

# **Threat Assessment Policies and Procedures**

## **FOR**



# **NEW RIVER**

## **Community College**

**Effective December 2018**

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## Introduction

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The threat assessment policies, procedures, and guidelines contained herein were developed based on models created by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) in response to legislation enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 2013. These policies and procedures are based on a synthesis of known best practices and are consistent with two significant sources of guidance:

Fein, R. A., Vossekuil, B., Pollack, W. S., Borum, R., Modzeleski, W. & Reddy, M. (2004). *Threat assessment in schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates*. Washington, DC: U. S. Secret Service and U. S. Department of Education.

Deisinger, G., Randazzo, M., O'Neill, D., and Savage, J. (2008). *The handbook for campus threat assessment & management teams*. Boston, MA: Applied Risk Management, LLC.

## Section I. Student Threat Assessment

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### A. Policy on Student Threat Assessment

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the prevention of general campus violence.

**Policy:** New River Community College prohibits threats and acts of violence on college property, within college facilities, at any college-sponsored event, while engaged in any college educational or athletic activities, and while traveling in state vehicles. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Injuring another person physically;
- Engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to self or others
- Engaging in behavior that would subject a reasonable person to, and does subject another individual to, extreme emotional distress;
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon while on state premises by students, except where possession is a result of participation in an organized and scheduled exercise for a course, or where the student is a law enforcement professional;
- Intentionally damaging property;
- Threatening to injure an individual (including oneself) or to damage property;
- Committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to, domestic violence or sexual harassment; and
- Retaliating against any employee or student who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy.

**Consequences of Policy Violation(s):**

1. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Handbook. Additionally, students who are identified as engaging in the use of threatening language or behavior may be required, as a condition of continued enrollment, to participate in a mental health evaluation as part of a threat assessment process, and receive approval from the mental health evaluator that they are not a risk to themselves or others.
2. The NRCC Threat Assessment Team (TAT) may determine that violators of this policy are a significant threat to the safety of college constituents and, as a result of that determination, ban violators from campus. (Campus bans are reviewed/validated annually by the TAT.)

**Definitions**

**Threat** – Concerning communication or behavior that suggests a person may intend to harm someone else. The threat may be spoken, written, or gestured, and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of its existence in any fashion.

Threat assessment – A fact-based process relying primarily on an appraisal of behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations and address them. (See Section I.B and III.A for additional information regarding the threat assessment process.)

Threat assessment team (TAT) – a group of individuals employed by or associated with New River Community College who work together to determine the level/severity of each reported potential threat. Members include college administrators with executive-level authority, a licensed professional counselor (LPC), a sworn law enforcement officer, and appropriate others. (See Section III.E for a roster of NRCC’s TAT.)

## B. Procedures for Conducting Student Threat Assessments

### 1. Identifying Threats

There are many behaviors on any college campus that may cause concern for the safety and well-being of an individual or the campus as a whole. The following is not an exhaustive list but provides examples of concerning behaviors or situations:

- Unusual or abrupt changes in behaviors or patterns;
- Extreme reaction to a loss or traumatic event;
- Preoccupation with weapons, violent events, or persons who have engaged in violent acts;
- Uncharacteristically poor performance, grooming, or affect;
- References to harming others or planning a violent or destructive event;
- Evidence of depression, hopelessness, or suicidal thoughts/plans;
- Inappropriate responses such as prolonged irritability, angry outbursts, or intense reactions;
- Strained interpersonal relations, isolating behaviors, or low self-esteem;
- Following or stalking, in person or electronically;
- Significant change in life circumstances such as loss of job or relationship.

### 2. Reporting Potential Threats

Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses a clear and immediate threat of serious violence that requires containment should notify Security (x3646) or in the case of emergencies, dial 911. (See Section III.B for additional guidance.)

NRCC Security will refer the potential threat to the chair of the Threat Assessment Team (TAT). The TAT works with the college’s Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) to determine the immediacy of the threat and appropriate interventions. If behavioral intervention is sufficient, the TAT officially will refer the case to BIT. Otherwise, the procedures outlined in Section I.B.3 (and Section III.A) are followed.

While anonymous reports are accepted, it is important that individuals making reports share as much information as possible. The identity of the reporter allows TAT members, Security, and/or local law enforcement to gather additional facts and

conduct follow-up interviews. Identities will be protected to the fullest extent possible.

### 3. Assessing Threats

When a threat is reported, unless it is referred to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), the chair of the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) will convene the TAT and begin the assessment process. (See Section III.A for an overview of the process.)

#### a. Initial Screening

The initial screening consists of the TAT chair and/or Security receiving a full report from the person identifying the threat. The goal of the screening is to gather as many details as possible to determine immediacy and level of threat.

#### b. Immediacy/Imminence

When the initial screening identifies an immediate threat, the TAT chair or Security officer will contact local law enforcement by dialing 911.

When the threat does not appear imminent, the TAT chair and Security officer will triage the situation. Two results are expected in this step: (1) a determination as to what, if any, intervention is required now; and (2) a decision as to whether a full inquiry is warranted.

If immediate interventions are not likely to resolve the concern, the TAT will be convened to conduct a full inquiry. Conversely, if immediate interventions are warranted and likely to bring resolution to the concern, a full TAT inquiry will not be conducted. For example, when a student threatens self-harm and is referred to BIT, the TAT assumes that the BIT group will seek sufficient resources (counseling, temporary detention order, etc.) to resolve the concern.

