ASSISTING Disruptive Individuals

WHAT IS DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?
Behavior that interferes with students, faculty or staff and their access to an appropriate educational or work environment is considered disruptive.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?
- Yelling or screaming
- Persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention
- Words or actions that intimidate or harass another
- Words or actions that cause another to fear for his/her personal safety
- Threats of physical assault

WHAT IS MY ROLE?
Disruptive behavior should not be ignored. Remain calm. Remind yourself that it is not about you; it is about the situation. Tell the individual that such behavior is inappropriate and there are consequences for failing to improve the disruptive behavior. Many disruptive situations involve anger. Recognize that the period of peak anger usually lasts 20-30 seconds. Although this may seem like an eternity in the throes of the situation, often it is best to “wait it out” before progressing.

DOCUMENTATION
Disruptive behavior should be documented. Write a factual, detailed account of what occurred. Use concrete terms.

THE DOs
- DO listen through the anger. Use active listening.
- DO acknowledge the feelings of the individual.
- DO allow the person to vent and tell you what is upsetting to him/her. Use silence to allow the person to talk it out.
- DO set limits. Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable: “I will be willing to speak with you as soon as you lower your voice.”
- DO be firm, steady, consistent and honest.
- DO focus on what you can do to help resolve the situation safely.
- DO make personal referrals. Give a name of an individual when possible, and call ahead to brief the person.
- DO maintain clear and consistent boundaries and expectations.
- DO report the behavior to University Police and/or Student Conduct or Human Resources.

THE DON'Ts
- DON'T interrupt, particularly during the first 20-30 seconds of peak anger.
- DON'T minimize the situation.
- DON'T get into an argument or shouting match.
- DON'T blame, ridicule or use sarcasm.
- DON'T touch.
- DON'T ignore warning signs that the person is about to explode.
- DON'T ignore your own limitations on established boundaries.

The DOs

THE DOs
- DO be mindful of cultural norms.
- DO speak with the individual privately.
- DO express your concern in behavioral, non-judgmental terms.
- DO tell him/her you are willing to help.
- DO listen carefully to what he/she is troubled about.
- DO help him/her explore options.
- DO suggest getting help.
- DO make referrals to the appropriate campus department.
- DO point out that help is available and that seeking such help is a sign of strength and courage, rather than of weakness or failure.
- DO maintain clear and consistent boundaries and expectations.
- DO recognize your limits.
- DO enlist the help of others as appropriate.
- DO document the interaction or incident.

THE DON'Ts
- DON'T promise confidentiality.
- DON'T judge or criticize.
- DON'T promise confidentiality.
- DON'T ignore the unusual behavior.
- DON'T make the problem your own.
- DON'T involve yourself beyond the limits of your time or skill.

GUIDE TO ASSIST DISRUPTIVE OR DISTRESSED INDIVIDUALS

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF DISTRESS
- Marked change in performance or behavior
- Excessive absence or tardiness
- Trouble eating and/or sleeping
- Disruptive behavior
- Undue aggressiveness
- Exaggerated emotional response that is obviously inappropriate to the situation
- Depressed or lethargic mood
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Marked change in personal hygiene
- Excessive confusion
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Dependency (individual hangs around or makes excessive appointments to see you)
- Behavior indicating loss of contact with reality
- Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- References to suicide
- References to homicide or assault
- Isolation from friends, family or classmates
- Giving away prized possessions
- Preparing for death by making a will and final arrangements

If you feel threatened or endangered, call 911!

Referrals & Resources

Emergency 911
University Police 567-242-7400
Student Conduct 567-242-7342
Employee Assistance Program 1-800-678-6265

Referrals & Resources

In a crisis situation, call 911
To consult regarding a student, call Counseling and Consultation Service at 567-242-7158. Refer to go.osu.edu/cccs
To consult regarding a faculty or staff member, call:
- Ohio State Employee Assistance Program: 800-678-6265
- Office of Human Resources, Employee and Labor Relations: hr.osu.edu/elr
- Ohio State Department of Public Safety: lima.osu.edu/security

(Adapted from materials from The University of Colorado at Boulder and Pennsylvania State University)
When in doubt, call 911!

