

CAMPUS INTERVENTION TEAMS: *WORKING WITH DISTURBED AND DISTURBING STUDENTS*

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Hosted by: ACCA & PaperClip Communications
3/4/10 at 2:00 PM EST

Program Overview

- We will discuss the history and evolution of these teams after the more recent high profile campus tragedies.
- We will outline the role of mental health professionals, and other student affairs professionals as members of their Campus Team.

Program Overview



- We will examine important legal issues related to the practice of these teams.
- We will share our experiences re: common practices and preparing for common institutional challenges.
- We will discuss basic ideas, and review cases to hear what you find is most helpful in navigating a mental health professional's role on these teams.

Team Names

- Students of Concern Committee
- Campus Assessment Team (CAT)
- Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation (CARE)
- Student Behavior Consultation Team (SBCT)
- Assessment and Care Team (ACT)
- Campus Partners
- Networks
- Students At Risk (STARS)

Team Names

- Alert Team
- Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT)
- College Concerns Team
- Threat Assessment Team
- Behavioral Response and Support Team (BRST)
- Student Threat Assessment Team (STAT)
- Student Review And Consultation Committee (SRCC)
- Risk Assessment And Behavioral Intervention Team (RABIT)

History of Teams

- Assessment-Intervention of Student Problems (AISP) Model (Delworth, 1989)
- Students are categorized in 3 ways:
- Disturbing students- in violation of code of conduct- no clear mental health concerns.
- Disturbed students- mental health concerns -not violating code of conduct.
- Disturbed and disturbing- may be in violation of the IHE code of conduct and be experiencing mental health difficulties.

History of Teams

- Dunkle, Silverstein and Warner (2008) updated the AISP model .
- Teams engage in a collaborative process to develop appropriate policies governing team operations.
- Serve as consultants on campus.
- Educated and train the campus about the team.
- Determine the best system both in/outside the IHE to assess students, determine who best to intervene.
- Develop a system to monitor students and review the results of the assessments to monitor trends and evaluate team performance.

Evolution of Teams

- Sokolow and Lewis (2008) of NaBITA argue for “Second Generation Behavioral Intervention Teams.”
- Using formalized protocols of explicit engagement techniques and strategies.
- Viewing their role as nominally to address threat and primarily to support and provide resources to students.
- Using risk rubrics to classify threats.

Evolution of Teams



- Utilizing mandated psychological assessment as part of the overall process.
- Having the authority to require mandated assessment.
- Being undergirded by sophisticated threat assessment capacity, beyond law enforcement and psychological assessment tools.

Evolution of Teams

- Fostering a comprehensive reporting culture within the institution.
- Training and educating the community on what to report and how.
- Being technologically advanced and supported by comprehensive databases that allow the team to have a longitudinal view of a student's behavior patterns and trends.

Evolution of Teams

- Focusing not only on student-based risks but on faculty and staff as well.
- Integrating with campus risk management programs and risk mitigation strategies.
- Focusing on “minding the gap” when troubled students are quiet and are not acting out.

Mission and Purpose

- A mission statement of a more traditional first generation team may read like the following:

“The mission of State University’s team is to coordinate information and develop support plans to promote student health, well-being and a successful academic experiences.”
- Whereas a mission statement of a second generation team may read as follows:

“The mission of State University’s team is to coordinate information and develop an institutional response to promote campus safety through an active process of threat assessment and behavioral intervention.”

Mission and Purpose

- BIT teams are designed to improve systemic communication and address concerning behaviors:
 - Create Behavioral Intervention/Threat Assessment Teams to reduce the “silo” effect of information sharing between departments and increase pro-active intervention.
- Deisinger suggests BIT/TAT teams should:
 - “Identify a student, faculty member, or staff member who has engaged in threatening behaviors or done something that raised serious concern about their well-being, stability, or potential for violence or suicide.” p. 47

Mission and Purpose

- Referral agents should be addressing student behavior, not targeting those with mental illness. They should be focused on acts of aggression, threats, intimidation, hoarding of weapons and the frustration, anger and isolation that leads to an act of violence.
- Those with mental illness are more likely to be the victims of violence, not perpetrators (Choe, Tepin & Abrams; 2008).

