ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT

Strategies of Behavioral Intervention (SOBI)

Employee and Student Guide

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STRATEGIES OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION

EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT GUIDE

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The Alamo Colleges District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information or sexual orientation with respect to access, employment programs, or services. Inquiries or complaints concerning these matters should be brought to the attention of: Director of Human Resources, Title IX Coordinator, 210/485-0200. Address: Human Resources Department, 201 W. Sheridan, Bldg. A, San Antonio, Texas 78204.

SOBI TASKFORCE

Group 1 - Behavioral Intervention Team			
Name	**Location**	**Phone Number**	**Email**
Adelina S. Silva	District	485-0150	asilva@alamo.edu
Ruth Dalrymple	SPC	486-2276	rdalrymple@alamo.edu
Sherrie Lang	SPC	486-2252	slang14@alamo.edu
Gloria Medellin	District	485-0217	gmedellin@alamo.edu
Emma Mendiola	SAC	486-0370	emendiola@alamo.edu
Christopher Pate	SPC	486-2420	cpate1@alamo.edu

Group 2 - Assistance and Consultation for Faculty, Staff & Students			
Name	**Location**	**Phone Number**	**Email**
Patricia Parma	PAC	486-3337	pparma@alamo.edu
Paula Daggett	SAC	486-0024	pdaggett@alamo.edu
Sharon Dresser	NVC	486-4466	sdresser@alamo.edu

Group 3 - Reporting Process			
Name	**Location**	**Phone Number**	**Email**
Retha Karnes	District	485-0059	rkarnes1@alamo.edu
Don Adams	District	485-0088	dadams@alamo.edu
Eddie Cruz	District	485-0057	ecruz70@alamo.edu
Joe Curiel	District	485-0184	jcuriel2@alamo.edu
Kasey Neece-Fielder	NVC	486-4009	kfielder1@alamo.edu
Johnny Trevino	District	485-0056	jtrevino43@alamo.edu

Group 4 - Assessment Process & Investigation			
Name	**Location**	**Phone Number**	**Email**
Don Adams	District	485-0086	dadams@alamo.edu
Joe Curiel	District	485-0184	jcuriel2@alamo.edu
Anna Forey-Rohrbach	NLC	486-5487	aforey-rohrbach@alamo.edu
Lin Freeman	District	485-0065	lfreeman@alamo.edu
Celso Guzman	District	485-0221	cguzman40@alamo.edu
Sonja Montgomery	NVC	486-4834	smontogmery3@alamo.edu

Group 5 - Intervention Strategies			
Name	**Location**	**Phone Number**	**Email**
Stacie Williams	NLC	486-5496	swilliams@alamo.edu
Don Adams	District	485-0088	dadams@alamo.edu
Joe Curiel	District	485-0184	jcuriel2@alamo.edu
Retha Karnes	District	485-0059	rkarnes1@alamo.edu
Yolanda Reyna	PAC	486-3335	yreyna@alamo.edu
Carol Riley	District	485-0063	criley@alamo.edu
Johnny Trevino	District	485-0056	jtrevino43@alamo.edu

INTRODUCTION

The Alamo Colleges District is committed to a safe and supportive learning and working environment for all students, staff, faculty, and visitors. We are dedicated to preventing and responding to incidents that are disruptive, threatening, or violent. In an ideal world, we would not experience behavior that undermines the mission of the Alamo Colleges District. However, the unfortunate reality is that a small number of individuals may exhibit disruptive behavior in classrooms, lab areas, offices, field sites, and other educational settings, or via electronic means such as email, discussion boards, online meeting spaces, and audio video conferencing.

As part of the communication of this guide and in order to provide our College community with information about how to address disruptive or threatening behavior and to aid in the prevention of such incidents on campus, the Strategies of Behavioral Intervention (SOBI) Taskforce has developed this guide for reference and guidance. Included you will find information about identifying and reporting disruptive or threatening incidents on the campus as well as resources for assistance in responding to these types of concerns. This guide is intended for use by employees (faculty, administrators, and staff) and students when referring disruptive behavior of students or visitors on our campuses. Students should utilize this guide to inform and seek assistance from their college professors, administrators, or staff regarding any disruptive behavior by students or visitors. The processes discussed herein are not intended as a substitute for disciplinary actions and measures.

We hope you will find the enclosed materials useful. For additional information and assistance contact your College SOBI Team.

Thank you for helping to keep the Alamo Colleges District and Colleges a safe and welcoming community.

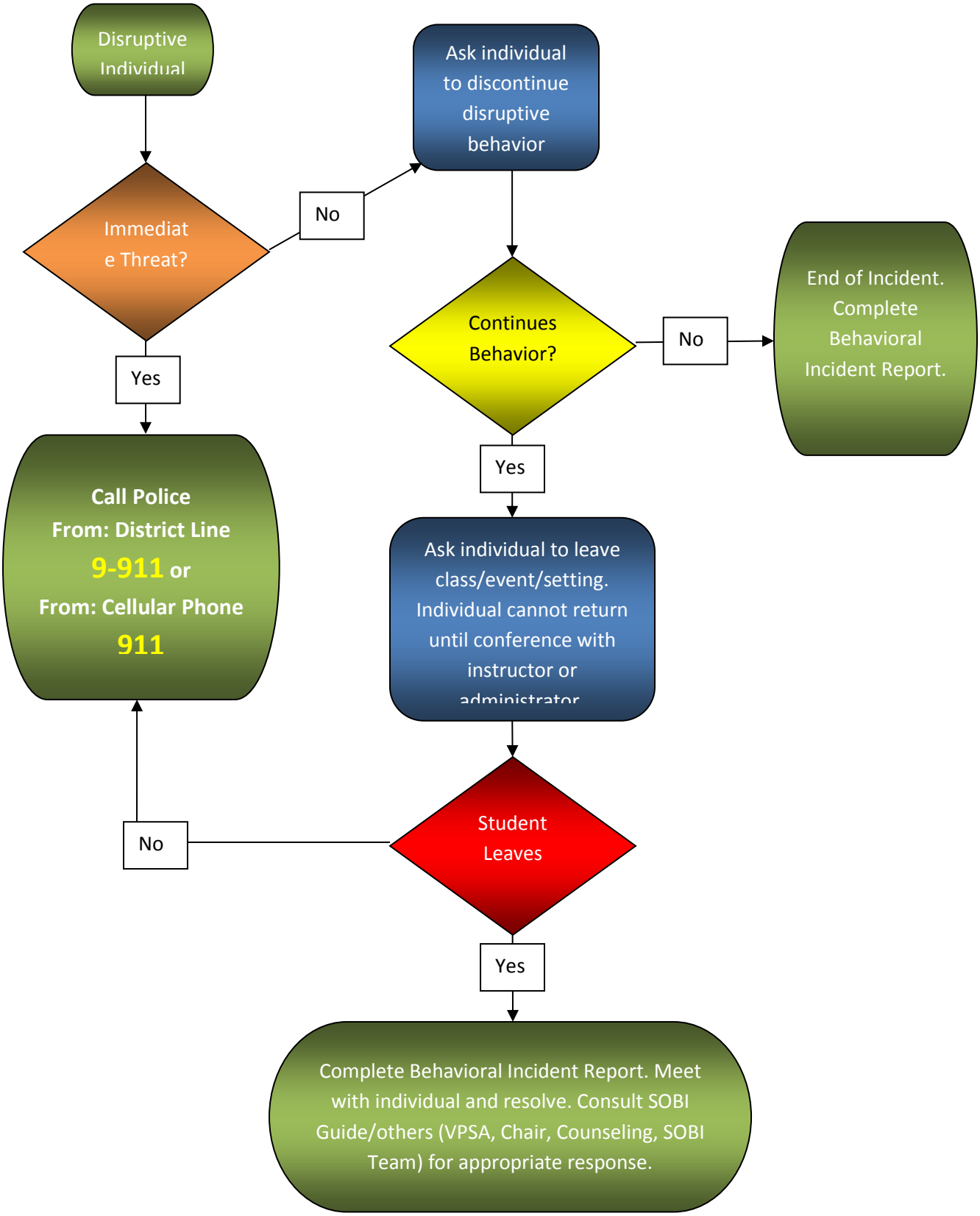
Sincerely,

_____
Chancellor

_____
Super Senate Chair

_____
Unified Staff Council President

PROCESS FOR HANDLING DISRUPTIVE INDIVIDUAL(S)



PART I: BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM

COLLEGE STRATEGIES OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION (SOBI) TEAM

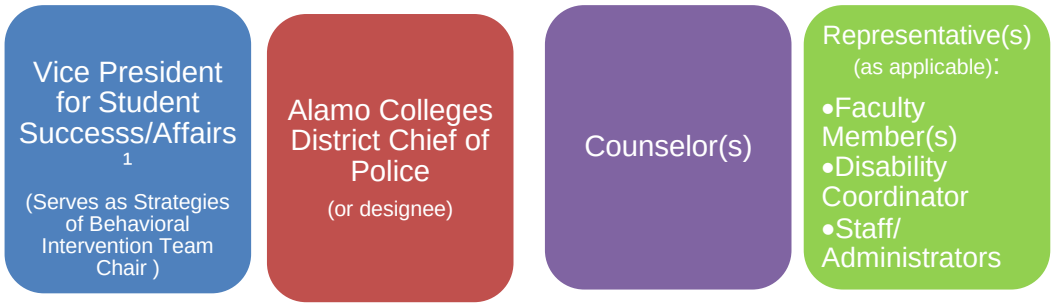
FUNCTIONS

The Strategies of Behavioral Intervention Team is a multidisciplinary team that meets regularly to serve five major functions for the Colleges:

1. Provide consultation, education, and support to faculty, staff, and administration in assisting students who display disconcerting or disruptive behaviors;
2. Gather information to assess situations involving students who display disconcerting or disruptive behaviors;
3. Recommend appropriate intervention strategies or disciplinary sanctions;
4. Connect students with needed campus and community resources; and
5. Monitor ongoing behavior of students who have displayed disruptive or disconcerting behavior.

