

Student of Concern Manual

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University of
Lynchburg

Office of the Dean of Students
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Who to Contact?

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[Students of Concern Referral](#)

Introduction

The University of Lynchburg is committed to the health and safety of all members of our community. To safeguard our community the Department of Student Development has developed a comprehensive referral system to share appropriate information so students can receive and/or connect to the academic support and student wellness services they need. This referral system is one element of a safe and supportive campus community.

This guide is designed as a reference and resource for faculty and staff members to foster the well-being, in its many forms, of the members of the University of Lynchburg. It specifically provides information about seeking assistance and referring students of concern. Additional information is provided about managing difficult situations, behavioral signs that warrant concern, as well as resources for assisting students in accessing resources and services at the University of Lynchburg.

The University does not expect professors to be counselors or police officers at anytime, but do encourage them to follow the systems set in place to aid students of concern. Responding to students of concern reflects the University of Lynchburg's mission statement to promote overall wellness for our students.

What is a Student of Concern?

A student of concern is any student who is exhibiting behaviors or experiencing life events that may impact the ability of a student to be successful in the University environment.

What Constitutes a Concern?

Troubling Behaviors

- Constantly falling asleep in class
- Dramatic change in energy level (high and low)
- Changes involving poor hygiene or physical appearance
- Significant changes in weight
- Frequent states of alcohol intoxication
- Potential self-harm: noticeable cuts, bruises, or burns on a student
- Repeated absences from class, work, study, or normal activities
- Apathy/extreme changes in participation levels
- Seeking frequent extensions or exceptions
- Agitated communication to professors, friends, coaches, or supervisors
- Emotional outbursts
- Extreme personality changes
- Expressed hopelessness, fear, or worthlessness
- Themes of suicide, death, or dying
- Direct statements related to distress, family issues, or other difficulties.

Disruptive Behaviors:

- Interferes with or disrupts the educational process and the rights of other students or the normal functions of the University
- Demanding, verbally abusive, bullying or intimidating behaviors
- Displays of extreme irritability

- Irrational or impulsive behaviors

Threatening Behaviors:

- Signs of physical abuse
- Physical/verbal confrontations
- Direct threats of harming self or others
- Concerns about references to access or use a weapon in an act of violence
- Threatening communication

Referring a Student of Concern

Referring a student of concern can be done online by submitting a [student of concern referral](#) or by directly contacting the Office of the Dean of Students at 434.544.8226. If you are attempting to make a referral after 5:00 pm Monday - Friday, on the weekend, or when the school is closed, then you can contact the 24 hour information/security desk at 434.544.5555. If you believe there is an immediate threat to the safety of the student, campus, or a member of the community, then please call 911 first followed by campus safety and security.

Once the referral has been received, the Office of the Dean of Students will respond to the referee to confirm that the student is being taken care of, but limited information will be available to ensure the student's protection through FERPA and HIPAA. For more information please visit the University of Lynchburg's Dean of Students [website](#).

Student Privacy

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Generally, post-secondary institutions must have written permission from the student in order to release any information from a student's academic record.

However, what a college official sees, hears, experiences, or personally observes is not governed by FERPA unless it is drawn from a written or recorded source or it is subsequently memorialized in a written or recorded form.

When there is a credible threat to the health and or safety of a student, the campus, or any member of the campus community, FERPA authorizes college officials to release information from educational records to anyone necessary to avert the threat.

For more information see: www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html & <https://www.lynchburg.edu/academics/registrar/privacy-of-academic-records/>

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

A major goal of the HIPAA Act is to ensure that individuals' health information is properly protected while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high quality health care and to protect the public's health and well being. The Rule strikes a balance that permits important uses of information, while protecting the privacy of people who seek care and healing. University of Lynchburg's Health and Counseling Services records are protected under HIPAA. For more information see: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/>

Resources

There are many offices on campus that are available and willing to assist students to become successful at the University. These offices work in collaboration to ensure that students receive the services suitable to their needs.

