The Medical University of South Carolina
Behavioral Support and Intervention Team

Protocol

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Medical University of South Carolina is committed to ensuring a positive and safe environment for our students, faculty, staff, patients, and visitors.   To this end, the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life established the MUSC Behavioral Support and Intervention Team (BSIT). The purpose of this team is to provide supportive and proactive intervention for students who are experiencing problems which may affect their safety and/or the safety of others.   Members of the BSIT will work in collaboration with the six colleges and appropriate MUSC offices including, public safety, risk management, student services, legal services, Office of Gender Equity, and the Associate Provost.

The process and procedures described in this document are intended to be consistent with federal and state laws and regulations as well as MUSC policies and procedures which supersede the scope of responsibilities and authority of the BSIT.

Mission

The mission of the BSIT is to collate and integrate various sources of information and offer recommendations to the college deans as a means of identifying and proactively assisting students who exhibit behaviors of major concern (see Reasons for Referral to the BSIT, page 5). **The BSIT will provide a centralized repository for information which may indicate student problems which are or could become disruptive or threatening and therefore may have an adverse impact on the safety of that student and/or the safety of others in the MUSC community.** The BSIT will take a proactive, collaborative approach in evaluating student behavior which causes concern and will recommend appropriate support and intervention.   The BSIT will make recommendations for action to the Dean of the College in which the student is enrolled.

Student rights and privacy are of the utmost importance and every measure will be taken to ensure that only appropriate concerns will be addressed. All referrals to the BSIT will be investigated before recommendations to the dean are made.

Membership Composition

The BSIT reports to the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life.

The BSIT is chaired by a mental health professional appointed by the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life and includes representatives from the following MUSC services and colleges.

- Public safety

- Student Programs
- James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine
- College of Graduate Studies
- College of Health Professions
- College of Medicine
- College of Nursing
- College of Pharmacy

Legal counsel and risk management will be advisory in nature.
Representatives from Student Health Services (SHS) and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) are excluded from membership because of the potential for students to perceive a violation of patient confidentiality.   CAPS and SHS may serve as resources for non-patient related information and recommendations and may also receive referrals from the BSIT and/or college deans to provide appropriate services for students.

Administrative Support

The Associate Provost will provide for administrative support for the BSIT.   The administrator will maintain files (electronic and/or hard copy) for all students who have been referred to the BSIT. The administrator will be present at all BSIT meetings; however, he/she will not participate in making decisions regarding students. The chairperson will ensure that the administrator receives copies of all communications, documentation of actions, reports, etc. received or sent by the committee.

Terms of Service

The chair will be appointed by the Associate Provost for a term of three years.

Representatives from the six colleges, Public Safety, and Student Programs will be appointed by the Associate Provost at the recommendation of their respective dean or service area director for a term of three years.

Terms of appointment will be staggered such that the committee retains two-thirds of its current membership each year. At the conclusion of year 1, new appointments (or reappointments) will be made for the Colleges of Pharmacy and Graduate Studies and Student Programs. At the conclusion of Year 2, new appointments (or reappointments) will be made for the Colleges of Health Professions and Dental Medicine, Risk Management, and Legal Counsel. At the conclusion of Year 3, new appointments (or reappointments) will be made for the Colleges of Medicine and Nursing and Public Safety.

Quorum

With the exception of an emergency (as defined as a situation where a student is in imminent danger of hurting him or herself or others), a quorum of two members is required to make a recommendation for action to the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled.

For all emergencies, individuals are instructed to call 911 or public safety (if on MUSC campus).

Frequency

The BSIT will meet every month at an established date and time.   This schedule will be adjusted as necessary.

Scope of Responsibilities and Authority

The BSIT will serve as an advisory committee to the Associate Provost and the deans of the six colleges. The dean of each college will have ultimate responsibility and authority for any action taken regarding a student in that college.

The BSIT will review behavioral incidents and apply a consistent, systematic, and timely response to referred concerns.

Each college will have a representative BSIT member who will immediately notify the Dean or their designee of his/her college of any referral of a student enrolled in that college. The identity of the referral source will remain confidential unless dictated by State and Federal law; however, all referrals will be reviewed to ensure the referral is valid and credible.   The BSIT, after further investigation of a referral and if appropriate based on the outcome of the investigation, will make recommendations to the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. The dean of the college will take action(s) which he/she judges to be in the best interest of the student, the college, and MUSC. The BSIT will request feedback from the dean regarding actions taken and will maintain records regarding the referral, recommendations, and action taken. When appropriate, BSIT will cross report to CAPS and will attempt to seek permission from student to release information from CAPS for coordination of care.