#### c. Inquiry and Assessment

If it is determined that some level of threat exists, warranting an inquiry and assessment, the TAT will use the process in Section III.A of this handbook to determine the level of threat that exists and subsequent action or monitoring needed.

## C. Workplace-Related Threats of Domestic Violence

**Definition:** Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behavior, including acts or threatened acts, that is used by the perpetrator to gain power and control over a current or former spouse, family member, intimate partners, or person with whom the perpetrator shares a child. Domestic violence includes, but is not limited to, physical or sexual violence, emotional and/or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, economic control, harassment, physical intimidation, or injury.

New River Community College prohibits threats and acts of violence on college property, within college facilities, at any college-sponsored event, while engaged in any college educational or athletic activities, and while traveling in state vehicles. This prohibition includes all acts of domestic violence (as defined above) for college employees, students, and visitors.

#### D. Procedure for Assessing and Responding to Threats of Workplace-Related Threats of Domestic Violence

##### Identifying and Reporting Threats

Unlike most other types of violence, victims of domestic violence commonly will try to conceal their abuse. However, NRCC has an overriding responsibility to respond to and take action to prevent violence that threatens the safety of the college community.

Employees or students who have secured a protective order (or restraining order) that lists NRCC as a protected area or in which NRCC fits the definition of the protected area are encouraged to inform NRCC Security of such order as soon as possible. Employees or students who have not secured such order but have safety concerns with regard to domestic violence are also strongly encouraged to report their concerns to their supervisor and NRCC Security.

##### Intervention

A workplace safety plan is a strategy developed in collaboration with the victim to implement workplace safety options including, but not limited to, handling of court protection order, procedures for alerting Security personnel, temporary or permanent adjustment of schedules and locations, change in parking places, and escorts to and from the parking areas to the office/classroom.

NRCC employees and students in danger of being the victim of domestic violence (or having been the victim of domestic violence) may establish workplace safety plans upon request of the NRCC Security Supervisor.

Finally, if/when the threat of domestic violence reaches a point of immediate threat, the TAT will follow the procedures outlines in Section III.A of this manual unless those procedures are superseded by court order. When superseded by court order, the chair of the TAT together with the Security Supervisor will ensure that procedures adhere to the details of the order.

## E. Due Process

No student will be expelled without due process. Any time that the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) recommends expulsion, the following judicial procedure will be followed:

1. The student will be notified of the TAT recommendation by certified mail. Should the student refuse the certified item, notification will be made by personal service via the appropriate law enforcement agency.
2. The notification to the student will include date, time and location of the appeal hearing.
  - a. The hearing date and/or time may be modified ONCE at the request of the student, provided that the new date and/or time fall within a week of the original hearing date.
  - b. If the student does not attend the hearing, the hearing panel will render a decision based on the evidence available.
3. The hearing will occur not sooner than 24 hours from the time of personal service or three (3) days from receipt of certified mail.
4. The hearing panel will be comprised of the chair and vice chair of the college's Threat Assessment Team (TAT), members of the college's Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) and, when Title IX offenses are present, the Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator. Law enforcement may be present at the request of either party.
5. The hearing panel will, upon consideration of the evidence presented, make one of the following determinations:
  - a. Dismiss the case with no further investigation needed.
  - b. Continue the case until additional information can be gathered.
  - c. Refer the case to BIT or TAT for reconsideration.
  - d. Affirm the recommendation of the TAT.
  - e. Take intermediate action aimed at resolution prior to implementing the recommendation of the TAT.

The convening of the hearing panel is considered an appeal of the TAT recommendation and, therefore, is final.

## Section II. Threat Assessment for Employees and Others

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### F. Policy on Employee Threat Assessment

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the prevention of general campus violence.

**Policy:** New River Community College prohibits threats and acts of violence on college property, within college facilities, at any college-sponsored event, while engaged in any college educational or athletic activities, and while traveling in state vehicles. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Injuring another person physically;
- Engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to self or others
- Engaging in behavior that would subject a reasonable person to, and does subject another individual to, extreme emotional distress;
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon while on state premises by students, except where possession is a result of participation in an organized and scheduled exercise for a course, or where the student is a law enforcement professional;
- Intentionally damaging property;
- Threatening to injure an individual (including oneself) or to damage property;
- Committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to, domestic violence or sexual harassment; and
- Retaliating against any employee or student who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy.

**Consequences of Policy Violation(s):**

1. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the NRCC Employee Handbook and Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) Policy 1.80 – Workplace Violence ([http://web1.dhrm.virginia.gov/itech/hrpolicy/pol1\\_80.html](http://web1.dhrm.virginia.gov/itech/hrpolicy/pol1_80.html)).
2. The NRCC Threat Assessment Team (TAT) may determine that violators of this policy are a significant threat to the safety of college constituents and, as a result of that determination, ban violators from campus. Students will not be expelled or banned from campus without due process; see Section 1.E. Individuals who are not students or employees may be banned from campus on the recommendation of the TAT alone. (Campus bans are reviewed/validated annually by the TAT.)

### G. Procedures for Conducting Employee Threat Assessments

#### 3. Identifying Threats

There are many behaviors on any college campus that may cause concern for the safety and well-being of an individual or the campus as a whole. The following is not an exhaustive list but provides examples of concerning behaviors or situations:

- Unusual or abrupt changes in behaviors or patterns;
- Extreme reaction to a loss or traumatic event;
- Preoccupation with weapons, violent events, or persons who have engaged in violent acts;
- Uncharacteristically poor performance, grooming, or affect;
- References to harming others or planning a violent or destructive event;
- Evidence of depression, hopelessness, or suicidal thoughts/plans;
- Inappropriate responses such as prolonged irritability, angry outbursts, or intense reactions;
- Strained interpersonal relations, isolating behaviors, or low self-esteem;
- Following or stalking, in person or electronically;
- Significant change in life circumstances such as loss of job or relationship.

