

PASSAIC COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
College Behavioral Intervention Team

Purpose: The College Behavioral Intervention Team (CBIT) is a multidisciplinary team that meets as needed to review and respond to reports of student behavior that **may pose a direct threat** to the health and safety of the College Community. Please note: the CBIT is **not** an emergency response team. For emergencies, please contact Public Safety at 973-684-5043 or call 911 (as appropriate).

Standing Membership of CBIT:

- Associate Vice President/Dean of Student Affairs (Chair)
- Assistant Dean of Disability Services
- Director of Public Safety
- Vice President Human Resources
- Legal Counsel
- Director Wellness, Student Advocacy, and Violence Prevention (as needed for consultation)

Ad Hoc members may be added to the CBIT as needed.

Campus Utilization of CBIT: The College Behavioral Intervention Team is a consultative, investigative, and intervention team to the Office of Student Affairs. CBIT is available to assist with brainstorming effective approaches to addressing concerns, gathering information to inform their approach, and intervening when students are exhibiting red flag behaviors and/or are in distress.

Should a member of the college community have any concerns or questions about a student's behavior, affect, and/or psychological state, please feel encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs which may engage the CBIT at its discretion. Do not worry about whether your concern is justified. The Office of Student Affairs will do the research and CBIT may participate in the assessment.

If it is an emergency, please contact The Office of Public Safety by calling 973-684-5403 or by calling 911. Without the campus community, this work would not be effective. We are counting on each of you. If you see something, say something. If something feels uneasy, please feel encouraged to speak up. All stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, parents, community members—are encouraged to make reports.

When Should I Make a Referral to the CBIT:

You should make a referral during the following instances:

- You have observed a concerning, unusual, or inappropriate “red flag behavior.” Most of the time these incidents will cause you to feel alarmed, anxious, scared or unsure.
- The student has made overt or covert threats to harm themselves or others.
- The student seems to have lost touch with reality or is engaging in violent, hostile behaviors.
- The student is attacking others verbally and/or physically.
- The student tells you directly that they need help.
- You are unsure of what is going on but believe it would be helpful for someone else on campus to know your thoughts/feelings and, should it be necessary, reach out to the student.

When Should I NOT Make a Referral to the CBIT:

You should not make a referral to the CBIT when:

- The behavior can be addressed by using expected classroom management techniques.
- The behavior is clearly a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and can be handled via a disciplinary process only.
- The behavior demonstrates a severe and imminent safety concern Immediately call the Office of Public Safety 973-684-5043 or 911 (if appropriate).

How can a member of the college community help? A member of the college community can help by:

- reporting facts, observations, and concerns;
- documenting your report and completing a Behavioral Incident Report;
- not spreading the information to others.

If a member of the college community knows of someone else who may have valuable information to share with the CBIT, please encourage them to come forward, and please provide us with their names so that the CBIT can reach out to them.

How Will the college community member know when the situation has been addressed?

When the College Behavioral Intervention Team receives a report, the report will be investigated thoroughly and should it be necessary, an action plan will be implemented. The CBIT does not ask reporters to make determinations or to have all the answers. The CBIT is going to take a caring approach to minimize risk and increase safety and wellbeing. **Please know that student privacy and confidentiality standards apply in these situations so those who file reports may not necessarily know the outcome of the situation or be privy to details during the investigation.**

If you have any questions about the CBIT or our reporting process, please feel encouraged to contact the Associate Vice President/Dean of Student Affairs at 973-684-6309 or CBIT@pccc.edu

RED FLAG BEHAVIORS

A “red flag behavior” is a concerning or inappropriate behavior that may be presented through a student’s appearance, spoken or written words, or specific actions (in-person and online). Using the icon on the College’s webpage, students, faculty and staff are encouraged to report student interactions, “red flag behaviors” or incidents that seem unusual or cause alarm. Examples of “red flag behaviors” include, but are not limited to:

- behaviors that *interfere* with classroom management, the classroom environment or decorum
- notable changes in behavior, appearance, and hygiene
- infrequent class attendance
- dependency on student and/or academic affairs staff
- unusual or threatening words, writings, communications, or actions
- overly aggressive behaviors toward others; inability or unwillingness to set limits or redirect focus.
- poor decision making and coping skills.
- inappropriate or strange behavior
- low frustration tolerance, acting out inappropriately.
- overreaction to circumstances
- paranoia or loss of touch with reality; bizarre behavior, such as talking with something/someone who is not present.
- impaired speech/babbling and/or disjointed thoughts.
- difficulty making decisions despite repeated efforts to clarify, encourage and support.
- depressed mood or extreme isolation
- anxiety, panic attacks, extreme emotional swings, excessive crying
- irritable; unruly, abrasive, hostile or aggressive behavior
- lack of regard for others
- lack of sensitivity to being corrected or reprimanded.
- extreme drowsiness/falling asleep often; lack of energy.
- seeming intoxicated/inebriated

