

# CONCERNING BEHAVIOR RESPONSE GUIDE

This guide may be used as a resource when working with troubled students, identifying students in distress, helping students, and knowing where to refer students for help when they need it. Staff in the Dean of Students Office are available for assistance if needed when referring or assisting a student. The Dean of Students should be contacted regarding concerning behavior on the part of faculty or staff, respectively.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

UST Police Department (USTPD)  
(713) 525-3888  
[www.stthom.edu/police](http://www.stthom.edu/police)

Counseling & Disability Services  
(CDS)  
(713) 525-2169  
[www.stthom.edu/cds](http://www.stthom.edu/cds)

Dean of Students (DOS)  
(713) 525-3570  
[www.stthom.edu/dos](http://www.stthom.edu/dos)

Title IX Coordinator: Students  
(713) 525-6972  
[deanofstudents@stthom.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@stthom.edu)

Title IX Coordinator: Employees  
(713) 525-3813  
[titleixcoord@stthom.edu](mailto:titleixcoord@stthom.edu)

Human Resources  
(713) 525-3142  
[www.stthom.edu/hr](http://www.stthom.edu/hr)

Care Team  
[careteam@stthom.edu](mailto:careteam@stthom.edu)

## LOCAL RESOURCES

Suicide Prevention  
1 (800) 273-TALK (8255)

Houston Area Women's Center  
Domestic Violence Hotline  
(713) 528-2121

Rape Crisis Hotline  
(713) 528-2121

## DOES THE STUDENT NEED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE?

**YES - Imminent Danger**  
The student's conduct is clearly reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening, and is suggestive of immediate harm to self or others.

**CALL 911 or UST POLICE**  
**(713) 525-3888**

**Report the Concern**  
Counseling & Disability Services  
or Dean of Students

**Not Sure / No Imminent Danger:**  
The interaction has left me feeling uneasy or concerned. Indicators of distress are observed but severity is unclear.  
**OR:**  
I'm not concerned for the student's or other's immediate safety, but s/he is having significant academic and/or personal issues.

**Call for Consultation:**  
Counseling & Disability Services  
or refer to the UST Care Team

## WHAT IS THE CARE TEAM?

The Care Team meets weekly during fall and spring to identify students who are under-performing academically or seem to be experiencing social adjustment problems. This team then works collaboratively to assess a distressed student's needs, direct her/him to campus and community resources, and consult with UST offices impacted by the crisis or behavior problems.

If you want to alert the Care Team call (713) 525-3570, email [careteam@stthom.edu](mailto:careteam@stthom.edu), or fill out the Concerning Behavior report found at [www.stthom.edu/dos](http://www.stthom.edu/dos).



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# DISRUPTIVE OR DANGEROUS?

## DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

- Excessive cell phone usage in class
- Frequent interruption during instruction and/or repeated asking of irrelevant, off-topic questions
- Inappropriate, revealing, or bizarre clothing, including sexually provocative clothes, pajamas, tactical military gear, Halloween costumes when it's not Halloween
- Carrying on side conversations
- Interrupting class instruction by frequently coming and going from the classroom
- Poor personal hygiene
- Lack of focus or paying attention
- Excessive sighs, eye rolls, or other gestures that disrupt
- Suspected intoxication
- Disrespectful to others; interrupting the professor; dominating discussions
- Arguing points of contention after staff or faculty have asked the student to stop
- Eating or drinking in class without permission
- Reading magazines, newspapers, books, or studying for other classes during class

## DANGEROUS BEHAVIORS

- Direct threats, such as, "I am going to kick your butt" or "If you say that again, I will end you"
- Racist or offensive expressed views, such as, "Women should be barefoot and pregnant," "Gays are an abomination to God and should be punished," "Muslims are all terrorists and should be wiped off the earth"
- Bullying behavior focused on students, faculty, or staff in your presence
- Prolonged nonverbal, passive-aggressive behavior such as sitting with arms crossed, glaring or staring at faculty or staff, and refusing to speak or respond to questions or directives
- Self-injurious behavior such as cutting or burning, including during a meeting or class, or exposing self injuries
- Physical assault such as pushing, shoving, or punching
- Storming out of a room when upset, screaming and yelling
- Conversations designed to upset others, such as descriptions of weapons, killing, or death
- Psychotic, delusional, or rambling speech
- Overuse of an office or staff's function or time; especially when already instructed to change their behavior and respect boundaries

## CLASSROOM TIPS

Be thoughtful about embarrassing a student; have a private conversation

Remind students of the classroom rules

Redirect the student: ask a question, "Let's hold that thought for later", "Let's give others a chance to talk"

Consider using your body language to address concerns: make eye contact, walk to the other side of the room

## WHAT NOT TO DO IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT

- Don't interrupt during the first 20-30 seconds of peak anger
- Don't minimize the situation
- Don't get into an argument or shout
- Don't blame, ridicule, or use sarcasm
- Don't touch the student
- Don't ignore warning signs that the person is about to explode
- Don't ignore your own limitations
- Don't take the remarks of a student in distress personally

For general questions or consultation,  
please call the Dean of Students Office at (713) 525-3570.

