

Behavioral Intervention Teams (BIT)
Improve Systemic Communication
and
Address Concerning Behaviors



According to the National Association for Student Personnel (**NASPA**) & the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (**NaBitA**)

“Colleges and universities should implement formal threat assessment teams to identify and address situations in which the behavior of students (or other members of the campus community) indicates they may be experiencing difficulty in functioning or may be a threat to self or others.”

In search of safer communities: Emerging practices for student affairs in addressing campus violence. *New Directions for Student Services*, Winter 2008 Supplement p. 14. Available from: Academic Search Premier, Ipswich, MA. Accessed May 20, 2010.

CRISIS PREVENTION

The purpose of the BIT is to utilize a team approach in identifying, monitoring, intervening, and mitigating student (or staff) crises.

On December 8, 2009, Jason Hamilton fired two rounds at the professor in his math classroom at the Woodbridge campus of Northern Virginia Community College.



- ❑ Rifle jammed after two shots and he was arrested in the hall. Police report he was upset about grades before the shooting.
- ❑ He had a .30-06 bolt action rifle purchased the day before at a Dick's Sporting Goods store.
- ❑ Thirty-six of 45 campus security cameras were not working at the time of the shooting , and there were no floor plans or master keys to the building.

On February 12th , 2010, Amy Bishop shot and killed three and severely wounded three others during a faculty meeting.

She taught her regularly scheduled biology class and then attended a faculty meeting. Another professor reports she sat quietly listening for 40 minutes before opening fire.

There is speculation that this was related to her not getting tenure at the university or possibly related to a business project.



VIRGINIA TECH SHOOTING

Cho shot
and killed 32
people on
campus in
2007.

Seung-Hui Cho



JARED LOUGHNER

Killed six people and critically injured Gabrielle Giffords. Pima Community College campus police were ordered to not allow him on campus due to professor's expressed concerns. Loughner was forced out of the college three months earlier after school officials said he was acting bizarre in class.

