

**University of Nebraska
At Omaha**

Behavioral Review Team

Procedures

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Introduction

The safety and security of the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus and community are very important. Our students, faculty, staff and visitors should be able to pursue their educations, work, and other activities in a safe, non-threatening environment. Unfortunately, violence can occur. To educate and empower all members of the University community, resources and procedures are in place to prevent, deter, and respond to concerns regarding acts of violence. Safety is everyone's concern.

These procedures have been developed to assess and respond to critical incidents that may occur on campus and to persons whose behavior indicates a possible threat to the safety of others on campus or to themselves. The team, known as the Behavioral Review Team (BRT) will serve as an additional measure for campus safety. However, even with the best intentions, situations may arise that are unforeseen by any member of the university community. The BRT will operate in some instances with very limited information while exercising due diligence to protect the university, community and the individual.

MISSION

In support of the Metropolitan University Mission, the Behavioral Review Team's mission is to address concerns related to the health and safety of the campus community and by coordinating information and developing support plans as needed.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the BRT is to serve as the coordinating hub of a network of existing resources, focused on prevention and early intervention in campus situations involving members experiencing distress or engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors. The BRT will develop intervention and support strategies and offer case coordination. The BRT will regularly review situations and recommend actions in accordance with existing university policies.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Receive, review and document information regarding behavior about members of the university community
- Perform initial review of risk and refer cases to offices and officials as needed for additional action
- Develop strategies to manage potentially harmful or disruptive behavior in an effort to protect the safety and rights of the individual and the university community
- Engage in ongoing refinement of BRT procedures and protocols to foster optimal BRT functioning and interface with the university community
- Provide appropriate follow-up as needed

Goals

- Provide a safe physical environment for members of the university community
- Provide a safe emotional environment for members of the university community
- Promote peace of mind for friends and family of the university community
- Assess and respond to incidents in order to promote a safe environment
- Identify, assess, and respond to threatening behaviors that risk disruption of the learning and working environment and university activities

Overview

The University of Nebraska at Omaha has established the Behavioral Review Team to assist in addressing situations where students, faculty, staff or visitors are displaying behaviors that are threatening, or concerning in nature that potentially impede their own or others' ability to function successfully or safely. These procedures are designed to help identify persons whose behaviors potentially endanger their own or others' health and safety.

It is the responsibility of all faculty, staff, and students to immediately report any situation that could reasonably result in harm. Any member of the campus community may become aware of a troubling person or situation that is causing serious anxiety, stress, or fear. However, assessment of behavior that might constitute a threat should not be confused with management of a crisis.*

*A crisis may be defined where a person may pose an active or immediate risk of violence to self or others. **In these cases the Campus Security Department should be contacted at 402-554-2911.**

The Behavior Review Team is comprised of campus personnel who have decision making ability in dealing with troubling situations. A collaborative process to assess threats will be used and depending on the situation, personnel with areas of specialization may be called upon to assist the Team.

The Team may also consult other individuals as needed, such as a faculty member who has a concern about a student, a professional counselor to share expertise, and/or a manager who has information concerning an employee. The Manager of Campus Security will keep senior university officials advised of the situation, when necessary.

University community members will be able to report threatening or concerning behavior to the Team by speaking directly to a committee member or submitting an incident report. The electronic incident report can be accessed on the following web site:

Behavioral Review Team - www.unomaha.edu/brt

Once submitted, the report will be forwarded to the BRT for review. The submitted report will automatically become part of the electronic database used for active assessment of persons of concern and to generate report data.

The Team will meet regularly as well as on an emergency basis to review reports brought forward by faculty, staff, and students concerning disruptive, inappropriate, and/or threatening behavior.

Reporting Process and Assessment Procedure

If a behavior is observed which is threatening, disruptive, or inappropriate, it should be reported using the online incident report form. Once a report is received, a preliminary review will be conducted by the BRT. The BRT will conduct the preliminary investigation of the submitted report and if necessary, will notify the individual having administrative responsibility for the person of concern. Additional Faculty and Staff may also be consulted during this initial evaluation.

When information about a person's behavior and communications passes an agreed upon threshold of concern, the Team will initiate a behavioral assessment preliminary investigation. An investigation should be initiated in any situation of concern. Upon receiving information concerning a potentially threatening situation, the Team must first consider the urgency of the situation and will immediately contact local law enforcement if warranted.

When information is received concerning a potentially threatening situation, the safety of the university and its community is the priority consideration. The Team, therefore, should consider how to handle the individual of concern while an investigation is being conducted. In making decisions about how to handle a person pending the outcome of a behavioral assessment investigation, care should be exercised to ensure that the individual of concern is treated appropriately because allegations regarding the behavior or perceived threat may be unfounded.

Education and Training

UNO understands that by creating a Behavioral Review Team there is an accompanying responsibility to inform and educate the university community. For this program to be effective, the university community must be aware of the BRT, the need and purpose for intervention, the procedure for filing a report, and how to contact members of the committee with concerns or comments.

Conclusion

Our goal is to provide a safe learning and working environment for all Faculty, Staff, Students and Visitors at UNO. It is everyone's responsibility to report to the Behavioral Review Team situations that could possibly result in harm to any member of the campus community. **If an incident represents an immediate threat, the observer should report directly to Campus Security at 402-554-2911 or 911.**

Appendix A – Online Incident Report

Behavioral Review Team Incident Report

Full Name of person of concern, if known (first and last): _____

ID Number (if known): _____ Email address: _____

Status: Student: _____ Faculty: _____ Staff: _____ Visitor: _____

Your Name (first and last): _____

Your Phone: _____ Your Email: _____

Your position: Student: _____ Faculty: _____ Staff: _____ Visitor: _____

Date of Incident (if known): _____ Time: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Other Witnesses: Yes or No

If yes, their names: _____

Please provide a detailed description of the behavior observed during the incident (using specific, concise, objective language). Forward all documentation to Campus Security, EAB 100. Please do not send any information that is confidential through email as that is not a secure means of communication.

