Tips for how to identify and help students in need of support/resources

In an environment where academics are the priority, faculty and staff are in a unique position to interact, communicate, and observe students and notice emerging difficulties.
Be alert to signs of personal or psychological difficulties. If you notice any of the following signs, you can ask to meet privately with the student or call the Counseling Center to seek advice on how to address the situation:

- **Mood**: Extreme sadness, anger or anxiety, mood swings.
- **Performance**: Concentration difficulties, deteriorating performance, unexplained absences or lateness.
- **Social behavior**: Extreme withdrawal, dependency, irritability, hostility.
- **Speech or writings**: Student alludes to problems, feeling worthless, excessive guilt, thoughts of death or suicide, or thoughts of hurting others or threats to others.

1. If you choose to meet privately with the student, point out specifically the signs you’ve observed, say you’re concerned, and ask what’s wrong. (“I wanted to talk to you because I notice you’ve been late recently, you never participate in class anymore, and you seem troubled. I’m concerned. What’s wrong?”)

2. Discourage quick dismissals. (“I’m fine — it’s nothing.”) Say you really have noticed this change and that perhaps others have too. Ask how you can help. Then let the student talk. Listen carefully to what he or she says. If they continue to decline your offer to help, ask if there is anyone else in the department or at Manhattanville with whom they would feel comfortable talking and with whom you can help them connect, if necessary.

3. If the student explains that the problem or stress in their life is time limited, suggest a time (no later than one month) to reassess how they are doing. If the student explains that they are already in treatment with a therapist, you needn’t do anything further but determine whether improvement is occurring. If your concerns continue, and you feel at an impasse in your conversations with the student, call Student Health and Counseling for further guidance on how to address the situation.

4. If the student explains that there is a problem and it does not appear that the student will be able to deal with it by him/herself, you should recommend counseling to the student. Examples of problems may include:
   - Depression
   - Severe homesickness
   - Excessive anxiety or stress
   - An eating disorder
   - Severe family conflicts

5. To refer the student to mental health services, tell them that the Counseling Center:
   - Is devoted to helping students with personal difficulties.
   - Offers walk-ins, short-term individual counseling, group counseling, and referrals.
   - Is confidential.
   - Is free of charge.
   - Is staffed by professional counselors.
   - Is easy to schedule an appointment: call 914.323.7277. Or stop by to make an appointment.

6. Be encouraging if the student is frightened or skeptical of mental health treatment. If necessary, explain that counseling doesn’t mean someone is crazy or weak and that many students seek counseling services while at Manhattanville. But respect the student’s decision whether or not to go. Sometimes students initially reject counseling but take the step later — particularly if the signs of distress do not change over time.

7. If the student does not agree to go to counseling, and you continue to be concerned about them, reach out to Student Health and Counseling yourself to seek advice on next steps.