Office	Information	Contact
Office of the Dean of Students	The Office of the Dean of Students oversees all aspects of student life at the University of Lynchburg. We work to provide an orderly, safe, and comfortable campus environment that is conducive to living and learning.	Tel: 434.544.8226 Fax: 434.544.8650
Health and Counseling Center	The Health and Counseling centers provide quality, confidential, and compassionate care and education to students.	Health Center Tel: 434.544.8357 Counseling Center Tel: 434.544.8616
Spiritual Life Center	At the Spiritual Life Center, we provide services and support for the needs of all students.	Tel: 434.544.8348
Office of Equity and Inclusion	The Office of Equity and Inclusion serves as a hub for inclusivity, diversity, and equity through outreach, programming, training, and development for all campus members.	Tel: 434.544.8330
Academic Achievement Center	Academic advisors help you plan your education. They help you to define and focus on your desired outcomes, graduate on time, and achieve greater success starting your career after graduation.	Tel: 434.544.8339
Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources	University of Lynchburg guarantees all students with documented disabilities equal access to an education limited only by personal ability and not by disability and supports students in obtaining reasonable accommodations.	Julia R. Timmons Tel: 434.544.8687 or 434.544.8339 Fax:434.544.880

		8 timmons.j@lynchburg.edu
Campus Safety and Security	Campus Safety and Security Department provides a safe and secure environment where members of the University of Lynchburg Community live, study, work and play.	Tel: 434.544.8100 Emergency: 434.544.5555 or 911

When to call Campus Safety and Security?

The University of Lynchburg Campus Safety and Security Department should be notified at 434-544-5555 or 911 if the incident is nearing the level of crisis. A crisis exists whenever the behavior poses imminent danger of:

- causing or threatening harm to self or others,
- impeding lawful activities of other members of the campus community,
- interfering with the health, safety, or well-being of other members of the University of Lynchburg community and/or,
- experiencing a medical emergency.

If you're ever unsure of whether or not a crisis exists, err on the side of caution and call Campus Safety and Security at 434-544-5555. A dispatcher will either coordinate a response or give you information and/or referrals to assist the student(s) in need.

Leave Policies

Personal Leave: A personal leave of absence may be granted for one semester to students in good academic and social standing for whom personal matters require a temporary absence from the University.

Voluntary Medical Leave: A separation from the University due to medical or psychological conditions that significantly impair their ability to function successfully and safely as a student as certified by a legally qualified professional. Temporary time away should be used for treatment and recovery.

Involuntary Medical Leave: The Threat Assessment and Management Team (TAM) is charged with reviewing cases in which students' health or safety is at risk, and/or their behavior poses a risk to the health, safety, and well-being of the campus community. It may be determined by TAM that a student needs to take a medical leave to receive proper treatment and care before returning to campus with or without the student's consent. They are required to present proper documentation for re-enrollment, which will be reviewed by TAM to determine eligibility for active status.

Medical Withdrawal: Similar to a voluntary medical leave however, the student has no plans of returning to the University.

Withdrawal: A voluntary decision made by the student to leave the University with no plans of returning.

On-Call Rotation

During office hours, the Office of the Dean of Students responds to cases received through various reporting/referral systems. However, afterhour care is provided by Administrators from Student Development offices who serve as the On Call Graduate Assistant (OCGA), Dean on Call (DOC), Minister on Call (MOC), and Counselor on Call (COC) on a rotating basis (e.g., deans of students, directors and Coordinators of Student Development Offices, Campus Safety and Security, and Student Activities).

