

# Helping Students In Distress:

## Faculty/Staff Resource Guide

**In an emergency, and safety is an immediate concern, call KSU Public Safety at 470-578-6666.**

For non-emergency safety concerns, call KSU Public Safety at 470-578-6206.

The Behavioral Response Team (BRT) can facilitate campus efforts to assist the student and provide support for faculty/staff. Any disruptive, disturbing, or potentially dangerous behavior should be reported to the BRT ideally via “Red Flag Report” at <http://brt.kennesaw.edu/team.php>

KSU Public Safety                470-578-6666  
   (emergency)  
   470-578-6206  
   (non-emergency)

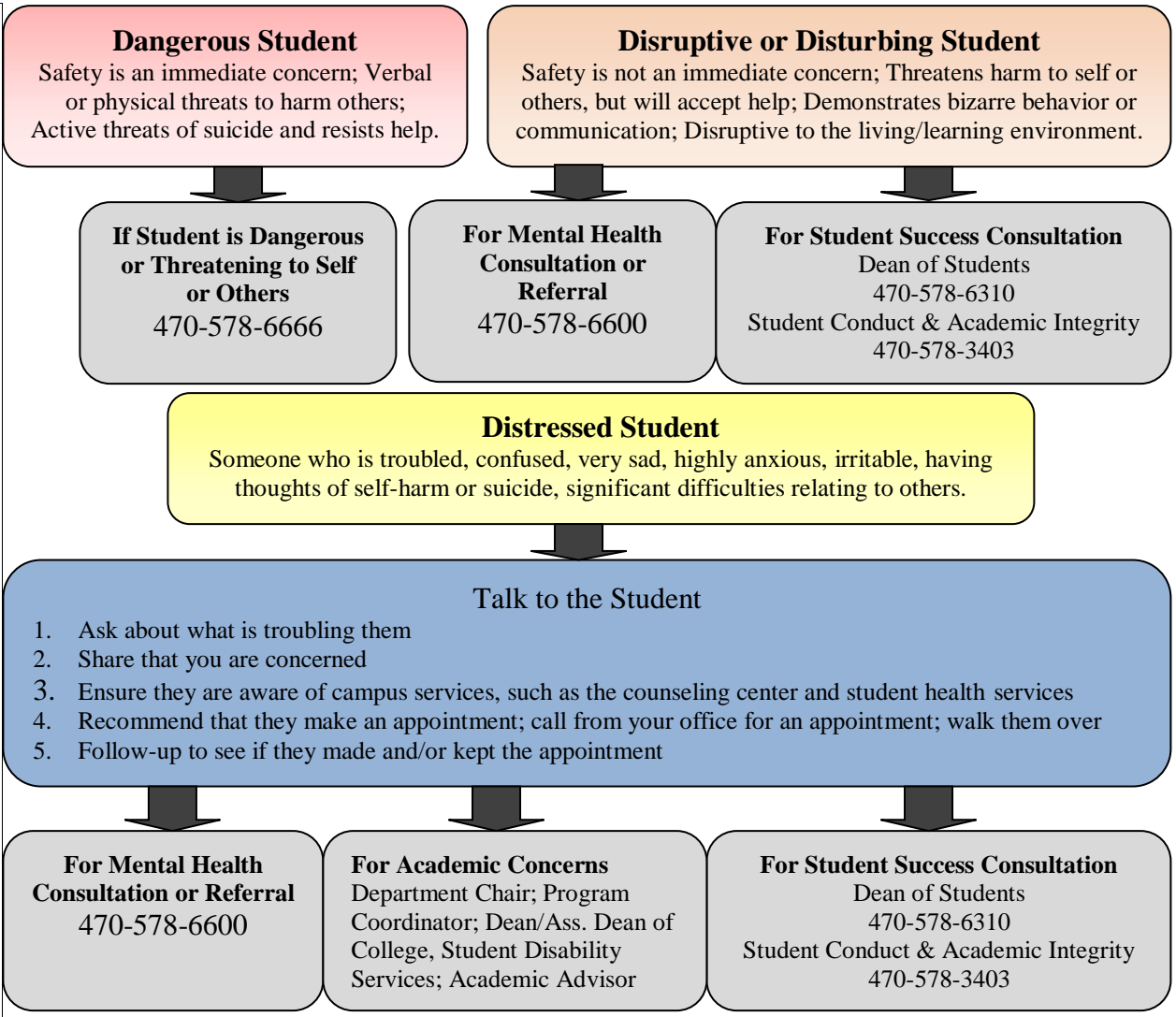
Counseling & Psychological    470-578-6600  
 Services

