



BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM

Division of Student Affairs





“The **presence of demonstrated distress, disruptive or dangerous student behavior** can be a **predictor** of future harm to self, others and **the larger MVSU community.**”



MVSU BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM (B.I.T.)

Some students who are distressed engage in behaviors that impact their welfare and the welfare of the university community. Mississippi Valley State University believes it is important to foster an environment that encourages students to maintain a standard of responsibility for self-care that includes the ability to respond adequately to one's emotional, physical, and educational needs.

The presence of demonstrated distress, disruptive or dangerous student behavior can be a predictor of future harm to self, others and the larger MVSU community. While we acknowledge that no one can predict with any degree of confidence whether a student will progress to acts that are harmful to themselves or others, there are behaviors indicative of higher risk. These behaviors may require further assessment by appropriate professionals to promote the safety of the student and the MVSU community.

As a result of growing national trends on college campuses of mental health issues and the increase in hospitalizations and deaths due to alcohol consumption, Mississippi Valley State University created the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). In order to promote the safety and health of its students, the BIT addresses student behaviors that are disruptive and may include mental health and/or safety issues. Students who qualify for a Behavioral Intervention Team referral demonstrate one or more of the following behaviors:

- Self-injurious behavior/suicidal ideation or attempt. Behaviors include, but are not limited to: talk of suicide or suicidal action
- Erratic behavior (including online activities) that disrupts the mission and/or normal proceedings of University students, faculty, staff or community. Behaviors include, but are not limited to: threats of a weapon on campus, significant inappropriate disruption to community, potential for safety being compromised
- Hospital transport for alcohol and drug use/abuse

MISSION

The Behavioral Intervention Team consists of a group of qualified and dedicated MVSU professionals whose mission is to:

- Balance the individual needs of the student and those of the greater campus community
- Provide a structured positive method for addressing student behaviors that impact the university community and may involve mental health and/or safety issues
- Manage each case individually
- Initiate appropriate intervention without resorting to punitive measures
- Eliminate “fragmented care”

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Behavioral Intervention Team is to:

- Establish a process that is designed to be helpful to students, particularly when the rights of others or an individual’s own growth and development are being endangered
- Serve as a resource for faculty, staff, and students to identify legitimate concerns regarding the needs of students who are displaying significant behavioral disturbances, emotional distress, psychological difficulties or inability to handle stressful circumstances



GOALS

The goals of the Behavioral Intervention Team are:

1. To provide a systematic response to students whose behavior is disruptive to themselves or the environment or who may be in violation of Mississippi Valley State University Code of Conduct,
2. To promote the safety of the campus community through communication, collaboration and information sharing,
3. To empower prevention and intervention with respect to behavioral wellness while protecting the privacy and the rights of individuals,
4. To track and monitor problematic behavior by providing consultation, referral and support,
5. To develop policies and protocols for team operation and accountability,
6. To support student success.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF BIT?

The BIT includes the following core members:

- Director of Student Counseling Center
- Director of Residential Life
- Associate Vice President/Dean of Students
- Director of University Police
- Director of Health Services
- Academic Affairs Representative

Additional ad hoc members include representatives from the following departments and offices:

- Disability Services
- Student Life
- Campus Wellness
- Facilities Management

WHY BE CONCERNED?

As members of the Mississippi Valley State University community, it is our duty to respect the dignity of all persons and demonstrate concern for others. As the eyes and ears of our community, it is everyone's responsibility to take action and assist those students who show any type of behavior that could threaten their own safety or the well being of the University community. We all play a vital role in ensuring the safety of our students. The BIT strongly encourages you to use its referral services to continue to better serve our students and to further enhance our community. The success of this process hinges on community commitment to reporting concerns.

If you have any further questions or comments, call the Office of Student Affairs at 254-3636 or the Student Counseling Center at 254-3830.

WHAT SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT?

The following behaviors can all be important signs of distress. As a member of the MVSU community, you may notice a student exhibiting one or more of the academic, physical or emotional signs and decide that something is clearly wrong. Maybe you have a "gut-level feeling" that something is wrong. If the latter is the case, don't dismiss your feelings or feel that you need to wait for tangible "proof" that a problem exists. A simple check-in with the student may help you get a better sense of his/her situation.



PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Falling asleep in class or other inopportune times
- A dramatic change in energy level (either direction)
- Worrisome changes in hygiene or personal appearance
- Significant changes in weight
- Frequent state of alcohol intoxication (i.e., bleary-eyed, hung-over, smelling of alcohol)
- Noticeable cuts, bruises or burns

EMOTIONAL SIGNS

- Inappropriate emotional outbursts (unprovoked anger or hostility, sobbing)
- Exaggerated personality traits; more withdrawn or more animated than usual
- Expressions of hopelessness, fear or worthlessness; themes of suicide, death and dying in papers/projects
- Direct statements indicating distress, family problems or other difficulties
- Peer concern about a fellow student (in class, lab, residence hall, club)

ACADEMIC SIGNS

- Deterioration in quality/quantity of work
- A negative change in classroom or research performance (e.g., drop in grades)
- Missed assignments or exams
- Repeated absences from class or from research lab
- Disorganized or erratic performance
- Decline in enthusiasm in class (e.g., no longer choosing a seat in the front of the room)
- Student sends frequent, lengthy, “ranting” or threatening types of emails to professor/teaching assistant
- Continual seeking of special provisions (e.g., late papers, extensions, postponed exams, and projects)

It's possible that any one of these signs may simply mean that a student is having an “off” day. Please note, any one serious sign (e.g., a student writes a paper expressing hopelessness and/or thoughts of suicide) or a cluster of smaller signs (e.g., emotional outbursts, repeated absence, a noticeable cut on the arm) necessitates an intervention.

If you are not sure if a student's behavior warrants a BIT referral, please contact the Office of Student Affairs at 254-3636 or the Student Counseling Center at 254-3830 to discuss your concerns.

NOTE: In cases where a student's behavior poses an imminent threat to you or another, contact the University Police immediately at 254-3478 or 911.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Although you are not expected to assess or treat mental health problems, you may be able to assist your students in getting the help they need. By doing so, you will help them achieve success on both a personal and academic level. The following information is intended to help you reach out to a student and connect them to the resources that are available:

If you suspect that a student is in need of counseling or mental health assistance:

- Approach the student confidentially, and let them know that you have a concern for them. Be direct about the reasons why (e.g., “I have noticed that you look like you have been crying, seem sad, or have had a drop in your academic performance.”)
- Inform them of the Student Counseling Services available on campus, and encourage them to come in to see a counselor.
- Offer to help with a referral by calling or walking the student over to the Student Counseling Center in the Student Health Center.
- Encourage the student to follow up to ensure that they receive the help they need.

If you are unsure of what to do and if a student refuses help, inform the Office of Student Affairs at 662.254-3636 and/or submit a BIT form.* The Office of Student Affairs can help with a referral to the Student Counseling Center and outside agencies, if needed.

*See attached BIT form.





BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM FORM

The MVSU BIT form is for use by any MVSU community member to facilitate appropriate intervention and is not intended to serve as a disciplinary tool. While many students are willing and able to seek help for emotional issues on their own, there are many who will not seek assistance at all. The Vice President for Student Affairs has the authority to refer students for psychiatric or psychological evaluation, if it appears to be in the best interest of the student and the university. Ideally, the BIT form should be completed in its entirety. Please provide detailed descriptions of the behavior(s) that has caused concern.

While appropriate concern and inquiry of a student's emotional status is within the range of responsibilities of MVSU faculty and staff, an attempt to provide psychological evaluation and counseling by non-mental health professionals is discouraged. Please make a referral for this service. Together, we aim to make the MVSU community safe, supportive and successful for all students, faculty and staff.

Mississippi Valley State University is committed to providing a safe environment for its students, staff, and faculty. This BIT form is for use by any staff, faculty or student who is concerned about the behavior of a Mississippi Valley State student. Complete the information below and return it to the **Student Counseling Center** or e-mail it to **yjones@mvsu.edu** with this information. If you have immediate concerns, please call the University Police at 254-3478 or 911.

This form may be completed anonymously but this may limit the ability to evaluate a student concern. Your identifying information will be treated confidentially.

Name of Student (who you are concerned about)	Date of referral	Student ID Number
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Local Address of Student	Telephone Number of Student
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Name of Person Submitting Form	Student/EmployeeID number	Telephone # & Email of Concerned Person
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Signature	Date
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Signature indicates that the above information is true to the best of your knowledge. Your identifying information will allow the Behavioral Intervention Team to contact you for further information if needed.

Reason for referral (Please be specific and provide dates, if possible.)

Do you have concerns about safety? Harm to self? Harm to others? Other? (Please explain)

If you have concerns about immediate safety, please contact University police at 254-3478.

Please list any other students involved:

Is student aware of referral? Yes No Have you notified other university personnel? Yes No

If so, who? _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM:

Action taken _____

Signature of BIT Team Chair	Date
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Signature of Vice President for Student Affairs	Date
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ONE GOAL
TEAM
VALLEY

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