



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT)

Behavioral Assessment

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Over the past few years, colleges and universities have seen a rise in the troubling events that have traumatized individual students and entire campuses. The most visible evidence of new levels of distress and psychological disturbances that exist in our communities includes student suicides, shootings, mental health issues, increasing hospitalizations, and deaths due to alcohol and drug consumption. While highly dramatic and tragic, these events are in fact rare and unpredictable. Nevertheless, our students deserve our concern and attention.

In response to these national trends, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) has created the Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT). The UMES BAT is a group of administrators and professional staff from across the university brought together for their expertise in crisis management as well as

addressing disruptive student behavior. The BAT's approach to address crises and disruptive behavior is to balance the needs of the both the individual student and the UMES community. Therefore, our approach is to support students in a caring and holistic manner that is comprehensive and intrusive.

Purpose

The UMES Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT) was developed to proactively address the growing need in the university community for a centralized, coordinated, caring, developmental intervention process for students in need prior to the onset of crisis. The BAT serves as a central network, focused on preventive and timely crisis intervention. Examples of such crisis include; but are not limited to: behavior which appears to be dangerous or threatening to themselves or others; troubling behavior; angry, hostile or abusive behavior; or other behavior this is inappropriate or disruptive in a community of academic learners, or may evoke alarm or concern among members of the community.

Objectives

The objectives of the BAT are to:

- Receive and gather information about behavior which appears to be dangerous or threatening to themselves or others; troubling behavior; angry, hostile, or abusive behavior; or other behavior that is inappropriate or disruptive involving students.
- Support students, who may be dealing with disruptive behavior and mental health issues, and offer resources as appropriate;
- Develop specific strategies to manage potentially harmful or disruptive behavior with regard to safety and rights of others and in order to minimize the disruption to the university community.
- Develop and disseminate informational materials focused on identification and prevention of disruptive behavior.
- serve as a resource for the University community in addressing student behavior which is not addressed by an existing units within the university community;
- Develop and review policies which addresses aberrant or threatening student behavior;
- provide educational opportunities for university departments about managing aberrant or threatening student behavior;
- Gather information about select situations and to assess the need for intervention;
- Provide support for academic and university departments in dealing with difficult student behavioral situations; and
- Make recommendations to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, with regards to special student situations and aberrant student behavior.

Assessment Measures

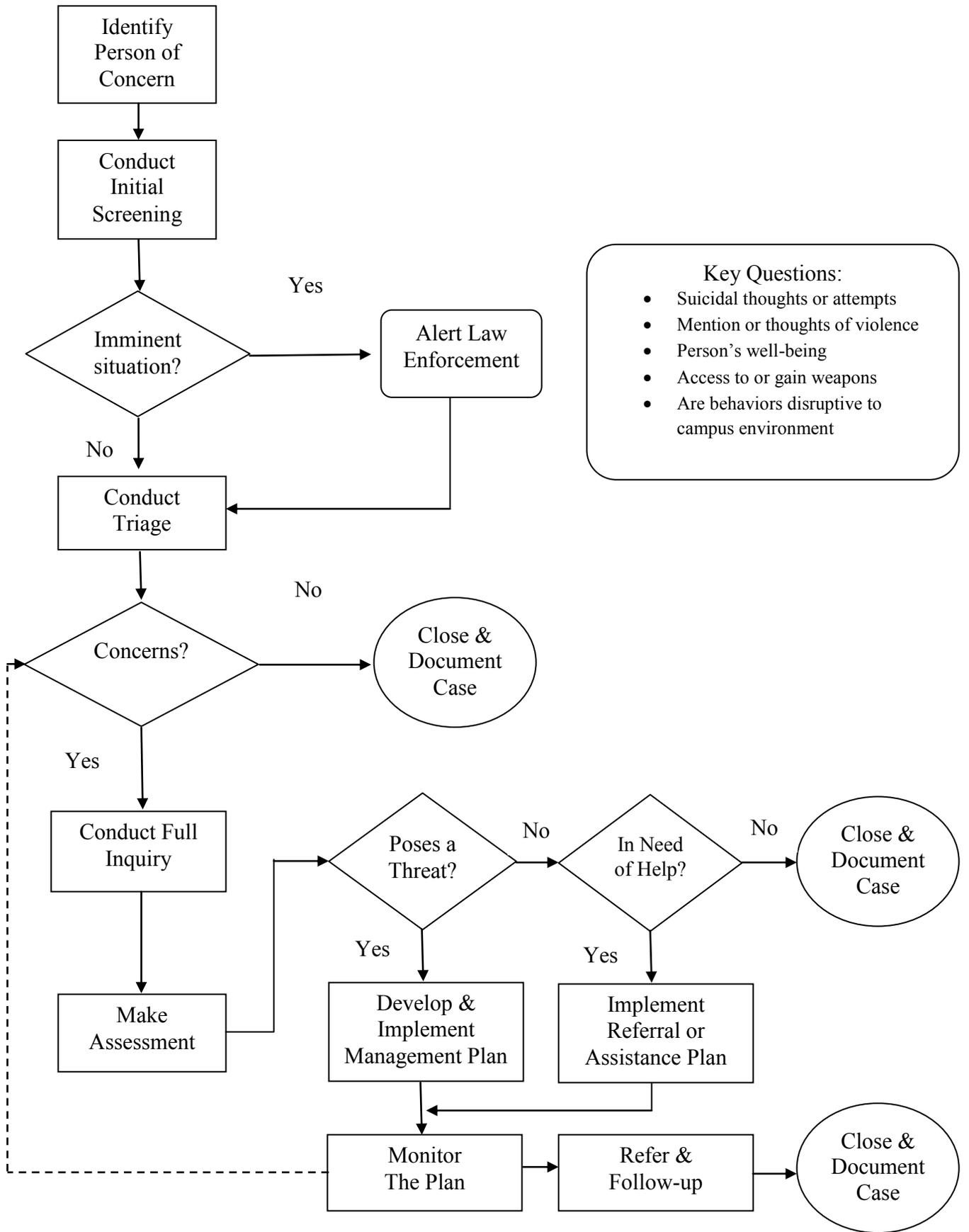
The Behavioral Assessment Team developed a set of assessment measures that we consider, to ensure that critical student behavior or mental health issues or incidents are addressed appropriately.