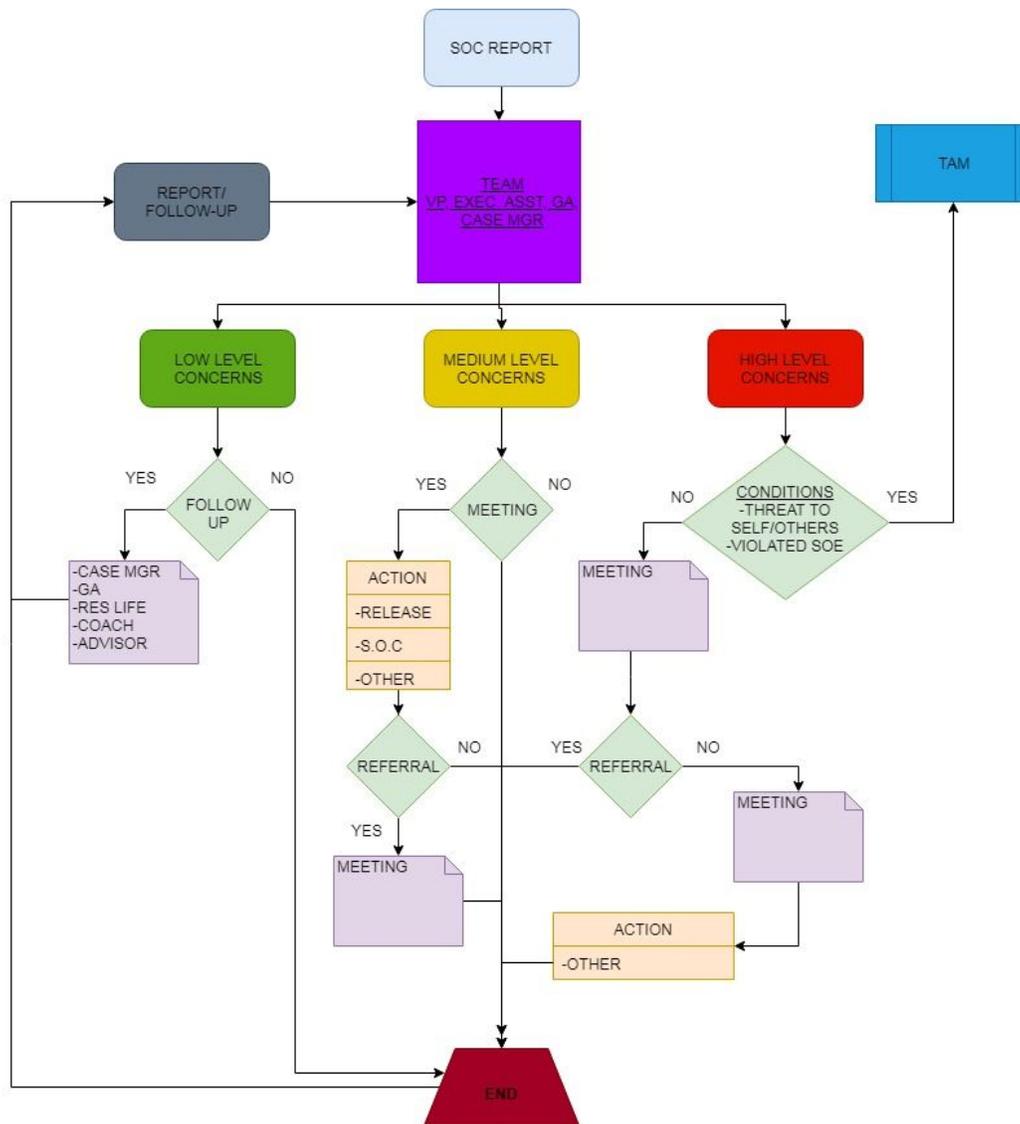
The On Call Graduate Assistant works with Campus Safety & Security, Residence Life, and the Dean on Call staff to address concerns, emergencies, policy violations, and other situations occurring on campus as well as Community Patrol on weekends.