- words, writings, communications or actions endorsing violence/hate/lack of tolerance for others; troubling content in written work/presentations.
- lack of empathy and concern for others
- anger management problems
- appearance of being overly nervous, anxious, tense, or fearful
- bruising, often injured.
- significant change in academic performance –extreme or erratic academic performance, excessive procrastination, and very poorly prepared work, especially if inconsistent with previous work performance; repeated requests for special consideration, such as deadline extensions
- excessive weight gain or loss
- evidence of self-harm, such as cutting, burning, head-banging
- expression of suicidal thoughts, depression or feelings of hopelessness
- suicidal statements, gestures, or attempts
- repeated hospitalizations for self-harm or suicidality
- homicidal threats (gestures, written, depicted or verbal); acts or threats to harm others
- other behaviors that cause significant concern to faculty and staff

Whether a student in crisis or distress seeks assistance from faculty and/or staff or not, being able to label the presenting concerns may prove to be difficult. For example, distinguishing between willful procrastination and depression or another medical condition can be difficult. Also, differentiating between a credible homicidal gesture and one communicated in jest can be difficult. We are not asking you to make this call. Instead, we are asking you to notice concerning behaviors that may resemble those above and reach out to CBIT@pccc.edu or a member of the Office of Student Affairs. You can also complete a **Behavioral Incident Report**, providing only the information you have.

Working With Students in Crisis/Distress

- Use soft skills and work to deescalate the situation.
- Use a calm tone of voice and open, welcoming body language. Keep in mind that your non-verbal skills may communicate much more than you are communicating verbally.

- Prioritize your safety and the safety of others. ***Please note:*** *A student who is in crisis or in distress does not necessarily pose a safety concern.*
- Try to maintain privacy and confidentiality, without closing yourself off.
- Position yourself near an exit and should the need arise, take action to protect yourself and others.
- Communicate with the individual by telling them about your concerns and ways to go about resolving the situation. Refrain from making promises. Only tell the individual what you know to be true.
- Unless the student welcomes physical touch, do not touch them; they likely want to be heard.
- Only ask for permission should you need to do so. For example, if you know you need to call or email another campus employee, do it without asking. It may or may not be helpful to tell the person you are calling for assistance or going to notify someone else who can assist via email.
- Let them know you care about everyone's wellbeing, including their own.

Responding to a Student in Distress

If you are concerned about a student, here are some suggestions for appropriate ways to respond:

- Request to speak with the student and do so in a private, yet safe space. Ensure the student privacy without compromising safety.
- Refrain from making any promises. It is not okay to tell the student you are going to keep their secret. This may be irresponsible and lead to heightened levels of distress in the future or a prolonged crisis.
- Be direct when communicating with the student. Use objective examples, and then take a humanizing approach by telling them why you are concerned about them.
- Focus on the facts and withhold judgment. Ask them to help you understand. ***You should not say you understand just how they are feeling.*** You can empathize with them without acting as if you have experienced their struggles just as they have.
- Be honest. ***Only commit to what is feasible.*** Tell them about campus resources and commit to helping them get help. Be familiar with the [ways students can access these services](#) and

the processes involved. Some students may be concerned about who will know what or how the incident will impact their standing at the College.

- If a student says they are ready to speak with someone in another area, walk with the student to the appropriate office and personally speak with the faculty/staff member. Speak only about your interaction with the student. Allow the students to tell their own story by providing background information.

Passaic County Community College Behavioral Incident Report

The Behavioral Incident Report is the document used to provide a standardized method for reporting **all non-emergency** Red Flag Behaviors of students. This report will be reviewed to determine appropriate action and to document patterns of disruptive or concerning behavior. Information provided in the Behavioral Incident report may be considered in determining appropriate disciplinary action with students or employees.

*Faculty, staff and students have a responsibility to report any situation that is disruptive or concerning the overall campus environment. **For Emergencies or incidents that involve criminal behaviors, immediately contact Public Safety at 973-684-5403 or dial 911 as necessary.***

Reporter Information

Please enter as much information as possible; the more information provided, the better-informed college officials are in coordinating a response. Although anonymous reports are allowed, incomplete information may hamper college officials' ability to follow-up and determine an appropriate course of action.

Please go to the [Online Behavioral Incident Form](#) to report the incident.