TEAM MEMBERSHIP

The College Strategies of Behavioral Intervention Team is composed of representatives from critical areas of the College campus community and includes:



The Strategies of Behavioral Intervention Team employs the services of a consultant as needed. Additional members from the campus community are included in meetings of the Strategies of Behavioral Intervention Team as necessary.

MEETINGS

The Strategies of Behavioral Intervention Team meets at least quarterly to discuss topics related to student behavior intervention. These discussions include information such as trends in student behavior, best practices in intervention, and available resources.

Additional meetings are held as needed to assess, intervene, and monitor students whose behavior has been brought to the attention of the Strategies of Behavioral Intervention Team.

[1] It is the Vice President for Student Success responsibility to apprise their College Presidents of pertinent SOBI matters.

DISTRICT-WIDE STRATEGIES OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION (SOBI) TEAM

TEAM MEMBERSHIP

MEETINGS

The district-wide SOBI Team will meet at least once a semester for the purpose of communication and information sharing regarding trends in campus student behavior, best practices in intervention, available resources, and to make appropriate recommendations.

Additional meetings are held as needed to assess, intervene, and monitor students whose behavior has been brought to the attention of the Strategies of Behavioral Intervention Team.

[2] The Alamo Colleges District Chief of Police or his designee has the discretion to notify the students and college community of any ongoing threats in accordance with the Clery Act.

[3] It is the Vice Chancellor for Student Success' responsibility to apprise the Chancellor of pertinent SOBI matters.

PART II: BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS

COLLEGE STANDARDS

The philosophy and goals of the Alamo Colleges District are to protect the equal opportunity of all persons qualified to attend and to offer services that encourage and enable students to pursue new career goals, upgrade present skills, and enrich their personal lives.

Enrollment in one of the Colleges is a voluntary entrance into the academic community wherein the student assumes obligations of performance and behavior that are reasonably imposed by the institution relevant to its mission.

The Alamo Colleges District respects the dignity and worth of each individual in the academic community and recognize the basic rights of freedom of speech, assembly, inquiry, reasonable use of services and facilities, and the right to due process. In the interest of protecting students' freedoms and maintaining civility in the college community, the Alamo Colleges District has established a Student Code of Conduct and adopted policies and procedures regarding student conduct.

The Student Code of Conduct is available online at:

F.4.2 (Policy) Student Code of Conduct - Non-Academic Misconduct, Academic Integrity
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2-Policy.pdf

F.4.2.1 (Procedure) Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary and Appeal Process
http://alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2.1-Procedure(4).pdf

F.4.2.2 (Procedure) Academic Integrity Disciplinary and Appeal Process
http://alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2.2-Procedure.pdf

PROMOTING CIVILITY ON CAMPUS

The Alamo Colleges District endorse an environment where teaching and learning activities, both inside and outside of the classroom, are paramount. In order to foster this environment, respectful conduct and discourse must be the basis for our actions.

Employees and students are expected to act in a responsible, respectful and professional manner, affirming their commitment to a mutually respectful college community. All students are expected to abide by the parameters outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and the Alamo Colleges District Policies and Procedures. Members of the community visiting the campus are expected to follow appropriate behavioral guidelines as well.

The Alamo Colleges District recognize the relationship between personal conduct and quality of campus life. What we do and say has an effect on others; being civil is not just about manners or politeness. In *Choosing Civility* (2002), Dr. P.M. Forni writes, "Being civil means being

constantly aware of others and weaving restraint, respect, and consideration into the very fabric of this awareness." To promote a positive, collegial atmosphere where faculty, staff, students and community are treated with respect and consideration, the Alamo Colleges District endorse standards of behavior that insure civility among all constituents.

Based on *The 25 Rules of Considerate Conduct* developed by Dr. Forni, the following rules exemplify the expectations of the Alamo Colleges District:

1. Pay Attention
2. Acknowledge Others
3. Think the Best
4. Listen
5. Be Inclusive
6. Speak Kindly
7. Don't Speak Ill
8. Accept and Give Praise
9. Respect Even a Subtle "No"
10. Respect Others' Opinions
11. Mind Your Body
12. Be Agreeable
13. Keep It Down (and Rediscover Silence)
14. Respect Other People's Time
15. Respect Other People's Space
16. Apologize Earnestly
17. Assert Yourself
18. Avoid Personal Questions
19. Care for Those Around You
20. Be Considerate
21. Think Twice Before Asking for Favors
22. Refrain from Idle Complaints
23. Accept and Give Constructive Criticism
24. Respect the Environment and Be Gentle to Animals
25. Don't Shift Responsibility and Blame

ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Maintaining a good learning environment in the classroom is an important part of a faculty member's responsibility as an instructor. Faculty and students should enter into a dialogue at the start of each semester to develop classroom parameters suitable for their individual learning environment. The instructor should endeavor to create a classroom atmosphere that in practical ways creates favorable conditions for learning and is comfortable and welcoming of all students, including women and members of minority groups. Disruptive classroom conduct on the part of students may be distracting, annoying, or intimidating to other students and should not be tolerated by the instructor.

In addition to the various Alamo Colleges District standards and policies referred to above, students are subject to the academic and behavioral standards set by the course instructor. Behavioral standards that are thoughtfully developed and effectively communicated at the start of the semester, and reinforced when needed, may exert a positive influence on classroom conduct.

Behavioral concerns that, in your judgment, require special emphasis can be addressed in your course syllabus. It is quite common to include a cautionary statement about cheating and plagiarism and the consequences of these forms of misconduct. Faculty is ultimately responsible for what occurs inside the classroom environment.

Examples of other behaviors that may be addressed in your syllabus include:

- Intimidating or harassing behavior.
- Inappropriate, disrespectful, or uncivil responses to the comments or opinions of others (in the classroom or transmitted electronically).
- Biased based behaviors or comments; harassment.
- Threats/challenges to do physical harm (even when stated in a joking manner).
- Use of obscene or profane language in the classroom or transmitted electronically.
- Excessive talking.
- Late arrival to, or early departure from, class without permission.
- Use of personal electronic devices such as cell phones or pagers.
- Refusal to comply with faculty direction.

When discussing standards at the beginning of the semester, you might want to consider an approach that does not discourage your students from forming and expressing ideas and opinions that are relevant to the course objectives. Appropriate behavioral standards tend to encourage and protect everyone's freedom of speech.

ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS FOR ON-LINE CLASS CONDUCT AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The number of students taking on-line classes has increased, as has the use of electronic communication tools, such as Blackboard. Electronic communication is another opportunity for students to display disruptive and unacceptable behavior. Students may make comments electronically that they would not make in person-to-person contact. Just as faculty members establish classroom conduct they must also establish expectations for students during on-line classes and through electronic communications. It is recommended that specific language regarding expectations for electronic communication be included on the syllabus for the course.

ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT WHILE ACCESSING CAMPUS SERVICES

Staff members play a vital role in establishing and maintaining a culture of civility on campus. Staff should strive to create an atmosphere that is comfortable and welcoming for all students and community patrons. Policies and behavioral standards that are thoughtfully developed, effectively communicated, and reinforced when needed, will positively influence the ultimate goal of promoting Student Success.

In addition to the various Alamo Colleges District standards, policies, and procedures, students and community patrons are subject to the behavioral standards set by the Colleges and their respective departments. Disruptive conduct on the part of students or community patrons undermines the College mission and the quality of services offered. Thus, behavioral concerns

that, in your judgment, require immediate attention must be addressed with the appropriate course of action.

Examples of behaviors that may be addressed in your campus service areas include:

- Intimidating or harassing behavior.
- Inappropriate, disrespectful, or uncivil behavior towards staff on campus or transmitted electronically.
- Biased behaviors or comments; harassment.
- Threats/challenges to do physical harm (even when stated in a joking manner).
- Use of obscene or profane language on campus or transmitted electronically.
- Disrespectful use of personal electronic devices such as cell phones, PDAs, iPods, etc.
- Refusal to comply with staff direction.

Behavior and actions of children brought to the college campus must comply with the policies and standards of conduct established by the Alamo Colleges District. The parent, guardian or caregiver assumes full responsibility.

Establishing policies that set and support appropriate behavioral standards tend to contribute to a safe working environment. Thus, it is important to establish and openly promote expectations for conduct within the working environment.

ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS FOR ON-LINE/ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WHILE ACCESSING SUPPORT SERVICES

As electronic interactions (e-mail, chats, discussion forums, social networking sites, etc.) are an extension of our campus services, the same behavioral standards apply when requesting services on-line or communicating via the telephone.

Keep in mind that all electronic interactions (e-mail, chats, discussion forums, etc.) are an extension of our classroom and should be treated as such.

