Responding to Individuals in Crisis

A joint presentation of UT Austin’s:
Counseling & Mental Health Center
Dean of Students Office
Employee Assistance Program
University Police Department
Overview

- Warning signs
- Response strategies
- Campus resources
Warning Signs

- Commits or threatens violence against self or others
- Out of touch with reality
- Extreme emotional reaction
- Noticeable change in appearance
- Decline in performance
- Decline in social involvement
Responding to Distress

- Provide opportunity to express concerns
- Initiate problem-solving
- Help the person take action
Effective Statements

- “I hear you saying…”
- “What can I do to help?”
- “Maybe I can help by listening to you.”
- “I hear that it’s important to you.”
- “I’m concerned about you and what you’re describing.”
- “I can see that you take this very seriously and would like help dealing with the issue.”
- “What options do you identify for dealing with this?”
- “It might be helpful if you spoke to someone at CMHC/EAP.”
- “I want to help you with this. My manager is the person you’ll want to talk with. I’ll get him/her now.”
What to Do:

- **DO** take a deep breath.
- **DO** speak slowly and calmly.
- **DO** be reassuring and authoritative.
What NOT to Do:

- DON’T make sudden movements or physical contact.
- DON’T respond defensively.
- DON’T minimize the person’s concerns.
Situations Requiring Immediate Action:

- Immediately report threatening behavior or violence to UTPD (471-4441 or 911).
- Focus on severity, not whether they identify a specific target.
- Trust your instincts - err on the side of caution.
When in Doubt...

Seek consultation:

BCAL (232-5050)
EAP (471-3366)
CMHC (471-3515)
Questions?