Ferris State University Behavior Review Team Guide

This Team focuses on student behaviors. Team members are listed below by title. Additional staff and faculty members such as the Director of Multicultural Student Services, the Directors' of Student Academic Affairs, Faculty Member(s), the Provost and/or Deans, and the Athletic Director; and others, may be called upon to join to address specific incidents/student concerns.

Typically, employee concerns will be addressed by Human Resources, Labor Relations, and/or General Counsel.

Behavior Review Team Core Members' Contact Information:

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Behavior Review Team Charge

The Ferris State University Behavior Review Team (BRT) is a multi-disciplinary team of employees from across the campus that meet weekly throughout the fall and spring semesters to review referrals of student behavior that raise significant concern. The goal of the team is to coordinate outreach or intervention to these students. The team is dedicated to fostering an educational environment for all members of our community through a proactive, objective, supportive, and collaborative approach to the prevention, identification, assessment, intervention, management, and coordinated response to student situations that cause concern including those that may pose a wellbeing and/or safety of individuals in our campus community.

Behavior Review Team Meetings

The BRT typically meets on Mondays from 9 AM to 10 AM during the fall and spring semesters to address new student behavioral concerns and to provide updates regarding previously reported concerns. If a report is received and is an immediate concern, the BRT will be called together outside of the regular meeting time. Additional community members may be consulted and sit on the BRT meetings as needed to assist with specific behavioral concerns for which their knowledge of the situation and/or expertise is relevant.

Behaviors of Concern

Although there is no single or combined set of indicators that will always reliably predict an individual's future behavior, the BRT does take into consideration odd, suspicious and/or inappropriate behavior that rises beyond a typical classroom or employee management concern. These behaviors of concern may be observed in a variety of mediums including their speech, written words, and/or their actions. Concerns may include:

- Academic Behavior Indicators including:
  Deterioration in quality of work
  Erratic performance
  Extreme disorganization
  Overblown or disproportionate responses to grades/evaluations

- Emotional Indicators:
  Direct statements of loss and/or significant distress, expressions of hopelessness
  Angry and aggressive outbursts or other significant behavioral problems
  Direct or veiled threats of harm to self or others

- Physical Indicators:
  Deterioration in appearance/hygiene
  Noticeable cuts, bruises, burns
  Disorganized speech, confusion, slurring speech
  Throwing things, hitting people, etc.

- Other Indicators:
  Concerns expressed about the same student by multiple peers, faculty, and/or staff
  Students who are repeatedly behaving in violation of the Student Code of Conduct (including academic integrity violations)

Reporting/Referral Process

Emergencies and acts of violence should immediately be reported to the Ferris State University Department of Public Safety at x5000/231-591-5000/911. Faculty and staff working in off-campus locations (i.e., Kendall College of Arts and Design and Statewide Locations) should report emergencies to local law enforcement/911.

Faculty, staff and others may refer any student demonstrating behaviors of concern to any member of the Behavior Review Team. The Behavior Review Team is also available for consultation to determine who and how is best to respond given all the information available.

Threat Assessment

While there is no single set of behaviors that will reliably predict an individual's future behavior or risk of harming others, the threat assessment process gathers and evaluates information available including behavioral evidence to make a determination of the likelihood that an individual may pose a significant risk of imminent harm to the campus community. Assessment is designed to distinguish between threatening and non-threatening cases in order to ensure the safety of the individual of concern and all others potentially involved as well as to resolve the conditions that initiated the inappropriate behavior.

Assessment assists in early identification of situations that may pose a threat to others, creates a baseline of information against which to assess future behavior, and provides a means for implementing interventions to increase the likelihood of a positive and safe resolution.

The Threat Assessment Team (TAT) is led by the Director of Public Safety and the Dean of Student Life and includes additional community members as appropriate such as:

President's Council
Behavioral Review Team
Associate Vice President for Auxiliary Enterprises
Executive Director International Education
Director of Athletics
Director of Birkam & the Personal Counseling Center
Director of Housing
Directors of Student Academic Affairs
Faculty Member(s)
Staff from University Advancement & Marketing

Assessment Process

A. Information Gathering

1. Once a report has been received by the BRT, the Team will perform an initial assessment on the student's level of risk, and whether or not there is an immediate risk/reason for concern. If the initial assessment indicates there is a moderate risk or higher, the team will call a meeting to inform and/or manage the situation as soon as possible. If not, the case will be reviewed at the next regularly scheduled BRT meeting.

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2. The assessment process may include, but is not limited to, any of the following data gathering processes:

- Contact with all available parties with information about the situation
- Meeting with the student alleged to have displayed inappropriate/concerning behavior
- Contact with any identified person who has witnessed inappropriate/concerning behavior
- Contact with a student's parents or family members
- Review of student's academic and disciplinary history
- Legal/criminal background check
- Implementation of the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool and/or other threat assessment models appropriate to the situation

B. Levels of Risk

To assist in assessing the level of risk a student may pose, the BRT may utilize the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool or some other appropriate model. Below is a summary of various risk levels and how the University may respond to those risks:

Mild risk – There is little to no threat to the individual of concern or others. At this level, the situation can generally be resolved by addressing the disruptive or concerning behavior. Counseling assessment and follow-up support may be recommended. Generally, in this situation, the individual can acknowledge the inappropriateness of the behavior and engage in behavior to make amends with the other party. These individuals may be experiencing mental health concerns, but their conduct is not generally in violation with the University's conduct policies.