Texas House Bill 2003 - Online Harassment

(See Appendix E, Page 46 for the Alamo Colleges District Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources)

PART III: TAKING ACTION

A number of factors, such as the severity and frequency of a student's misconduct, influence the action that might be appropriate to a specific instance of disruptive behavior. Faculty, staff and students must decide when to speak with the student directly, when to involve department leadership, the counseling center, dean's office, or the SOBI Team or whether to refer the student to the Vice-President of Student Success for disciplinary measures.

The following descriptions will help determine the level of risk that the behavior/situation poses to the student and to others. Based on all data gathered, the SOBI Team will utilize this scale in determining the recommended course of action and outcomes.

LEVELS OF RISK

Low Risk – There is no serious threat to the student of concern or others. At this level, any concerns between individuals can generally be resolved by addressing the conflict or dispute between the parties involved. Counseling and follow-up support may be recommended. Generally, in this situation, the student can acknowledge the inappropriateness of the behavior and engage in behavior to make amends with the other party.

Moderate Risk – At this level, there may be a threat to self or others that could be carried out although there is no evidence that the student has taken preparatory steps.

High Risk – At this level, there appears to be an imminent and serious danger to the safety of the student of concern or others. It appears that specific steps have been developed to carry out a plan to harm self or others. Faculty and staff who are privy to such behavior must immediately call the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911 or 911 from all other telephones to report the situation.

A **follow-up monitoring** plan should be developed for each student regardless of the level of risk involved. This may range from simply observing the students' behavior on campus to a more formal process of checking with faculty and staff regarding student behavior and periodic meetings of the student and an assigned counselor or SOBI Team member.

The measures discussed throughout this guide do not constitute fixed procedures that must be followed in each instance. Rather, these strategies should be pursued based on your own assessment of their suitability to the situation with which you are dealing.

Additional Identification and Intervention Strategies begin under Part IV of this guide on page 19.

IDENTIFYING “RED FLAG” BEHAVIORS

Manifestations of red flag behaviors can range from subtle displays of distress to obvious signs or expressions of anger or depression or behavior outbursts such as destroying or throwing objects, aggression towards self or others, and threats to kill self or others. Warning signs and cues can help identify behaviors and emotive responses outside the conventionally accepted range of normalcy. While no list is exhaustive, the following list offers maladaptive behaviors that may send a red flag:

- Low stress tolerance; easily upset.
- Moody or erratic behavior. May alternate between tenderness and hostility.
- Use threats and intimidation to control others.
- Do not take responsibility for their behavior; blame others.
- Always have to be right.
- Slow to forgive others; resentful.
- Isolative; withdrawn.
- Always seem to have excuses for their behavior.
- Dominate conversations; have last word.
- Never seem to get enough of what they want, leaving others feeling drained and confused.
- Seem to enjoy pushing other people’s buttons.
- Attitude of entitlement.
- Dramatic; exaggerative.
- Demonstrate a noticeable change in behavior over the course of time.
- Disoriented; disjointed thinking.
- Decreased sleep, yet little fatigue.

Additional Identification and Intervention Strategies begin under Part IV of this guide on page 19.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING RED FLAG BEHAVIORS

Individuals in severe distress frequently leave signals scattered across the campus. The challenge is to pull these pieces together so that patterns of behavior can be observed and the need for a response determined. The Alamo Colleges District seek to address this challenge by providing sound advice for dealing with potentially dangerous situations.

Early and effective intervention can protect the campus community and enhance Student Success. To that end, it is imperative that employees and students know how to recognize problematic behaviors, when to confront them, and how to report them.

Information that should be reported is anything that is witnessed, observed, or in which you are a participant that "sends up a Red Flag." Examples include:

- Suspicious behaviors or actions as well as any criminal acts.
- Knowledge of information or incidents that could cause harm to persons, property or reputation.
- Demonstration of high level violations of the Student Code of Conduct.
- Any high risk behaviors such as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Disturbing or strangely violent student writing.
- Expressions by others of feelings of depression, lack of self-worth, and/or uselessness including suicidal symptoms.

If there is a true emergency, call the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911. In addition, please keep in mind that reporting false information is a crime and appropriate disciplinary or legal action may be taken as necessary.

The most important thing is to act: “Say something to someone.”

RESPONDING TO AN IMMEDIATE THREAT

If you need *immediate* assistance in responding to a threat to your safety or the safety of others, contact the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911 from your office phone or 911 from your cell phone to reach local law enforcement. Alamo Colleges District Police Department is staffed 24 hours per day and can dispatch law enforcement personnel to assist you at your campus location. Become familiar with your local emergency services.

GIVE A WARNING

A rare instance of rude, annoying, or irritating behavior could simply be a sign of a person’s immaturity or lack of familiarity with campus culture. When this first behavior occurs, model proper conduct, redirect the individual, or use other informal means to let them know that their behavior is inappropriate. When disruptive behavior first becomes evident in the classroom setting, consider reminding the entire class of the need to follow applicable standards. If the disruption involves a behavior that has not been previously addressed, take the time to communicate your expectations.

Recurrent acts of disruptive behavior should be addressed in a direct manner. Speak individually with any student who exhibits a pattern of disruptive behavior or who commits a single incident of serious misconduct. Ask the student to remain after class for a conversation or to schedule a separate meeting. A confidential meeting will provide the best opportunity to discuss your concerns while avoiding the embarrassment or defensiveness the student might display when publicly addressed. However, do not meet alone with any individual you believe to be a threat to your personal safety (See Responding to Threatening or Potentially Violent Individuals, page 17) During the meeting, discuss the disruptive behavior, clarify your expectations, gain cooperation in adhering to class standards, and state the consequences of failing to make necessary adjustments (e.g. the filing of a Behavioral Incident Report). If a meeting cannot be arranged in person, attempt to contact the person by telephone, email, or letter. Make a written record of all attempts to discuss disruptive behavior.

RESPONDING TO INDIVIDUALS IN DISTRESS

If you need to consult with someone about an individual who is disruptive in any educational setting or seems to be showing signs of emotional distress, atypical behavior, or difficulty adjusting to college life, contact the Vice President of Student Success on your campus and they can assess the situation and make the appropriate referrals. The telephone numbers for the Student Success Offices on each campus are listed below:

College	Vice President of Student Success	Phone Number
Northeast Lakeview College	Dr. Debbie Hamilton	210-486-5421
Northwest Vista College	Debi Gaitan	210-486-4909
Palo Alto College	Gilbert Becerra	210-486-3930
San Antonio College	Dr. Lisa Alcorta	210-486-0930
St. Philip's College	Dr. Mordecai Ian Brownlee	210-486-2252
Off-Campus Site	Contact associated college above	

If you do not know whether to be concerned about a particular behavior, contact the Office of the Vice President of Student Success at your campus for guidance and referrals. If you are calling after hours, contact the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at their non-emergency telephone number: 210-485-0099.

As a representative of the District, you are the authority in the classroom or in any events occurring outside the class. You are obligated to establish appropriate academic and behavioral standards. Faculty should always set and communicate standards on their syllabi.

RESPONDING TO THREATENING OR POTENTIALLY VIOLENT INDIVIDUALS

Each of us responds differently to the behaviors of others. Encounters with individuals that leave you frightened and in fear for your personal safety should be taken very seriously. If a threat is immediate, dial 911 or 9-911 if calling from your office phone. Once the police have been notified, the Vice President of Student Success should be contacted.

Direct or implied threats of violence; challenges to fight; shoving; physical attacks; stalking; threatening telephone calls, emails, or other correspondence; acts of harassment; and similar behaviors should be immediately discussed with the Alamo Colleges District Police, your Department Chair or supervisor, and the Vice President of Student Success.

Your Department Chair or supervisor will provide advice and support and will ensure that the Vice President of Student Success and other appropriate campus officials are notified. The Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911 will assist in assessing the threat, determining the most appropriate steps to be taken and, if necessary, will dispatch additional law enforcement personnel.

MEETING WITH A THREATENING OR POTENTIALLY VIOLENT INDIVIDUAL

Do not meet alone with any angry or hostile individuals. Arrange a specific appointment to meet with the individual; thereby giving you time to develop a strategy. Precautions to take include, but are not limited to:

- Have an Alamo Colleges District Police Department officer stationed nearby, or with you, as circumstances dictate.
- Alert a colleague that you will be meeting the potentially violent person and have that colleague ready to assist.
- Consider establishing a code word to be used within the department. That word would serve as a signal to others to call for help.
- Keep the door of your meeting place open.
- Position yourself so that you can exit the room quickly, if necessary. For example, keep yourself between the individual and the door.
- Terminate the session immediately if you intuitively sense something is wrong.
- Avoid body language that appears challenging such as placing your hands on your hips, moving into the individual's territory, or using aggressive facial expressions.
- Slow your rate of speech and use a low pitch and volume to reduce the momentum of the situation.
- Ask to include a department head, supervisor, or another appropriate representative to help satisfy the agitated person's need to feel heard.
- As early in the meeting as possible, elicit the individual's goal for the meeting and state your goal. Negotiation of a common goal may be a useful approach to keeping the individual focused.
- Listen carefully by really paying attention to what is said. Let the individual know you will help within your ability to do so and within reason.
- Ask questions to thoroughly understand the situation and to regain control of the conversation, when necessary.

