

## THE SUSPICIOUS STUDENT

Typically, these students complain about something other than their psychological difficulties. They are tense, anxious, and mistrustful loners. They tend to interpret minor oversights as significant personal rejection and often overreact to trivial inconvenience. They see themselves as the focal point of everybody's actions and everything that happens has special meaning to them. They are overly concerned with fairness and being treated equally. Feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy underlie most of their behavior.

### **DO:**

- Express compassion without intimate friendship. Remember, suspicious students have trouble with closeness and warmth.
- Be firm, steady, punctual, and consistent.
- Be specific and clear regarding the standards of behavior you expect.
- Refer to the Counseling Services to assist with anxiety, frustration, and/or anger.

### **DON'T:**

- Assure the student that you are his/her friend; agree that you're a stranger, but say that even strangers can be concerned.
- Be overly warm and nurturing.
- Flatter or participate in their games; you don't know the rules.
- Be cute or humorous.
- Challenge or agree with any mistaken or illogical beliefs.
- Be ambiguous

\* Adapted from: Helping the Emotionally Distressed Student. Organization of Counseling Center Directors in Higher Education; 1999