

Working With Disruptive Students & Disturbing Behaviors

*Accessibility Resource Center (ARC)
& Dean of Students Office*

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Problematic Student Behavior

Faculty and Staff Often Deal with:

- Disruptive Behavior
- Disturbing Behavior
- Behavior may that have elements of both

Goals

- ◉ Define Disruptive and Disturbing Student behaviors
- ◉ Discuss the obligation to deal with the behaviors
- ◉ Offer suggestions about handling various types of behavior
- ◉ Explain the role of the Dean of Students Office in working with students

Why is Addressing and Identifying these Behaviors Important?

Being proactive, helps UNM to:

- Provide Resources for students in need so they can continue on academically
- Provide a good learning environment for students
- Provide a safe environment for our students at UNM

What is Disruptive Behavior?

Behavior that interferes with the
educational process of other students

OR

Behavior that prevents faculty or staff from
performing their professional
responsibilities

Examples of Severe Disruptive Behavior

- ◉ Physically confronts another person
- ◉ Verbally abuses another person
- ◉ Physically destroys or damages property

Examples of Disruptive Behavior

- ◉ Interrupts the classroom process by:
 - > Making remarks out of turn
 - > Taking over the lecture
 - > Dominating classroom discussion
 - > Using cell phone, pager, or other electronic devices in the class
 - > Being consistently late to class or leaving early
 - > Making excessive noise (e.g., shuffling paper or books)

Examples of Disruptive Behavior (Continued)

- ◉ Inappropriate E-mail Behavior with Faculty and or Staff
- ◉ Inappropriate use of on-line class forums or university social networking sites

What is Disturbing Behavior?

Behavior that indicates that the student is in distress.

- ◉ Whether or not caused in part by his/her school situation, academic performance often will suffer.

Disturbing Behavior

- ◉ Distress may be mild, with only minimal impact on the student's performance
- ◉ Distress can also extend to the severe levels, where there is potential for harm to the student or others

Examples of Disturbing Behavior (Severe)

- ◉ Student appears disheveled or has poor hygiene
- ◉ Has noticeable change in quality of work
- ◉ Appears disoriented/confused about time, place, or who he/she is
- ◉ Inappropriate verbal outbursts
- ◉ Bizarre written or verbal statements
- ◉ Inappropriate use of violent themes/subjects

Examples of Disturbing Behavior (Severe)

- ◉ Written or verbal references to suicide
- ◉ Giving away personal belongings or prized possessions
- ◉ Significant changes in mood, especially depressed or lethargic mood
- ◉ Expresses feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- ◉ Complains of problems sleeping or eating

Examples of Disturbing Behavior (Severe)

- ◉ Dramatic weight loss or gain
- ◉ Appears isolated from friends, family, or classmates/colleagues
- ◉ Persistent unwanted contact with others
- ◉ Appears hyperactive or speaks very rapidly
- ◉ Suspected drug or alcohol abuse

Dealing with Disruptive Behavior

- Securing a safe environment is the top priority. If there are questions about immediate safety, call Police at 911 or 505-277-2241
- Talk to the student, preferably in a private setting if you feel comfortable doing so
- If there are concerns about violence or escalating behavior, ask a colleague, supervisor, or department chair to be present

Dealing with Disruptive Behavior

- ◉ Inform the student of the behavior that needs to change, a timeline for when the change needs to be made, and the consequences if the change does not occur.
- ◉ Follow through with the consequences if change does not occur
- ◉ Write out the above steps, and provide the student with a written copy , if possible (in writing is necessary – why?)

Dealing with Disruptive Behavior

- ◉ If the disruptive behavior is ongoing in a public setting (e.g., a classroom or a campus office):
 - > Verbally request that the behavior stop
 - > Verbally request that the student leave the setting if he/she does not stop
 - > Call Campus Police at 911 (from any campus phone) or 505-277-2241 from a cell phone
 - > Consult the Dean of Students office about possible violations of the Code of Conduct

Dealing with Disturbing Behavior (Student in Distress)

- ◉ Speak with the student privately
- ◉ Let the student know that you are concerned about his or her welfare
- ◉ Express your concerns in nonjudgmental terms
- ◉ Maintain voice control
- ◉ Seek a “time out” if the behavior escalates

Dealing with Disturbing Behavior (Student in Distress)

- ◉ Tell the student you are willing to help
- ◉ Listen carefully
- ◉ Make a referral to the appropriate university department – give the name of a specific individual, if possible
- ◉ Emphasize that help for the student's concerns is available

Dealing with Disturbing Behavior (Student in Distress)

- ◉ Maintain clear boundaries and expectations – don't make promises you can't (or won't) keep
- ◉ Recognize your limits
- ◉ Do not promise confidentiality
- ◉ Do not personalize the problem
- ◉ Do not involve yourself beyond the limits of your time and/or skill

Resources

- Talk to your Supervisor, Department Chair or College Dean about the student, for help in deciding upon appropriate action.

Behavior Assessment & Response Committee

- This team is a key group of individuals across campus that will assist in addressing and managing students who fit the criteria of being someone who needs to be monitored more closely.
- This group will work on getting resources to the student and faculty/staff to help in addressing the student's behavior
- The goal of the group would be to manage a student's behavior so that is not unsafe or disruptive to others or themselves, so they can continue to obtain their academic degree here at UNM

Please let us know

- It is very helpful to have these incidents reported to the proper entity on campus, so we can have all of the information in front of us when making decisions about students. For example...
- You should report these incidents to Student Conduct Officer in the Dean of Students Office, by calling 277-3361.
- Reporting does not necessarily mean there is conduct action being taken, it just means we are going to track the information and see if there are other reports of problematic behavior with a particular student

Online Reporting

- On-line Reporting Avenue for the UNM Campus Community, incidents will have the ability to be reported on-line.
- https://unm-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/
 - This form allows you to submit a report any time and goes straight to the BARC for further evaluation.

Resources

- Consult with the Director of Counseling Services, Dr. Stephanie McIver, about a course of action by calling 505-277-3136.
- Call the Dean of Students Conduct Officer (277-3361) to discuss whether the disruptive behavior falls under the Student Code of Conduct and to report the incident for tracking purposes.

Resources

- Use the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center as a potential referral for the student or other students who might be affected by the behavior.
- The LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center provides a safe environment for students to receive support and advocacy services for a number of areas. The Advocacy Center is committed to helping students understand and navigate UNM's structure and to resolving issues they may encounter at the university. We aim to empower students to overcome obstacles and promote growth both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Contact Info:
 - > 277-2911 (24/7)
 - > loborespect.unm.edu
 - > ldelgado@unm.edu (Director's email)
 - > University Advisement and Enrichment Center 2nd floor, Room 262
- Additional Services
 - > Anonymous reporting location
 - > University and community resources
 - > Absence Notifications
 - > Domestic Partnerships
 - > Education and Trainings
 - > Hate Bias Incident Reporting
 - > Lobo Food Pantry
 - > Military Withdrawals
 - > Short Term Disabilities
 - > Short Term Loans
 - > Student Death Notices
 - > Tuition Appeals

