

## **Purpose**

The Pellissippi State Community College Behavioral Intervention Team is established to improve community safety through a proactive, coordinated approach to the assessment and management of expressed student or employee concerns that may disrupt college operations or pose a threat to the safety and well-being of the campus community.

## **Policy**

### **Creation of Behavioral Intervention Team**

The president of Pellissippi State shall appoint faculty and staff to serve on the college's Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). The purpose of the BIT is to provide caring, preventive early intervention with students and employees whose behavior is disruptive or concerning. Additionally, the BIT serves to consult with faculty, staff, and students reporting behaviors of concern to provide intervention. When necessary, the BIT may also conduct threat assessments for reports involving college-affiliated and non-affiliated individuals indicating potential harm to persons or property.

At the discretion of the president, the BIT may include representatives from the institution's police department, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Human Resources, and medical, psychological and counseling professionals. This core group will meet, at a minimum, of once per month to maintain group dynamics and provide opportunity for team growth and development. Meetings may also be called on an as necessary basis to discuss reports that pose an immediate concern or potential for harm.

Other members of the campus community may be brought in on an ad-hoc basis to provide additional insight, support, and expertise to the BIT. Ad-hoc members may include, but are not limited to, legal counsel, disability services, Student Affairs or Academic Affairs personnel, equity and compliance officer, Title IX coordinator, or campus deans.

### **Role of the Behavioral Intervention Team**

The BIT is designed to function as a resource to ensure the campus community is a safe place for teaching and learning to occur. The BIT is not a disciplinary board, but rather the central point of contact for reports of concerning behavior for the campus community in order to coordinate intervention services, when needed.

When a potential threat to the campus community is reported, the BIT shall be charged with developing comprehensive fact-based assessments of students and/or employees who may cause harm to the institution, its employees, students, and visitors. The BIT shall be empowered to take timely and appropriate action, consistent with TBR and institutional policy as well as applicable law.

### **Identifying Risks**

All individuals are encouraged to be alert to the possibility of campus disruptions, particularly acts of violence. Employees and students shall place safety as their highest concern and shall report all acts and threats of violence to the BIT.

Other non-violent behaviors that may be concerning and of interest to the BIT include, but are not limited to the following:

- Changes in appearance or interactions
- Expressions of suicide or hopelessness
- Outbursts of anger
- Disturbing writings or verbal expressions
- Appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any individual, whether affiliated with the college or not, may submit a report of concern to the BIT. The primary method of reporting will be an online form, which can be found on the BIT's college website or by sending an email to [bit@pstcc.edu](mailto:bit@pstcc.edu). When a report is submitted using the online form or email, all members of the BIT will receive an email notification indicating a report has been submitted. Generally, reports are reviewed during normal business hours.

All concerns that involve immediate risk or potential for harm should be reported to the Pellissippi State Police Department or community emergency services by contacting 911.

Individual members of the BIT may also be contacted via email, by telephone, or in person to report a concern regarding a student or employee. A member of the BIT will reach out to the reporting party to gather additional information.

Anonymous reports will be considered and may be submitted online through the campus police department's website. Reporting parties are encouraged to identify themselves in order to provide a point of contact to gather additional information. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the safety and anonymity of anyone who comes forward with concerns about a threat or act of violence.

All reports will be handled in a private manner, with information released only on a need-to-know basis within the campus community and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

Due to the private nature of the work performed by the BIT and applicable privacy laws, there may be little to no information related to the referral outcome that can be shared with reporting parties once a concern is submitted for review.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports acts or threats of violence pursuant to this or any other applicable law or policy is strictly prohibited.

## **Potential Outcomes of Reporting Concerns to the BIT**

Depending upon the information received, the BIT may take any or all of the following steps:

- Recommend no action and continue to gather information and monitor the situation
- Assist faculty or staff in developing a plan of action
- Meet with the student or employee of concern
- Refer student or employee to existing campus and/or community support resources
- Refer the concern to the appropriate office for potential disciplinary action
- Take other action as deemed necessary and consistent with college policies and procedures

When reports of concern indicate potential harm to others, the BIT will apply the standards outlined by the "direct threat test" as set forth by the Office of Civil Rights by considering the

- Nature, duration, and severity of the potential harm
- Likelihood that the potential harm will occur
- If reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk

Decisions of the BIT will be based upon an individualized assessment made using the most current medical knowledge or objective non-medical evidence. The BIT will utilize the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool, or other similar instrument, to establish a risk level.

Assessments that result in scores in the "severe" or "extreme" range will result in a recommendation to the appropriate decision-maker for an interim suspension pursuant to PSCC Policy 04:02:00 Student Code of Conduct and Due Process or appropriate employee discipline policy pending applicable due process considerations based on the individual of concern's affiliation with the college.

Assessments that result in scores in the “elevated” range may result in a recommendation to the appropriate decision maker for interim suspension pursuant to PSCC Policy 04:02:00 Student Code of Conduct and Due Process or appropriate employee discipline policy pending applicable due process considerations based on the individual of concern’s affiliation with the college.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

BIT members may provide each other with information about a student being monitored by the BIT as is necessary to protect the health, safety, and privacy of the student or other persons and to generate a recommended course of action in accordance with applicable legal and professional standards of confidentiality, including the release of information pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

Confidentiality of information and records considered by the BIT shall be maintained in accordance with all applicable federal and state laws and TBR and institutional policies.

### **Training**

All members of the BIT shall attend relevant training at least on an annual basis.

Such training shall include information regarding the role of the BIT on campus, reporting procedures, confidentiality requirements, policies and laws regarding student discipline, due process, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, the threat assessment model utilized by the institution, and any other area considered to be best practices in the field.

Reviewed/Recommended: President’s Council, September 18, 2017

Approved: President L. Anthony Wise Jr., September 18, 2017