- Neither agree with distorted statements nor attempt to argue. Avoid defensiveness.
- Terminate the meeting if the individual remains belligerent. Reschedule the meeting at a later date, if necessary.
- Never physically touch an outraged individual or try to force them to leave.
- If a weapon becomes evident, leave. If that is not possible, calmly ask the person to leave any weapon in a neutral position as you continue talking calmly. (Contact the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911 as you are able!)
- Let the person know the consequences of any violent behavior. Let them know that their behavior is not going to help them achieve the goal they have set forth for the meeting.
- Never agree to go to an unmonitored location with a potentially violent person.

STUDENTS REPORTING CONCERNS

Students may speak to an employee (faculty, administrator, and staff), including a counselor, college police, or a member of the SOBI Team to discuss situations or issues concerning the on-campus behavior of other students and the community. Students can also file an anonymous report from any computer with internet access by submitting an Incident Reporting Form available at https://publicdocs.maxient.com/incidentreport.php?AlamoColleges or a report through the Ethics Hotline at https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/default_reporter.asp. Many public locations, including the campus and public library, have internet computers. If you do not have access or are uncomfortable using a computer, you can call the Ethics Hotline toll-free number (866-294-3696) which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

PART IV: IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Literature and crime statistics show that college campuses are a safe place for students to study and employees to work. The Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education reports that crime rates for all violent crimes on college campuses are significantly lower than for the entire U.S. Nevertheless, efforts and resources must continue to maintain and improve the safe learning environment enjoyed at most institutions of higher education.

In effectively interacting with and assisting students and community, we adhere to the mission of the Alamo Colleges District to empower our diverse communities for success. That success must include personal responsibility, personal development, and civility. Addressing conduct concerns teaches everyone that problems are best resolved by directly addressing the situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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YOUR ROLE

As a faculty or staff member interacting daily with students, you are in an excellent position to recognize behavior changes that characterize the emotionally troubled student. A student's behavior, especially if it is inconsistent with your previous observations, could well constitute an inarticulate attempt to draw attention to his/her plight (i.e., a "cry for help"). A change in an individual's behavior could also be caused by a change in his/her medication or failure to take medication. While asking about a student's emotional well-being or confronting problematic behavior can be risky or seem intrusive, it is better to risk offending the student through a thoughtful intervention than fail to respond to distressed (and distressing) behavior. Moreover, students often perceive faculty and the student services staff as the first point of contact in obtaining advice and support.

There are a number of ways that faculty and staff can influence how individual student behavior impacts the campus environment. Some strategies that might prove helpful in maintaining a culture of civility include:

- Personally model the behaviors students are expected to exhibit.
- Firmly and fairly address disruptive behavior.

- Hold students accountable for their actions.
- Talk to the student of concern in private.
- Express empathy. Be as specific as possible in stating your observations and reasons for concern(s).
- Listen carefully to everything the student says.
- Repeat the essence of what the student has told you so your attempts to understand are communicated.
- Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental.
- Consider Counseling Services as a resource and discuss referral information with the student. If the student resists referral and you remain uncomfortable with the situation, contact your Chair, supervisor or Counseling Services to discuss your concern.

An environment that incorporates the above elements will better support students in their intellectual and personal growth while contributing to your own sense of safety and well-being.

CONSULTATION

Even when there is no threat of harm, you may find it helpful to involve your Department Chair, or supervisor, when meeting with a student to discuss seriously disruptive behavior. The Vice President of Student Success, Counselors, or Student Services professionals are also available for consultation. The added perspective of a campus official will serve to reinforce the importance of your standards and help keep the conversation focused on behaviors rather than personalities.

Consultation with Counseling Services is available when needed. Call or email a Counselor when you are troubled by a student's behavior but are unsure of how to proceed. If appropriate, a plan can be developed to intervene with the student. Department Chairs, Deans, or others can be involved, as needed. You may also contact a member of the SOBI Team for guidance and support.

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CRISIS INTERVENTION

FACULTY AND STAFF CRISIS INTERVENTION GUIDELINES

Both psychological crises and psychological emergencies warrant an immediate call to Counseling Services for crisis intervention. A *psychological crisis* situation occurs when the student feels unable to cope with the circumstances of his/her life. The more helpless the individual feels, the greater the crisis. Typically, a person may be temporarily overwhelmed but he or she is not in immediate physical danger. Crisis intervention helps a person cope with the immediate situation and make a plan to address any ongoing problems. A psychological crisis may be triggered by a traumatic event such as an accident, a loss of a family member or loved one, or an assault, or it may be related to exhaustion and severe stress. A *psychological emergency* exists when the crisis is so severe that the person is potentially in danger and may need to be hospitalized. A psychological emergency occurs when a person is:

- Suicidal
- Aggressive towards others
- Gravely impaired: confused, agitated, disoriented, having hallucinations or delusions

The Alamo Colleges District provide crisis intervention as needed and as available. You may contact Counseling Services or a member of the SOBI Team for assistance.

PROCEDURE

The procedure for crisis intervention is as follows:

1. Contact Counseling Services for an assessment or assistance. If Counseling Services is closed, or the student is acting aggressively or threatening to harm someone, call the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911. If you cannot call, enlist the help of another person – do not try to handle a crisis alone. Tell the Alamo Colleges District Police Department who you are and that there is a crisis.

2. Until help arrives:

    a. Listen. Avoid any physical contact and allow the student to talk.
    b. Assist. Provide a quiet atmosphere; minimize environmental stimulation. Give the student some space. Ask the student what or who might be helpful.
    c. Recognize. Know your limitations.

Counselors will make an assessment and contact the student's family or significant other if it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other persons. If hospitalization appears warranted, the Counselor will either assist the student and his/her family in getting an assessment for admission or contact the Bexar County Behavioral Health 24-Hour Crisis Team at (210) 223-7233 or 1-800-316-9241 or law enforcement if an evaluation for involuntary hospitalization is needed.

WHEN PERSONAL COUNSELING MIGHT BE BENEFICIAL

We know from our own experience that distress manifests itself with multiple signs and symptoms. To avoid over-interpretation of a single or isolated behavior, it is advisable to look for clusters of signs that appear around the same time.

1. **Stated Need for Help:** The desire for assistance with a problem may be stated directly or indirectly. For this reason, it is important not only to attend to the content of what a student may say, but also to understand the intentions and feelings underlying the message. Listening involves hearing what is being said, noticing the tone used, and observing the expressions and gestures employed. In fact, having someone listen attentively to an expression of a problematic feeling or thought is often a cathartic experience for the speaker which, in and of itself, can result in the individual feeling somewhat better.

2. **References to Suicide:** It is often necessary to distinguish between a theoretical or hypothetical discussion of suicide and a statement indicating true personal anguish. However, if an individual talks about or alludes to details of how, when, or where he or she may be contemplating suicide, then an immediate referral is necessary. Regardless of the circumstances or context, any reference to committing suicide should be considered serious. To conclude that a student's suicidal talk is simply a bid for attention is extremely risky. A judgment about the seriousness and possible lethality of the suicidal thought or gesture should be made by a mental health professional.

3. **Changes in Mood or Behavior:** Actions which are inconsistent with a person's normal behavior may indicate that he or she is experiencing psychological distress. The behavior change may also be due to a medication problem. A student who withdraws from usual social interaction, demonstrates an unwillingness to communicate, commits asocial acts, has spells of unexplained crying or outbursts of anger, or demonstrates unusual irritability may be suffering from symptoms associated with a psychological problem.

4. **Anxiety and Depression:** Anxiety and depression are two of the more common psychological disturbances that can present significant problems for students. Both of these emotional states, when they become prolonged or severe, can profoundly impair an individual's normal functioning. When an individual seems to be struggling with anxiety or depression, professional assistance is recommended.

5. **Psycho-Physiologic Symptoms:** Students who experience tension-induced headaches, nausea, or other physical pains which have no apparent physical cause may be experiencing psycho-physiologic symptoms. Such symptoms are real for that individual, and so is the pain. Other physical symptoms may include a loss of appetite, excessive sleeping, or gastrointestinal distress.

6. **Traumatic Changes in Personal Relationships:** Personal problems often result when an individual experiences traumatic changes in personal relationships. The death of a family member or a close friend, the breakup of relationships, divorce, changes in family responsibilities, or difficulties with finances can all result in increased stress and psychological problems.

7. **Drug and Alcohol Abuse:** Indications of excessive drinking or the abuse of other substances are almost always indicative of psychological problems. Frequent absences, tardiness, missed assignments, sleepiness or manic behavior, poor concentration, disorientation, and spotty performance may point to substance abuse.

8. **Career Choice Problems:** It is rather common for college students to go through periods of career indecision and uncertainty. Such experiences are often characterized by dissatisfaction with an academic major, unrealistic career aspirations, or confusion with regard to interests, abilities, or values. However, chronic indecisiveness can be a debilitating experience and many students need assistance in developing alternative goals when previous decisions prove to be in need of revision. Refer students to Career Services, if available.

9. **Learning Problems:** Many students find the demands of college-level academic work to be greater than they anticipated. While it is expected that all students will go through some adjustment period in this regard, those who demonstrate a consistent discrepancy between their performance and their potential may be in need of assistance. Poor study habits, incapacitating test anxiety, or repeated absences from class are all indicators that the student might benefit from Counseling Services. In addition, students can be referred to Disability Support Services it there is an indication of a learning disability. Consultation with Counseling Services and Disability Support Services is available for guidance and support.

