OHIO STATE 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 coworkers or students 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 ..... (614) 292-0748
  - **If the individual is a faculty or staff member**, call the Office of Human Resources ..... (614) 292-2800

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 Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service ..... (614) 292-5766
- 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.

WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL 911!

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency **911**

University Police **292-2121**

HELPFUL RESOURCES (614 area code except where noted)

Student Life Departments

Counseling and Consultation Service (students) **292-5766**
ccs.osu.edu

Disability Services **292-3307**
ods.osu.edu

Multicultural Center **688-8449**
mcc.osu.edu

Student Advocacy Center **292-1111**
studentaffairs.osu.edu/advocacy

Student Conduct **292-0748**
studentconduct.osu.edu

Student Health Center **292-4321**
shc.osu.edu

Student Life, Office of the Vice President **292-7393**
studentlife.osu.edu

Student Wellness Center **292-4527**
swc.osu.edu

University Housing **292-8266**
urds.osu.edu

Faculty / Staff Resources

Employee Assistance Program **1-800-678-6265**
osuhealthplan.com/OhioStateEAP

Human Resources **292-2800**
hr.osu.edu

(more resources on page 4)

Dealing with Disruptive Individuals

(Adapted from materials from The University of Colorado at Boulder and Penn State University)

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

HOW SHOULD I DEAL WITH A DISRUPTIVE PERSON?

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. Share the documentation appropriately.

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.
- DO make personal referrals. Give a name of an individual when possible, and call ahead to brief the person.
- 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.

IF YOU FEEL THREATENED OR ENDANGERED, CALL 911!

Referrals and Resources (614 area code except where noted):

Emergency **911**
University Police **292-2121**
Student Conduct **292-0748**
Employee Assistance Program **1-800-678-6265**
Office of Human Resources **292-2800**

Dealing with Distressed Individuals

(Adapted from materials from The University of Colorado at Boulder and Penn State University)

WHAT IS MY ROLE?

You might be in a good position to spot someone who may be emotionally distressed. While some of this is expected, especially during stressful times of the year, you may notice someone acting in a way that is inconsistent with your normal experience with that person. You may be able to be a resource in times of trouble, and your expression of interest and concern may be critical in helping the individual re-establish emotional equilibrium. You also may be able to alert the university so that an appropriate intervention can be made.

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

THE DOs

- DO speak with the individual privately.
- DO let him/her know you are concerned about his/her welfare.
- 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 resources.
- 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 ignore the unusual behavior.
- DON'T make the problem your own.
- DON'T involve yourself beyond the limits of your time or skill.

IF YOU FEEL THREATENED OR ENDANGERED,
CALL 911!

Referrals and Resources

- In a crisis situation, call University Police at **911**.
- To consult regarding a student, call Counseling and Consultation Service at (614) 292-5766. Refer to **ccs.osu.edu**.
- Student Conduct: **studentconduct.osu.edu**
- To consult regarding a faculty or staff member, call:
  - Ohio State Employee Assistance Program: 1-800-678-6265 (or visit **osuhealthplan.com/OhioStateEAP**)
  - Office of Human Resources, Employee and Labor Relations: **hr.osu.edu/elr**
- Ohio State Department of Public Safety: **ps.ohio-state.edu**

OSU SUICIDE PREVENTION
suicideprevention.osu.edu

REACH:
TO SAVE A LIFE.

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.

OSU 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 e-mail **suicideprevention@ehe.osu.edu**.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

(614 area code except where noted)

Faculty / Staff / Student Resources

BART (to report bias or discrimination) **292-1090**
studentaffairs.osu.edu/bias

BRAVO (for cases of violence against GLBTQI) **294-7867**
bravo-ohio.org

Campus Suicide Prevention Program **688-5829**
suicideprevention.osu.edu

Employee Assistance Program **1-800-678-6265**
osuhealthplan.com/OhioStateEAP

Military and Veterans Services **292-7047**
veterans.osu.edu

Psychological Services Center **292-2059**
labs.psy.ohio-state.edu/psc

(at OSU Harding Hospital) **293-9600**
medicalcenter.osu.edu/patientcare/healthcare_services/mental_health/harding/Pages/index.aspx

Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio **267-7020**
ohiohealth.com/sexualassaultresponsenetwork

SVES (Sexual Violence Education and Support) **292-4527**
swc.osu.edu/sexual-violence-education-and-support-sves

24-Hour Crisis/ Suicide Prevention Services

Suicide Prevention Services
(614) 221-5445

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255
(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.

ccs.osu.edu
osuhealthplan.com/OhioStateEAP

MESSAGE FROM JOSEPH ALUTTO

Dear Colleagues:

The revised "Ohio State Guide to Assist Disruptive or Distressed Individuals" is available and downloadable at: http://emergency.osu.edu. The guide provides emergency contact numbers, a listing of DOs and DON'Ts when assisting disruptive or distressed individuals, and listings of websites with other helpful resources and programs. Please print out a copy to keep handy for future reference.

In addition, Ohio State sponsors many training and coaching opportunities to learn effective responses to emergency situations, including:

• At Risk, an online simulation training for helping students in distress. Contact the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching: http://ucat.osu.edu/at-risk.html

• Dealing with Disruptive Individuals, a one- to two-hour workshop. Contact Anna Stephenson, Department of Public Safety at: Stephenson.1@dps.ohio-state.edu.

• REACH, a one-hour suicide prevention workshop for students, faculty, and staff. Contact: osusuicideprevention@ehe.osu.edu.

It is essential to know best approaches developed by our experts for various emergency situations — who to call, what to do — because ensuring a safe environment for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors is one of our highest priorities.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Alutto
Executive Vice President and Provost