BSIT members will follow existing MUSC policies and procedures. All public inquires (including inquiries from the media) regarding the BSIT are to be directed to the Associate Provost.

Criteria and Mechanism for Referral to BSIT

Referral to the BSIT

Reasons for referral

1. Self-injurious behavior/suicidal ideation or attempt
   - Behaviors include, but are not limited to talk of suicide or suicidal action

2. Erratic behavior (including online activities) that disrupts the mission and/or normal proceedings of MUSC students, faculty, staff, patients, or visitors

   - Behaviors include, but are not limited to threats of a weapon on campus, significant inappropriate disruption to community, potential for compromised safety

3. Worrisome behavior related to alcohol/drug use/abuse
   - Behaviors include, but are not limited to appearing intoxicated/impaired while on campus or in patient treatment areas; appearing overly intoxicated at social events; losing consciousness; hospital transport for alcohol and drug use/abuse

4. "Red flag behaviors"
   - Behaviors which are questionable, suspicious or inappropriate and may be presented through someone's appearance, spoken or written words, or specific actions
   - Examples of "red flag behaviors" (Source: Madonna University Behavioral Intervention Plan Handbook, 5/26/2009, http://cms.madonna.edu/pdf/UnivRes/MUBIT_Handbook_05-26-09.pdf, Page 4)

     a) Behaviors which regularly interfere with classroom environment or management
     b) Notable change in behavior or appearance which cause concern
     c) Impairment of thoughts – verbally or in writing
     d) Overly aggressive behaviors toward others, inability to set limits or re-direct focus
     e) Inappropriate or strange behavior
     f) Low frustration tolerance and/or overreaction to circumstances which cause concern
     g) Writings and comments endorsing violence; unusual interest in violence
     h) Indirect or direct threats in writings or verbalizations
     i) Anger management problems
     j) Threats to others

k) Appearance of being overly nervous, tense or tearful to a degree which causes concern

l) Expression of suicidal thoughts or feelings of hopelessness

Guidelines

1.   If the concern is a self-referral, the student may be advised to make an appointment with CAPS, contact the psychiatry resident on call, or go to the nearest emergency room.

2.   Anonymous referrals will be accepted.

3.   A BSIT Incident Referral Form will be completed for each incident and maintained in a centralized location. (See Appendix A).

Protocol

The Behavioral Support and Intervention Team (BSIT) developed the following protocol to ensure the appropriate management of critical student behavior and mental health issues or incidents.   The National Behavioral Support and Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) created the Threat Assessment Tool (Appendix B) which the BSIT will utilize in determining an appropriate course of action.

Extreme Risk Protocol

In the event of an extreme risk (see on-line Threat Assessment Tool for guidance) both BSIT members and referring students, staff, or faculty are to contact Public Safety at 792-4196 (if on campus) or to call 911 if off campus.

If a member of the BSIT becomes aware of an extreme risk referral that the BSIT was already involved in, the member will submit documentation of the referral including any available information regarding the student and the outcome. Documentation will be submitted to the BSIT Chair and administrator.

BSIT members may not be aware of referrals outside the MUSC community (e.g., calls to 911).

Documentation will be maintained in a centralized database.

Mild, Moderate, Elevated, Severe Risk Protocol

♦ If any one in the MUSC community becomes concerned about a student's behavior, he/she should submit a referral through one of the following mechanisms:
  ▪ Contact the BSIT chairperson as identified on the BSIT website

- Contact the BSIT representative in the student's college as identified on the BSIT website

♦ When a referral is submitted through the BSIT website, each team member will immediately receive a notice of the referral via secure e-mail.

♦ The BSIT Chair will assign a member of the BSIT to function as a case manager. It is recommended that the case manager be the BSIT member from the college in which the student is matriculated unless there is good cause for the chair to appoint an alternative case manager.

♦ The case manager will collect all available information regarding the student and the situation. When possible, the case manager and/or BSIT Chair will meet with the student in person to gather information and discuss concerns. This information will reside in a secure location, accessible only to BSIT members.

♦ The case manager will report to the committee at the regularly scheduled meeting unless the situation requires more immediate attention in which case the case manager will request the chair convene an urgent meeting. A quorum of two members is sufficient to make recommendations to the appropriate dean.

♦ In all cases, it is incumbent upon the representative from each college to inform his/her dean of all actions concerning students from his/her college. All referrals and subsequent information are confidential unless dictated by State and Federal law. The deans will receive information regarding their students only. They are not to receive information on students from other colleges unless an extreme risk exists.