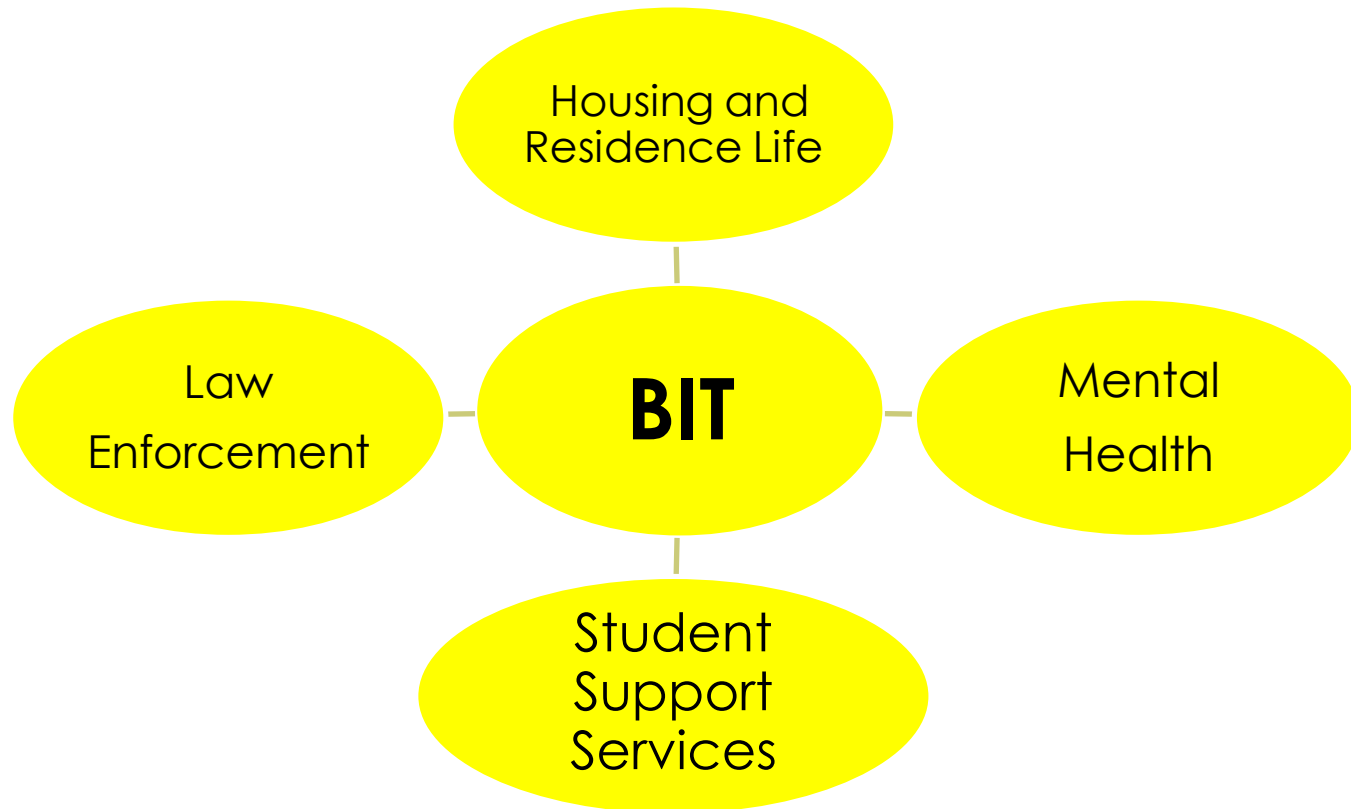


National College Health Survey

In the last 12 months...	WLU 2010 346 respondents 14.7%	WLU 2012 301 respondents 12.9%	WLU 2014 123 respondents 4.8%	WLU 2016 129 respondents 6.4%
Felt very sad	65%	2%	63%	68%
Felt very lonely	55%	53%	59%	65%
Felt so depressed it was hard to function	32%	30%	33%	50%
Seriously considered suicide	7%	6%	9%	21%
Attempted suicide at least once in past 12 months	2%	.3%	2%	1%
Felt like things were hopeless	50%	48%	52%	56%
Intentional cut, burned, bruised or otherwise injured self	6%	5%	5%	17%

There is no data to indicate whether students were receiving counseling services on or off campus.

Behavior Intervention Team (NASPA Recommendation)



In search of safer communities: Emerging practices for student affairs in addressing campus violence (2008).

Rationale for BIT

Protect individuals in the campus community from harm.

Protect the university and staff from legal liability by utilizing student affairs best practices.

Who Can Report Concerns?

Faculty

Student Affairs Staff

Other Staff

Parents

Students

What Does the BIT Team Do?

Assesses the potential threat objectively (free from fears, hearsay, or prejudices).

Determines the dangerousness of the situation on a continuum.

Implements the most appropriate intervention.

Assesses the efficacy of interventions.

Potentially Dangerous

Distressed: Behavior that causes us to feel alarmed, upset or worried (most common).

Disruptive: Behavior that interferes with or interrupts the educational process of other students or the normal business functions of the university.

Dangerous: Behavior that leaves us feeling frightened and in fear for our personal safety or the safety of Others.

General rule:

If it doesn't feel right, it's usually not right!
(trust your gut) **When in doubt—report.**



Things to Document On your Referral

1. Only document observable behaviors and facts
2. Avoid subjective feelings, diagnostic labels and/or derogatory information.
3. This information could be viewed by others so please avoid inflammatory language.

Keep in Mind



If you come by information second hand, follow up on the situation. Don't assume someone else will call or take care of the situation. Promptly pass on the information directly to the:

Campus Police

or

Associate Dean of Students/Director of Housing & Residence Life, Marcella Snyder

Responding to the Distressed Student.

What to do...

- ⦿ Talk to the student
- ⦿ Be direct and non-judgmental

I've overheard or noticed you've been talking about missing classes." and I'm concerned," rather than "Why are not taking your college classes seriously?"
- ⦿ Listen sensitively

Communicate understanding by repeating back the essence of what the student has told you. For example: "It sounds like your having difficulty adjusting to college classes."
- ⦿ Refer
- ⦿ Follow up




Creating a Culture of...

"When in doubt, report and/or refer."

The Distressed Student Helpful Response

Look directly at the student.

Express your concerns in behavioral, specific, nonjudgmental terms

A photograph of a woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing a bright red short-sleeved button-down shirt. She is shown from the chest up, in profile, looking towards the right side of the frame. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be a wooden door or wall.

I've been noticing ...
(specific things you have
observed) and I'm concerned
because...."

The Distressed Student

Unhelpful Responses



"Why did you wait so long to ask for assistance?"

"It's time to grow up and start taking responsibility for your life. You're not in high school anymore."

"You had better get your act together if you expect to pass my class."

The Distressed Student

Helpful Conversation Starters

**"Tell me
how
things
are
going?"**

"You have a number of missing assignments lately. Is there something preventing you from getting them done?"



"You seem very quiet and distracted in class. That's not like you. Is there something going on that you would like to talk about?"

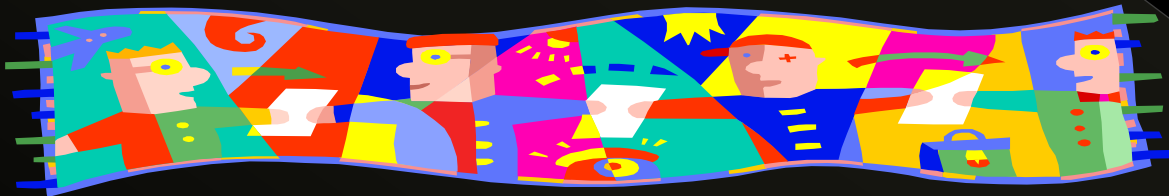
Confidentiality Issues

Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

No release of information outside of team unless there are others who have a need to know.

Confidentiality

Generally speaking, we can only release confidential information if it would be of some specific benefit to the student and then only with his or her written consent.



Privacy Laws

Mental health professionals are allowed to share information in circumstances where they reasonably believe the client poses an imminent danger or serious injury to themselves or to others.

FERPA permits educators to share confidential information with law enforcement, medical personnel, and parents without the student's consent to protect the health and safety of others.

Have a Nice Day

