu**.

More information on the Care Team is available at **[unthsc.edu/wellness-services/care-team/](https://unthsc.edu/wellness-services/care-team/)**.

If you would like to refer a student to the Care Team, you can utilize the Person of Concern Reporting Form at **[unthsc.edu/personofconcern](https://unthsc.edu/personofconcern)**

### When to Refer:

As a staff member, faculty, friend, peer, or parent, you see students on a regular basis and play an incredibly important role in identifying students who might need additional support. If you notice that a student is exhibiting any of the following academic, physical or emotional indicators, or you just have a “gut feeling” that something is wrong, you can make a referral to the Care Team. The referral process provides students with the opportunity to connect with an on-campus source of support and identify resources that may be helpful.

## Academic Indicators:

- Excessive procrastination and poorly prepared work, especially if this is not typical of the student's performance;
- Missing assignments or exams;
- Decline in interest or enthusiasm;
- Inability to follow instructions or tasks, despite attempts to clarify/encourage;
- Repeated requests for special consideration (e.g. deadline extensions); or
- Dependence on professor/tutor that is beyond what is usual for a student needing assistance in your class.

## Emotional Indicators:

- Extreme or prolonged display of emotion (sadness, nervousness, fearfulness, etc.);
- Change in personality (e.g., more outgoing or more withdrawn than usual);
- Difficulty connecting with others;
- Difficulty dealing with a personal life event (e.g., death in family, relationship break-up);
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, isolation, or worthlessness; including thoughts or mention of suicide, self-harm or reference to death and dying;
- Displays of irritability, anger, hostility;
- Mention of dealing with a mental health diagnosis, substance abuse, eating disorder, etc; or
- Strange or bizarre behavior that is clearly inappropriate to the situation.



## Physical Indicators:

- Chronic fatigue or falling asleep at inappropriate times;
- Marked change in personal hygiene or appearance;
- Noticeable or dramatic change in energy level;
- Dramatic weight loss or weight gain;
- Impaired speech or confused/disjointed thoughts; or
- Noticeable signs of self-harm on student.

## What about FERPA?

Case management, although supportive and personal, is not the same as psychotherapy; therefore, confidentiality guidelines are different. The Care Team operates within the confidentiality rules outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Educational records are also protected by FERPA, and therefore cannot be shared with anyone outside of the University, unless there is concern for the health and safety of the student.

### **FERPA permits communication about a student of concern under the following circumstances:**

- UNTHSC may disclose personal identifiable information from an “educational record” to appropriate individuals in a health and safety emergency. Information may be released to emergency contacts, police, or others, if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or others.
- Information can be shared with University personnel when there is a specific need to know. When sharing information with other staff or faculty, the Care Team will only share information that is vitally important and always works to respect the privacy of the student.

**The Care Team operates under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in a non-clinical, case management capacity, and does not provide psychotherapy. Information may be provided to appropriate faculty and staff members based on a business need to know and/or for health and safety reasons. The Care Team always works to respect the privacy of the student.**

## What can you do to help?

- Stay calm;
- Talk to the student in private if you feel comfortable and safe doing so;
- Express your concern in non-judgmental terms;
- Listen to the student and paraphrase what the student is saying;
- Identify options available to the student;
- Clarify the costs and benefits of each option while solution building from the student’s perspective;
- Respect the student’s value system;
- Ask if the student is considering suicide or self-harm;
- Make appropriate referrals;
- Help the student understand that action is necessary;
- Speak clearly and clarify expectations; and
- Call the UNTHSC Police Department (**x2600**) or **911** if there is an immediate risk of harm to self or others.





## Responding to suicidal concerns

When a student makes any reference to suicide, threat of suicide, or attempt at suicide, it is important to seek help immediately. Suicidal concerns are first and foremost a medical emergency. If dangerous or suicidal behavior appears imminent:

***STAY CALM AND CALL THE UNTHSC POLICE DEPARTMENT (X2600) OR 911***

### **Recognize the signs of suicide risk:**

- Suicide threats/previous attempts
- Increasing drug/alcohol abuse
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Self-destructive behavior
- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Be aware of direct/indirect verbal clues, behavioral clues, and/or situational clues

### **To save a life, remember QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)**

- Question the person about suicide.
- Persuade the person to get help.
- Refer to appropriate resources.

## Referring a student to the Care Team

To refer a student to the Care Team, you can submit a referral through the Person of Concern Reporting Form that includes the name of the student and information about your concern. Once a Care Team referral is received, a member of the Care Team will respond by gathering more information and reaching out to the student to offer support. The Care Team response is dependent on the context

of the referral and level of concern and/or risk.

The Care Team meets regularly for case management to work together to assess the level of concern for the student, identify opportunities to connect with the student, and provide holistic support services. The team will evaluate the circumstances and will work with the student to develop an appropriate action plan.



**Be assured that the Care Team exists to assist students and handle all referrals professionally in an effort to best meet the needs of students and the UNTHSC community.**

Person of Concern Report: [unthsc.edu/personofconcern](https://unthsc.edu/personofconcern)

Email: [CareTeam@unthsc.edu](mailto:CareTeam@unthsc.edu)

Phone: (817) 735-2740

## Who is a disruptive individual?

When a student's behavior appears distressed and/or goes beyond the normal classroom disturbances, you can contact the Care Team for assistance. The team will evaluate the circumstances and determine the appropriate plan of action for the student.

- An individual who makes threats of physical harm to you, others, or his/her self.
- An individual who behaves in an uncharacteristic manner or exhibits unstable behavior patterns.
- An individual who appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of a controlled substance.
- An individual who exhibits a weapon.

**When safety is an immediate concern, contact the UNTHSC Police Department (817-735-2600) or 911.**





## Resources

In the event of an emergency or situation that requires immediate intervention, please contact the UNTHSC Police Department or 911. The Care Team plays a secondary role to all urgent circumstances and should be contacted only after initial notifications are made. Please know that the Care Team and the UNTHSC Police Department are committed to a collaborative relationship, and the Care Team will be notified at the appropriate time by the Police Department when needed.

To submit a Care Team referral, use the Person of Concern form at [unthsc.edu/personofconcern](https://unthsc.edu/personofconcern)

To contact the Care Team directly, call **(817) 735-2740** or email at [CareTeam@unthsc.edu](mailto:CareTeam@unthsc.edu)

More information can also be found at [unthsc.edu/wellness-services/care-team/](https://unthsc.edu/wellness-services/care-team/)

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**UNTHSC Police Department** (817) 735-2600

**Office of Student Affairs** (817) 735-2505

**Student Health Clinic** (817) 735-5051

**Assistant Director, Disability Accommodations** (817) 735-2134

**National Suicide Hotline** 1-800-273-TALK

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