The DOC is available to consult with and to assist security and residential staff about safety, medical, mental health, and facility emergencies. The Dean-on-Call emergency response system supplements but does not replace standard protocol of Campus Safety and Security or the Office of Housing & Residence Life. The Dean-on-Call system is active during the fall and spring semesters when weekday office hours have ended; the DOC system is not active during winter, and summer breaks.

The Minister On-Call (MOC) provides care and advocacy for the members within University of Lynchburg community. The MOC is available by phone or in person at times of illness, mental health crisis, depression, death of a loved one, sexual assault, transition issues, and at the Emergency Department/Hospital.

The Counselor On-Call (COC) are Counselors who serve on a rotating basis and are available by phone to assist the DOC in addressing concerns related to student mental health.

The Referral Process



Office of the Dean of Students SOC Referral Process:

1. The Office of the Dean of Students receives a student of concern referral.
2. Threat levels are assessed. For emergencies, contact Campus Safety and Security immediately.
3. For low level concerns, students are followed up for an informal meeting. If the student falls into medium to high level concerns, a meeting is scheduled to gather more information and/or provide resources..
4. A statement of expectations may be created and release of information form may be signed. The statement of expectation is a personalized document tailored to the individual outlining various action strategies to promote their success.
5. The student will be expected to follow through on the plans made with staff in the Office of the Dean of Students.

6. The Office of the Dean of students will follow up with the student to ensure that they have the proper support.
7. If a secondary meeting is required, then a new plan of action will be made. If expectations are violated the case will be reviewed, which may include the involvement of the Threat Assessment Team.

After Hours Response System:

1. Campus Safety and Security, an RA, or the OCGA will be notified about a concern/situation.
2. The OCGA will respond to the situation and assess.
3. If the OCGA can neutralize the situation independently with Campus Safety and Security, then no further assistance is required.
4. If the OCGA cannot neutralize the threat, and the DOC approves, then the COC will be called.
 - a. The criteria for contacting the counselor on call include student death, an IMP situation, a student with questionable suicidal ideation (not clear whether or not hospitalization would be next best step), or a significant traumatic event on campus or in the student's life. The COC is always available for consultation with the DOC/MOC regarding mental health issues and concerns.
5. If the student's or communities' safety is still in question, then EMS or LPD will be called.
6. The DOC will be notified, and the MOC will be called to respond to the student.

Student Behavior Profiles

The Distressed Student

You may become aware of students in distress in a variety of ways. Students may directly communicate their distress to you in private or in front of others. You may also sense there is something amiss with a student on the basis of their behavior or demeanor over time. Distressed students may display some or more of the behaviors identified below:

1. May express heightened apprehension and fear verbally or behaviorally. These concerns will likely interfere with their learning and ability to appropriately participate in class activities. You may notice agitation, physical shaking of hands, or a trembling voice.
2. May appear tense, anxious, and mistrustful. These students may tend to interpret minor oversights as significant personal rejection or may overreact to insignificant occurrences. They may be overly concerned with fairness and being treated equally.
3. May change behavior over time from actively engaged and involved to a noticeable loss of interest in the classroom or other activities. Normally outgoing students may seem to retreat from interaction and involvement. Attendance issues may become a problem for students in distress. Depending on your relationship with the student, he/she may verbally communicate the distress with you
4. A student may share events or incidents of discrimination, harassment, and/or sexual or physical violence. This may be expressed through various forms of communication. Nearly every Employee at Lynchburg College is identified as a Responsible Employee and must report to the Title IX Coordinator all information regarding Prohibited Conduct, including personally identifiable information. For more information on mandatory reporting, please refer to the Lynchburg [Interpersonal Misconduct Policy](#).
5. May appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol in your class, in your office, or during an event.
6. Students who are physically ill or who are experiencing a medical emergency also fall into this category.

If the Behavior is Distressed

Student demonstrates distressed behavior but is not disruptive.

Signs of distress can fall into several categories but are not always indicators of unmet behavioral or mental health needs.

Distressed behavior includes: tearfulness, anxiety, irritation, depression, or inability to concentrate.

