

# Quick Guide for Disruptive Behaviors

## What is considered Disruptive Behavior?

A student is considered disruptive when they engage in behaviors that interfere in a significant way with normal teaching or administrative duties. Disruptive behavior comes in many forms and this guide serves as a quick reference for intervention. If you are unsure about what to do, or uncomfortable dealing with problematic behavior, please contact the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs (812-429-9849) for advice. The AWARE Team meets regularly to discuss and plan appropriate responses to potential student behavioral issues.

## Examples of Disruptive Behaviors

- Behaviors that distract the class.
- Refusal to comply with faculty or staff direction.
- Actions that intimidate others.
- Loud and / or erratic behavior.
- Threats of physical violence.
- Entitled or disrespectful talk to professor or other students.

## Questions? Contact a member of Evansville Campus AWARE Team:

Rebecca McQueen-Ruark, Asst Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs  
Denise Johnson-Kincaid, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs  
Kelly Cozart, Vice Chancellor of Academic  
Ryan Winters, Director of Public Safety  
Marcus Weatherford, Director of Student Experience  
Dr. Paul Odney, Asst Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs  
Leah Davis, Disability Services Advisor  
Reina Tavares, Director of Academic Advising  
Amy Lutzel, Wellness Coach  
Shawna Garrett, Student Affairs Assistant  
Joe Binkley, Dir of Employer Education Services/ASAP

## Levels of Concern

### Low

A situation that can be handled informally between you and the student, leading to prompt resolution (i.e., disrespectful tone, inappropriate language, etc.)

How to address:

- Handle informally with student, alone, after class
- Clearly state the behavior and define proper conduct
- Make note of the situation so if there is a pattern you have the information.

### Moderate

An ongoing problem, or a more serious incident in the classroom/office area (i.e. challenge of authority, verbal confrontation, persistent refusal to adhere to classroom policies, etc.)

How to address:

- Clearly state the behavior and define proper conduct
- Provide student with supportive resources
- Submit an incident report and select either: Student of Concern or Personal Misconduct.

### Heightened

This is where immediate danger of some kind is happening (i.e. elaborated threats of violence), or persistent disruptive behavior despite prior intervention (i.e. violating an established behavioral agreement)

Immediate danger may be present.

How to address:

Call Security @ 812-492-0517 or 812-568-2297

- Submit an incident report for personal misconduct after situation has been deescalated.

# Dealing with a Disruptive Student

Disruptive behavior should not be ignored. Remain calm. Remind yourself that it is not about you; it is about the situation. Tell the student that such behaviors are not appropriate for the learning environment and there are consequences for failing to improve their behaviors. Many disruptive situations involve anger or distress.

Recognize that the period of peak anger usually lasts 20-30 seconds, wait it out.

## Indicators

### Academic Distress

- Extreme disorganization or erratic performance.
- Written expression of violence, morbidity, despair, suicide, or death.
- Patterns of perfectionism.
- Overblown or disproportionate response to grades or evaluations.

### Behavioral / Emotional Distress

- Angry or hostile outbursts, yelling, or aggressive comments
- Repeated absences from class or more withdrawn or animated than usual when in attendance
- Expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness, crying or tearfulness
- Excessively demanding or dependent behavior

### Physical Distress

- Deterioration in physical appearance or personal hygiene
- Excessive fatigue, exhaustion, falling asleep in class
- Visible changes in weight, noticeable cuts, bruises, or burns, or frequent chronic illness
- Disorganized speech, rapid or slurred speech, confusion

## The Do's

- Use active listening through the anger.
- Acknowledge the feelings of the student.
- Allow the student to vent.
- Use silence to allow the student space to talk it out.

- Set limits and explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable.
- Be firm, steady, consistent, and honest.
- Know your limitations.

- Focus on what you can do to help resolve the situation.
- Make personal referrals to resources.
- Report behavior on incident report.

## The Don't

- Interrupt while student is sharing.
- Minimize the situation.

- Get into an argument or shouting match.
- Blame, ridicule, or use sarcasm.

- Touch the student.
- Ignore warning signs that the student's emotions are escalating.

## Take Immediate Action

If the student threatens to injure, harm, kill or risk the safety of self or others. If they act in a frightening or threatening manner. If the student reports or initiates a threat or bomb scare.

**CALL SECURITY AT 812-492-0517 or 812-568-2297**