

# Responding to Student Conduct Concerns



**UCAN: ADVISE THE ADVISOR SERIES**

# Objectives



- Identify and affirm available skills, strategies, and resources
- Apply knowledge and skills by reviewing and responding to student conduct cases
- Increase comfort with responding to conduct concerns

# Key Considerations



- Scope of role
- Safety
- Skills and experience
- Confidentiality
- Under-reaction
- Engaging appropriate supports/resources
  - Does the behaviour represent a conduct concern?
  - Does the behaviour suggest possible risk to self or others?

# Student Experience and Distress



- Distress is a "normal" part of student experience.
- At UofC, approximately 42.5% percent of students surveyed met clinical criteria for distress (mental health needs).
- The top three areas of concern reported by students were: academic, career, and addictions.

Jubenville, T., Kerrtesz, R., Renny, K., and Robinson, A. (2013). Student's Union Wellness Centre Needs Assessment Report. University of Calgary, Calgary, AB.

# Responding to Students



## Skills & Strategies

- Identify concerns
- Clear communication
- Active listening
- Information gathering
- Assessment
- Identify options
  - Referral or resources
  - Next steps

## Consultation & Referral

- Colleague/Dept Head
- SU Wellness Centre
- Campus Security (24/7)
- Ombudsperson
- Student at Risk Team
- Student Conduct
- Distress Centre (24/7)

# Key Indicators in Threat Assessment



- Frequency and severity of reported behaviour(s)
- Does the behaviour represent a marked change from baseline behaviour?
- Has the individual experienced a major life stressor or health concern?
- Evidence that he/she is planning or preparing to harm themselves or others
  - What level or degree of detail is present in the plan?
  - Is the threat clear, direct and plausible?

# What type of conduct concern?



## MISCONDUCT

- Potential “violations” identified in the non-academic misconduct policy
- May include threatening, violent or aggressive behaviours.

## AT-RISK BEHAVIOUR

- Includes worrisome and/or threatening behaviours
- High risk behaviours
  - Clear, direct threats or plans of harm
  - Possession/use of weapons

In some cases, the concern is **both** or **neither** of the above.

# On Campus Resources



- Campus Security
- Conduct Office
- Student Ombudsperson
- Student at Risk Team
- Wellness Centre
- Other Student Services



# Group Activity



## SCENARIOS

- Read the scenario and consider your personal response.
- Brainstorm response options as a group.
- Identify one or two specific response options.
- Practice! How would you approach this? What would you say? Be specific.

# Scenario: Registration Request



- A student calls in with a registration request. You are not able to assist with the request because the student needs special permission.

When you explain this the student becomes combative and demands to speak with someone else. You respond in a calm and firm manner, and the student replies “you will be sorry that you did not help me ... you are on my list”.

# Response: Registration Request



- Initial contact, unknown baseline & underlying concerns
- Threat: Unclear, indirect, no detail
- Conduct Policy: Possibly 4.9B (offensive) or 4.10M (threatening)

Information suggests mild risk with respect to threat.

Response options:

- Confrontation by reporter or other
- Conduct response – informal (4.9B) or formal (4.10M)
- May identify behavioural expectations/access restrictions.

# Scenario: End of Term



- It's a Friday afternoon near midterm of Winter term and you are having your weekly meeting with a 1<sup>st</sup> year student. You know that the student has been struggling, both personally and academically. You look at their record, calculate their GPA and suggest that they may RTW. You also note that the student has outstanding fees.

The student bursts into tears and starts saying over and over “there is no point in going on”. You try to console the student but the student continues to cry and cannot be consoled.

# Response: End of Term



- Ongoing contact, shift (decline) from baseline
- Concerning behaviour, 1<sup>st</sup> year stressors +/- other stressors?
- Possible threat to self - Unclear, indirect, no detail
- Conduct Policy – n/a

Information suggests mild risk with respect to threat.

Response options:

- Inquire about statement “no point...”
- Referral to SU wellness, Distress Centre, and/or other resources
- Discussion re: first & next steps and options

# Scenario: In the Bag



- You are meeting with a student who you have not met with before. The student's bag is open on the floor. You notice that there is a large knife in the bag.

You decide to calmly inquire about the knife and the student states the knife is for protection. You ask “why” and the student states that he is being threatened by others.

# Response: In the Bag



- No knowledge of baseline or shift
- Possible threat from others - Unclear, no detail
- Conduct policy – 4.10C weapons on campus

Insufficient information to assess severity of threat.

Response options:

- Engage Campus Security
- Conduct response - formal

# Scenario: Grade Dispute



- You have met with a student a number of times regarding a grade dispute. The student has expressed that he was mistreated and unfairly graded by his professor last term. He is in the middle of the appeal process, and his level of agitation has increased significantly since your last meeting.

In this meeting, he is visibly angry, clenching his fists and raising his voice. He states that if he does not get the result he hopes for, he will “go after the professor”. The professor has indicated that she does not feel safe meeting with this student, but you have not felt threatened.



# Response: Grade Dispute



- Observed shift (increased anger) in baseline
- Threat is vague but direct
- Conduct Policy: possibly 4.10M (need more info)

Insufficient information to assess severity of threat.

Response options:

- Engage Campus Security
- Consider office precautions
- Engage Ombudsperson: conflict management
- Conduct – additional information

# Comments & Questions



# Contact Info



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