♦ For most referrals, a consultation with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is recommended but not required. The BSIT case manager will contact the referred student(s) and encourage him/her/them to participate in an assessment at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

♦ All information regarding a student of concern will reside in a confidential centralized location and accessible only by the chair, members of the BSIT, and the BSIT administrator.

Incident/Referral Information

All referrals and related information regarding a specific student will be maintained in a separate confidential student BSIT file (electronic and/or hard copy) for seven years.

Incident referrals will request the following information:
- Student name, address, telephone
- Incident date, time, location
- Names of persons involved
- Name, address, telephone, email, and MUSC role (student/faculty/staff) of person referring
- Description of incident
- Actions taken regarding incident
- Disposition of referral (e.g., continue monitoring, referral to mental health services, academic probation, suspension, dismissal, etc.)

BSIT Incident Referral Form and Notification Procedure

BSIT Incident Referral Form is available on the BSIT website. The form will be a fillable incident referral form which will be completed by the reporter to include the incident/referral information (Appendix A). The information on the form will be used to automatically populate a secured data base with the information contained on the form. The submission of this form will also generate an automatic email to all members of the committee notifying them that a referral has been sent. This email will not contain any student names or identifiable information, only an alert. The alert will remind committee members to access the secured website to view the referral information. The referral will then be handled as outlined in the protocol section.

In the case of a walk-in or called-in referral, the committee member handling the information will submit the incident referral form to the system.

BSIT Acquired Information

Tracking

All referrals, assessment outcomes, intervention recommendations, and other documents generated as a consequence of a reported incident will be maintained in the active BSIT database while the student remains enrolled at MUSC. Records for students who have left the University (voluntarily, involuntarily, or graduation) will be archived for seven years after graduation/withdrawal/dismissal. Only the Provost, Associate Provost for Education and Student Life, and the BSIT administrator will have access to archived files. The Provost or Associate Provost for Education and Student Life may, at their discretion, reactivate an archived file (i.e., make available to current BSIT

members) in certain situations (e.g., when the student is admitted to another college program or readmitted to a program.)

All information acquired by the BSIT will be documented and maintained in a separate, confidential student BSIT file (electronic and/or hard copy). Documentation will be archived for seven years after graduation/withdrawal/dismissal.

Documentation may include the following items:
- Interview documentation (persons involved, faculty, staff, etc.)
- Assessments by mental health professionals as released by the student
- Interviews/contact with parents, family members, or others
- Academic and disciplinary history
- Threat assessment
- Previous criminal charges and background checks including anything included in the public record; National Crime Information Center (NCIC) findings (Note: Documentation is required to justify inquiries.)
- All communications received from the student including interviews, release of information forms, etc.)
- Medical files as released by the student
- Available campus information (international programs, student programs, etc.)

Students are allowed access to review their BSIT records. In order to access records, students must request in writing to set up an appointment with BSIT Chair and another BSIT member to review records. BSIT Chair has up to 45 days to provide access to the record. Copies of records will not be provided. Any information related to another student will be redacted.

Students have a right to challenge accuracy or sufficiency of information that has been recorded in their BSIT record. Students who wish to challenge information within their BSIT record must do so in writing. Requests addendum will be reviewed and decided by BSIT Team.

Students whose case warranted a Threat Assessment within the moderate to mild range may request for their records to be expunged. Students must request in writing to BSIT Chair to have their record expunged. Request for revision will be reviewed and decided by the BSIT Team. Any incident that warranted a Threat above moderate range will not be expunged and will remain in student BSIT record.

BSIT Communications

All communications generated by the BSIT will be documented and maintained in the appropriate student file (electronic and/or hard copy) for seven years. This includes, but is not limited to the following documentation:

- Intervention strategies
- Referrals to university and/or community resources
- Criminal charges
- Campus communications
- Follow-up and monitoring
- Feedback to referring individual

While specific findings may be communicated to the dean to provide information and make recommendations; access to the BSIT student file will be restricted to the current BSIT members and administrator.

MUSC Communication Plan

The MUSC communication plan will launch with the creation of a website which will provide information about the MUSC BSIT. The information on this site will include information about the role and responsibilities of the BSIT; identify the committee team members, including their contact information and the college/service they represent; and, provide answers to frequently asked questions. Clearly indicated on this page will be information instructing persons to call 911 or campus police in the event of an emergency.

MUSC Community Training

Members and administrator of the BSIT will be trained in the use of confidential information and sign a confidentiality agreement. Members will be given access to the NABITA website, emails, training webinars, and web conferences.