Please call Campus Security at 402-554-2648 with any additional questions.

If this is considered a potential or immediate threat to a person or to the university community at large, call Campus Security at 402-554-2911.

Appendix B – Red Flags, Warning Signs and Indicators

RED FLAGS, WARNING SIGNS AND INDICATORS

By Roger Depue, Ph.D.

Virginia.gov (2008). Report of the Virginia Tech Review Panel, Appendix M. Retrieved on May 15, 2008 from <http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/techpanelreport.cfm>.

Experts who evaluate possible indicators that an individual is at risk of harming himself or others know to seek out many sources for clues, certain red flags that merit attention. A single warning sign by itself usually does not warrant overt action by a threat assessment specialist. It should, however, attract the attention of an assessor who has been sensitized to look for other possible warning signs. If additional warning signs are present then more fact-finding is warranted to determine if there is a likelihood of danger.

Some warning signs carry more weight than others. For instance, a fascination with, and possession of, firearms are more significant than being a loner, because possession of firearms gives one the capacity to carry out an attack. But if a person simply possesses firearms and has no other warning signs, it is unlikely that he represents a significant risk of danger.

When a cluster of indicators is present then the risk becomes more serious. Thus, a person who possesses firearms, is a loner, shows an interest in past shooting situations, writes stories about homicide and suicide, exhibits aberrant behavior, has talked about retribution against others, and has a history of mental illness and refuses counseling would obviously be considered a significant risk of becoming dangerous to himself or others. A school threat assessment team upon learning about such a list of warning signs would be in a position to take immediate action including:

- Talking to the student and developing a treatment plan with conditions for remaining in school
- Calling the parents or other guardians
- Requesting permission to receive medical and educational records
- Checking with law enforcement to ascertain whether there have been any interactions with police
- Talking with roommates and faculty
- Suspending the student until the student has been treated and doctors indicate the student is not a safety risk

Following are some warning signs (indicators and red flags) associated with school shootings in the United States. Schools, places of employment, and other entities that are creating a threat assessment capability may want to be aware of these red flags:

Violent fantasy content –

- . Writings (Stories, essays, compositions),
- . Drawings (Artwork depicting violence),
- . Reading and viewing materials (Preference for books, magazines, television, video tapes and discs, movies, music, websites, and chat rooms with violent themes and degrading subject matter), and role playing acts of violence and degradation.

Anger problems –

- . Difficulty controlling anger, loss of temper, impulsivity,
- . Making threats.

Fascination with weapons and accoutrements –

- . Especially those designed and most often used to kill people (such as machine guns, semiautomatic pistols, snub nose revolvers, stiletos, bayonets, daggers, brass knuckles, special ammunition and explosives).

Boasting and practicing of fighting and combat proficiency –

- . Military and sharpshooter training, martial arts, use of garrotes, and knife fighting.

Loner –

- . Isolated and socially withdrawn, misfit, prefers own company to the company of others.

Suicidal ideation –

- . Depressed and expresses hopelessness and despair,
- . Reveals suicidal preparatory behavior.
[See note below by Dr. Cheryl Yatsko]

Homicidal ideation –

- . Expresses contempt for other(s),
- . Makes comments and/or gestures indicating violent aggression.

Stalking –

- . Follows, harasses, surveils, attempts to contact regardless of the victim’s expressed annoyance and demands to cease and desist.

Non-compliance and disciplinary problems –

- . Refusal to abide by written and/or verbal rules.

Imitation of other murderers –

Appearance, dress, grooming, possessions like those of violent shooters in past episodes (e.g. long black trench coats).

Interest in previous shooting situations –

- . Drawn toward media, books, entertainment, conversations dealing with past murders.

Victim/martyr self-concept –

- . Fantasy that someday he will represent the oppressed and wreak vengeance on the oppressors.

Strangeness and aberrant behavior –

- . Actions and words that cause people around him to become fearful and suspicious.

Paranoia –

- . Belief that he is being singled out for unfair treatment and/or abuse; feeling persecuted.

Violence and cruelty –

- . A history of using violence to solve problems (fighting, hitting, etc.), abusing animals or weaker individuals.

Inappropriate affect –

- . Enjoying cruel behavior and/or being able to view cruelty without being disturbed.

Acting out –

- . Expressing disproportionate anger or humor in situations not warranting it, attacking surrogate targets.

Police contact –

- . A history of contact with police for anger, stalking, disorderly conduct;
- . Past temporary restraining orders (or similar court orders),
- . A jail/prison record for aggressive crimes

Mental health history related to dangerousness –

- . A history of referral or commitments to mental health facilities for aggressive/destructive behavior.

Expressionless face/anhedonia –

- . An inability to express and/or experience joy and pleasure.

Unusual interest in police, military, terrorist activities and materials

Vehicles resembling police cars, military vehicles, surveillance equipment, handcuffs, weapons, clothing (camouflage, ski masks, etc.).

Use of alcohol/drugs –

- . Alcohol/drugs are used to reduce inhibitions so that aggressive behaviors are more easily expressed.

Note: Additional information on suicidal ideation provided by Dr. Cheryl Yatsko, Columbus State University, June 4, 2008.

Suicidal Ideation

Depressed and expresses helplessness, hopelessness, and worthlessness.

Talking about death.

Talking about suicide, or making statements like “everybody would be better off without me.”

Acquiring the means, e.g., buying a gun.

Giving away possessions.

Saying goodbye.

References

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