Membership

Each school must assess their particular institutions culture to create the best team membership. Some suggestions include:

- Dean of Students
- Campus Safety
- Counseling Director
- Residential Life
- Judicial Affairs
- Legal Counsel
- Athletics
- Health Services
- Student Activities
- Academic Affairs

Membership

- United Educators survey:
 - 100% JA /student discipline
 - 93% counseling
 - 87% campus safety
 - 87% student affairs
 - 67% residence life
 - 67% health services
 - 27% academic affairs
- Others include University Counsel's Office, Athletics, Student Disability Services, Greek Life.

Chair's Role

- Leader should be a senior student affairs administrator with a high level authority - manage cases, understand the IHEs administrative structure, relevant policies and procedures around conduct.
- Understanding of the complexity of the relevant issues in these situations.
- Not being limited by the confidentiality laws that apply to mental health information.
- Could still possibly be mental health professional.

Chair Responsibility

- Setting the agenda for and facilitating meetings, including managing time.
- Agenda include: check-in with member, compile names of students of concern, address policy or other relevant issues.
- Work with University Counsel to assure appropriate record keeping and other procedures.
- Oversight of case management/support coordination process.
- Encourage training and focus during “down times.”

Other Team Member Responsibilities

- Submit the names of students of concern in advance of the Team's weekly meeting.
- Review information from their respective domains relevant to the week's cases in preparation for the Team meeting.
- Discuss cases to come to an acceptable resolution.
- Examine appropriate behavioral boundaries within existing university policies, and consider courses of action.
- Review past cases and dispositions; maintain database.

Dean of Student

- Often chairs the team and has responsibility for decision making.
- Useful in helping sort out difficult discussions and mediating disagreements among team members.
- Holds a position that could be useful for taking action and working with “higher-ups.”
- Often a challenge to share information with DOS depending on whether they “take it and run” or give staff a chance to work out an action plan.

Judicial Affairs

- JA shares active cases that may have overlap into other areas such as counseling and residential life.
- It is likely that the police and DOS are already aware of many of these cases.
- Cases shared typically are ones involving assault, vandalism, campus crime and drug and alcohol violations.
- For counselors, it is rare that this information is directly useful or “actionable,” but consider adding to internal alert list.

Police/Campus Safety

- Often are members least likely to have frequent access with other team members.
- Offer a chance for other team members to understand legal policy and arrest issues.
- Often first on scene in sexual assault, domestic violence or psych hospital transportation cases.
- Need to be aware of how information that others may share (e.g. drug issues, weapons on campus) may lead to direct action.

Academic Affairs

- Often has direct access to grades and class attendance with some follow-up.
- Works more directly with concerned faculty who may be worried or fearful of another shooting.
- May have other issues to consider such as retention.
- May experience pressure from faculty or academic affairs administration to remove underperforming students.

Mental Health Role



- Counselors and psychologists (working as administrators and/or clinicians) are faced with a range of choices when it comes to choosing what their involvement should be when participating on a Team.

Benefits of Counselor Involvement

- Increased expertise in mental health problems available to BIT.
- Connection to students who utilize counseling.
- Improved perspective in regards to how other departments operate.
- Increase in information sharing (reduce silo) with other departments.
- “Team player” benefit when working with other departments.

Challenges of Counselor Involvement

- Perception that counseling shares all information with others on campus.
- Potential violation of ethics codes with professional organizations.
- Increased exposure to “tricky” situations that require action by team member (e.g. like having a lawyer on the team).
- Counseling staff feeling frustrated being pulled into mandated or “big brother” treatment.
- Reduction of students sharing or coming to counseling.

No Involvement. There are rules.

- There are rules and ethics that I have to follow, these are non-negotiable.
- These rules do not allow me to be part of a BIT.
- If I attending a meeting, I would violate my ethical code and perhaps be in trouble with the licensing board.

I'll go and consult, but no names.

- I'll attend the meetings and will offer support and information to others on the team about mental health issues.
- I don't talk about my clients or any current cases because of ethics and my licensure.

I go, but I don't talk or do anything.

- I can attend a BIT, but I can't say anything about any students I work with---that is unethical.
- I'll come to the meetings, but I'm just there to sit and listen. I can't do anything without my client's permission.

I try to be helpful, within reason.

- I will attend the BIT and can share information if needed.
- We have our student sign an informed consent that gives some permission for us to talk about them at a BIT if there is an emergency.
- I can talk to my clients or non-clients to try to get them connected to counseling.