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency ................................................................. 911
University Police .................................................. 567-242-7400

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Student Life Departments, Lima
Counseling and Consultation Service (students) ........................................ 567-242-7158
go.osu.edu/lccs
Disability Services ........................................................................ 567-242-7194
lima.osu.edu/ddss
Student Advocate ........................................................................ 567-242-7342
studentaffairs.osu.edu/advocacy
Student Conduct ........................................................................... 567-242-7342
studentconduct.osu.edu
Student Life, Director of Student Life ................................................ 567-242-7342
studentlife.osu.edu

Faculty/Staff Resources
Employee Assistance Program ................................................................ 800-678-6265
osuhealthplan.com/programs-and-services/eap

Additional Resources
BART (to report bias or discrimination) .............................................. 614-247-5838
equity.osu.edu
BRAVO (for cases of violence against LGBTQI) .................................. 866-86BRAVO (866-862-7286)
bravo-ohio.org
Campus Suicide Prevention Program .............................................. 614-688-5829
suicideprevention.osu.edu
Consultation and Assessment Team .................................................. 567-242-7342

Crime Victims Services ..................................................................... 1-877-867-7273 or 419-222-8666

Crossroads Crisis Center ................................................................. 419-228-4357
crossroadscrisiscenter.com
Hope Line Suicide Prevention ................................................................ 1-800-567-HOPE (4673)
wecarepeople.org
Military and Veterans Services .......................................................... 614-247-VETS (8387)
veterans.osu.edu
Prevention, Awareness, Support and Services (PASS) ......................... 419-549-8530

THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Guide to Assist Disruptive or Distressed Individuals

Ohio State's Counseling and Consultation Service and Employee Assistance Program developed this information guide to help you assist anyone in the university community experiencing distress or causing a disruption.

If you are concerned for your safety or that of others, CALL 911 immediately.

• If you are concerned about the individual's self-harm, call Suicide Prevention Services ...................... 614-221-5445
• When the situation allows...
  - If the individual is a student, call Student Conduct................................................................. 567-242-7342
  - If the individual is a faculty or staff member, call the Office of Human Resources ....................... 567-242-7277

If you are NOT concerned for your immediate safety or that of others:

• Discuss the situation with the person to address the inappropriate behavior.
• Consider asking any disruptive individual to leave the room.*
• Suggest the following:
  - STUDENTS can contact Lima’s Counseling and Consultation Service .................................... 567-242-7158
    - Counseling is confidential.
    - Counseling does not affect academic records.
    - Counseling sessions are free to registered Ohio State students.
  - FACULTY OR STAFF can contact the Employee Assistance Program .................................. 1-800-678-6265
    - Counseling is available to university employees, their immediate families and domestic partners.
    - Counseling is not a part of personnel or human resource files.
    - Five free counseling sessions are available; counseling is confidential and voluntary.

*Consult pages 2 and 3 of this document for helpful hints on understanding and addressing distressed or disruptive behavior.

Ohio State Suicide Prevention’s REACH Training Program

suicideprevention.osu.edu

Nationally, suicide is the second leading cause of death in young adults aged 19–24. Suicide is preventable, however, and you can help prevent a suicide by learning warning signs and how to intervene.

Ohio State Suicide Prevention is a free resource. Its REACH training program is a short, easy and free program available to all Ohio State affiliated organizations, units, departments and individuals upon request. For further information and/or to schedule training, call 614-688-5829 or email osusuicideprevention@osu.edu.

24-Hour Crisis/Suicide Prevention Services

Suicide Prevention Services
988
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
988
(Veterans: press 1 to talk with a veteran)

Call for yourself or for someone else.
Services are free and confidential. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.