How to Recognize Warning Signs

In light of recent events on college campuses around the country, it has become clear that friends, roommates, classmates, and acquaintances of troubled students are the most likely individuals to be made aware of potentially dangerous and/or self-destructive situations.

Therefore, we would like to offer a list of warning signs that students should take seriously and encourage students to disclose their concerns to adults in the community such as staff of the Counseling Center, Residential Life, Office of Student Development, Campus Ministries, or Campus Safety and Security.

Warning Signs for Troubled and Dangerous Students

1. Any direct statement about the intention to harm oneself or other members of the community
2. "Hints" that the individual intends to harm themselves or other members of the community
   For example, "I might not be around after this weekend;" "It would be a good idea for you to stay out of the cafeteria tomorrow;" "People might get hurt, if they're not careful"
3. Extreme difficulty adjusting to college life; for example the student is isolated, depressed, and/or very angry, with peers
4. Significant changes in behavior, appearance, habits, mood or activities
5. Statements from individuals about access to fire arms and suggestions that they may be bringing them to the campus or may already have them on campus
6. Behaviors that indicate that the individual is settling their affairs, which may include telling people goodbye, giving possessions away, and/or making statements about what they would like to have done should something happen to them
7. Fascination with violence, and/or focusing on or admiring violent "role models"
8. Your own "gut feeling" that someone that you know intends to harm themselves or others

What you should do

- Take all threats to self or others seriously; it is always better to be safe than sorry. Notify an appropriate person in authority
- Know that you are doing the right thing by not keeping a potentially destructive secret. In all reported recent incidents, individuals were told, but, in general, they did not let anyone know who could have actually intervened effectively. Conversely, when individuals in authority were notified, it is believed that potentially catastrophic events were avoided

Source: Iona College Counseling Center