Speak with student privately about what you are observing and your concerns if feasible.

Inform student of assistance available on campus. If possible, help student call for an appointment or walk them over to the Health and Counseling Center.

The Health and Counseling Center is located on the Terrace Level Hundley Hall
434-544-8616.

Repeat "Column A" as needed.

-or-

If the distressed behavior becomes disruptive proceed to column B.

-or-

If distressed behavior persists, impeding the ability of the student to successfully function in the campus community, submit a Student of Concern Report at the link below or call the Office of the Dean of Students at 544-8226

Distressed Student Decision Tree

DO:

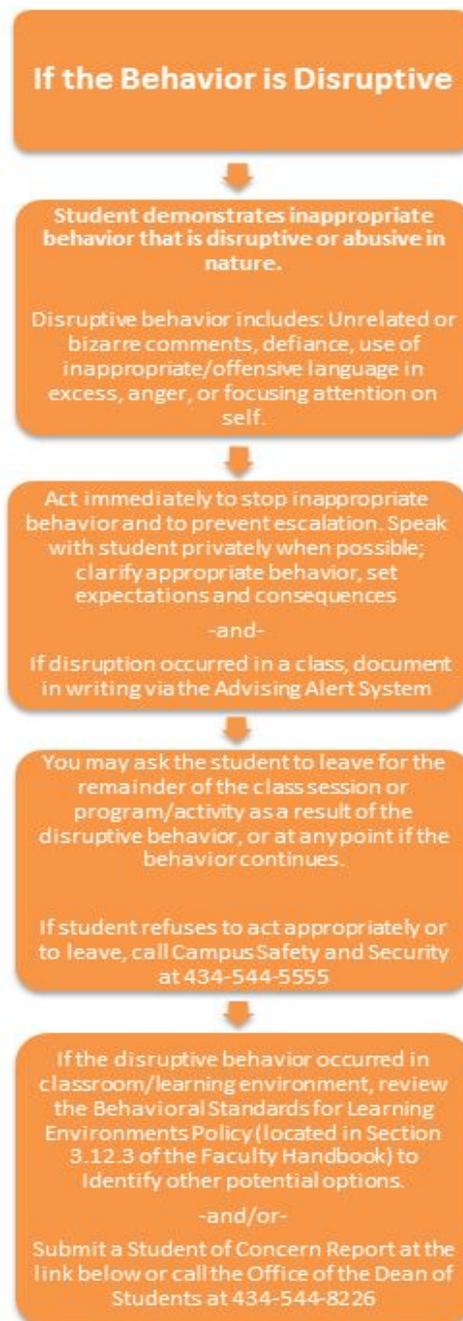
- A. Speak with the student privately about what you are observing and your concerns if feasible.
- B. Express compassion without violating appropriate boundaries.
- C. Communicate your concern if appropriate.
- D. Be specific and clear regarding the standards of behavior you expect if the student's behaviors are interfering with classroom activities.
- E. Listen for indications that the student may be suicidal with statements like "Life doesn't seem worth living" or "I just feel like I can't go on anymore."
- F. Share your intention of referring them for assistance.
- G. Inform the student of assistance available on campus. If possible, help the student call for a counseling appointment or walk them over to the Health and Counseling Center, which is located on the Terrace Level of Hundley Hall and can be reached at 434-544-8616.
- H. If it is evident that the case involves a medical emergency or drug/alcohol abuse, then always contact the University of Lynchburg's Campus Safety and Security at 434-544-5555.

DON'T:

- A. Take responsibility for their emotional state by saying "I'll take care of it for you."
- B. Discount their distress by saying "It's not really that bad" or "You've really got nothing to worry about."
- C. Assure the student that you are his/her friend.
- D. Be overly warm and nurturing.
- E. Be cute or humorous.
- F. Challenge or agree with any mistaken or illogical beliefs.
- G. Say anything else that might discount the personal significance or intensity of the student's feelings.
- H. Agree to maintain student confidentiality.