#### 4. Reporting Potential Threats

Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses a clear and immediate threat of serious violence that requires containment should notify Security (x3646) or in the case of emergencies, dial 911. (See Section III.B for additional guidance.)

NRCC Security will refer the potential threat to the chair of the Threat Assessment Team (TAT). The procedures outlined in Section I.B.3 (and Section III.A) are followed.

While anonymous reports are accepted, it is important that individuals making reports share as much information as possible. The identity of the reporter allows TAT members, Security, and/or local law enforcement to gather additional facts and conduct follow-up interviews. Identities will be protected to the fullest extent possible.

#### 5. Assessing Threats

When a threat is reported, unless it is referred to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), the chair of the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) will convene the TAT and begin the assessment process. (See Section III.A for an overview of the process.)

##### a. Initial Screening

The initial screening consists of the TAT chair and/or Security receiving a full report from the person identifying the threat. The goal of the screening is to gather as many details as possible to determine immediacy and level of threat.

##### b. Immediacy/Imminence

When the initial screening identifies an immediate threat, the TAT chair or Security officer will contact local law enforcement by dialing 911.

When the threat does not appear imminent, the TAT chair and Security officer will triage the situation. Two results are expected in this step: (1) a determination as to what, if any, intervention is required now; and (2) a decision as to whether a full inquiry is warranted.

If immediate interventions are not likely to resolve the concern, the TAT will be convened to conduct a full inquiry. Conversely, if immediate interventions are warranted and likely to bring resolution to the concern, a full TAT inquiry will not be conducted.

c. Inquiry and Assessment

If it is determined that some level of threat exists, warranting an inquiry and assessment, the TAT will use the process in Section III.A of this handbook to determine the level of threat that exists and subsequent action or monitoring needed.

H. Workplace-Related Threats of Domestic Violence

**Definition:** Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behavior, including acts or threatened acts, that is used by the perpetrator to gain power and control over a current or former spouse, family member, intimate partners, or person with whom the perpetrator shares a child. Domestic violence includes, but is not limited to, physical or sexual violence, emotional and/or psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking, economic control, harassment, physical intimidation, or injury.

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I. Procedure for Assessing and Responding to Threats of Workplace-Related Threats of Domestic Violence

Identifying and Reporting Threats

Unlike most other types of violence, victims of domestic violence commonly will try to conceal their abuse. However, NRCC has an overriding responsibility to respond to and take action to prevent violence that threatens the safety of the college community.

Employees or students who have secured a protective order (or restraining order) that lists NRCC as a protected area or in which NRCC fits the definition of the protected area are encouraged to inform NRCC Security of such order as soon as possible. Employees or students who have not secured such order but have safety concerns with regard to

domestic violence are also strongly encouraged to report their concerns to their supervisor and NRCC Security.

### Intervention

A workplace safety plan is a strategy developed in collaboration with the victim to implement workplace safety options including, but not limited to, handling of court protection order, procedures for alerting Security personnel, temporary or permanent adjustment of schedules and locations, change in parking places, and escorts to and from the parking areas to the office/classroom.

NRCC employees and students in danger of being the victim of domestic violence (or having been the victim of domestic violence) may establish workplace safety plans upon request of the NRCC Security Supervisor.

Finally, if/when the threat of domestic violence reaches a point of immediate threat, the TAT will follow the procedures outlines in Section III.A of this manual unless those procedures are superseded by court order. When superseded by court order, the chair of the TAT together with the Security Supervisor will ensure that procedures adhere to the details of the order.

## J. Policy on General Threat Assessments

New River Community College prohibits threats and acts of violence on college property, within college facilities, at any college-sponsored event, while engaged in any college educational or athletic activities, and while traveling in state vehicles. General threats are those that come from individuals or groups not affiliated with the college. These individuals or groups may be visitors, vendors, contractors or contract employees, or individuals who may have targeted the college or one of its stakeholders.

Generally, since the college has no law enforcement authority, it is the college's policy to consult with local law enforcement (usually the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office for matters at the Dublin campus or the Christiansburg Police Department for matters at the NRV Mall site) regarding general threats.

## K. Procedure for Conducting General Threat Assessments

The Threat Assessment Team (TAT) will take one of two courses of action with regard to conducting threat assessments for general threats. In situations where an individual is identified, appears to be acting alone, and poses a Priority 3 or lower risk to the college, the TAT will follow the procedures established in Section III.A of this handbook.

In situations where the scope of the threat is unknown or the threat posed is higher than Priority 3 (disruption), the college will follow the protocol outlined by the local law enforcement agency.

### Section III. Responsibilities

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#### L. Management Responsibilities include:

Designate a Workforce Violence Prevention Coordinator.

- Colleges must obtain the name(s) of an emergency clinician at each Community Services Board (CSB) in the college's service region to serve as a contact person. Each President must designate a college staff member with responsibility for communication with the CSB contact person(s) to prepare for and respond to potential emergency situations, to include requesting an assessment to determine whether a student, faculty or staff member poses a threat of violence to self or others.
- Establish a college violence prevention committee and a threat assessment team to comply with Virginia law. Each college's administration should ensure that its threat assessment team remains able to quickly receive information about, assess and respond to potential threats that are reported in accordance with its policies, and determine corrective actions and prepare necessary reports on given situations. In addition, each college's administration should ensure that its violence prevention committee remains able to publish education and prevention information and recommend ways to, (1) to respond to incidents, (2) investigate all reported incidents of workplace violence and (3) determine the appropriate response and actions necessary to address a particular situation.

