Supporting Students: What to Do, When You Don’t Know What to Do

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Appointments Available Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Recognize disruptive or unusual behaviors
- Gain tools and strategies for responding to such behaviors
- Give thought to their role - what, to whom and how to report and refer
- Consider what care is available on their campus and how to reach those services
- UNDERSTAND THEY ARE NOT ALONE IN DEALING WITH THESE ISSUES
Disruptive or Inappropriate Behavior

• Behavior that interferes with other students, faculty or staff and their access to an appropriate educational or work environment
• May be severe, or ongoing and pervasive
• Possible causes:
  ✓ Rudeness
  ✓ Anger, anxiety or other emotional state
  ✓ Mental health issues
Disruptive or Inappropriate Behavior

Rudeness? Disruption? Violence?

• Cell phones and text messages
• Talking in class
• Yelling and screaming
• Persistent and unreasonable demands of attention
• Words and/or actions that have the effect of intimidating or causing fear for your safety
• Use of profanity or fighting words
What Is Not Disruptive Behavior

• Cultural differences

• Individuals who require more time or need accommodations for and have appropriate documentation
Unusual Behaviors

- Marked change in behavior
- Deterioration in personal hygiene
- Depressed or lethargic mood
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Strange or bizarre behavior
- References to suicide
- References to homicide
How to Deal with Disruptive People

• Remain calm
• It’s not about you; detach
• Don’t ignore warning signs
• Listen through the behavior
• Don’t become hostile
• Set appropriate boundaries
Tactics and Tips

• Lower your voice and speak slowly
• Watch your body language/space
• Use “I” statements
• Set clear expectations/use behavioral terms
• Use empathy/active listening
• Acknowledge a problem
• Know your limitations
Other Tips

• Do not touch the person or invade personal space
• Do not say “I know how you feel”
• Do not minimize the person’s feelings
• Know you do not have to “solve” the problem
• Be aware of gender/cultural aspects
• Telephone – give warning before hanging up
• Responding to threats of legal action
Dealing with Unusual Behavior

• Talk to the person (privately)
• Express your concern in behavioral terms
• Be nonjudgmental
• Be an active listener
• Help explore options
• Maintain clear boundaries
• Refer to appropriate department
• Keep log of interactions
• Keep copies of e-mails, messages, letters, etc.
• Report observations
• Be factual and detailed, use concrete terms
• Keep out editorial language, suppositions
• Do not keep as part of an academic record
• Share appropriately
• FERPA/HIPAA
• Consult! Consult! Consult!
When They Won’t Take NO for an Answer

- Do not make promises you cannot keep
- When you make referrals; notify that person
- Be decisive
- Follow the rules/procedures of your University (do not make exceptions)
- Do not allow complainant to set the agenda
- Determine when to stop engaging
- Consult or report
Personal Safety

• Have a safety plan BEFORE anything occurs; notify colleagues
• Review environment – exits, office set up, etc.
• Develop code words
• Request a stand-by
• Ask for help
• Get out!
• Know the weapons policy of your University
Role of the Police at OSU

- Issue trespass warnings
- They have access to criminal histories and other law enforcement documentation
- They have the legal authority to make an arrest
- They have authority to assist getting the student to Emergency care (Pink Slip)
- (OSU Police: 614-292-2121) **Know the number to your campus police and keep that in a clear and easy to find place**
- Consult: What is the role of police on your campus?
Role of Student Conduct at OSU

- Jurisdiction
- Code of Student Conduct
- Interim suspension
- Process Sanctions
- No contact orders/restrictions
- What is the role of Student Conduct at your University?
Role of Counseling and Consultation Service at OSU

- Provides mental health services to all students
- Triage system for initial contact with students
- Urgent appointments available daily
- Consultation regarding how to best handle a situation
- [www.ccs.osu.edu](http://www.ccs.osu.edu)
- What is the role of your campus counseling service and how do students/faculty/staff access them for care?
What is a CAT Team? - Students

• Informal consultation team when a student is involved in severe disruption or there is a mental health concern
• Assess situations involving students who pose a potential risk of harm
• Take a multidisciplinary approach to developing strategies for responding to students, situations or incidents
• Does your institution have a CAT team or similar crisis review team? How can they be accessed?
Other Resources at OSU

• Emergency  9-1-1
• The Ohio State University Police  292-2121
• Student Conduct  292-0748
• Counseling and Consultation Service  292-5766
• Human Resources  292-2800
• Student Advocacy  292-1111
• Student Wellness Center  292-4527
• Employee Assistance Program  292-4472

• What are the resources you want to keep listed and available for your students?
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