

# **COMPREHENSIVE OTCCARES/BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM PROTOCOL**

## **OZARKS TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **I. An Introduction to OTCCARES and the Behavioral Intervention Team: MISSION, PURPOSE, AND GOALS**

**MISSION** OTCCares and the Behavioral Intervention Team (hereafter referred to as the “BIT”) 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**

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. OTCCares and the 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 Equity and Compliance 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; Karla Gregg, Vice-chair; Scott Leven, College Director of Safety & Security; Julia Holmes, College Director of Equity and Compliance; Loren Lundstrom, Dean of Student Development; Autumn Porter, Assistant Coordinator of Title IX; Corey Charlé, Specialist-Assistive Technology, Disability Support

Services and Recorder for the BIT. 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), Kelly Miller, Psychology Faculty (General Education Division liaison), and John R. Brandt, Consulting Psychologist to the BIT.

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 OTCCares and the BIT**

In cases of emergency, individuals are instructed to contact 911 or Safety & Security (417-447-6911) first. OTCCares and the BIT play 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 OTCCares 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. A case is opened in the case management system.
  - i. The type of case is identified (e.g. Student Conduct, BIT, Equity & Compliance, HR, Safety & Security).
  - ii. The case is assigned to the appropriate Team member.
  - iii. If the reported concerns necessitate that more than one OTCCares department be responsible for follow-up, separate cases may be opened and assigned.

- iv. For BIT cases, a risk level is identified and entered into the case. To determine the initial and subsequent risk level(s) and action(s) to take, appropriate tools and/or professionals are consulted (e.g. OTC's core and expanded BIT members, Behavioral Intervention Risk Assessment Tool; Direct Threat Analysis Form, if applicable; the BIT's contracted Forensic Psychologist; the SIVRA).
- 3. The case is discussed by the BIT either immediately (in the case of urgent situations) or at the next weekly meeting of the BIT.
- 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. Referral to various programs or services on campus (e.g. Counseling Services, Financial Aid Services, Disability Support Services, Tutoring and Learning Center).
    - v. Referral 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. Referral to the Dean of Students or Dean of Student Development for possible disciplinary action.
    - viii. Referral to the Equity & Compliance department.
  - 4. When applicable, conducting an individualized assessment to determine whether an individual poses a significant risk to the health and safety of the College Community, and if so, whether modification of College policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services, will eliminate the significant risk (see section VI of this OTCCares/BIT Protocol).

- 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 who have been separated from OTC consistent with these protocols, the BIT 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.
- E. All BIT records will remain on file indefinitely.

## **V. Example of the OTCCares/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 Team will follow-through with the student as needed and a final report of all Team interventions will be recorded.

## **VI. Direct Threat Analysis**

In cases in which the BIT receives a report of concerning behavior that poses a risk to the health and safety of the College Community, special procedures may apply. The College Community includes employees, students, visitors, guests, and participants in College-sponsored programs and activities (collectively, the “College Community”).

When behavior by an individual with a disability indicates a significant risk to the health and safety of the College community, the College will employ a team approach to determine the nature of the risk and any measures that can be taken to manage the risk. The College will make these determinations as the result of an individualized assessment.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine the level of risk the student poses to the health and safety of the College community and to inform decisions about the student’s future participation in the College’s programs. The BIT will not take or recommend adverse action against a student whose conduct is considered to pose a significant risk to the College community before conducting an individualized assessment.

The BIT will make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence, to ascertain: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices or procedures or, where applicable, the provision of auxiliary aids and services, will mitigate the risk. The BIT undertakes this assessment to ensure compliance with the direct threat regulatory provisions and to ensure that students with disabilities are not subjected to adverse action on the basis of unfounded fear, prejudice and stereotypes.

The BIT may recommend to the Dean of Students or other appropriate administrator that the College impose interim restrictions upon students up to and including an interim suspension. In exceptional circumstances interim restrictions may be imposed if the BIT believes that such interim restrictions are advisable to protect the College community, or to ensure safety and maintenance of order of the College pending a final decision regarding adverse action against an individual on the basis of direct threat. In these exceptional circumstances, minimal due process will be provided in the interim and due process offered subsequently. Written notice will be provided to students of applicable appeal procedures in cases resulting in an interim suspension or other adverse action.

Assessment

The BIT will notify the student of the direct threat inquiry in writing, will provide a copy of the College's BIT Protocol and the name and contact information of the office or staff member the individual can contact regarding the direct threat inquiry or assessment, and will invite the student to provide documents or other information related to the team's direct threat inquiry or assessment. If the student does not provide documents or other information, the BIT will proceed with the documents or information the BIT has available.

The BIT will convene to complete an individualized assessment, utilizing the factors for a direct threat analysis set forth above, to determine whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. The team may consider the imposition of a behavioral contact, if appropriate, that may include, among other things, consultations with health care professionals or restrictions on participation in College operations. If the team determines the student poses a direct threat to the health and safety of the College community, and that the risk cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of policies, practices or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, the BIT will make the necessary referrals for action regarding the student. Disciplinary decisions regarding student conduct are made by the Dean of Students or other appropriate administrator, who will consider the recommendation and Direct Threat Analysis Form (and any supporting documentation) created by the BIT.

#### Appeal Process

A student may use the appeal procedures outlined in Policy 5.16 to appeal a decision made by the BIT. In cases of appeal, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, or designee, will receive and consider the student's Direct Threat Analysis Form completed by the BIT and supporting documentation. The BIT members and approving College official(s) will not participate in the deliberation or decision regarding the student's appeal.

#### Return requirements

Following a determination that an individual poses a direct threat to the College community necessitating a voluntary or involuntary leave or withdrawal, the College may require a return-seeking student to provide documentation that the student no longer poses a direct threat to the College Community. The College may request records from the student and request permission to speak to a treating professional. The records and information that will be requested and required are determined on a case by case basis.

### **VII. Campus Education**

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

- Professional development educational opportunities concerning OTCCares/BIT, behavioral warning signs, how to use the online reporting

system, and relevant topics related to OTCCares/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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