#### M. Threat Assessment Team Responsibilities include:

- a. Establishing or utilizing existing relationships with local and state law enforcement agencies as well as mental health agencies to ensure compliance with § 23 of the Code of Virginia, and expedite assessment and intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to campus safety.
- b. Upon a preliminary determination that an individual poses a threat of violence to self or others, or exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or need for assistance, a threat assessment team may obtain criminal history record information, as provided in Virginia Code §§ 19.2-389 and 19.2-389-1, and health records, as provided in § 32.1-127.1:03.
- c. Upon a preliminary determination that an individual poses an articulable and significant threat of violence to others, the threat assessment team shall:
  - i. Obtain any available criminal history record information as provided in §§ 19.2-389 and 19.2-389.1 and any available health records as provided in § 32.1-127.1:03;

- ii. Within 24 hours of making the preliminary determination, notify in writing (i) the campus police department, (ii) the local law enforcement agency where the college is located, (iii) the local law enforcement agency where the individual resides. (iv) if known to the threat assessment team, the local law enforcement agency where the city or county in which the individual is located and (v) the local Commonwealth's attorney in any jurisdiction where the threat assessment team has notified local law enforcement; and,
  - iii. Disclose any specific threat of violence posed by the individual as part of such notification.
  
- d. Each threat assessment team member shall complete a minimum of eight hours of initial training within 12 months of appointment to the threat assessment team and shall complete a minimum of two hours of threat assessment training each academic year thereafter. Training shall be conducted by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (the Department) or an independent entity approved by the Department.
  
- e. When otherwise consistent with applicable state and federal law, if the college has reliable knowledge that a student or employee who has determined pursuant to an investigation by the college's threat assessment team to pose an articulable and significant threat of violence to others in transferring to other institution of higher education or place of employment, the college from which the individual is transferring shall notify the other institution of higher education or place the employment to which the individual is transferring of such investigation and determination.

## Section IV. Resources

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### A. Threat Assessment Guidelines and Flow Chart

The threat assessment processes at NRCC consist of three (3) parts: (1) adherence to the *Guiding Principles*; (2) assessing and classifying threats; and (3) follow up.

#### Guiding Principles

The appraisal of risk in a threat assessment focuses on actions/behaviors, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest that an individual intends to engage in violence and is planning or preparing for that event. The threat assessment process is centered upon an analysis of the facts and evidence of behavior in a given situation.

Six core principles form the foundation of the threat assessment process at NRCC:

1. The central question in any threat assessment inquiry or investigation is whether an individual (student or other) poses a threat, not whether the individual has made a threat.
2. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and often discernible, process of thinking and behavior.
3. Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target.
4. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.
5. Effective assessment is based on facts and observations of behavior, rather than on characteristics or traits. (Profiles do not provide a reliable basis for making judgments of the threat posed by a particular student.)
6. An integrated approach should guide threat assessment inquiries. (Coordination with the college's Behavioral Intervention Team, other institutions of learning, and other agencies – such as mental health services and law enforcement – is an important practice for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the potential threat.)

#### Assessing and Classifying Threats

Based on the information available, the threat assessment team should seek to answer the following questions:

1. What are the individual's motives and goals?
  - a. What motivated the individual to make the statements or take the actions that caused him/her to be reported?
  - b. Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
  - c. Does the individual have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?
  - d. What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result? Does the potential attacker feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternatives?
2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?
  - a. What, if anything, has the individual communicated to someone else (targets, friends, other students, teachers, family, others) or written concerning his/her

- ideas and/or intentions? (Written documents may include assignments submitted in NRCC course and postings on social media sites, as examples.)
- b. Have friends been alerted or “warned away?”
  3. Has the subject shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?
    - a. School attacks or attackers
    - b. Weapons (including recent acquisition of a weapon)
    - c. Incidents of mass violence
  4. Has the subject engaged in attack-related behaviors? These behaviors might include:
    - a. Developing an attack idea or plan
    - b. Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons
    - c. Casing, or checking out, possible sites and areas for attack
    - d. Rehearsing attacks or ambushes
  5. Does the individual have the means to carry out an act of targeted violence?
    - a. How organized is the individual’s thinking and behavior?
    - b. Does the individual have the means (access to a weapon, for example) to carry out an attack?
  6. Is the subject experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair? (BIT should be consulted on this question.)
    - a. Is there information to suggest that the individual is experiencing desperation and/or despair?
    - b. Has the individual experienced a recent failure, loss, and/or loss of status?
    - c. Is the individual known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event?
    - d. Is the individual now, or has he/she ever been, suicidal or “accident prone?”
    - e. Has the individual engaged in behavior that suggests that he/she has considered ending his/her life?
    - f. Has the individual been known to practice self harm?
  7. Does the individual have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?
    - a. Does the individual have at least one relationship with an adult that he/she can confide in, believing that he/she will be heard in a non-judgmental way?
    - b. Is the individual emotionally connected to others? Is he/she emotionally disconnected from others?
    - c. Has the individual previously come to someone’s attention or raised concern in a way that suggests he/she needs intervention or supportive services?
  8. Does the subject see violence as an acceptable (or desirable or only) way to solve problems?
    - a. Does the setting around the individual (friends, fellow students, colleagues, parents, teachers, spouses, etc.) explicitly or implicitly support or endorse violence as a way of resolve problems or disputes?
    - b. Has the individual been “dared” by others to engage in an act of violence?
  9. Are the individual’s conversation and story consistent with his/her actions? Does the information from collateral interviews and from the individual’s own behavior confirm or dispute what the individual says in going on?
  10. Are other people concerned about the individual’s potential for violence?
    - a. Are those who know the subject concerned that he/she might take action based on violent ideas of plans?