10. **Retention Issues:** Counseling Services can be effective in combating student attrition. Students who are considering dropping out of school and those who are worrying about possible academic failure may find counseling to be a useful resource during their decision-making process.

WHEN TO REFER

Aside from the signs or symptoms that may suggest the need for counseling, there are other guidelines which may help the faculty or staff member define the limits of his or her involvement with a particular student's problem. A referral is usually indicated in the following situations:

1. A student presents a problem or requests information that is outside your range of knowledge.
2. You feel that personality differences that cannot be resolved between you and the student and will interfere with you helping the student.
3. The problem is personal, and you know the student outside of work (friend, neighbor, relative, etc.).
4. A student is reluctant to discuss a problem with you for some reason.
5. You believe your advisement with the student has not been effective.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL

Openly acknowledge to a student that he/she appears to be distressed, that you are sincerely concerned about his/her welfare, and that you are willing to help. Exploring alternatives can have a profound effect on the student's morale and hopefulness. We encourage you, whenever possible, to speak directly and honestly to a student when you sense that he/she is in academic and/or personal distress.

1. Request to see the student in private. This may help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness. A private setting could be your office, a quiet corner after class or an empty classroom. However, be mindful not to isolate yourself with a student who may be hostile or volatile.

2. Briefly describe your observations and perceptions of the student's situation and express your concerns directly and honestly. "I'm concerned about the changes I've seen in your work." "Your attendance is inconsistent and you seem despondent and tired when you're in class." "During lab last week, your speech was slurred and rambled without making sense – you seemed intoxicated."

3. Listen carefully to what the student is troubled about and try to see the issues from his/her point of view without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing.

4. Attempt to identify the student's problem or concern as well as your own concerns or uneasiness. You can help by exploring alternatives to deal with the problem.

5. Strange and inappropriate behavior should not be ignored. Comment directly on what you have observed.

6. Some reasonable flexibility with strict procedures may allow an alienated student to respond more effectively to your concerns. However, if a student is being manipulative, matter-of-factly sticking to the guidelines is preferable.

7. Involve yourself only as far as you are comfortable. At times, in an attempt to reach out or help a troubled student, you may become more involved than time or skill permits. <u>When in doubt, consult and refer</u>. "I would like you to talk with some folks who know more about this than I do. Let's call over to Counseling Services and see when a counselor is available. It's completely private and nothing shows up on your academic record."

8. Whenever possible, have the student make the call to Counseling Services and schedule an appointment before ending your conversation. If appropriate, you can suggest to the student that, with their permission, you will talk to the Counselor about the nature of the problem. When you do discuss making a referral to Counseling Services, it would be helpful for the student to hear in a clear, concise manner your concerns and why you think counseling would be helpful. Also, having the student call for an appointment increases his/her responsibility and commitment to come in for counseling. There may be times however, when it is preferable for you to call and make an appointment for him/her or accompany the student to the Counseling Services (e.g. the student is in crisis).

9. You might tell the student a few facts about Counseling Services. For example, it is best to call in advance for an appointment. All discussions are held confidential except when the student presents a danger to self or others or when child/elder abuse is involved. Counseling Services does <u>not</u> share information about a student with other campus

departments without the student's consent – to do so would be illegal; nothing shows up on the academic record.

10. Except in emergencies, it is up to the student to decide whether or not to pursue counseling. Respecting the student and preserving your relationship with him/her is of greater benefit than pressuring the student and jeopardizing your rapport. Suggest that the student may want to have some time to consider counseling as an option, and then follow-up with them at a later date.

Extending yourself to others always involves some risk-taking, but it can be a gratifying experience when kept within realistic limits.

IDENTIFYING THE DISTRESSED STUDENT

The college years can be stressful for many. In the contemporary climate of competition and pressure, many students cope with these stresses, but others find that stress becomes unmanageable and interferes with learning. In some cases, these students may even disrupt the learning of others.

Some students or community members may demonstrate distressed, disturbed, or dysregulated behaviors. Many students initially seek assistance from faculty or staff members. Below are guidelines developed by Virginia Tech to identify students in distress:

- Excessive procrastination and poorly prepared work, especially if inconsistent with previous work.
- Infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed.
- Dependency (e.g., the student who hangs around or makes excessive appointments during office hours).
- Listlessness, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class.
- Marked changes in personal hygiene.
- Impaired speech and disjointed thoughts.
- Repeated requests for special considerations (e.g., deadline extensions).
- Threats to others.
- Expressed suicidal thoughts (e.g., referring to suicide as a current option).
- Excessive weight gain or loss.
- Behavior which regularly interferes with effective class management.
- Frequent or high levels of irritable, abrasive, or aggressive behavior.
- Unable to make decisions despite your repeated efforts to clarify or encourage.
- Bizarre behavior that is obviously inappropriate for the situation (e.g., talking to something/someone that is not present).
- Overly nervous, tense, or tearful.

IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO DISTURBING CREATIVE WRITING

Faculty can face complicated issues raised by disturbing student writing. Occasionally, student writing can create an uncomfortable environment and raise questions about the author's mental state. Disturbing writing in combination with disturbing behavior will heighten concern. The instructor may feel the need to address these issues.

It is impossible to predict behavior on the basis of writing alone. When instructors are concerned about a student, their best service is to encourage that student to seek advice and assistance from experts. These guidelines are meant to help assess and respond to questionable situations. They are not absolute and cannot guarantee outcomes.

Instructors should follow their own instincts and common sense when determining what constitutes disturbing writing. A standard definition may include writing that warns of a potential harm; expresses deep desperation; threatens harm to self, others or property; or portrays violence or gruesome details of actual or imagined events.

In the lessons learned from tragedy, Virginia Tech developed a series of questions instructors might find helpful in distinguishing creative and literary explorations of themes like violence, drugs and suicide, from a threat or cry for help.

- "Is the creative work excessively violent? Do characters respond to everyday events with a level or kind of violence one does not expect, or may even find frightening? If so, does the violence seem more expressive of rage and anger than it does of a literary aesthetic or a thematic purpose?

- "Are the characters' thoughts as well as actions violent or threatening? Do characters think about or question their violent actions? In other words, does the text reveal the presence of a literary sensibility mediating and making judgments about the characters' thoughts and actions, or does it suggest unmediated venting of rage and anger? If the literary sensibility is missing, is the student receptive to adding that layer and to learning how to do so?"

- "Is this the student's first piece of violent writing? Is violence at the center of everything the student has written, or does other writing suggest that violence is something the student is experimenting with for literary effect?"

- "Are the violent actions in the work so disturbing or so extreme as to suggest they go beyond any possible sense of purpose in relation to the larger narrative?"

- "Is the writing full of expressions of hostility toward other racial or ethnic groups? Is the writing threateningly misogynistic, homophobic, racist, or in any way expressive of a mindset that may pose a threat to other students?"

Once a concern about a student's writing is identified, the instructor may implement the following steps:

Step 1: Talk Informally with the Student

Try to make the discussion as informal as possible. It may be best to do this before or after class, or in a common area, rather than having the student come by the instructor's office. If the student seems at all threatening, do not meet with the student alone. Alert a supervisor or colleague about the meeting time and place. Arrange a warning system so that help is readily available, if needed. Set up the room or location and maintain a safe environment where the exit is not blocked and

the vision in/out of the room is not obstructed. Listen carefully and allow the student to talk as much as he or she wants. Focus on the content of the writing rather than on the student. Ask about the inspiration and evolution of the writing, what authors may have influenced the student, and how the imagery or action relates to the overall theme of the work.

It may be appropriate to offer counsel and support in helping the student deal with any identified issues. Encourage the student to visit Counseling Services if the student is in need. Provide the student with contact information for Counseling Services. Follow-up later to see if the student has gone to counseling. Document meeting(s) including date, time and location; advice given; action taken and outcomes. Keep the original writing on file.

Step 2: Consult with the Department Chair
If after a conversation with the student, concerns continue or increase, consult with your Department Chair. Present as thorough a picture as possible of the writing and the cause of concern. Share the writing in question, explain the situation in detail, review notes from the meeting with the student, and seek advice about interacting with the student.

If the conversation between the instructor and Chair leaves either feeling uncomfortable, the Chair will confer with Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Vice President of Academic Affairs decides how to proceed in the particular situation.

Step 3: Refer to SOBI Team
In instances where concerns are considered serious, the Department should seek advice from the SOBI Team which includes experts in mental health and law enforcement. The SOBI Team, in conjunction with the Department, will assess whether or not further action or intervention is necessary. All conversations regarding the student should be on a need-to-know basis, focusing on the current issue.

THE DEPRESSED STUDENT

College students are at significant risk for depression. Student life is demanding and many students work. Younger students are at a developmental stage marked by uncertainty, change and strong emotions. Older students are likely to be juggling an exhausting load of school, work and family obligations. The lifetime prevalence (how many people will meet diagnostic criteria during a specified period in their life) for major depressive disorder in 15-24 year olds is 20.6% for females and 10.5% for males. Major depression differs from feeling sad or struggling with life events. It significantly impairs a person's functioning while reducing their hope for change and motivation to seek help. In major depression, a person's appraisal of him or herself, the future and the world at large become markedly and irrationally negative and distorted.

