

BUILDING THE FUTURE



Encountering and Working with Disruptive Students

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2019 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Disruption Defined

Disruption/Obstruction- Obstructing or interfering with university functions or any university activity. Disturbing the peace and good order of the University by, among other things, fighting, quarreling, disruptive behavior or excessive noise, including but not limited to, a disruption by the use of all types of cameras, cell phones, and/or communication devices.

(Student Code of Conduct)

3 Areas of Focus

- Disruptive Student Behavior
- Troubling Student Behavior
- Threatening Student Behavior

Disruptive Student Behavior

- **Intentional Disruption**-Continuing behavior despite directives, persistent questions, arguing, attention getting comments, derisive comments.
- **Challenging Behaviors**-Questioning your position, a test, “unreasonable” expectations, your credentials, grading policy.
- **Refusal**-Student will not stop the behavior, student unwilling to follow directive, student says “NO.”

Troubling Student Behavior

Student is troubled, confused, very sad, highly anxious, irritable, lacks motivation, exhibits odd behavior, and/or thinking or talking about suicide.

Threatening Student Behavior

A threatening student leaves you feeling frightened and in fear of your personal safety or the safety of others.

These behaviors should be taken seriously!

Student Scenarios



Dealing with a Disruptive Student

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

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 him or her. Use silence to allow the person to talk it out.
- DO set limits. Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable. “I care about what you are saying, but I need you to lower your voice before we continue to talk.”
- 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 the police and/or DOS office.

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's emotions are escalating.
- DON'T ignore your limitations

Proactive Classroom Management (and in the office and service counter area!)

- **Classroom management is most effective when:**
- Faculty engage students at the beginning of the semester in a discussion of expectations for classroom conduct
- Behavioral expectations are included in the course syllabus, specific to standards for classroom conduct
- Behavioral guidelines are consistently enforced and applied fairly
- Faculty respond in a calm manner to behavioral disruptions
- Faculty initially address mildly disruptive behavior by engaging the student in a conversation about their behavior in a meeting outside of class

Take Immediate Action if the Student

Call University of Houston xx Police Department or 911.

- Threatens to injure, harm, kill, or risk the safety of self or others
- Acts in a frightening or threatening manner
- Refuses to leave the classroom after being asked to leave
- Reports or initiates a threat or bomb scare
- Text

Options to Involve Dean of Students

- FYI
- Conversation with DOS
- Formal Referral

Conduct Assessment Response Team (CART)

- The University has established the **Conduct Assessment and Response Team (CART)** in order to provide a proactive, multidisciplinary, and collaborative approach to assessing and responding to students who exhibit threatening and/or concerning behaviors.
- **Complete an Incident Report Form**-Submitting a Behavioral Incident Report Form to the CART will initiate an assessment of the behavior of concern. The assessment process is designed to get the individual the assistance they need to succeed in the University community and to protect the University community as a whole.

Threat of Violence Advisory Team (TOVAT)

- The University of Houston has established the Threat of Violence Advisory Team (TOVAT) to convene quickly at the discretion of the Chief of Police or designee to provide direction in response to acts or communications constituting threats of violence.

<http://www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/mapp/07/070203.pdf>

- This team may assist in determining:
 - The existence of a serious threat;
 - The need for counseling and/or training;
 - Recommendations concerning continued employment/enrollment.
- Cases are initiated by the Chief of Police or upon referral to the Police Department.