The Disruptive Student

Often, large amounts of time and energy are given to students who make excessive demands on your time. They may seek to control your time and unconsciously believe that the amount of time they receive from you is a reflection of their worth. These students may also have difficulty keeping their comments consistent with the activities or with the topic/issue being discussed. Disruptive behavior can include verbal aggression.



Disruptive Student Decision Tree

DO:

- A. Act immediately to stop inappropriate behavior and to prevent escalation. Speak with the student privately when possible; clarify appropriate behavior, set expectations and consequences
- B. Set limits. Consider language along the lines of, "Excuse me; I need to attend to other things."
- C. Remain calm and professional. Be sensitive to both verbal and nonverbal cues exhibited by a student who seems to be verbally aggressive.
- D. Intervene as soon as you hear or see the undesirable behavior. Be consistent with your intervention.
- E. Give the class a break and ask the student to meet outside of class to speak privately.
- F. Briefly and directly convey to the student that verbally aggressive behavior is unacceptable and that the matter must be resolved.
- G. You may ask the student to leave for the remainder of the class session or program/activity as a result of the disruptive behavior, or at any point if the behavior continues.
- H. If the disruptive behavior occurred in the classroom/learning environment, review the Behavioral Standards for Learning Environments Policy (located in Section 3.12.3 of the Faculty Handbook) to identify other potential options.
- I. If, in your best judgment, the verbally aggressive student could create a safety risk, contact the University of Lynchburg Campus Safety and Security immediately at 434-544-5555. Use a phone out of sight/hearing of individual if possible or request someone else to call. Report details of the incident.
- J. Submit a [University of Lynchburg Student of Concern Referral](#) or call the Office of the Dean of Students at 434-544-8226.

DON'T:

- A. Wait until you have become too involved to seek assistance
- B. Let them use you as their only source of support.
- C. Get trapped into giving advice, "Why don't you ...etc.?"
- D. Get defensive.
- E. Engage in a power struggle with the student.
- F. Respond with anger.
- G. Allow the disruptive behaviors continue.

The Potentially Dangerous Student

Certain behaviors may signal imminent danger to self or others. For example: physical or verbal threats, harassment, expressing personal insults, refusal to comply with directions of university officials or faculty members, and continued escalation of threats might signal imminent danger.

Dramatic changes in behavior over time may indicate the potential for dangerous behavior or harm to self such as :

- Actively engaged and involved students may begin to demonstrate a loss of interest in classroom or other activities.
- Normally outgoing students may seem to retreat from interaction and involvement.

Depending on your relationship with these students, they may communicate their sense of despondency or outline a specific plan to do harm to themselves.

You may also experience students whose behavior may be bizarre, eccentric or erratic. They may display

- Disorganized speech and behavior
- Inappropriate or complete lack of emotion
- Bizarre behavior that may include expressing hallucinations
- Strange beliefs that involve a serious misinterpretation of reality
- Social withdrawal
- Inability to connect with or track normal communication

While these behaviors, by themselves, may not indicate a potential for violence or danger, they may indicate the need for treatment or hospitalization. It should be noted that students who are experiencing these behaviors can be unpredictable and should be approached with caution.

If the Behavior is Dangerous



Crisis Event

A crisis event exists whenever a person's behavior poses imminent danger of:

- Harm to self or others,
- Impeding the approved activities of other members of the campus community
- Significant property damage,
- Interfering with the health, safety, or well-being of other members of the LC community.



Protect the safety of others and self and call Campus Safety and Security at 434-544-5555

If incident circumstances and safety will allow, buy time with the student by talking calmly and with concern, if possible, until assistance arrives



Provide necessary information to Campus Safety and Security for their documentation.

Helpful Tips

Do not promise confidentiality but inform the student about places they can go to receive this level of confidentiality. These include the Health and Counseling Center and the Chaplain's Office.

