

Behavioral Intervention

The goal of the behavioral intervention team (BIT) is to provide a pro-active and holistic approach to addressing behavior of concern in students. This reporting system facilitates communication and creates a quick response. Your incident report will be routed to a specific BIT member to prioritize and investigate. After submitting your report, you will receive an e-mail message indicating the case number and the BIT member who is assigned to investigate your report. All prior incidents relating to individual students are integrated in the system and help the BIT member with the investigation. In gathering information through interviews and finding other sources of information, the team member gains a better understanding of what occurred and can assess the risk involved more accurately as well as the necessary level of intervention.

Student behavior can be grouped into three categories of risk levels. For example, a student who appears to be depressed and talks or writes about death could present a mild, moderate, or severe risk. If the student is responding to one of life's negative circumstances and is exploring feelings, the risk is probably mild or moderate. However, if the student has been diagnosed with clinical depression, has decided to commit suicide and has said goodbye to his friends and instructors, the risk is severe. The intervention may be supportive sessions for a mild risk person while committing the student to a psychiatric facility, after contacting parents/guardians, may be necessary for a severe risk person.

The BIT has established referral guidelines which include emotional distress, physical deterioration, and/or suicidal tendencies of the student in question as well as a list of frequently asked questions.

Referral Guidelines:

Emotional Indicators:

- Direct statements of distress, family problems or other difficulties
- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Exaggerated personality traits: more withdrawn or more animated than usual
- Expressions of concern about a student by his/her peers
- A hunch or gut-level reaction that something is wrong

Physical Indicators:

- Deterioration of physical appearance
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Visible changes in weight
- Bleary-eyed, hung over or smelling of alcohol

Safety Risk Indicators:

- Any written note or verbal statement which has a sense of finality or a suicidal flavor
- Essays/papers which focus on despair, suicide, or death
- Statements to the effect that the student is “going away for a long time”
- Giving away of prized possessions; self-injuries or self-destructive behaviors; severe depressions

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Taking the step to express a concern about someone can evoke mixed feelings. Following are a few questions to explore as you consider your options.

1. What if I am wrong about the person?

You are registering a concern based on an observed behavior (e.g., verbal exchange, action, etc.), not making a determination. By alerting the appropriate campus representatives, a safety determination can be made.

2. Should I approach him/her first?

As a caring individual, you may desire to reason with or explore the source of the actions of the person in question. However, based on the threat level, this mentoring approach may not be the best course of action. Always assess the risk. Should you have any concern about your safety or that of the involved student, your best course of action is to access intervention from people who are trained in these areas.

3. I don't have a great deal of evidence; should I wait before notifying someone?

Sometimes we don't have all the evidence. Let the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) weigh the information and see if gathering more facts is warranted as a response plan is evaluated. Bring what you have because others may have evidence too.

4. What will happen to the person whom I submit a Concern Report form about?

Although action will depend upon the situation, the BIT will intervene in support of the person of concern.

5. Who has access to this information?

The BIT is the primary responding body at the College. In the event that other people will need to be involved, reported information will be handled discretely.

6. How long will this Concern Report stay on file?

The majority of reports will stay on file for six (6) years; however, depending on the situation, some reports may stay on file for a longer period of time.

7. Will this report adversely affect this person's student or employee status?

You are doing the right thing in reporting your concerns in support of the health of the individual student and of the safety of our campus. However, this action may

also raise concern for the person(s) involved. Whether the overall review of information will adversely affect the person's student status will depend on the situation.

8. How will I know that the situation has been addressed?

BIT will address every report that is brought to the committee. However, you may not be privy to the specific outcome of an investigation based on the factors involved.

9. Will the person be able to find out that I submitted the concern?

BIT will attempt to handle all matters discreetly. We cannot guarantee that the person(s) involved will not be able to figure out the source of the report. However, we will not divulge your identity.

10. Can I submit anonymously?

No. It is important to this process for you to identify yourself.

Members of the BIT Team are:

Jaime Bachtell (Coordinator of Disability Support Services)

Angie Auldridge (Academic Advisor)

Emily Hollins (Coordinator of Recruitment Operations at Fort Ritchie)

Jeannine Stonestreet (Assistant Professor of Psychology)

Nancy Meikrantz (Assistant Director of Nursing).