Information about the BSIT will be conveyed to the Deans and Associate Deans of each college by the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life during regularly scheduled meetings. Each college's website will contain a link to the main BSIT page. Faculty will be made aware of the BSIT through their deans at town hall meetings and via faculty listservs.

Students will be made aware of the BSIT during orientation programs, via links on the student life homepage, and through their student government representatives who will be fully informed through meetings with the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life and the Executive Director of Student Programs. Additional opportunities include adding several questions to one or more of the CATTS Modules, branding the function of the BSIT with a recognizable icon to promote reporting, participating in various MUSC events (e.g., Student Activities Fair), and providing contact information on student handouts (student "master" card). At the request of the dean, the BSIT may facilitate faculty training.

Further outreach to the MUSC and outside community may be accomplished by including an article in The Catalyst and on the MUSC home page when the committee has been established and the web advertising is in place.

BSIT Review and Evaluation

Effectiveness

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the BSIT will be an ongoing process with a formal report developed at the end of the school term each year and submitted to the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life. Effectiveness evaluations will include but not be limited to faculty and student knowledge of the BSIT and its purpose and procedures (as measured by email surveys), number of "hits" on the BSIT website, number of students referred to BSIT and for what purpose, and number of student disturbances or offences (e.g., suicide attempts, drug use, sexual offences, etc.) on campus as reported by MUSC's Department of Public Safety.

Review and Revision of Procedures

The BSIT will review all procedures at the end of the Fall and Spring terms. Revisions will also be made on an ongoing basis, as needed, based on majority vote of the team.

Review of Membership and Terms of Office

The Chair and Vice-Chair will review the membership composition of the BSIT in January of each year to insure an adequate representation of all interested parties and colleges throughout MUSC. BSIT membership will be ongoing with no limits on terms of office. Members who resign will be replaced by the Associate Provost for Education and Student Life who will seek recommendations from the college dean of the resigning member.

Appendix A. Behavioral Support and Intervention Team Incident Referral Form

If there is an imminent threat to anyone's personal safety or if there is an emergency in progress, please call 911 or Public Safety at 792-4196.

Student Full Name (First, Middle, Last)
Student College (if known)
Student Program (if known)
Student Email Address (if available)
Student Phone Number (if available)

(Referring individual may elect to remain anonymous.)

Your Name
Your Title
Your Phone
Your Email Address

Date of Incident (mm/dd/yyyy)
Time of Incident (select)
Location of Incident (select??)
Nature of the report
       Concerning behavior
       Threatening behavior
       Student distressed
       Safety and security report
       Other (please explain)
Urgency of this report
       Normal
       Urgent

Please provide a detailed description of the incident using **specific** concise, objective language.
Forward any electronic communications/supporting documentation to the Behavioral Support and Intervention Team at bsit@musc.edu. Of note, due to the safety concerns of some student's behaviors, we cannot guarantee confidentiality.   If you have any additional questions or comments please contact the BSIT Chair or BSIT representative from the student's college.

Appendix B.   NABIT Threat Assessment Tool

NaBITA THREAT ASSESSMENT TOOL

MENTAL & BEHAVORIAL HEALTH, "THE D-SCALE"

DYSREGULATION/MEDICALLY DISABLED*

▲ Suicidal
▲ Para-suicidal (extreme cutting, eating disordered)
▲ Individuals engaging in risk taking behaviors (e.g. substance abusing)
▲ Hostile, aggressive, relationally abusive
▲ Individuals deficient in skills that regulate emotion, cognition, self, behavior and relationships

DISTURBANCE

▪ Behaviorally disruptive, unusual and/or bizarre acting
▪ Destructive, apparently harmful to others
▪ Substance abusing

DISTRESS

• Emotionally troubled
• Individuals impacted by situational stressors and traumatic events
◆ May be psychiatrically symptomatic

*Medically Disabled is a clinical term, as in a psychotic break. It is not the same as "disabled" under federal law.

© NCHERM and the Center for Aggression Management

GENERALIZED RISK

EXTREME

SEVERE

ELEVATED

MODERATE

MILD

NINE LEVELS OF AGGRESSION

9 LOSE/LOSE ATTACK

8 WIN/LOSE ATTACK
7 LIMITED DESTRUCTIVE BLOWS

6 THREAT STRATEGIES

5 FORCED LOSS OF FACE
4 IMAGE DESTRUCTION

3 ACTIONS VS. WORDS
2 HARMFUL DEBATE
1 HARDENING

CRISIS PHASE

ESCALATION PHASE

TRIGGER PHASE