- b. Are those who know the subject concerned about a specific target?
  - c. Have those who know the subject witnessed recent changes or escalation in mood and behavior?
11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?
- a. What factors in the individual's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that the person will attempt to mount an attack at the college?
  - b. What is the response of other people who know the subject's ideas or plan? Do those who know the subject's ideas actively discourage the individual from acting violently, encourage the subject to attack, deny the possibility of violence, passively collude with an attack, etc?

These and other questions, once considered thoroughly by the TAT, should lead to a classification of the threat as follows:

Threat Level	TAT Response
Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)	<p>The person/situation appears to pose a clear and imminent threat of serious violence toward self or others and requires containment.</p> <p>TAT should contact law enforcement to pursue containment options and/or protect identified target(s).</p> <p>Once containment action has been taken, the TAT will develop and implement a management plan.</p>
Priority 2 (High Risk)	<p>The person/situation appears to pose a threat of self-harm or physical violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacks immediacy and/or a specific plan – or a specified plan of violence does exist but currently lacks a specific target.</p> <p>TAT develops a monitoring plan.</p>
Priority 3 (Moderate Risk)	<p>The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, but does exhibit behaviors/circumstances that are likely to be disruptive to the community.</p> <p>This case warrants intervention, usually by the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT), to include referral and/or monitoring to minimize the risk of escalation.</p> <p>TAT develops a monitoring plan.</p>
Priority 4 (Low Risk)	<p>The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is there evidence of significant disruption to the community.</p>

Threat Level	TAT Response
	TAT maintains report for potential re-examination in the future and contacts BIT (if appropriate) for referral.
Priority 5 (No Identified Risk)	<p>The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is there evidence of significant disruption to the community.</p> <p>TAT closes the case.</p>

Follow-Up

Follow-up activities usually follow one of two forms: (1) referral; and/or (2) monitoring.

B. Referral

For threat assessment purposes, referral means placing further investigation, monitoring, and intervention within the sphere of responsibility of another body. The most common referral are those to the college’s Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). BIT referrals are made for Priority 3 and 4 cases (as deemed appropriate by the TAT) for intervention and monitoring. The BIT may, at its discretion, transfer the case back to TAT should an escalation be deemed present.

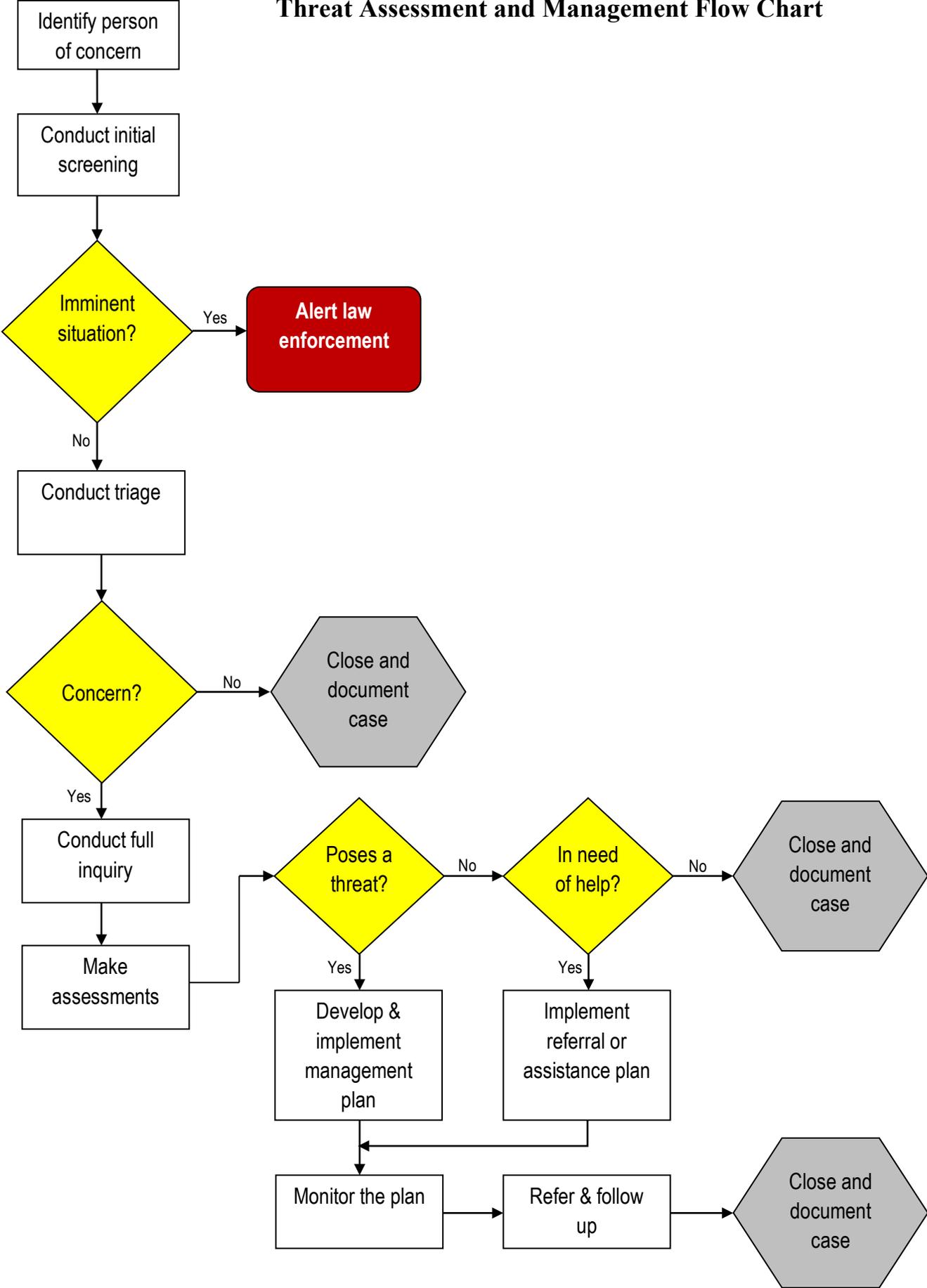
The second most common referral is to an external agency. Individuals who volunteer to do so may be contained and/or evaluated by ACCESS (the intake counseling service provided by New River Valley Community Services). Individuals who will not willingly seek such intervention may be referred to local law enforcement (usually the Pulaski County Sheriff’s Office).