There are 3 BAT categories:

1. Self-Injurious behavior/ suicidal thoughts or attempt;
2. Erratic behavior (including online activities) that disrupts the mission and/or normal proceedings of University students, faculty, or staff and/or
3. Hospital transport for alcohol and drug use/abuse.

When a referral is submitted to the BAT the team will convene. The team assesses and evaluates each report, considering an appropriate response to each student. If a report requires emergency attention, the team will engage whatever actions are required to gain additional information to better respond to the needs of the student and to campus community.

Students who fail to comply with the recommendation of BAT, may be referred to and charged under the University's student judicial system for failure to comply, and/or may be separated from the university.



Team Members

The Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT) is chaired by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. Additional members of the core group include a representative from:

- Counseling Center
- Disability Services
- Faculty
- Human Resources
- Residence Life
- Student Health Center
- University Police

If You Need Help or Are in Crisis

If you are in need of help, there is always someone available. During normal university office hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, contact the Counseling Center at 410-651-6449.

After University hours, 5 p.m., contact University Police/Public Safety at 410-651-6594.

Life Crisis, located in Salisbury, MD maintains a 24 hour Hot-line, 7 days a week and can be reached by dialing 410-651-749-4357.

If you live in campus housing, you may contact your, Resident Counselor, Resident Assistant, Student Director, or University Police who will know how and where to obtain assistance.

University Resources

In the event of an emergency that requires immediate intervention, please contact University Police. The BAT plays a secondary role to all urgent circumstances, and should be contacted afterwards. To contact the BAT directly, you can complete a BAT referral at: www.umes.edu/BAT or call 410-651-8440.

Department	Phone Number
Alcohol, Tobacco & Drug Prevention	410-651-6385
Center for International Education	410-651-8385
Counseling Services	410-651-6449
Human Resources	410-651-6400
Residence Life	410-651-6144
Student Affairs & Enrollment Management	410-651-6687
Students Health Center	410-651-6597
Services for Students with Disabilities	410-651-6461
University Police/Public Safety	410-651-6594
University Behavioral Assessment Team	410-651-8440

Tips for Identifying Students In distressed

One time or another everyone feels upset or distressed. However, there are behaviors that occur over time that suggest a student may be in distress. It is important to consider each type of behavior in context for the individual student in question. Below is a list of tips or examples that can be used as guidelines for identifying students who may be in distress:

- Excessive procrastination and very poorly prepared work, especially if inconsistent with previous work
- Infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed
- Dependency (e.g., the student who hangs around or makes excessive appointments during office hours)
- Listlessness, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class
- Repeated requests for special consideration (e.g., deadline extensions)
- Physical and or verbal threats to others
- Expressed suicidal thoughts (e.g., referring to suicide as a current option)
- Changes in physical appearance or personal hygiene; excessive weight gain or loss
- Behavior which regularly interferes with effective class management
- Frequent or high levels of irritable, unruly, abrasive, or aggressive behavior
- Unable to make decisions despite your repeated efforts to clarify or encourage
- Students who appear overly nervous, tense or tearful
- Disjointed speech or writings
- Persistent sadness or unexplained crying
- Change in patterns of social interaction
- Problems concentrating & remembering things or making decisions
- Demanding, verbally abusive, or intimidating behavior
- High levels of irritability or inappropriate excitement
- Withdrawal, significant relational/social isolation; not leaving residence hall room for sustained periods
- Displays or carries a weapon
- Dramatic increase in alcohol or drug use
- Sends threatening correspondence
- Loss of contact with reality (e.g., talking to something/someone that is not present seeing hearing things that are not there, beliefs or actions at odds with reality)

How You Can Help

- Initiate a private, non-combative conversation with the person about your concerns
- Identify options available to the individual and make referrals to campus resources for help
- Assist the individual with accessing the departments to which you referred them
- Make sure the person understands what action is necessary and make plans to follow up with them
- Verbally ask that the disruptive behavior stop
- If behavior does not stop, ask the person to leave the area or leave yourself if necessary
- Inform person of the expected behavior changes, timeline for changes, and the consequences should behavior not change by that time
- If possible, discuss the reasons for the disruptive behavior and refer to a department with expertise in that area
- Document the interactions exactly as it happen
- Contact University Police/Public Safety at 410-651-6594 or dial 911
- If it involves a student, also inform the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- If it involves a staff member of the University, inform the department chair/director or Human Resources
- Consult with the Counseling Center to debrief and assist you once the initial crisis is resolved
- Contact the BAT

Responding to Suicidal Concerns

Suicide attempts are first and foremost a medical emergency. If dangerous or suicidal behavior appears imminent or has already occurred, contact University Police/Office of Public Safety at 410-651-6594 or dial 911.

When a person makes any reference to suicide, threat of suicide, or attempt at suicide, it should be taken seriously. In addition, notify the Counseling Center, Vice President for Student Affairs or University Police of the situation. Mental health evaluations and treatment are available through the Counseling Center at 410-651-6449.

Understanding FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA protects the privacy of students' education records. FERPA does not prohibit BAT or in any way restrict a University employee from sharing what they personally observe. In other words, a University employee would not violate FERPA by advising The Behavioral Assessment Team of what he or she saw or heard when directly interacting with a student, when observing a student interact with others, or when otherwise observing a student's behavior or demeanor.

In addition, if a UMES faculty member notices disturbing content in a student's writing or artwork, the faculty member should refer this to The Behavioral Assessment Team. Although the student's writing or artwork would likely be an education record protected by FERPA, FERPA authorizes school officials such as faculty to disclose education records to other school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in those records, without the student's consent. Since The Behavioral Assessment Team is responsible for identifying, responding to, and supporting at risk UMES students while simultaneously attending to the needs of the university community, in these circumstances, the members of The Behavioral Assessment Team would have a legitimate educational interest in examining the student's writing or artwork.

Protecting student privacy is a high priority of The Behavioral Assessment Team. Records and proceedings of The Behavioral Assessment Team are kept confidential and shared only on a "need to know" basis in a manner that is consistent with University policy and the University's obligations under applicable law, including FERPA. For additional information regarding FERPA, please visit their website.

Contacting the Behavioral Assessment Team

Faculty and staff members are encouraged to report problematic, disruptive, or anti-social behavior that, although might not trigger serious concerns in isolation, may raise concerns if combined with reports from other sources. You can make referrals by contacting the chair of The Behavioral Assessment Team at 410-651-8440, call any member of the BAT, or complete a [referral form](#).

When making a referral online or by phone, please provide a detailed description of the incident or behavior that is causing you to be concerned, **using language that is as specific, concise, and objective** as possible. All BAT referrals and files will be kept confidential.

Please contact the Behavioral Assessment Team in the following student situations:

- Personal safety and/or the safety of others is a concern
- A student's behavior indicates acute personal distress
- There is a pattern of disruptive or disturbing behavior
- Alcohol, drug violations or other incidents necessitate a hospital transport

If you believe the student or any member of the university community is in immediate danger, please contact the University Police/Public Safety 410-651-6594.

REFERRAL FORM

Insert line for form here: www.umes.edu/BAT.