

OZARKS TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OTC CARES Referral and Intervention Protocol

I. MISSION, PURPOSE, AND GOALS

Mission

Student support staff across the college system provide holistic, student-centered assistance through the OTC Cares referral system. They address behavioral concerns, connect students with appropriate resources, and analyze referral data to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of both students and the college community.

Purpose

OTC Cares staff coordinate college and community resources to support students facing personal stressors and basic needs that threaten their success at OTC. They also conduct individualized assessments to determine the appropriate college response when referrals require decisions about a student's participation in programs and activities.

Goals

1. Prevent crises through interventions, outreach, education, consultation, assessment, and referrals.
2. Ensure referred students with concerns are contacted, and when applicable, receive follow-up and access to appropriate resources to improve their well-being.
3. Support student development of life skills to overcome barriers to achieving their academic goals.
4. Create a unified referral and tracking system to observe student behavior patterns and resource requests, informing assessments and documenting responses.
5. Uphold and promote the [four pillars of OTC Cares](#): student-centered, data-informed, proactive, and holistic.

II. TEAM MEMBERSHIP & MEETINGS

Case Management Team

The case manager plays a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being and success of students at OTC by coordinating the response to concerning behaviors, life stressors, and resource needs. They are responsible for reviewing referrals and employing intervention strategies. They are tasked with contacting students, offering support resources, and facilitating meetings to discuss needs, expectations, and referrals to relevant college and community services. Additionally, the case manager monitors the student's progress through regular check-ins, adjusting the intervention strategies as needed, and ensuring that all actions are

thoroughly documented. In cases where a student's needs exceed the college's resources, the case manager coordinates referrals to external organizations for specialized care. At OTC, case managers may include, among others:

- Community Resource Specialists
- Counselors
- Student Success Staff
- College Administrators

Student Care Team (SCT)

The SCT will meet bi-weekly in the Brooks Conference Room (ICW 219) to assess and evaluate the college's student support services and case management workflow. The team will address gaps, obstacles, and communication issues, implementing solutions to ensure students receive targeted and intentional support for their success. Additional OTC employees may be invited to meetings as needed.

- Sarah Bargo, College Director of Student Care and Engagement, Chair ∞
- Joyce Doebler, Dean of Students, Co-Chair ∞
- Kevin Luebbering, Title IX Coordinator and Director of Civil Rights Compliance ∞
- Heith Aldridge, Assistant Supervisor, Safety and Security
- Dr. Tiffany Brunner, College Director High School Programs ∞
- Heather Lewellen, Coordinator of Counseling Services ∞
- Pan Porter, Director of Disability Support Services
- Janet Kingsland, Community Resource Specialist * ∞
- Lacey Busick, Director of Student Success – Technical Education *
- Dr. Drew Aberle, Dean of Arts, Sciences and Business *
- Martha Crise, Instructor-English, Faculty Representative *

* SCT members who will rotate their service.

∞ SCT members who also serve as Case Managers.

Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

The BIT will meet as needed to address new and ongoing cases, assigning tasks to team members for case management. Meetings are held in the Title IX Coordinator's Office (ICW 219K). For urgent concerns or threats, the BIT Chair will convene the team to gather data, assess risk, and implement intervention steps according to the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) guidelines. Additional SCT members or OTC employees may be invited to attend. In the Chair's absence, any BIT member can convene the team.

- Joyce Doebler, Dean of Students, Chair
- Sarah Bargo, College Director of Student Care and Engagement
- Heith Aldridge, Assistant Supervisor, Safety & Security
- Kevin Luebbering, Title IX Coordinator & Director of Civil Rights Compliance

III. REFERRING CONCERNS & REQUESTING RESOURCES

In emergencies, individuals should contact 911 or Safety and Security at 417-447-6911 before submitting a student care referral. The SCT and BIT provide support in all emergency situations, and referrals should only be made after initial emergency notifications. This guidance is available on each referral form and the OTC Cares webpages.

Those referring are asked to complete the appropriate referral form at <http://otc.edu/otccares> when reporting concerning behaviors, life events, stressors, or resource requests. Anonymity is optional. Each referral should include detailed information about the behavior, resource needs, or incident. After submission, the referring party will receive a confirmation and an acknowledgment from the assigned case manager if an email address is provided.

IV. RESPONSE & FOLLOW THROUGH

A. Referral/Report Process:

1. The referral is reviewed and assigned to the appropriate case manager.
2. A student case file is created in Maxient, including:
 - a) Case type
 - b) Case access restriction
 - c) Assignment to the appropriate SCT/BIT member or college administrator

- d) Separate cases for multi-department management if needed
 - e) In cases where threatening behavior is reported, individualized risk assessment tools will be used to determine risk. Section V. of this protocol describes these tools.
3. Urgent cases receive immediate intervention; non-urgent cases receive intervention within two business days.

B. Case Manager Actions:

1. Review referral details.
2. Establish baseline behavior using data from the student's other college contacts.
3. Contact the student via phone, text, Canvas, or email to refer them to support resources.
4. Meet with the student(s) involved to discuss:
 - a) Needs
 - b) College support resources
 - c) College expectations
 - d) Referral to college and community resources
 - If a student's needs exceed available college resources, they may be referred to local agencies for specialized care.
 - e) Referral to the Office of the Dean of Students for conduct administration
 - f) Referral to the Equity & Compliance department
5. Notify appropriate resources.
6. Conduct check-ins at two weeks and one month to assess intervention success on behavior, life situation, and academic persistence.
7. Monitor periods of inactivity in previously identified students to determine the need for increased or decreased monitoring.