C. Monitoring

Monitoring plans are created for all Priority 3 through 5 risks, and for Priority 2 risks where circumstances warrant. Monitoring plans should identify the primary caseworker (person responsible for ensuring that the monitoring plan is carried out), specific steps that will be taken to monitor the situation, and a timeline associated with those steps. For example, an individual who has made threats via his/her social media account can expect to have that account monitored (overtly or covertly) at regular interval (daily, weekly, etc.) by his/her caseworker (John D. Counselor).

Finally, follow-up includes documentation. The chair of the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate documentation of the TAT’s assessment – including contributing documents like incident reports and interviews – are part of the official record. A ***Threat Assessment and Response Report*** form (below) should be completed with each assessment.

# Threat Assessment and Management Flow Chart



## Threat Assessment and Response Report

PART I. THREAT REPORTED	
Date:	
Individual completing form:	
Position:	
Contact information:	
Source of report:	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Anonymous <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):
Information on person making threat/engaging in concerning behavior:	
Name:	
Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Date of birth:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Friend/contact person:	
Relationship (if known):	
Any history of violence in school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Any history of violence elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Any history of disciplinary action or referrals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Other information about the person:	

Information about the threat/behavior(s)	
Date of threat/behavior:	
Where the threat/behavior occurred:	
Who reported the threat/behavior?	
What was reported (quote as closely as possible)	
Information on target	
Has the intended target/victim been identified?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Name of target/victim	
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
PART II. FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS	
Name of person interviewed:	
Relationship or involvement:	
Notes:	
Name of person interviewed:	
Relationship or involvement:	
Notes:	

Name of person interviewed:	
Relationship or involvement:	
Notes:	
Name of person interviewed:	
Relationship or involvement:	
Notes	
Has the target been interviewed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Please indicate which of the interviewees above is the target or summarize the interview with the target here	
<b>PART III. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS</b>	
What are the subject's goals or motives?	
Has the subject shown inappropriate interest in:	<input type="checkbox"/> School attacks or attackers <input type="checkbox"/> Weapons <input type="checkbox"/> Incidents of mass violence  If yes, please describe:

<p>Has the subject engaged in attack-related behaviors such as:</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Developing an attack plan  <input type="checkbox"/> Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons  <input type="checkbox"/> Casing, or checking out, possible sites and areas for attack  <input type="checkbox"/> Rehearsing attacks or ambushes</p> <p>If yes, please describe:</p>								
<p>Does the subject have the means to carry out an act of violence?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>								
<p>Is the subject experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>								
<p>Does the subject have at least one trusting relationship with a responsible adult?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>								
<p>Is the subject's conversation and story consistent with his/her actions?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>								
<p>Are other people concerned about the subject's potential for violence?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>								
<p>What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?</p>									
<p>Are any of the following indicators of potential for violence present?</p>									
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%; text-align: left;">Indicators</th> <th style="width: 30%; text-align: left;">Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="191 1444 607 1570"> <p>Ideas or plans for injuring self or attacking someone at NRCC</p> </td> <td data-bbox="607 1444 1430 1570"> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="191 1570 607 1738"> <p>Communications/writing that suggest an unusual or worrisome interest in school attacks</p> </td> <td data-bbox="607 1570 1430 1738"> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="191 1738 607 1906"> <p>Comments that express or imply the student is considering mounting an attack</p> </td> <td data-bbox="607 1738 1430 1906"> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Indicators	Comments	<p>Ideas or plans for injuring self or attacking someone at NRCC</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p>Communications/writing that suggest an unusual or worrisome interest in school attacks</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p>Comments that express or imply the student is considering mounting an attack</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes  <input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>
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Recent weapon-seeking behavior, especially if linked to interest in an attack	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Communications/writing suggesting that the subject condones violence to redress grievances or solve problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Rehearsal of attacks or ambushes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	

**PART IV. DETERMINATION OF THREAT LEVEL**

Check one:

- Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)
- Priority 2 (High Risk)
- Priority 3 (Moderate Risk)
- Priority 2 (Low Risk)
- Priority 1 (No Identified Risk)

Basis for determination:

**PART V. RESPONSE**

Check all that apply:

Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Primary TAT/BIT Contact:
Monitoring Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Primary TAT/BIT Contact:
Referral	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	To whom/what agency?  Primary contact:

**PART VI. CLOSURE**

This case has been resolved and necessary actions have been taken to provide support or assistance to the individual who made the threat and to any others impacted by the threat.