Student Health Services        470-578-6644 (option 4)

Dean of Students                470-578-6310

Student Conduct and            470-578-3403  
 Academic Integrity

Residence Life                   470-578-4388





# Behavioral Response Team (BRT)

The mission of the Behavioral Response Team (BRT) is to provide a proactive, planned, and coordinated approach to the identification, prevention, assessment, management, and reduction of interpersonal and behavioral threats to the safety and wellbeing of the Kennesaw State University community.

The BRT process does not replace faculty classroom management, disciplinary processes, and/or public safety responses to incidents. It provides one more opportunity to report individuals exhibiting distressed, threatening, or dangerous behaviors.

**All behaviors of concern should be reported to the BRT by all members of the KSU community.**

## **BRT Team Members:**

### **BRT Members represent the following Offices/Positions:**

- Assistant Dean of Students for Behavioral Response Management
- Associate Vice President and Dean of Students
- Associate Vice President and Director of Student Success Services
- Director of Counseling and Psychological Services
- Medical Director, Wellstar Student Health Services
- Associate VP for Academic Affairs/Provost's Office
- Public Safety
- Residence Life
- Student Conduct & Academic Integrity (SCAI)
- Title IX

### Consulting BRT Members represent:

- Human Resources
- Legal Affairs
- Student Disability Services
- Strategic Safety and Security

## **Reporting to the BRT**

- The KSU police should be contacted for all emergencies on the KSU campus and for making urgent BRT reports outside of normal business hours (470-578-6666 for emergencies or 470-578-6206 for non-emergencies). The KSU police will debrief the BRT as soon as possible after the resolution of the emergency situation.
- **There are several options for reporting incidents to the BRT.**
  - The preferred method for non-emergency reporting is the online “Red Flag Reporting” site: <http://brt.kennesaw.edu/team.php>
  - Reports can be submitted to the Assistant Dean of Students for Behavioral Case Management in regular, non-emergency situations at 470-578-6310 or [csumme23@kennesaw.edu](mailto:csumme23@kennesaw.edu).
  - Ultimately, incidents may be reported to any office connected with the BRT and those reports will be disseminated to the entire team as soon as feasible and/or assessed at the weekly meeting. The BRT will meet as needed on an emergency basis to address situations requiring an urgent response.



## FERPA & Confidentiality

### What does FERPA say about reporting to the BRT?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records and it in no way restricts what can be communicated to the BRT for two primary reasons.

1. FERPA permits disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff). In its role of supporting students and keeping KSU safe, the BRT has a clear and legitimate educational interest.
2. FERPA is not applicable to observable behavior; that is, anything seen or heard by a university employee is not a part of the educational record and therefore can be communicated among appropriate university faculty and staff. This would include observed classroom behavior and personal information that a student voluntarily discloses to you.

### What about student confidentiality?

Confidentiality is an ethical aspiration promoted by almost all professions in higher education (e.g., faculty, student affairs, administration). In academia, confidentiality refers protecting student's rights regarding their intellectual freedom and academic performance. It does not apply to observed behavior or information of a personal nature that has been voluntarily disclosed.

#### **Faculty and staff should never promise confidentiality to students.**

Rather, it should be explained to students that while most information can be kept confidential, ultimately any information that causes concern about potential harm to the student or others will need to be shared with appropriate persons.



## Behavioral Response Team FAQ

### What types of behaviors should be reported?

- Threatening words or actions
- Suicidality, including threats (I am going to kill myself), gestures (erasing one's hard drive), ideation (I've always thought about killing myself by jumping off a cliff), or attempts.
- Writings that convey clear intentions to harm self or others
- Observed self-injurious behavior, such as cutting, burning, etc.
- Online postings in Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, RateMyProfessor that are threatening
- Acts motivated by hatred or discrimination, or paranoia that a student groundlessly believes they are being targeted
- Stalking
- Relationship violence (even if the victim doesn't want you to tell, unless the information is conveyed to you in a privileged relationship)
- Hazing
- Flat affect or extreme lack of responsiveness
- "Accidental" overdose
- Disappearances, kidnappings or missing persons
- Harassment
- Alarming references to bombs, ammunition or ordnance
- Alarming infatuation with fire or firearms
- Extreme rudeness or insubordination to university officials, staff, faculty or administrators
- Classroom disruption
- Drunkenness in the classroom
- Excessive class absenteeism

### What happens after someone is referred?

The response is determined on a case by case basis and in consultation with the members of the BRT. The information you provide will be used to determine the level of risk or concern. The BRT operates within a community centered philosophy of proactive intervention aimed at achieving the optimal balance between support and safety.