C. Case Resolution & Closure:

Before closing a case, the case manager documents decision-making rationale and final outcomes.

OTC Cares staff responsibilities end when college and community resources are offered, the student is separated from OTC, or an administrative hold is placed on the student's OTC records.

D. Documentation:

All actions, notes, tasks, data gathering, risk assessment, intervention strategies, and case timeline items are documented and audit-protected in Maxient, where records remain on file indefinitely.

V. RISK ASSESSMENT & SAFETY INTERVENTION

The BIT may initiate a risk assessment and safety intervention when presented with credible information that a student has or may have engaged in any of the following behaviors:

- The student has engaged or threatened to engage in behavior that poses a significant risk to the health or safety of one or more individuals or to the college community as a whole;
- The student is unable or unwilling to carry out substantial self-care obligations and poses a significant risk to their own safety not based on mere speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations about individuals with disabilities;
- The student has engaged or threatened to engage in behavior that poses a significant disruption to the programs, services, or activities of the college.

Reports containing information of concerning/threatening behavior posing a risk to the health and safety of the college community require data gathering, individualized assessment and intervention strategies.

Individualized Assessment

When a student's behavior indicates a potential risk to the health and safety of the college community or other behaviors mentioned above, the BIT will conduct an individualized assessment.

Purpose

The purpose of the individualized assessment is to determine the level of risk the student poses to the health and safety of the college community, determine action that the college may need to take in response, and to inform decisions about the student's future participation in the college's programs. The BIT will coordinate an individualized assessment prior to taking or recommending adverse action against a student whose conduct appears to pose a significant risk to the college community.

Process

The individualized assessment process and outcome will be based on reasonable judgment that relies on current information, medical knowledge, experience and training, and/or the best available objective evidence to ascertain:

- The nature, duration, and severity of the risk.

- The probability that potential injury will occur; and
- Whether reasonable modifications of college practices or procedures or, where applicable, the provision of auxiliary aids and services, will mitigate the risk.

The BIT may utilize any or all of the following during the course of the individualized assessment:

- Validated NaBITA risk assessment tools to determine the level of risk and what intervention strategies should be employed to reduce the risk. These validated risk assessment tools may include: Risk Rubric, Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA-35), and Violence Risk Assessment of Written Word (VRAW-2)..
- Consultation with a licensed mental health professional, trained in forensic psychology and/or violence risk assessment.
- Psychological evaluation, comprehensive risk assessment or other assessments deemed appropriate by the consulting psychologist or risk assessment professional.

The BIT undertakes this assessment and analysis protocol to ensure that students are not subjected to adverse action based on unfounded fear, prejudice, and stereotypes and to ensure compliance with the direct threat regulatory provisions.

The BIT will notify the student in writing to their OTC email if the student's participation and/or input is required for any portion of conducting individualized assessment and/or analysis. The BIT will also provide a copy of this protocol and the name and contact information of the department or staff member the individual can contact regarding the individualized assessment and will invite the student to provide documents or other information related to the assessment materials. 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, and, utilizing the process above, consider what health and safety concerns the student's behavior raises and whether risks associated with those concerns can be managed by modifications, support measures, or accommodations. The BIT may consider the imposition of a behavioral contract, if appropriate that may include, among other things, consultations with health care professionals or restrictions on participation in college operations.

If the BIT determines the student poses health or safety risk, and that risk cannot be mitigated by reasonable modifications of practices, procedures, support measures or accommodations, 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 another designated administrator, who will consider the recommendation by the BIT and any applicable documentation in making final determinations about the student's academic continuance.

Interim Restrictions

The BIT may recommend to the Dean of Students or other designated administrators that the college impose interim restrictions upon students up to and including an interim suspension. Interim restrictions may be recommended and 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. In these exceptional circumstances, written notice will be provided to the student of the applicable appeal procedures in cases resulting in an interim suspension or other adverse action.

Disability Support Services

When behavior by an individual with an identified disability indicates a significant risk to the health and safety of the college community, the BIT will employ a team approach, in coordination with Disability Support Services as applicable, to determine the nature of the risk and any measures that can be taken to mitigate the risk. The college will make these determinations as the result of the individualized assessment.

Appeal Process

A student may use the appeal procedures outlined in [policy 5.16 Student Discipline and Appeals](#) to appeal a decision made by the Dean of Students or their designee. In cases of appeal, the vice chancellor for student affairs, or designee, will receive and consider the recommendation of 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 an elevated and critical level of risk to the college community necessitating a voluntary or [institutional withdrawal](#), the college may require a return-seeking student to provide documentation that the BIT can analyze to evaluate the student's current level of risk 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.

VI. SYSTEM-WIDE EDUCATION

College community members need to be informed about the SCT, BIT, the OTC Cares referral and case management system, their functions, how to report concerning or threatening student behaviors, alleged Standards of Student Conduct violations, and how to request resources for students.

- a. Regular professional development opportunities on OTC Cares, behavioral warning signs, and the online referral system will be provided to all college community members.
- b. Ongoing education will be delivered through various communication methods and settings, including informational presentations, workshops, and webinars.

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