Signature of case manager or TAT chair:

Date:

## NRCC Threat Assessment Team Roster

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As of October 2023

Melissa Anderson, Business Operations and Human Resources Manager

Peter Anderson, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services

Brian Bolling, Technology Services Manager

Tom Ciappina, Licensed Professional Counselor

Angie Covey, Executive Director, NRCC Educational Foundation

Ronnie Nichols, Facilities Services Manager

Mark Rowh, Vice President for Workforce Development and External Relations

Fritz Streff, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

Joseph Williams, Coordinator of Emergency Response and Campus Security/Emergency Coordination Officer

Anthony Wilson, Former Chief of Police, Blacksburg

Mike Worrell, Sheriff, Pulaski County

# ACTION GUIDE FOR FACULTY & STAFF

## Frequently Asked Questions About Dealing with Student Behaviors

### Q. What is the mission of the Threat Assessment Team?

New River Community College's Threat Assessment Team will help develop policies and procedures for the prevention of violence on campus, including assessment and intervention with individuals or groups whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of the campus community.

### Q. What are some signs that a student may be in distress?

Students in distress may not be disruptive to others, but may exhibit behaviors which indicate something is wrong, show signs of emotional distress and indicate that assistance is needed. They may also be reluctant or unable to acknowledge a need for personal help. Behaviors may include:

1. Serious grade problems or a change from consistently passing grades to unaccountable poor performance.
2. Excessive absences, especially if the student has previously demonstrated consistent attendance.
3. Unusual or significantly changed patterns of interaction, i.e., avoidance of participation, excessive anxiety when called upon, domination of discussions, etc.
4. Other characteristics that suggest the student is having trouble managing stress successfully, e.g., a depressed, lethargic mood; very rapid speech; swollen, red eyes; marked change in personal dress and hygiene; falling asleep during class.
5. Repeated requests for special consideration, such as deadline extensions, especially if the student appears uncomfortable or highly emotional while disclosing the circumstances prompting the request.
6. New or repeated behavior which pushes the limits of decorum and which interferes with effective management of the immediate environment.
7. Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses which are obviously inappropriate to the situation.

### Q. How do I make a referral?

While many students go to counseling or to the Office of Student Services on their own, your exposure to students increases the likelihood you will identify signs and/or behaviors of distress in a student. What can you do?

- Recommend campus services to the student or complete a Referral Form for Student Services Intervention and forward the form to a member of the Behavioral Intervention Team.
- Determine the student's willingness to go to a helping resource. Reassure the student that it is an act of strength to ask for help.
- Dispute the myth that only "weak" or "crazy" people go for counseling or use others' help.
- Remind the student that counseling resources are affordable (often free or reduced for students) and are confidential.
- Offer to help make the initial contact with the helping resource.

### Q. What are warning signs of disruptive student behavior that requires immediate attention?

Severely troubled or disruptive students exhibit behaviors that signify an obvious crisis and necessitate emergency care. These problems are the easiest to identify. Examples include:

1. Highly disruptive behavior (e.g. hostility, aggression, violence, etc.).
2. Inability to communicate clearly (garbled, slurred speech; unconnected, disjointed, or rambling thoughts).
3. Loss of contact with reality (seeing or hearing things which others cannot see or hear, beliefs, or actions greatly at odds with reality or probability).
4. Stalking behaviors.
5. Inappropriate communications (including threatening letters, e-mail, messages, harassment).
6. Overtly suicidal thoughts (including referring to suicide as a current option in a written assignment).
7. Threats to harm others.
8. Appearance of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
9. Possession of a weapon.

### Q. What are the warning signs of alcohol and substance abuse that might lead you to refer a student?

#### Physical warning signs of drug abuse

- Bloodshot eyes or pupils that are larger or smaller than usual
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns. Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Deterioration of physical appearance and personal grooming habits
- Unusual smells on breath, body or clothing
- Tremors, slurred speech, or impaired coordination
- Has burned fingers, burns on lips, or needle track marks on arms
- Exhibits impaired coordination or unsteady gait (e.g. staggering, off balance)
- Speaks more rapidly or slowly than normal

#### Behavioral signs of drug abuse

- Drop in attendance and performance at work or school
- Unexplained need for money or financial problems. May borrow or steal to get it
- Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors
- Sudden changes in friends, favorite hangouts, and hobbies
- Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, illegal activities)
- Has difficulty concentrating, focusing, or attending to a task
- Frequently appears distracted or disoriented
- Makes inappropriate or unreasonable choice
- Experiences short-term memory loss
- Often needs directions repeated
- Has difficulty recalling known details

#### Psychological warning signs of drug abuse:

- Unexplained change in personality or attitude
- Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts
- Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness
- Lack of motivation; appears lethargic or 'spaced out'
- Appears fearful, anxious, or paranoid, with no reason
- Experiences wide mood swings (highs and lows)
- Experiences general change in mood toward a more depressed and negative or critical outlook
- Appears fearful or anxious; experiences panic attacks
- Appears impatient, agitated, or irritable
- Experiences ongoing depression
- Has paranoid thoughts

### CONCERN FOR STUDENT

Incidents observed that provoke concern but require no emergency response



Behavioral Intervention Team

### EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR

If you see, or are dealing with, a student who "needs to talk to someone" about a personal concern or is experiencing a psychological crisis.



Behavioral Intervention Team

### AGGRESSION

If you see, or are dealing with, aggressive or threatening behavior.