What Happens During Referral Process

Procedural Interview

Disciplinary Hearing/Conference

Appropriate Sanctions

Failure to Appear

http://www.uh.edu/dos/_files/mdsb_2018

TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION
If the Student:

Threatens to injure, harm, kill, or risk the safety of self or others Acts in a threatening manner Refuses to leave the classroom after being asked to leave Reports or initiates a bomb scare	University of Houston Police Department Campus Phone: 911 Routine Dispatch: 713-743-3333 www.uh.edu/police
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CAMPUS POLICIES

Take Non-Emergency Action www.uh.edu/dos	Title IX Policy www.uh.system.edu/students/salutations/policy/
Student Code of Conduct www.uh.edu/dos/_files/student-code-of-conduct.pdf	Violence on Campus Policy www.uh.edu/af/universityservices/policies/mapp/02/020801.pdf

CONSULT FOR ADVICE
If the Student:

Appears to be out of touch with reality Reports suicidal thoughts or actions, depression, hopelessness, anxiety, or difficulty dealing with grief Reports feeling overwhelmed by a family or personal emergency	CAPS 713-743-5454 www.uh.edu/caps	Acts significantly out of character Acts in a way that causes alarm Displays unhealthy or dangerous patterns of behavior Reports having been a victim of hazing or other crime	Dean of Students Office 832.842.6183 www.uh.edu/dos
Reports having been a victim of a stalking Reports sexual assault or relationship violence Indicates experiencing hate crimes, bias, or discrimination Reports any Title IX concerns	Equal Opportunity Services (EOS) 713-743-8835 www.uh.edu/equal-opportunity	Exhibits behavior that substantially impairs, interferes, or obstructs orderly processes and functions of the university Exhibits behavior that is lewd or offensive Reports financial difficulty due to hardships	
Is having academic difficulty due to physical, psychological, or learning disability Indicates a need for disability accommodations	Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) 713-743-5400 www.uh.edu/csd	Reports difficulty due to recent hospitalization Needs assistance transitioning back to the university after an emergency	SOS: Student Outreach and Support Services 832.842.6183 casemanager@uh.edu

CAMPUS RESOURCES

SOS: Student Outreach and Support
Student Center South, Room 256
PHONE: 832.842.6183
EMAIL: casemanager@uh.edu
WEB: uh.edu/dos/sos

UAA: Undergraduate Academic Affairs
E Cullen, Room 109
PHONE: 713.743.9112
WEB: uh.edu/provost/policies-resources/student

LGBTQ Resource Center | Women & Gender Resource Center
Student Center North, Room 201
PHONE: 832.842.6191
WEB: uh.edu/lgbtq
uh.edu/wgrc

Veteran Services
Student Center North, Room 202
PHONE: 832.842.5490
WEB: uh.edu/veterans

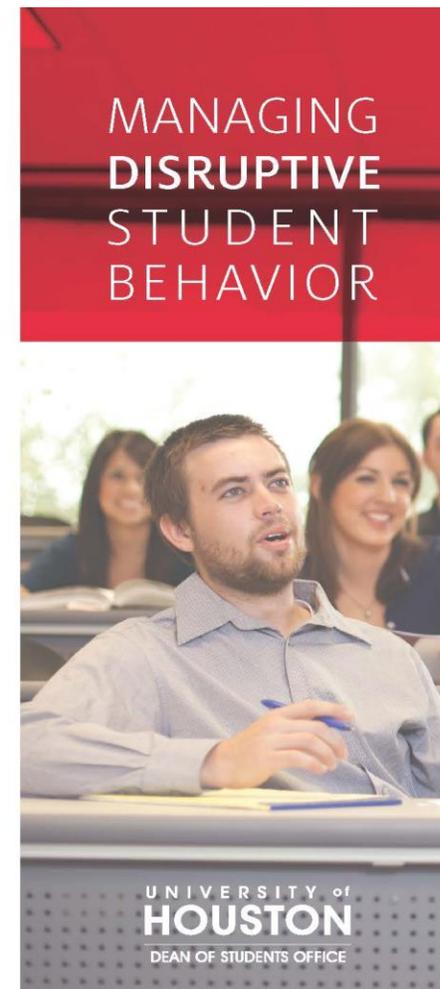
LSS: Learning Support Services
Cougar Village 1, Room N109
PHONE: 713.743.5411
WEB: uh.edu/lsscc/launch/tutoring/

International Student & Scholar Services
Student Center North, Room 203
PHONE: 713.743.5065
WEB: uh.edu/foiss

UH Health Center
Health 2 Building
PHONE: 713.743.5151
WEB: uh.edu/healthcenter

CAPS: Counseling and Psychological Services
226 Student Service Center 1
PHONE: 713.743.5454
WEB: uh.edu/caps

UHPD: University of Houston Police Department
4051 Wheeler Ave
PHONE: 713.743.3333
WEB: uh.edu/police



http://www.uh.edu/dos/_files/mdsb_2018

WHAT IS DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?