Remember, the most important part of the prevention process is reporting.

### What will happen to the person who is referred?

Frequent BRT interventions include:

- Talking to the subject of the report to hear their side of the story. In many cases, simple engagement with the individual can facilitate movement away from crisis and reduce risk of additional problems.
- Monitor the situation, either with an active monitoring plan or simply waiting to see if other behavior of concern emerges and requires action.
- Make recommendations to appropriate university personnel that may include, but are not limited to the actions or sanctions consistent with the Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, and Staff handbook. These may include: interim suspension, suspension or expulsion; parental/guardian notification; medical/psychological withdrawal; student conduct response; human resources response; referral to support services, such as counseling, disability services, employee assistance program.
- Make recommendations to appropriate university personnel regarding conditions of consideration for an individual to return as an active member of the campus community. This may include requiring internal or external psychological evaluations of the individual in question.

# Responding to Distressed or Disturbing Behavior

As a faculty/staff member, it is very likely that you will observe students who are clearly displaying signs of distress. You should respond to these signs as if you are the first person to notice them and the best person to facilitate help seeking. Campus safety is everyone's responsibility.

| What behaviors should concern me?   | How should I respond?  | How to make a referral for counseling   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Mild distress</b> can often be recognized by noticing changes in behavior. For example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Decreased class attendance</li> <li>○ Declining academic performance</li> <li>○ Neglected hygiene and appearance</li> <li>○ Difficulty interacting with others</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderate distress</b> is usually more obvious and in addition to the above signs, may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Difficulty adhering to the structure of the classroom</li> <li>○ Requests for the professor to extend deadlines or make other exceptions</li> <li>○ Unusual or demanding writing/ email</li> <li>○ Emotional reactions that seem extreme for the circumstances</li> </ul> <p><b>Extreme distress</b> will be clearly evident and require immediate emergency care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Threats, hostility, or other aggression</li> <li>○ Overt suicidality</li> <li>○ Stalking</li> <li>○ Confusion and/or incoherent speech</li> <li>○ Loss of contact with reality</li> </ul> | <p><b>For mild to moderate distress with no concerns for safety:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attempt to talk with the student and address the behavior of concern</li> <li>○ Share your concern, but never offer confidentiality</li> <li>○ Be clear about classroom expectations and appropriate behavior, and use the opportunity to provide corrective feedback</li> <li>○ Consult with colleagues and/or department chair</li> <li>○ Consult with Behavioral Response or Counseling &amp; Psychological Services</li> <li>○ Ensure the student is aware of campus resources</li> <li>○ Call for an appointment or walk them over to Counseling &amp; Psychological Services</li> <li>○ Inform supervisor</li> <li>○ Make a report to the BRT</li> </ul> <p><b>KSU Public Safety should be contacted immediately in any situation that leads you to fear for your safety or the safety of the student.</b></p> | <p><b>How to make a referral for counseling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assume a gentle, caring, and non-judgmental attitude</li> <li>○ Tell them why you are concerned and then suggest a visit to the counseling center. For example:</li> </ul> <p>“I have noticed you have been missing a lot of class, you seem very distracted when you are here, and I am concerned. Have you thought about talking to a counselor?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expect some resistance and be prepared to explain that normal people go to counseling and that it is just one of the many resources available on campus for students</li> <li>○ Educate them about how counseling is often used to help students learn more about themselves and you don't have to have a significant problem to benefit from talking with a counselor</li> <li>○ Remind them that counseling services are free and the same services off-campus can cost \$75-\$150 per hour</li> <li>○ Have them call from your office or walk them over if they are comfortable</li> <li>○ Most students who have never seen a counselor will display some level of ambivalence, so don't give up at the first hint of hesitation</li> </ul> |