NRCC Security,  
Behavioral Intervention Team  
and/or  
Threat Assessment Team

### ILLNESS OR INJURY

If you see or are dealing with a person who is injured, or ill, or whose behavior seems erratic.



NRCC Security  
and/or  
Behavioral Intervention Team

### DANGER TO SELF

A student expresses (verbally or in writing) a willingness or desire to harm or kill himself/herself with no specific plan

\*In this situation, the danger is not imminent and only involves the person.  
\*Example: A student may write about or discuss a sense of desperation or hopelessness with death as a solution.



Behavioral Intervention Team  
and/or  
NRCC Security

OR

### DANGER TO SELF

A student demonstrates (in progress) an attempt to harm or kill himself/herself or has a specific plan to harm himself/herself.

\*Here the danger is imminent or in progress.  
\*Example: A student advises that he/she has taken pills, has a weapon, has cut self or that when he/she leaves, he/she is going to implement his/her suicide plan.



NRCC Security,  
Behavioral Intervention Team  
and/or  
911

### DANGER TO OTHERS

A student expresses (verbally or in writing) a willingness or desire to harm or kill others or a student demonstrates (in progress) or is attempting to harm or kill others.



NRCC Security  
and/or  
Threat Assessment Team

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

A student appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs in class, or is seen in possession of same.



NRCC Security  
and/or  
Behavioral Intervention Team

### SEXUAL ASSAULT

A student reports he/she is a victim of ongoing or very recent physical or sexual abuse at the hands of a relative, guardian, caretaker, spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, or unknown.



NRCC Security  
  
and/or  
911  
as appropriate

### DISABILITY

If you see or are dealing with a person with a disability who is in difficulty, ask if you may contact:



Student Disability Services, Lucy Howlett,  
Ext. 3619, Rm. 274, Rooker Hall

### General Guidelines

1. Remain calm and know whom to call. See referral numbers below.
2. Remember that it is **NOT** your responsibility to provide professional help needed for a severely troubled/disruptive student. You need only make the necessary call and request assistance.
3. When students express a direct threat to themselves or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational or disruptive way, immediately call Security ext. 3646 or 540-674-3646.

### Disruptive Student Behavior

The Student Handbook outlines the standards and expectations of students' conduct and behavior. Examples of disruptive behavior are as follows:

#### Conduct Disruptive to the College Community

Conduct that is disruptive to the college's educational objectives, to its operations, or to its officials, staff, and faculty in the performance of their work, or to any other aspect of its mission. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

1. Disruption of a class, college activity, or any other normal activity held on college property at a college location.
2. Classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to benefit from the instructional program.
3. Actions causing physical injury or endangering one's own health or safety.

#### Causing Physical or Other Harm to Any Person

1. Conduct causing physical injury or endangering another's health or safety, which includes, but is not limited to, acts of physical violence, assault, and relationship or domestic violence.
2. Actions causing physical injury or endangering one's own health or safety.

#### Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct

1. Sexual Assault. Any sexual act or attempt to engage in any sexual act with another person without the consent of the other person or, in circumstances in which the person is unable, due to age, disability, or chemical or other impairment, to give consent.
2. Sexual Misconduct. Any intentional intimate touching of another without the consent of the other person or, in circumstances in which the person is unable, due to age, disability, or chemical or other impairment, to give consent.

#### Harassment

1. Harassment or Threats—Verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, coercion or any other conduct that places another individual in reasonable fear for his or her safety through words or actions directed at that person, or substantially interferes with the working, educational, or living environment of the individual, including stalking and racial harassment.
2. Sexual Harassment—Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
  - a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or status in a college activity or;
  - b. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or decisions affecting such individual's employment or status in a college activity, or;
  - c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment or academic environment.

### Q. How should I respond when a student is disrupting my class?

Faculty members have broad authority to manage their classrooms and establish reasonable guidelines for class discussions that ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate in an orderly manner. If you believe a student's behavior is inappropriate, consider a general word of caution rather than singling a student out or embarrassing the student. If the behavior in question is irritating, but not disruptive, try speaking with the student after class. Most students are unaware of distracting habits or mannerisms, and have no intent to be offensive or disruptive. There may be rare circumstances where it is necessary to speak to a student during class about this behavior. Correct the student in a manner indicating that further discussion can occur after class. Examples of disruptive behavior include interrupting or monopolizing classroom discussion, interrupting instruction, and using inappropriate language.

If a student's behavior reaches the point that it interferes with your ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the class, the student should be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the class period. The student should be provided with a reason for this action and an opportunity to discuss the matter with you as soon as is practical. In such situations, consultation and referral to NRCC Security, the Behavioral Intervention Team, or the Threat Assessment Team may be appropriate. Faculty members should exercise sound judgment regarding the immediacy of the need and act accordingly.

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

**Campus Security:**  
Dial Ext. 3646 or 540-674-3646.

**Advising Center:** Ext. 3609

**Student Disability Services:**  
Ext. 3619

### BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM

**Deborah Kennedy** Ext. 3690

**Gwen Houston** Ext. 4408

**Lucy Howlett** Ext. 3619

**Rod Reedy** Ext. 4358

### THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

**Chair: Peter Anderson** Ext.4369

**Melissa Anderson** Ext. 4310

**Brian Bolling** Ext. 4375

**Tom Clappina**

**Angie Covey** Ext. 3655

**Ronnie Nichols** Ext. 3639

**Mark Rowh** Ext. 4241

**Fritz Streff** Ext. 3637

**Joey Williams** Ext. 3646

**Anthony Wilson**

**Mike Worrell**