Due to the opportunities that faculty and staff have to observe and interact with students, they are often the first to recognize that a student is in distress, even when the student continues to function in class. Depressed behavior includes:

- Tearfulness/general emotionality
- Dependency (a student who makes excessive requests for your time)
- Lack of energy/motivation; indecisiveness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Alcohol or drug use
- Agitation, hostility or angry outbursts
- Markedly diminished performance
- Infrequent class attendance
- Increased anxiety/test anxiety/performance anxiety
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Deterioration in personal hygiene

Students experiencing depression often respond well to a small amount of attention for a short period of time. Early intervention increases the chances of the student's return to good health.

Do:

- Let the student know you're aware he/she is feeling down and you would like to help.
- Be patient with the student with regard to course requirements.
- Encourage the student to talk to a Counselor.
- Consult with a Counselor if you need guidance on how to make a referral.
- Immediately contact Counseling Services if the student suggests that he/she wants to commit suicide. Walk the student to see a counselor, if necessary.

Don't:

- Bombard the student with "fix it" solutions or advice.
- Minimize the student's feelings, e.g., "Don't worry." "Everything will be better."
- Chastise the student for poor or incomplete work.
- Drop the student without first consulting with a Counselor.
- Do nothing.

THE SUICIDAL STUDENT

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. It is important to view all suicidal comments as serious and make appropriate referrals. Suicidal people are irrational about how bad things are, now and in the future. High-risk indicators include:

1. Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and futility
2. A severe loss or threat of loss (death, break up of a relationship, flunking out)
3. Talk of ending things (quitting school, work)
4. A detailed suicide plan with specified means (high risk of lethality)
5. A history of previous attempt(s)
6. Tearfulness, agitation, insomnia
7. Giving away important possessions
8. History of alcohol or drug abuse
9. Feelings of alienation and isolation; complete withdrawal
10. Making comments such as "I don't want to be here anymore" or "I can't do this anymore."
11. Completing perceived unfinished business (telling others "thank you for all you've done for me", preparing a will)

Do:

- Take the student seriously – 80 percent of people who commit suicide give warning of their intent.
- Refer the student immediately to Counseling Services or, if in the evening or on the weekend, to the **Bexar County Behavioral Health 24-Hour Mobile Crisis & Substance Abuse Hotline (210) 223-7233 or 1-800-316-9241**. The Center for Health Care Services provides additional information at http://chcsbc.org/. Call 911 if the student has a weapon or other means to harm him/herself. The student does not need to agree to this. It's safer to offend than to overlook.

Don't:

- Assure the student that you are his/her friend; agree that you are a stranger, but even strangers can be concerned.
- Ignore or downplay the issue.
- Tell them everything is alright.
- Be overly warm and nurturing.
- Be ambiguous, cute or humorous.
- Challenge or agree with any mistaken or illogical beliefs.
- Assume that anyone else knows about their suicidal thoughts and feelings.

THE ANXIOUS STUDENT

Anxiety is a normal response to a perceived danger or threat to one's well-being. For some students, the cause of their anxiety will be clear but for others it will be difficult to pinpoint the source of their stress. Regardless of the cause, the resulting symptoms are similar and include: rapid heart palpitations; chest pain or discomfort; dizziness; sweating; trembling or shaking; and cold, clammy hands. The student may also complain of difficulty concentrating, always being "on the edge," having difficulty making decisions or being too fearful to take action. In rare cases, a student may experience a panic attack in which the physical symptoms occur spontaneously and intensely in such a way that the student may fear he/she is dying.

The following guidelines remain appropriate in most cases:

Do:

- Let them discuss their feelings and thoughts. Often this alone relieves a great deal of pressure.
- Provide reassurance.
- Remain calm.
- Be clear and directive. "Let's sit down and do some slow breathing."
- Provide a safe and quiet environment until the symptoms subside.
- Remind them that their anxiety will subside, sooner or later.
- Refer them to Counseling Services, if needed.

Don't:

- Trivialize the perceived threat to which the student is reacting.
- Take responsibility for their emotional state.
- Overwhelm them with information or ideas to "fix" their condition.
- Let them leave without writing down any referral or appointment information they need. Anxious people are not able to retain information given while under duress.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCING DELUSIONS OR CONFUSION

A person having delusions is literally out of touch with reality for biological reasons. This can be seen in college students who are having a psychotic episode or a thought disorder, or occasionally, in normal students who have abused stimulant drugs for an extended period. College-aged students are in the middle of the period (late teens to mid-thirties) when most people with thought disorders first demonstrate the symptoms of their illness.

Some of the features of being out of touch with reality are disorganized speech, disorganized behavior, odd or eccentric behavior, inappropriate or no expression of emotion, expression of erroneous beliefs that usually involve a misinterpretation of reality, expression of bizarre thoughts that could involve visual or auditory hallucinations, withdrawal from social interactions, an inability to connect with people and an inability to track and process thoughts that are based in reality. Less severe symptoms may come across as a kind of "oddness", with the student responding with non-sequiturs and showing extended delays before responding to questions or in conversations. While this student may elicit alarm or fear from others, they are generally not dangerous and are likely to be more frightened and overwhelmed by you than you are by them. Occasionally, a person experiencing a paranoid delusion may act violently, but this occurs in the minority of cases.

When you encounter a student who demonstrates delusions or confusion:

Do:

- If the situation is not an immediate threat, call Counseling Services to consult.
- If there is immediate danger, call the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 911 or 9-911 from a campus phone.
- Respond with warmth and kindness, but set limits.
- Remove extra stimulation from the environment (turn off the radio, step outside of a noisy classroom).
- Acknowledge your concerns and state that you can see they need help. "I don't really understand what you're trying to tell me, but I see that you're upset."
- Acknowledge their feelings or fears without supporting the misperceptions, e.g., "I understand you think someone is following you, but I don't see anyone and I believe you're safe."
- Acknowledge your difficulty in understanding them and ask for clarification or restatement. "Sorry, I don't understand. What I asked was…"
- Focus on the "here <u>and</u> now." Tell the student the plan for getting him/her to a safe environment, and repeat the plan emphasizing the safe environment. "Ok, let's get you over to Counseling Services to talk with the folks there. "It's a safe place and they will help you."
- Be aware that the student may show no emotions or intense emotions.
- Be aware that the student may be extremely fearful to the extent of paranoia.
- Be aware that the student may not understand you or understand only parts of what is being said.
- Be aware that, on occasion, a student in this state may pose a danger to self or others.

Don't:

- Argue or try to convince them of the irrationality of their thinking, as their brain may be literally incapable of accepting the information.
- Encourage or support the delusions, e.g., "Oh yeah, I hear the voices (or see the devil)."
- Demand, command, or order.
- Expect that the student will understand you.
- Assume the student will be able to take care of him/herself when out of touch with reality.
- Do nothing and hope that others will intervene.
- Allow friends to take care of the student without getting a professional opinion.
- Assume the family knows about the student's condition.
- Encourage further discussion of the delusional processes.

THE VERBALLY AGGRESSIVE STUDENT

Students usually become verbally abusive when in frustrating situations that they see as being beyond their control; anger and frustration become displaced from those situations onto the nearest target. Explosive outbursts or ongoing belligerent, hostile behavior become this student's way of gaining power and control in an otherwise out-of-control experience. It is important to remember that the student is generally not angry with you personally, but is angry at his/her world and you are the object of pent-up frustrations.

This behavior is sometimes associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs, as intoxication is used to relieve tension, but ends up lowering their inhibitions about expressing their anger.

Do:

- Acknowledge their anger and frustration, e.g., "I hear how frustrated you are."
- Rephrase what they are saying and identify their emotion, e.g., "I can see how upset you are because you feel your rights are being violated and nobody will listen."
- Reduce stimulation; invite the person to a quieter place if this is comfortable and safe for you.
- Allow the individual to ventilate, get the feelings out, and tell you what is upsetting them. Take care of your own safety first, especially if the person is becoming increasingly agitated, "You are getting worked up, please control yourself or I will have to call the campus police."
- Be directive and firm about the behaviors you will accept, e.g., "Please step back; you're too close." "I cannot listen to you when you yell at me." "If you want my help, you'll have to speak politely and I will do the same."
- Help the person problem solve and deal with the real issues when they become calmer.
- Keep a safe distance from the student. There should be a minimum of three (3) feet between you and the student.
- Call the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911 if you feel uncomfortable with the situation.

Don't:

- Get into an argument or shouting match.
- Become hostile or punitive, e.g., "You can't talk to me that way!"
- Touch the student.
- Press for explanations for their behavior.
- Ignore the situation.

THE VIOLENT STUDENT

Violence, because of emotional distress, is rare and typically occurs when the student's level of frustration has been so intense or of such an enduring nature as to erode all of the student's emotional controls. The adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," best applies here. Potentially violent people almost always exhibit warning signs prior to acting out - no one "just snaps". While no one clue indicates a potential danger, even minor clues can be cause for concern and warrant a response. There are four broad categories of behaviors that might indicate a developing problem:

1. Verbal clues: direct and indirect threats; talking about violent plans, fantasies or past behavior; expressing a wish to kill or die; harassing or abusive language.
2. Physical clues: weapons possession, drawings or writing with violent themes, frequent listening to music with violent themes, agitated or threatening behavior, bullying, destruction of property, deteriorating appearance, isolating, inappropriate displays of anger/aggression, rebelling against college rules.
3. Obsessive thinking: preoccupation with resentments or grudges against someone, romantic obsessions, perceived injustice, weapons, past violent events.
4. Bizarre thoughts: persecutory delusions; paranoia; grandiose delusions involving power, control, or destruction; deteriorating thought processes.

