

## Students in Distress Process Summary and Tips

The Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) mission is to promote campus safety, well-being, and success by assisting students who may be displaying concerning or disruptive behavior. We are an interdisciplinary team composed of diverse professionals from key areas of the college. The goal of the BIT committee is to identify students who appear to be in distress and provide supportive intervention as well as guidance to faculty/staff before the student reaches crisis level.

BIT will gather, assess, and share information, when necessary, regarding situations involving students who display concerning or disruptive behaviors. The role of BIT is to determine by interdisciplinary collaboration how to balance FERPA, HIPAA and counselor privilege with college need-to-know and emergency communication needs. When a student exhibits behaviors of high concern and could potentially be a risk to self and others the BIT coordinates a proactive effort to prevent and/or manage the situation. BIT will consider appropriate intervention strategies and will connect students with needed on-campus and/or community resources. BIT may also monitor behavior and provide ongoing follow-up support of students who have displayed concerning or disruptive behavior.

### Step 1: Students of Concern Report

BIT reports are processed through the District-wide tracking system, which also processes all student discipline and Title IX reports. The BIT report is submitted through the online report form at: [https://chaffey-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report/](https://chaffey-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/)

The report is automatically distributed via Chaffey email to all BIT members. The report is screened as it is received to see if immediate action is required or not. If no immediate action is needed the report will be reviewed at the next BIT meeting. (Please know that BIT members are not required to screen reports outside of their regularly scheduled working hours.) However, if immediate action is necessary, typically, one of the following actions are taken:

- An email with resources or recommendations will be sent to the reporting party
- A welfare check will be conducted by CPD with the reported student
- The report is promoted as a potential Title IX and/or Student Behavioral Code violation.
- For a high priority/risk report, the report is promoted to the Threat Assessment Group (TAG).

The report is reviewed at the following BIT meeting; BIT meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons. BIT members will review the report initially to determine if it is BIT related or if it needs to be promoted as either a potential Title IX and/or Student Behavioral Code violation, including Academic Integrity violations. If the report is determined to be promoted, it will be promoted immediately through the District-wide tracking system. If the report is determined to be BIT related, it will be assessed and becomes an official BIT case.

### Step 2: Student Assessment

The case will be assessed using the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) Threat Assessment Tool to determine the mental & behavioral health of the student, level of hostility/violence, and the generalized risk rubric to determine the severity of the situation. While assessing, if more information is needed or an update or further action is required, a member of BIT or CPD will contact the reporting party to request additional information. Through the assessment, an action plan for the case is formed.

### Step 3: Student Action Plan

The action plan for the case may include:

- Assigning the case to a BIT member(s).
- Determining what, if any, additional information, updates or actions are required.
- Determining what the appropriate correspondence, if any, BIT will have with the reporting party as they indicated on the BIT report form they submitted.

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- Including what resources and/or recommendations from within the Chaffey Community and/or from outside agencies might be helpful.
- Determining the status of the case as: Active, Monitored or Resolved.
  - Active: The case will continue to be discussed in subsequent BIT meetings until it becomes a monitored or resolved case.
  - Monitored: The case will be monitored when immediate or additional actions are not required, but it may require action or a follow-up with the reporting party at a future time within in the semester. A monitored case may become active again or resolved depending on any new information provided.
  - Resolved: When all available BIT actions have been utilized and/or no further action is necessary.

## Tips for the Reporting Parties

- On the BIT Report Form, there is a question that asks, “Pick the appropriate action: Information only report (no contact needed) or Have BIT member contact me within 72 hours” If you select, “Information only report” you are not likely to hear from BIT unless they determine they need more information from you.
- BIT cannot always provide updates due to FERPA laws, which means that sometimes the reporting party will not be told of the actions BIT is actively taking or the outcome unless it is necessary. In those cases, if more information is needed or an update or further action is required, a member of BIT or CPD will contact the reporting party.
- The student involved may share whatever they want, but BIT members cannot.
- BIT understands the potential frustrations this might present at times to the reporting party, but please trust that all BIT reports are reviewed and addressed in a timely manner utilizing all the resources available and with all parties best interests in mind.
- BIT takes every report very seriously and cares deeply about the safety, well-being, and success of our community members.
- BIT recommends to report any concerning behavior or students in distress upon the first incident, please do not wait a pattern develops before a report is submitted.
- BIT is a standing committee and is not a function of any office or department.
- Faculty and Staff are encouraged to review the resources and workshops available on the Chaffey BIT webpage.

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## How to Identify a Student in Distress

Be aware of the following indicators of distress. Look for groupings, frequency, duration and severity -- not just isolated symptoms. Though not an exhaustive list, these behaviors may be warning signs of significant distress:

### Academic Indicators

- Serious grade problems
- New or regularly occurring behavior that pushes the limits and may interfere with classroom environment or management
- Unaccountable change from good to poor performance
- Change from frequent attendance to excessive absences
- Writings and comments endorsing violence; unusual interest in violence
- Indirect or direct threats in writings or verbalizations
- Impairment of thoughts – verbal or written
- Repeated request for special considerations

### Physical Indicators

- Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight loss/gain
- Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance
- Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol
- Disoriented or "out of it"
- Inability to communicate clearly – garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech
- Behavior is out of context or bizarre
- Delusions and paranoia

### Psychological Indicators

- Self-disclosure of personal distress such as family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief
- Change in pattern of interaction
- Unusual/disproportional emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions
- Irritability or unusual apathy
- Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- Expressions of concern about the student by their peers

### Safety Risk Indicators

- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Physical violence (shoving, grabbing, assault, use of weapon)
- Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations/violent behaviors -- a "cry for help"
- Stalking or harassing
- Communicating threats via email, correspondence, texting, or phone calls

## How to Help

As faculty, there are times when you have the unique opportunity to listen, provide support, and make a difference in a student's life. Distressing behavior may sometimes be a "cry for help." Every member of the Chaffey community can offer assistance to a student in distress. Here are some tips to help you approach a student you may be concerned about:

### LISTEN

- Stop what you are doing and genuinely listen to what the student is saying
- If appropriate, speak with the student privately to minimize embarrassment

### ACKNOWLEDGE

- Be sure the student is aware that you cannot keep expressions of harm to self or others confidential
- Express concern and interest, and let the student know you understand
- Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental
- Remember, although it may not seem like a crisis to you, it still feels like one to the student

### ASSESS

- Ask open-ended questions to help you better understand and clarify the problem
- Consider questions like, "What have you thought about doing?" or "Have you had thoughts about suicide?"
- Explore options with the student and probable consequences, but don't expect to have all the answers

### REFER

- Don't ignore comments about suicide, violence, or harm to self or others
- Clarify the limits of your ability to help
- Remind the student that seeking help is a sign of strength and courage
- Do not agree to be secretive about the problem
- **Submit a report to BIT** and Help the student find appropriate resources

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