Moderate/Elevated risk - At this level, the student may be a threat to self or others, and that threat could be carried out although there is no evidence that the student has taken preparatory steps. These individuals may be experiencing mental health problems and/or displaying disruptive behaviors. Counseling assessment and follow-up support may be recommended and the student may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

Severe/Extreme risk – At this level, there appears to be serious danger to the safety of the individual of concern or others, and immediate intervention by Ferris State University's Department of Public Safety and other local resources is required. It appears that specific steps have been made to carry out a plan to harm.
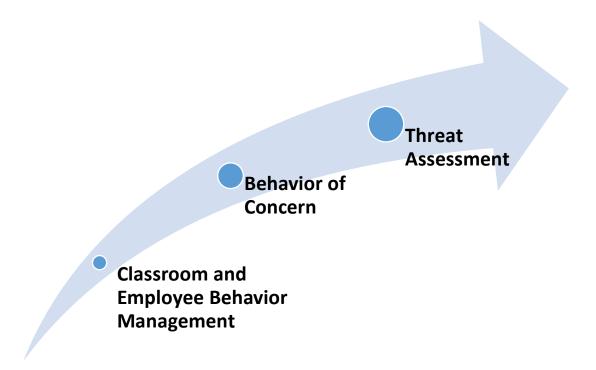
C. Intervention Strategies

Based on the behavior displayed and the assessment by the BRT, the team may make any of the following recommendations for intervention. Recommendations may be made in consultation with the appropriate college, department, or administrator before any final action is taken. Below is a list of some of the intervention strategies that the University may use. Recommendations may differ based on the uniqueness of each student's situation.

- Follow-up and monitoring – In addition to any of the specific intervention strategies described previously, the BRT will determine a plan for the follow-up monitoring of each student. This may include checking with faculty and staff regarding student behavior and periodic meetings between the student and an assigned mental health professional.

- Referral to Counseling Center and/or University resources - The BRT may suggest that the student utilize the services of the Counseling Center for intervention and connection with appropriate resources.
- Parent or Guardian Contact - The BRT may recommend that the University contact the student's parent or guardian in response to addressing a health or safety emergency.
- Voluntary withdrawal from classes – Based on discussion with a counselor or member of the BRT, the student may choose to temporarily take time away from the University to seek the appropriate level of care and/or to deal with other concerns.
- Referral to Office of Student Conduct – The BRT may determine that the student behavior may be in violation of the Code of Student Community Standards.
- Criminal charges - Students who have engaged in behavior that may be in violation of local, state, or federal law may be referred for criminal prosecution. Ferris State University's Department of Public Safety will take over the case in these circumstances.

Appendix 1 Distressed Individual Response Continuum

The Distressed Individual Response Continuum (see below) designates and groups an individual's behavior from mild risk to extreme risk by identifying their need for or likely benefit from immediate intervention.

Distressed Individual Response Continuum Defined

The purpose of the continuum system process for sorting individuals into groups designating mild risk to extreme risk based on their need for or likely benefit from immediate treatment is to serve in an advisory capacity for behaviors of concern that expand beyond classroom or employee management issues, and to develop the process for connecting the dots regarding individual behavior of concern on Ferris State University campuses.

Issues of Classroom and Employee Behavior Management Defined

Instructors are in charge of their classroom. This includes the times and extent to which he/she/they allows questions or discussion, the level of respect with which he/she/they and other students are to be treated, and the specific behaviors he/she/they will allow within their classes. Instructors are charged with maintaining order in his/her/their class and has an obligation to other students to do so. With this in mind, an instructor is authorized and expected to inform a student that his/her/their behavior is disrupting class and to instruct the student to stop that behavior. If the student persists, the instructor is authorized to direct the student to leave the class.

Employee behavior concerns should be dealt with by the appropriate authority (i.e. Department Head, Dean, and Supervisor) according to HR Policies and/or Collective Bargaining Agreement.

