

**Helping Distressed Students** - from Deb Dotterer, Director of Undergraduate Student Affairs (12/2012)

As many faculty know, the instances of students facing mental health issues is on the rise and many times students communicate directly with their faculty about their illness. Our faculty are knowledgeable about the resources on campus and how to refer students, however there may be a time when a student communicates to you through email, phone or in person and signals that they could do harm to themselves or to others. In these situations, or whenever you have a concern about a student's communication to you, do not hesitate to forward that student's information to: Deb Dotterer, Director of Undergraduate Student Affairs, 355-4470, [dotterer@msu.edu](mailto:dotterer@msu.edu).

I will then set things in motion to insure the student's safety. I realize that there may be concern on the faculty member's part regarding FERPA and confidentiality; however when it comes to a health and safety issue FERPA is not a concern. By contacting me, I will insure that the situation is kept as confidential as possible to avoid embarrassment for the student, but my (and I know your) primary concern is the safety of the student.

I would also like to provide you with the following link to the Counseling Center which provides a great deal of resource information for Faculty and Staff that you may find useful:

<http://www.counseling.msu.edu/node/359>

Please let me know if there are any questions and thank you for all you do for our undergraduate students.

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