

# COMPREHENSIVE BIT PROTOCOL FOR THE OZARKS TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUSES

## I. An Introduction to OTC's Behavioral Intervention Team: MISSION, PURPOSE, and GOALS

**MISSION** OTC's Behavioral Intervention Team (hereafter referred to as the "BIT") is to provide a systematic response to identify students whose behavior is of concern in order to support student success and to assist in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the students and members of the OTC community.

**PURPOSE** The BIT is to coordinate OTC's resources to address the needs of students who are experiencing significant behavioral disturbances in order to recommend collaborative and purposeful interventions aimed at helping students achieve success. The BIT process is also designed to provide members of the college community, who have concerns regarding students' behavior, with an easily-accessible avenue to report these concerns. Following a referral or information submission, the BIT will, when appropriate, identify treatment and/or referral recommendation options to the student, toward the ultimate goals of student health, safety, success, and retention.

**GOALS** The goals of the BIT are to (1) prevent crises before they occur through the provision of outreach and educational programming, consultation, appropriate assessment, and referrals; (2) ensure that students whose behavior is of concern are contacted through follow-up processes and have access to the appropriate services so that they have the opportunity to improve their welfare; (3) create a unified reporting and tracking system that will allow members of the BIT to observe patterns of behavior that may elicit assessment and to provide a documented response to distressed students.

## II. OTC's Behavioral Intervention Team:

The BIT meets weekly to discuss non-emergency situations and routine incidents. When a report is deemed urgent, the team, or a subset of the team, will meet to make an immediate response.

BIT members include Joyce Thomas, permanent Chair and recorder of the BIT; Karla Gregg, Chair and recorder in the absence of the permanent Chair; Pete Rothrock, Director of Safety & Security; Julia Edwards, Assistant Dean of Disability Support Services; and Deborah Thompson, Faculty. The BIT reports to Rob Rector, Vice President for Administrative Services. Additional college officials may be asked by the BIT Chair to serve on the team in specific situations as needed.

When an urgent situation arises, the team, or a subset of the team, will meet to make an immediate response to the potentially escalating situation. Karla Gregg's office (ICW 219G2) is the default meeting location for convening BIT sessions. Core team members will access each other by cell phone in the event that only one team member is available to respond to urgent situations.

## III. Reporting Incidents to the BIT

In cases of emergency, reporters must contact Safety & Security (417-447-6911) or 911. The BIT plays a secondary role in all emergency situations and should be contacted *only after making contact with emergency response personnel* (i.e. Safety & Security; 911).

Reporters can choose to remain anonymous. Each report should include as much detail as possible about the behavior and/or incident of concern. Once an incident report is submitted, the reporter will receive a computer-

generated response, acknowledging the report has been successfully submitted. The reporter will also receive an acknowledgement of receipt *if* he/she indicated an email address. Similar to the Neighborhood Watch program, the BIT encourages individual and collective responsibility in reporting student behaviors of concern. When reporting behaviors of concern using the on-line Incident Reporting Database [www.otc.edu/bit](http://www.otc.edu/bit)

#### **IV. Response and Follow through**

When an incident report comes in:

1. The report is read by the BIT members.
2. The report is discussed by BIT members and the NCHERM CUBIT Risk Rubric is consulted. The level of risk is assessed as distress, disturbance, or dysregulated.
3. The actions of the BIT may include, but are not limited to:
  - No immediate action.
  - Contacting the student via phone or email to extend concern and informally inquire as to his/her well-being.
  - Meeting with the student(s) involved to discuss:
    - a. Student Needs
    - b. Campus Services
    - c. College Expectations
  - Referring the student to various programs or services on campus (including, but not limited to Counseling Services, Financial Aid Services, Disability Support Services, and the Tutoring and Learning Center).
  - Notifying the parents or next-of-kin (regardless of the student's age) or initiating the action necessary to place the student in the custody of an institution capable of dealing with the student's needs and behavior.
  - Referring the student to the Dean of Student Development for possibly disciplinary action.
4. The core team will carefully monitor periods where a previously identified student-in-distress goes dormant and will determine, based on pre-determined guidelines, whether quietude raises increased or decreased monitoring needs and act accordingly.

#### **V. Example of the BIT process**

A student is identified by a member of the campus community as exhibiting behaviors of concern, however, the behaviors are mild in severity and do not clearly indicate imminent danger or harm. The reporter documents the incident and behaviors using the online reporting system. A brief, automated acknowledgment will be sent to the reporter and, if the reporter does not remain anonymous, a designated BIT core team member will also send a brief communication, acknowledging receipt of the report. The communication will include language that the report has been received and that further contact will be initiated if appropriate and if the reporter did not wish to remain anonymous.

When the designated BIT core team member reviews all daily incident reports and is informed of this particular behavioral report he/she :

- may determine that no immediate action is necessary as this is one, isolated behavioral report but will bring the report up for review at the next regular meeting of the core BIT.
- may consult right away with members of the core team as this behavior may be one of many “mild” behavioral reports concerning the same student:
  - A pre-determined level of severity may have been met due to the number of reports received (even if each report on its own reached only a “mild” threat level) and appears to warrant quick action.
  - The designated BIT member will contact other members of the core team and provide an informal assessment regarding the level of risk using the NCHERM CUBIT Risk Rubric.
  - If necessary, the core team (or a subset of the team) will meet in-person and complete a preliminary investigation and finding of fact and determine the need for intervention (this may include a referral to an OTC or community resource).
  - The BIT will begin its intervention with the student and document all data collected and actions taken in the on-line reporting system.
  - The BIT will follow-through with the student for a pre-determined period of time, following the pre-determined guidelines and a final report of all team interventions will be recorded.

## **VI. Campus Education**

College community members must be aware of the BIT, how it functions, and how to report student behaviors of concern.

- Professional development educational opportunities concerning the BIT, behavioral warning signs, how use the incident reporting system, and relevant topics related to the BIT, will be made available on a regular basis to all members of the campus community.
- Campus education will be on-going, using numerous forms of communication presented in many different settings. Educational opportunities may include informational presentations, professional development workshops, webinars, etc.