I'll do anything, forget my ethics.

- I will attend the BIT and can share anything you need.
- I don't see confidentiality as an issues since we all work at the same school.
- I can call faculty and tell them or talk to a students parents without any permission.

Mental Health Role Revisited

- Ideally mental health professionals are not the chair but serve as consultants to the team.
- Help others understand the relevant mental health context, realize counselors do not need to be expected to bring information on students to the team.
- Can serve as a conduit back to the counseling service to inform therapists of campus concern about a student client of the counseling service.

Attend to Group Process

- All groups do go through various stages Corey and Corey (2006) .
- Orientation and exploration,
- Transitional stage where the group is dealing with conflict and resistance,
- Working stage that is characterized by cohesion and productivity,
- Consolidation.

Attend to Group Process

- Orientation and exploration as they sort through many of the issues we will discuss.
- Will be some conflict about these issues as different members have different perspectives.
- Members develop relationships with each other productivity and consolidation.
- Critical component for successful team.
- Unlikely the team will come together without acknowledging group dynamics.

Legal Ethical Issues

- When BIT members deliberate any course of action it must be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Any policy requiring automatic dismissal or withdrawal of a student who expresses disturbing behavior is legally vulnerable.
- "A significant risk constitutes a high probability of substantial harm, not just a slightly increased, speculative, or remote risk" (OCR to De Sales.)
- There needs to be an *individualized* and *objective* assessment as to whether the student can safely be a member of the community.

Legal Ethical Issues

- Any assessment must be "...based on a reasonable medical judgment relying on the most current medical knowledge and/or the best available objective evidence" (OCR to DeSales.)
- The assessment must consider the following issues:
 - Nature, duration and severity of the risk;
 - Probability that the risky behavior will actually occur;
 - Whether reasonable accommodations will sufficiently reduce the risk.

Teams Becoming Standard Practice

- Most schools have some form of counseling staff on their BIT team.
- According to the *2009 Campus Safety and Security Survey*, about two-thirds of respondents said that a Behavioral Assessment Team exists on their campus—ranging from 42 percent of public two-year colleges to 65 percent of independent institutions and 76 percent of public four-year colleges and universities.
- Over 92% of those schools with Behavioral Assessment Teams have a member from counseling services.

- Our team is a little on the larger size. We have DOS, judicial affairs, Gym coordinator, academic support, counseling, health, police, diversity affairs, south campus, student activities and residential life.
- We meet weekly, judicial affairs keeps a centralized list for records, but each department keeps their own notes.
- I share “we know them and are working with them” or more details if there is a hospitalization or suicide threat. We use an informed consent to give permission to share information with the team.

Cornell Model- Alert Team

- Members include: Dean of Students, JA, Residential Programs, 2 CAPS reps, police, and by invitation.
- Submit the names of students of concern in advance of the Team's weekly meeting.
- Review information from their respective domains relevant to the week's cases in preparation for the Team meeting.
- Discuss cases to come to an acceptable resolution.
- Examine appropriate behavioral boundaries within existing policies--- consider courses of action.
- Review past cases and dispositions.



Continuum of Responses

- Continue monitoring situation without immediate action.
- Assist faculty or staff in developing a plan of action.
- Refer to or continue support structure (case management) .
- Recommend involvement of family/ emergency contact.
- Consider a voluntary health leave.



Continuum of Responses

- Recommend implementation of *persona non grata* prohibiting a student from being on campus .
- Legal option: no trespass order.
- Activate a formal threat assessment process.
- Recommend consideration of involuntary leave.



Messages to Campus

- Develop messages to create a caring campus culture rather than one that focuses on reporting per se.
- Consider the *Bystander Effect* .
- Primary ways to facilitate helping is to get people to define the situation as an emergency, assume personal responsibility, realize that the costs to their helping are low, and realize the benefits of providing assistance to others (Aronson, 1999).

Messages to Campus

- Severity and prevalence of student mental health issues.
- Campus leaders convey that it is the responsibility of all faculty, staff and students to notice the well-being of those around them and do something.
- Cost to the community members to notice and respond is low.
- Potential benefits to the distressed individual and the community can be very significant.
- Address protective nature of students getting help.

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Q/A

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