Alcohol and other drugs can reduce inhibitions against violence. If it appears the student is intoxicated and agitated, your primary goal then is to keep yourself and any others safe. Seek help.

Do:

- First determine if you feel safe with the student. If not, remove yourself and call the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 911.
- Consult with Counseling Services, your Department Chair, your Dean, or supervisor for non-crisis situations.
- Attempt to prevent total frustration and helplessness by quickly and calmly acknowledging the intensity of the situation, e.g., "I can see you're really upset and are ready to lash out."
- Explain simply, clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable, e.g., "Sit down and lower your voice."
- Use brief and specific directives and questions. "What do you need? I want to help."
- Get necessary help (send a student for campus police, other staff, dean, etc.).
- Document and Report the situation to your supervisor as soon as possible.
- Stay safe. Maintain easy access to an exit (student should not be between you and the door); keep furniture between you and the student.

Don't:

- Assume the student can take in a normal amount of information – keep your statements simple.
- Ignore warning signs that the person is escalating, e.g., raised voice, flushed face, clenched fists, threats.
- Threaten, tease or corner the student.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Touch the student.
- Be alone with the student.
- Overlook bizarre or irrational statements.

THE DEMANDING, PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE OR MANIPULATIVE STUDENT

Sometimes students seek to control your time; they unconsciously believe the amount of time received is a reflection of their worth. You may find yourself increasingly drained and feeling responsible for this student beyond your normal involvement. It is important that the student be connected with many sources of support on-campus and in the community.

Demanding students can be difficult to interact with because they can be intrusive and persistent. Demanding traits can be associated with anxiety, agitated depression and/or personality disorders. Some characteristics of demanding students are a sense of entitlement; an inability to empathize; a need to control; difficulty dealing with ambiguity; a strong drive for perfection; difficulty respecting structure, limits, and rules; persistence after hearing "no"; dependency on others to take care of them; and a fear of dealing with the realities of life.

When dealing with a demanding student:

Do:

- Insist that they make their own decisions. You specify what you can do, and then they decide.
- Set firm and clear limits on your time and involvement. End the conversation when it exceeds those limits, even if the student is not satisfied. It's not helpful to the student to stay engaged, despite their distress. You may feel like you're being harsh, but you're not.
- Offer referrals to other resources on and off campus.
- Set and enforce limits to prevent the disruption of a class, lab or study group via acting out or monopolizing the discussion.
- Set limits on where and when you talk with them, e.g., no home numbers (unless everybody gets it), no being cornered while you are having lunch.
- Consult the Student Conduct Code, located in the Alamo Colleges District e-Catalog, which cites the standards of student conduct if excessive student demands become disruptive. You can also make a referral to the Vice President of Student Success.
- Consult with your supervisor or department chair for guidance and support. You can also make a referral to the Vice President of Student Success.

Remember that your ability to be able to teach or serve other students and the other students' needs for an environment conducive to learning also must be met.

Don't:

- Avoid the student as an alternative to setting and enforcing limits.
- Argue with the student.
- Accommodate inappropriate requests or get trapped into giving advice, special conditions, changing your schedule, etc.
- Feel obligated to take care of him/her, or feel guilty about not doing more.
- Ignore the problem and the impact that it has on you and the other students.
- Allow the student to intimidate you.

THE STUDENT UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive drug. It is common to find alcohol abusers in college populations also abusing other drugs, both prescription and illicit. Patterns of use are affected by fads and peer pressure. Currently, alcohol is the preferred drug on college campuses.

The effects of alcohol on the user are well known to most of us. Student alcohol abuse is most often identified, by faculty and staff, when irresponsible, unpredictable behavior affects the learning environment (i.e., drunk and disorderly conduct), or when a combination of the health and social impairments associated with alcohol/drug abuse sabotages student performance. Because of the denial that exists in most substance abusers, it is important to express your concern about the student not in terms of suspicions about alcohol and other drugs but in terms of specific changes in behavior or performance. If you are uncertain about how to approach a difficult situation, please call Counseling Services to consult.

Do:

- Express concern to the student regarding his/her specific behavior.
- Offer support and concern for the student's overall well-being.
- Contact the Student Health Center and/or Counseling Services to discuss the situation.
- Maintain contact with the student after a referral is made.
- Consider informing your class at the beginning of the semester that students who appear to be intoxicated will be asked to leave. "This probably won't ever come up, but if anyone even appears to be intoxicated in class…"
- Address the substance abuse issue if the student is open and willing.

Don't:

- Convey judgment or criticism about the student's substance abuse.
- Make allowances for the student's irresponsible behavior.
- Ignore signs of intoxication in the classroom.

The Student Conduct Code and the Alcohol and Drug Use Policy clearly outline the student's responsibilities.

Alcohol and Drug Use Policy can be found online at:

D.4.7.1.Ex (Exhibit) Notice of Drug-Free Workplace Requirements
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/D.4.7.1.Ex-Exhibit.pdf

F.4.5 Alcohol and Drug Use (Policy)
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.5-Policy.pdf

F.4.5.Ex Notice and Information on Illegal Drugs and Steroids (Exhibit)
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.5.Ex-Exhibit.pdf

THE SUSPICIOUS STUDENT

Typically, these students complain about something other than their psychological difficulties. They are tense, anxious, mistrustful, loners, and sometimes isolative. They tend to interpret minor oversights as significant personal rejection and often overact to insignificant occurrences. They see themselves as the focal point of everyone's behavior and everything that happens has special meaning to them. They are overly concerned with fairness and being treated equally. Feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy underlie most of their behavior.

Do:

- Express compassion.
- Be firm, steady, punctual, and consistent.
- Be clear about the expected standards of behavior. These include specific requirements for academic performance, e.g., due dates, grading, expectations for classroom participation.
- Consult with Counseling Services or Student Health Center, if needed.

Don't:

- Assure the student that you are his/her friend; agree that you are a stranger, but even strangers can be concerned.
- Be overly warm and nurturing.
- Be cute or humorous.
- Challenge or agree with any mistaken or illogical beliefs.
- Be ambiguous.
- Disregard your policies because of the student's behavior.

THE SEXUALLY HARASSED STUDENT

Sexual harassment involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct that is inappropriate. It is sometimes found in the context of a relationship of unequal power, rank or status. It does not matter that the person's intention was not to harass; it is the effect of the behavior that counts. If the conduct interferes with a student's academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment, it is considered sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment usually is not an isolated event, but a repeated pattern of behavior that may include:

- Comments about one's body or clothing
- Questions about one's sexual behavior
- Demeaning references to one's gender
- Sexually-oriented jokes
- Conversations filled with innuendoes and double meanings
- Displaying of sexually suggestive pictures or objects
- Repeated non-reciprocated demands for dates or sex

The **Alamo Colleges District Civil Rights / Title IX Policy** covering sexual harassment of students:

H.1.2 (Policy) Civil Rights Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/H.1.2-Policy.pdf

H.1.2.1 (Procedure) Civil Rights Complaint and Resolution Procedure
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/H.1.2.1-Procedure.pdf

H.1.2.2 (Procedure) Civil Rights Complaints Appeal Procedure
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/H.1.2.2-Procedure.pdf

H.1.2.3 (Procedure) Bully Free Workplace and Campuses
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/H.1.2.3-Procedure.pdf

Common reactions by students who have been harassed is to doubt their perceptions, wonder if it was a joke, or wonder if, in some way, they have brought it on themselves. A student may begin to participate less in the classroom, drop or avoid classes, or even change majors.

Do:

- Separate your personal biases from your professional role.
- Encourage the student to contact the Alamo Colleges District Police to file a report. You may want to call the police yourself, with the student present, to ensure that this is done.
- Encourage the student to keep a log.
- Help the student seek informal advice through a Counselor, Department Chair, supervisor or advisor.

If unresolved, refer the student to Counseling Services for support and assistance.

Don't:

- Fail to act. Taking no action invalidates the student's experience and puts the college in a vulnerable position, should this behavior continue.
- Overreact. Listen, support, and guide the student to appropriate channels.

PREVENTING DISRUPTIVE AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR BEGINS WITH NOTICING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Hostility, verbal aggression, depression, isolation, and withdrawal are key signals that should not be ignored. Disregarding early warning signs facilitates escalation. It is better to offend a student by "over-reacting" and apologize, than to fail to act in the interest of everyone's safety.

Below is a behavioral alert chart developed by the Student Health and Psychological Services at Ventura College, Ventura, California, that includes three categories of behavior and actions that require attention and a response. Each level designates increasing severity of risk. Research suggests that inappropriate, disruptive or violent behavior may be diffused if these issues are addressed early.