The University of Houston is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe and civil environment for the teaching, learning, and administrative process. The UH Student Handbook defines disruption as "obstructing or interfering with university functions or any university activity." Moreover, disruption includes any behavior that interferes with students, faculty, or staff and their access to an appropriate educational or work environment.

EXAMPLES OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Refusal to comply with faculty or staff direction	Actions that intimidate others
Loud and/or erratic behavior	Overt inattentiveness
Behavior that distracts the class	Threats of physical assault
Persistent and unreasonable demands for attention	Romantic or obsessive behavior

MODERATE LEVEL OF DISRUPTION

No immediate danger — mildly distressed	Typically a situation that can be handled informally between you and student, and leads to a resolution
Emotionally troubled, student impacted by situational stressors and or trauma	

HIGH LEVEL OF DISRUPTION

When a student exhibits behavior that warrants a greater degree of intervention, immediately address the student's behavior. If this occurs, you should call UHPD at (713) 743-3333.

Exhibiting clear distress, disturbance escalating, and/or there is immediate danger of some kind	Damaging university property
	Harming themselves or others

FERPA STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

The privacy of a student's educational record is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). The disciplinary record is considered part of the student's educational record. Any information gathered while speaking with the disruptive student should be handled in a confidential manner.

DEALING WITH A DISRUPTIVE STUDENT

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.

THE DOS

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PROACTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

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PEAK TIMES OF INCREASED STUDENT STRESS

Semester start and end
Midterms
Holidays

ISSUES THAT MAY INCREASE STUDENT STRESS

Financial or Legal problem
Pending assignments, final exams, workload
Divorce, roommate, or relationship conflicts
Health issues
Returning home for the holidays

WHEN YOU ARE CONCERNED

Tell them you are concerned
Know campus resources
Do not be afraid to ask questions
Know your limits and when to refer
Consult for advice

DOCUMENTATION

When an incident is not an emergency, disruptive behavior should be documented through the Incident Reporting Form found on the Dean of Students website (uh.edu/dos/behavior-conduct/incident-report).

Be factual and detailed, use concrete terms

Keep log of interactions

Keep accurate records of observations of behavior

Keep copies of emails, messages, letters, etc.

Follow up conversations with student in writing and keep copy in file

Keep out speculation or assumptions. Do not editorialize.

Do not keep as part of an academic record



DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Once a student has been referred to the Dean of Students office, they are formally notified via email to schedule a disciplinary meeting. During this meeting students will have an opportunity to present their perception of the incident or events. The student may choose to have the disciplinary meeting with either a hearing officer or the University Hearing Board. If the student chooses to meet with the hearing board, you may be asked to be present and provide information. In the past, very few students have chosen the hearing board option. In either option, the inappropriate behavior is addressed, and where applicable, sanctions may be assigned that help the student correct the behavior.

NON DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The University has established the Conduct Assessment and Response Team (CART) in order to provide a proactive, multidisciplinary, and collaborative approach to assessing and responding to students who exhibit threatening and/or concerning behaviors. The purpose of the CART is to provide a vehicle for communication across and among divisions and departments of the university regarding student conduct and to serve as the institutional gathering point for information related to students who exhibit threatening, concerning behaviors.

Resources

<http://www.uh.edu/dos/behavior-conduct/disruptive-students/>

http://www.uh.edu/dos/_files/mdsb_2018

<http://www.uh.edu/dos/behavior-conduct/cart/>



