

## **COMPREHENSIVE BIT PROTOCOL FOR OZARKS TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **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 coordinates OTC's resources to address the needs of students who are experiencing 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 receipt of a report, the BIT will, when appropriate, identify assistance 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 as follows:

1. Prevent crises 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 core members of the BIT meet weekly to discuss non-emergency situations and routine incidents. Weekly BIT meetings take place in ICE 127 (the Disability Support Services Conference Room). When a report is deemed urgent, the team, or a subset of the team, will meet to make an immediate response.

The expanded members of the BIT will meet with the core BIT at least one time each month. Additional meeting attendance may be required.

Core BIT members include Joyce Bateman, Chair and recorder of the BIT; Karla Gregg, Vice-chair and recorder in the absence of the Chair; Scott Leven, College Director of Safety & Security; Julia Edwards, College Director of Equity and Compliance; Loren Lundstrom, Dean of Student Development. Expanded BIT members include Susan Blakey, Assistant Director High School Programs (Career Center liaison to the BIT), Jill Colony, Secretary to Dean of Technical Education (Technical Division liaison to the BIT); Ronda Jones, Nursing Faculty (Allied Health liaison to the BIT), and Kelly Miller, Psychology Faculty (General Education Division liaison).

When an urgent situation arises, the core team, or a subset of the team, will meet to make an immediate response to the potentially escalating situation. Expanded BIT members may also be consulted when urgent situations arise. Dean Karla Gregg's office (ICW 219G2) is the default meeting location for convening emergency BIT sessions. Core and expanded BIT 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, individuals are instructed to contact 911 or Safety & Security (417-447-6911) first. The BIT plays a secondary role to all urgent circumstances and should be contacted only after initial emergency notifications are made. Individuals should follow up during the next business day with Safety & Security and the BIT by completing the BIT Student Concern/Incident Report form.

Reporters are asked to complete the online incident report form found at [otc.edu/otccares](http://otc.edu/otccares) when reporting behaviors of concern. 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 acknowledgment of receipt from a member of the core BIT if he/she indicated an email address.

### **IV. Response and Follow Through**

A. When an incident report comes in:

1. The report is read by the appropriate BIT member.
2. The report is assigned to the appropriate BIT member.
3. The report is discussed by the BIT either immediately (in the case of urgent situations) or at the next weekly meeting of the BIT.
4. The appropriate tools and/or professionals are consulted (e.g. OTC's Behavioral Intervention Risk Assessment Tool; the BIT's contracted Forensic Psychologist; the SIVRA) to determine the level of risk and the most appropriate action(s) to take.

B. The actions of the BIT may include, but are not limited to:

1. Reviewing the incident report(s) and establishing baseline behavior.
2. Reaching out to the student via phone or email to extend concern and informally inquire as to his/her well-being.
3. Meeting with the student(s) involved to discuss:
  - i. Student needs
  - ii. Campus services
  - iii. College Expectations

- iv. Referring the student to various programs or services on campus (e.g. Counseling Services, Financial Aid Services, Disability Support Services, the Tutoring and Learning Center).
  - v. Referring the student to appropriate community resources.
  - vi. Notifying outside parties (e.g. Police Department, other higher education institutions, student's next-of-kin) in high priority cases, when the student is considered an imminent threat to self or others.
  - vii. Referring the student to the Dean of Students or Dean of Student Development for possible disciplinary action.
- C. The BIT will carefully monitor periods where a previously identified student-in-distress goes dormant and will determine whether quietude raises increased or decreased monitoring needs and acts accordingly.
- D. As a Community College with limited mental health resources, the BIT recognizes that some students' needs may exceed the scope of available assistance at OTC. For students whose behavior(s) have been deemed a severe or extreme priority (as defined by OTC's Risk Assessment Tools and/or consultation with consulting psychologist(s)), and the student has been separated from OTC, the Behavioral Intervention Team responsibilities will end when:
1. Community resources have been offered to student of concern at the time of separation;
  2. An administrative hold has been placed on student's OTC records.
- Even after a student's case has been closed (due to separation from the institution or because the terms of the student's BIT requirements/sanctions have been met), BIT records will remain on file indefinitely, should the student seek readmittance in the future.

## **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 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.

When the designated Team member reviews all daily incident reports and is informed of this particular behavioral report, he/she may:

- Establish a case with the baseline behavior reported and bring the report up for review at the next regular meeting of the BIT.
- Consult immediately with members of the Team as this behavior may be considered high priority or 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 Team and provide an informal assessment regarding the level of risk using the appropriate risk assessment tools (e.g. OTC’s Behavioral Intervention Risk Assessment Tool).
- If necessary, the 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 Team will begin its intervention with the student and document all data collected and actions taken in the on-line report system.
- The BIT will follow-through with the student as needed 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 to 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.

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