NaBITA THREAT ASSESSMENT TOOL

NaBITA.org

HARM TO SELF
MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, "THE D-SCALE"

OVERALL &
GENERALIZED RISK RUBRIC

HARM TO OTHERS
NINE LEVELS OF HOSTILITY AND VIOLENCE

DYSREGULATION/DECOMPENSATION

- Acutely suicidal (thoughts, feelings, expressed intentions and ideations)
- Para-suicidal (extreme self-injurious behavior, eating disorder, personality disorder) at life-threatening levels
  - Engaging in risk taking behaviors (e.g. substance abusing)
  - Hostile, aggressive, relationally abusive
  - Deficient in skills that regulate emotion, cognition, self, behavior and relationships
  - Profoundly disturbed, detached view of reality
  - Unable to care for themselves (poor self care/protection/judgment)
  - At risk of grievous injury or death without intent to self-harm
  - Often seen in psychotic breaks

DISTURBANCE

- Increasingly disruptive or concerning behavior, unusual and/or bizarre acting
  - May be destructive, apparently harmful or threatening to others
  - Substance misuse and abuse; self-medication; erratic medication compliance

DISTRESS

- Emotionally troubled (e.g. depressed, manic, unstable)
- Individuals impacted by situational stressors and traumatic events that cause disruption or concern
  - May be psychiatrically symptomatic if not coping/adapting to stressors/trauma
  - Behavior may subside when stressor is removed or trauma is addressed/processed

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EXTREME

- Dysregulated (way off baseline) or medically disabled
- Threat made or present
- Threat is concrete (specific or direct)
- Likely to be repeated or shared with multiple reporters

- Information about threat or threat itself is consistent, plausible or includes specific detail of a plan (time, place, etc.), often with steps already taken
- Threat may be repeated with consistency
- Content of threat suggests threatener will carry it out (reference to weapons, means, target)

SEVERE

- Disturbed or advancing to dysregulation
- Threat made or present
- Threat is vague, but direct, or specific but indirect
- Likely to be repeated or shared with multiple reporters

- Information about threat or threat itself is consistent, plausible or includes increasing detail of a plan (time, place, etc.)
- Threat likely to be repeated with consistency (may try to convince listener they are serious)

ELEVATED

- Seriously disruptive incident(s)
- Exhibiting clear distress, more likely disturbance
- Threat made or present
- Threat is vague and indirect, but may be repeated or shared with multiple reporters

- Information about threat or threat itself is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail
- Threat lacks realism, or is repeated with variations
- Content of threat suggests threatener is unlikely to carry it out

MODERATE

- More involved or repeated disruption. Behavior more concerning. Likely distressed or low-level disturbance
- Possible threat made or perceived
- Threat is vague and indirect

- Information about threat or threat itself is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail
- Threat lacks realism
- Content of threat suggests threatener is unlikely to carry it out

MILD

- Disruptive or concerning behavior
- May or may not show signs of distress
- No threat made or present

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9 PLUNGING TOGETHER INTO THE ABYSS

Description: The individual is focused and fixated on destroying the target with no regard for his or her own safety. As long as the opponent is dragged into the abyss as well, even self-destruction is a triumph. This is described as a lose-lose attack where intent of the threatener is to destroy the target and him or herself.

8 FRAGMENTATION OF THE ENEMY

Description: The individual is ready to destroy the enemy target. The attack may be physical, material, psychological and/or spiritual. There is a desire to tear down the core of the system so it can no longer be rebuilt. There remains some desire for self-preservation during the attack. This is described as a win-lose attack where the individual keeps his or her own life and destroys his target.

7 LIMITED DESTRUCTIVE BLOWS

Description: Threats are implemented. There is a high level of objectification and depersonalization toward the target. Deceit and lies are championed and used to cause harm to the other party. Damage, while occurring, is limited. Often seen in the form of the acts of an accomplice, the pulled punch, or in the acts of the criminal mastermind who orchestrates harm to others but is not the direct instrument of its delivery.

6 STRATEGIES OF THREAT

Description: The individual begins to make ultimatums and threats that contain a "do this or else" quality. Might be mere saber rattling, but the individual will attempt to infuse his or her threat with credibility. There are threats of punishment in order to get one's way. Conflict is escalating and may soon turn violent.

5 LOSS OF FACE

Description: The individual creates an outcast of his target and goes on the offense in order to unmask them in the community as a fraud. In an often public effort at undermining, the target is treated as inhuman and past events are viewed with a new, negative perspective.

4 IMAGES AND COALITIONS

Description: The individual has an image of the target and strives to enlist supporters to the cause, often within the peer, social or work group of the target. The individual only sees what confirms existing beliefs that reinforce a villainized target who now has accusations hurled against him or her. Physical confrontation and conflict enter the mix, no longer just verbal in arguments.

3 ACTIONS NOT WORDS

Description: There is a fundamental lack of trust and increased suspicion of others. The individual assumes negative intentions from others and debate is deadlocked. There is movement toward non-verbal behaviors to express frustration rather than engaging in conversation.

2 DEBATE AND CONTENTIOUS ARGUMENTS

Description: The individual further filters out any conflicting information and adopts polarizing points of view with others. There is a level of aggression threaded throughout all of the interactions and a sliding into extreme positions. There may be some lingering desire to convince others to his or her point of view, but being right supersedes the facts. Differences become polarizing.

1 HARDENING

Description: The individual begins to selectively attend to his or her environment, filtering out material or information that doesn't line up with his or her beliefs. Stances begin to harden and crystalize. There is some oscillation between cooperative and competitive.

TRAJECTORY?   BASELINE   TRAJECTORY?