LEVELS	LEVEL I: LOW RISK	LEVEL II: MODERATE RISK	LEVEL III: HIGH RISK
WARNING SIGNS	PRONOUNCED AND SUDDEN CHANGE IN ATTENDANCE PATTERNS: • Tardiness • Increased absences CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR: • Withdrawn • Irritable • Confrontational • Depressed • Angry NEGATIVE CHANGE IN ATTITUDE: • Significant change in the way the student interacts with staff and/or students	NEGATIVE/HOSTILE ATTENTION SEEKING BEHAVIOR IN CLASSROOM THREATS TO DO HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS DISCLOSED EITHER IN A DIRECT OR DISGUISED MANNER (**Depending on Severity may be High Risk**): • Jokes • Sarcasm • Hints • Symbolic gestures • Drawings • Writing assignments WITHDRAWN BEHAVIOR OF INCREASING CONCERN/ VACANT STARE OPENLY CONFRONTATIONAL WITH FACULTY, STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS NO PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES WITH PASSIVE/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS AND ACTING OUT	CONTINUED DEMONSTRATIONS OF ODD OR PECULIAR BEHAVIOR AGGRESSIVE AND THREATENING BEHAVIOR OR GESTURES ESCALATING THREATS, RAISED VOICES VISIBLE AGITATION, PHYSICAL TENSION, TREMBLING
WHAT TO DO	1. Make time to meet with the student one-on-one 2. In a non-threatening and non-punitive fashion, comment on your observations of specific behaviors and express your concern 3. Inquire as to what circumstances may be causing the changes in behavior 4. Develop an action plan to address issues 5. Make a referral to Counseling Services 6. Invite the student during office hours to discuss problems that may be interfering with his/her academic goals	1. Meet with the student one-on-one if you feel safe 2. Express your interest in the student's well being 3. In a firm and non-punitive fashion describe the problem behavior 4. Set clear guidelines regarding appropriate behavior 5. Address your concerns with your Chair, Dean or supervisor 6. Notify the Vice President of Student Success	1. Remain calm; don't engage in an argument 2. Keep distance between you and the student 3. Allow the student a way to exit 4. Don't allow yourself to be trapped 5. Reduce noise, talking, questions and stimulation 6. Campus police will respond and make appropriate referral **Call Alamo Colleges District Police Department (911) IMMEDIATELY!**

PART V: REPORTING PROCESS

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING RED FLAG BEHAVIORS

Preventing disruptive and violent behavior begins with noticing student behavior. Students in severe distress frequently leave signals scattered across the campus. The challenge is to pull these pieces together so that patterns of behavior can be observed and the need for a response determined. The Alamo Colleges District seek to address this challenge by providing sound advice for dealing with potentially dangerous situations.

Early and effective intervention can protect the campus community and enhance Student Success. To that end, it is imperative that employees and students know how to recognize problematic behaviors, when to confront them, and how to report them.

Information that should be reported is anything that is witnessed, observed, or in which you are a participant that "sends up a Red Flag." Examples include:

- Suspicious behaviors or actions as well as any criminal acts.
- Knowledge of information or incidents that could cause harm to persons, property or reputation.
- Demonstration of high level violations of the Student Code of Conduct.
- Any high risk behaviors such as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Disturbing or strangely violent student writing.
- Expressions by others of feelings of depression, lack of self-worth, and/or uselessness including suicidal symptoms.

If there is a true emergency, call the Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911. In addition, please keep in mind that reporting false information is a crime and appropriate disciplinary or legal action may be taken as necessary.

The most important thing is to act: “Say something to someone.”

REPORTING THROUGH THE ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT ETHICS HOTLINE

Reports can be filed anonymously through the Alamo Colleges District the Ethics Hotline. Reports can be submitted from any computer that has internet access, by going to https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/default_reporter.asp. Many public locations, including the campus and public library, have internet computers. If you do not have access or are uncomfortable using a computer, you can call the Ethics Hotline toll-free number 844-302-0425) which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

FEEDBACK TO REFERRING INDIVIDUAL

Offering feedback contributes to improved management of the SOBI initiative and ultimately enhances an environment of civility on campus. Referring sources will be notified that the referral has been received and that action is being taken.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Therefore, the specific findings and action taken by the SOBI Team or the district administration may not be disclosed to the referring source.

BEHAVIORAL INCIDENT REPORT

This **SOBI Incident Report Form** is designed to enable faculty, staff and students to voluntarily report "red flag behaviors" that may raise concerns, as well as obvious incidents of an individual's misconduct at the Alamo Colleges District. An incident, in this context, is an event that does not warrant immediate intervention. **In the event of an emergency that requires immediate intervention, call Alamo Colleges District Police Department at 9-911 from a campus phone or 911 from other phones.**

Information obtained through the Behavioral Incident Report will be utilized in support of the functions directly related to the Strategies of Behavioral Intervention program:

1. Provide consultation, education, and support to faculty, staff, and administration in assisting individuals who display concerning or disruptive behaviors;
2. Gather information to assess situations involving individuals who display concerning or disruptive behaviors;
3. Recommend appropriate intervention strategies or disciplinary sanctions;
4. Connect individuals with needed campus and community resources; and
5. Monitor ongoing behavior of individuals who have displayed disruptive or concerning behavior.

The reports provide a standardized mechanism for recording observations of troublesome behaviors, for alerting staff of potential concerns, for responding to individual incidents and for offering appropriate and timely interventions to resolve and/or prevent escalation of issues and behaviors. Reports also assist the Alamo Colleges District in revealing patterns of disruptive behavior of specific individuals and provide aggregate data on the nature and frequency of disruptions at Alamo Colleges District. In accordance with the Alamo Colleges District Student Code of Conduct, information provided in the Behavioral Incident Report may also be considered in determining appropriate disciplinary action with students.

Please complete the report to provide a detailed description of the incident. Use an additional piece of paper, if necessary. Pay particular attention to the behaviors of the individual and the effect of the individual's behavior on others. Concrete, specific observations are most useful. Be honest, respectful, and avoid providing judgments, assessments and opinions. Please describe conversations you have had with the individual and any action you have taken regarding this incident.

Please submit the completed form to the Office of the Vice President for Student Success associated with your college. The SOBI Incident Report Form should be used for non-emergencies and can be submitted from any computer that has internet access by going to https://publicdocs.maxient.com/incidentreport.php?AlamoColleges

College	Vice President of Student Success	Phone Number
Northeast Lakeview College	Dr. Debbie Hamilton	210-486-5421
Northwest Vista College	Debi Gaitan	210-486-4909
Palo Alto College	Gilbert Becerra	210-486-3930
San Antonio College	Dr. Lisa Alcorta	210-486-0930
St. Philip's College	Dr. Mordecai Ian Brownlee	210-486-2252
Off-Campus Site	Contact associated college above	

* Individuals are allowed to make anonymous reports, however if a name is not provided it may hamper the SOBI team's ability to seek follow up information that may be critical in determining an appropriate course of action. If a name is provided the team will provide feedback regarding actions taken.

PART VI: STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

The SOBI Team recommendations do not supersede the authority or decisions of the College Vice President of Student Success and the recommendations are not intended to be a substitute for disciplinary action by the college administration. Rather, the SOBI Teams have been created to provide faculty, staff, and students with a forum to report individuals who are exhibiting disconcerting, disruptive, or distressed behavior, and through the Team's collaborative analysis, provide the College Vice President of Student Success with a recommended course of action.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COMPLYING WITH FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

U.S Department of Education, FERPA Compliance Office:
http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

The Legislative Act:
http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2008-4/120908a.pdf

APPENDIX B: ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

F.4.1 (Policy) Student Records
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.1-Policy.pdf

F.4.1.1 (Procedure) Access to Student Records
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.1.1-Procedure.pdf

F.4.1.2 (Procedure) Amendment to Student Records
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.1.2-Procedure.pdf

F.4.6 (Policy) Academic Grievances
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.6-Policy.pdf

F.4.7 (Policy) Non-Academic Grievances
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.7-Policy.pdf

F.4.7.1 (Procedure) Non-Academic Grievances
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.7.1-Procedure.pdf

APPENDIX C: ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

F.4.2 (Policy) Student Code of Conduct - Non-Academic Misconduct, Academic Integrity
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2-Policy.pdf

F.4.2.1 (Procedure) Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary and Appeal Process
http://alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2.1-Procedure(4).pdf

F.4.2.2 (Procedure) Academic Integrity Disciplinary and Appeal Process
http://alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2.2-Procedure.pdf

E.1.7 (Policy) Instructional Resources: Copyrighted Materials
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/E.1.7-Policy.pdf

APPENDIX D: TEXAS HOUSE BILL 2003: ONLINE HARASSMENT

Texas House Bill 2003 - Online Harassment
http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/81R/billtext/pdf/HB02003F.pdf

APPENDIX E: ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT APPROPRIATE USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

C.1.9 (Policy) Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/C.1.9-Policy.pdf

C.1.9.1 (Procedure) Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/C.1.9.1-Procedure.pdf

F.7.1 Student Email Account the Official Electronic Mode of Communication (Policy)
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.7.1-Policy.pdf

REFERENCES

The site below, linked to the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association, has a wealth of resources on generational dynamics and how these relate to norms, thresholds, behaviors, and interventions:

http://www.nabita.org/

Alamo Colleges District expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. P.M. Forni, John Hopkins University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University **(**Virginia Tech**)**, and Ventura College for granting the Alamo Colleges District permission to borrow resources which were created and developed by the respective institutions:

Dr. P.M. Forni, Cofounder of the John Hopkins University Civility Project

Choosing Civility: The Twenty-five Rules of Considerate Conduct (2002)

St. Martin's Press: New York

Virginia Tech, Cooke Counseling Center

Recognizing and Responding to Students in Distress: A Faculty Handbook

http://www.campussuicidepreventionva.org/facultyhandbook/

Virginia Tech, Department of English

Identifying and Responding to Disturbing Creative Writing

Ventura College, Student Health & Psychological Services

Assisting the Distressed Student