## RECOGNIZE. RESPOND. REFER. REPORT.

### **RECOGNIZE: Assess the Risk**

- Ensure your safety; use a calm, non-confrontational approach
- Meet privately (if no perceived safety concerns) and allow sufficient time to meet
- Contact USTPD (713) 525-3888 or 911 if a student expresses a direct threat to self or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational and disruptive way, or if the situation seems to be escalating

### **RESPOND: Listen & Give Reassurance**

- Listen through the anger and acknowledge the feelings of the individual
- Allow the person to vent and tell you what is upsetting to them; stay silent until they are done
- 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"
- Be firm, steady, consistent, and honest; clearly express your concerns focusing on the behavior in non-disparaging terms
- Ask directly if the student has thoughts about hurting him/herself or others; it's okay to ask
- Respect the student's privacy without making false promises of confidentiality

### **REFER: Encourage Professional Help and Support Strategies**

- Recommend services and provide direct referrals; assist student in contacting resources
- Frame any decision to seek and accept help as an intelligent choice
- Make sure the student understands the necessary actions
- Encourage and assist student to make and keep an appointment
- Make personal referrals: call ahead to brief CDS, walk the student over to CDS

### **REPORT: Making a Stronger Community Together**

Reports can be made directly to CDS, Care Team, Dean of Students, Human Resources, your Department Chair, and/or Academic Dean.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT AND TITLE IX

All University of St. Thomas employees are obligated to report knowledge of sexual assault of a student to the Title IX Coordinator for Students at (713) 525-3570 or email [deanofstudents@stthom.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@stthom.edu), or by filling out the Sexual Misconduct report found at [www.stthom.edu/dos](http://www.stthom.edu/dos). This is mandated by the Clery Act and Title IX. Anonymous reporting is available, however the University's response may be limited if the report does not include identifying information and/or a description of the facts and circumstances.

For more information, see: [www.stthom.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.stthom.edu/sexualmisconduct)

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I REPORT A TITLE IX INCIDENT?

Reporting knowledge of an alleged incident to the Dean of Students allows UST to properly respond to the alleged survivor(s), relay interim measures and resources, explain options for reporting if the survivor(s) want to lodge a formal complaint with the University or law enforcement, and investigate the incident.

## WHERE DO I DIRECT TITLE IX COMPLAINTS?

When alleged or suspected discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation is experienced or observed or made known to an employee, the employee is responsible for reporting that information:

**Title IX for Students: Lindsey McPherson, [deanofstudents@stthom.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@stthom.edu), (713) 525-3570**

**Title IX for Employees: Randy Graham, [titleixcoord@stthom.edu](mailto:titleixcoord@stthom.edu), (713) 525-3813**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND WHEN CLASSROOM DISRUPTION OCCURS?

A number of factors influence the response to disruptive behavior. The University outlines guidelines for faculty to use as appropriate. These guidelines do not constitute a fixed procedure; they should be pursued according to your assessment of the situation.

Section 3 of the Academic Standards, Subsection J states, “A faculty member has the right to require that students observe reasonable norms of conduct and good manners in class. Smoking, eating and drinking by students or faculty are not permitted in classrooms and laboratories. Any breach of discipline in the classroom and/or inappropriate classroom behavior will be reported to the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Dean of the school, so that the behavior may be addressed through the conduct process.”

It is important to report concerning behavior for continued monitoring of the student not only in your classroom but throughout campus. Behavior of concern may also be reported to [deanofstudents@stthom.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@stthom.edu) or online at [www.stthom.edu/dos](http://www.stthom.edu/dos).

## HOW SHOULD I REPORT A CONCERN THAT CAME FROM A PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH A STUDENT?

If the concern involves threat of harm to self or others, contact USTPD (713) 525-3888, if it is an emergency or, in non-crisis situations, report it to the Care Team at [careteam@stthom.edu](mailto:careteam@stthom.edu). Please remember, when alleged or suspected discrimination, sexual harassment (including sexual violence) or retaliation is experienced or observed by or made known to an employee, the employee is responsible for reporting that information to the respective Title IX Coordinator.

Even when there is no threat of harm, it is suggested you involve others when a conversation or interaction with a student causes concern. You may find it helpful to discuss this with your department head or supervisor. The Counseling & Disability Services Office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or the Dean of Students at (713) 525-3570.

## WILL SOMEONE NOTIFY ME OF THE OUTCOME REGARDING MY REPORT/REFERRAL?

Depending on the nature of the report/referral, a staff member from the Dean of Students Office may contact you to verify report details or to discuss the incident. However, due to confidentiality for all involved, you may not be notified of the outcome. Please know that if a report is sent to the Dean of Students, or others, it will be fully investigated.

## HOW DO I KEEP MYSELF & OTHERS SAFE?

Prioritize your safety if you think a student could potentially pose a threat. If you have reason to believe through behaviors or direct threats that a student may harm you, consider a safe escape path or removing yourself from the interaction. While we want to keep others safe around us and have a responsibility to intervene when we come across disruptive behaviors, our own personal safety is paramount.