Implement these steps sooner rather than later. Issues are more treatable when they are milder.

Potentially Dangerous Student Decision Tree

DO:

- A. Contact University of Lynchburg Campus Safety and Security at 434-544-5555 in situations where you believe violence is imminent.
- B. Immediately report students who share suicidal thoughts.
- C. Recognize that psychotic states can involve extreme emotion or lack of emotion and intense fear to the point of paranoia.
- D. Respond to the student with concern and kindness, and with firm reasoning. "I can see you're very upset. Please tell me how I can assist you."
- E. Articulate your specific concerns and state that you can see they need help.
- F. Be aware that the student may show no emotions or intense emotions.
- G. Ask another staff or student to call for help if needed.
- H. Submit a [Student of Concern Referral](#) or call the Office of the Dean of Students at 434-544-8226.

DON'T:

- A. Assume the student will be able to care for him/herself.
- B. Agitate the student by arguing about unrealistic beliefs.
- C. Assume the student comprehends what you are saying or doing.
- D. Release the student to the care of a roommate or friend without seeking professional consultation.
- E. Attempt to probe the delusional thinking.
- F. Assume responsibility by personally trying to resolve their issues.

Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Situations

Faculty and staff members often have face to face contact with students. They may be the initial responders to students who are in crisis, angry, verbally abusive, or potentially dangerous. These general suggestions can be utilized with the behavior pattern “do’s” and “don’ts” identified previously in this document. The following guidelines provide general principles for effective verbal intervention.

1. Remain Calm

Remember that the verbally escalating person is beginning to lose control. If the person senses that you are also losing control, the situation may get worse. Try to keep your emotions under control even when you are being challenged, insulted, or threatened. This may be easier said than done, especially when a student is making threats or using abusive language, but it is important in the process of de-escalating the situation.

2. Be Empathetic

Try not to judge or discount the feelings of others. Whether or not you think the feelings are justified, those feelings are real to the other person. You may want to acknowledge them by saying things like, “I understand that this is very frustrating for you” or “I’m sorry that you’re feeling distressed about....”

3. Watch Your Body Language

As a person becomes increasingly agitated, he or she will pay less attention to your words and more attention to your body language. Be aware of your use of space, posture, and gestures. Avoid gestures that might seem threatening. Make sure your nonverbal behavior is consistent with your verbal message.

4. Respect Personal Space

Maintain a safe distance (2 - 3 feet) from an agitated person. Invading personal space tends to increase the individual’s anxiety and may lead to increased agitation.

5. Keep It Simple

Be clear and direct in your message. Avoid jargon and complicated choices. A person who is beginning to lose rational control may not be processing information as he or she usually does. Complex messages may increase anxiety and make self-control more difficult.

6. Set and Enforce Reasonable Limits

If the person becomes belligerent, defensive, or disruptive, then be sure to state limits and directives clearly and concisely. When setting limits, offer choices and consequences to the acting-out individual. For example, "If you calm down, I can continue to assist you. If not, you will need to leave."

Consider saying "It's not my role to make that kind of decision here at the University. Let me locate someone who can help you." or "It's hard for me to understand what you are saying when you are shouting. Please lower your voice so that I can better help you."

7. Request Assistance When Necessary

- a. If you perceive any threat, call the University of Lynchburg Campus Safety and Security at 434-544-5555. In such situations, your safety and those of others in your area are of utmost importance. The use of telephone "code words" or alarm buttons may be a good strategy and should be discussed and developed within your department.
- b. If the student is angry or demanding, but you do not sense an immediate threat, then he or she can receive assistance available on campus. If possible help the student call the Health and Counseling Center at 434-544-8616. The Health and Counseling Center is located on the Terrace Level of Hundley Hall.

8. Document The Incident

- a. Submit a [Student of Concern Referral](#) or call the Office of the Dean of Students at 434-544-8226.