



EAB

RESEARCH BRIEF

Preventing Campus Violence and Providing Mental Health Services at Rural Institutions

Community College Executive Forum

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Install surveillance technology, hire a campus police force, and implement campus safety sessions during new student orientation to prevent violence.

All profiled institutions have installed surveillance technology (e.g., security cameras) in strategic locations such as student dormitories to monitor threatening or suspicious activity or behavior. Profiled institutions also have an emergency alert system that campus police activate to notify all campus constituents of crises (e.g., campus intruders) via email, texts, and phone calls. To enable students to take safety precautions, administrators at **Institution A** and **Institution B** require new students to attend a campus safety session during new student orientation.

Train faculty to identify, address, and manage aggressive students or students of concern. Contacts at **Institution C** indicate that it is important to train faculty to identify and address students of concern¹ because they interact with students on a daily basis and form relationships with them. The full-time equivalent (FTE) counselor and selected faculty attended a workshop at the University of Southern Mississippi to learn how to address students of concern. Similarly, administrators at **Institution B** require faculty to participate in workshops to learn to address students of concern once per semester. Contacts at Institution C and Institution B indicate that role-playing scenarios are the most effective method to train faculty to identify and address students of concern.

File complaints against aggressive students, and give aggressive students the necessary support to change their behavior. At **Institution B**, the Dean of Students receives and files complaints against aggressive students, and it is at the discretion of the Dean of Students to decide the best course of action. During difficult cases, the Dean of Students may elicit the help of the Behavioral Assessment Committee to help him or her determine how to best manage the aggressive student. Once the Committee makes a decision, the Dean of Students communicates the outcome to the student in question (e.g., suspension, mandatory counseling).

Hire at least one FTE counselor to serve faculty, staff, and students' mental health needs. **Institution B** has the lowest ratio of FTE counselors to students of all profiled institutions. Contacts indicate that at a minimum, candidates seeking counselor positions must possess a bachelor's degree and have prior counseling experience. The most effective counselors have master's degrees and counseling licenses and are capable of helping students with serious challenges (e.g., suicide). Contacts offer counselors salaries commensurate with their qualifications, previous work experience, and the local cost of living.

Track the number of students who use counseling services and any increases in the number of students faculty refer to the counseling unit. Administrators track the number of students who use the counseling unit's services on an annual basis. This allows administrators to identify changes in student use of the counseling unit and to adjust their services and publicity efforts accordingly. Academic counselors at **Institution C** also provide specialized workshops for students (e.g., tutoring sessions) and send surveys to workshop participants to solicit feedback.

Ensure that all strategies to prevent campus violence involve collaboration among counselors, campus police, the dean of students, and faculty

1) Note: The term "students of concern" is defined as students who exhibit at least one of the following: classroom outbursts, psychiatric hospitalizations, eating disorders, depression, anxiety or sleep disorders, disruptions in residence halls, suicide ideation, suicide attempts. This definition comes from the EAB study, "Responding to Students of Concern: Best Practices for Behavioral Intervention Teams". Page 9. Accessed 30 March 2016. <https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/student-affairs-forum/studies/2013/responding-to-students-of-concern>

members. Contacts at **Institution A** indicate that unilateral efforts to curb campus violence by individual campus units are not successful; rather, a variety of campus units and department must share personnel and resources to ensure campus safety through collaboration. For example, contacts at **Institution C** indicate that faculty often have the closest relationships with students because they interact with them on a daily basis. As a result, faculty members must communicate frequently with the counseling unit and campus police to identify students of concern. However, contacts at Institution A indicate that declining enrollments and decreased state funding has created financial constraints. Lack of resources makes it difficult for administrators to hire additional personnel, and develop the necessary programming and training to ensure campus safety and offer quality mental health services.

2) Preventing Violence on Campus

Strategies to Prevent Campus Violence

Install Surveillance Technology to Monitor and Prevent Campus Violence

Contacts at all profiled institutions indicate that they have installed surveillance cameras in strategic areas like dormitories to monitor suspicious activity and behavior. At **Institution A**, students must swipe their student identification cards to access dormitories, which prevents individuals outside the community from entering student living space. Contacts at all profiled institutions also indicate that they have technology that alerts students, faculty and staff to campus intruders, inclement weather, and other emergencies. Campus police activate the alert electronically, which is sent to every campus constituent via email, texts, and calls.

Hire a Specialized Police Force to Protect the Campus

In addition to installing surveillance technology, **Institution B** and **Institution A** have on-campus police forces that protect the campus 24/7. Students may also call the campus police at any time to report suspicious activity, and to escort them to a location. Administrators must purchase cell phones for campus police so that students, faculty, and staff may reach them at any time. A chief campus police officer or deputy typically oversees the police force.

The campus police force also collaborates with local police and hospital administrators on an ad hoc basis when campus violence incidents have legal consequences (e.g., rape), or when a student's health is in jeopardy (e.g., student threatening suicide).

Implement Campus Safety Sessions during First-Year Orientation to Teach Students about Personal Safety

Administrators at **Institution A** and **Institution B** also require first-year students to attend a session on campus safety as part of new student orientation. Topics include where to go to receive counseling and how to report sexual assault. The chief campus police officer or counselors typically lead these sessions.

Sample Campus Safety Session at New Student Orientation



The campus counselor or campus police director tells new first year students about the services the counseling unit offers (e.g., coping with substance abuse, mental illness) and how to report sexual assault.



The session leader gives students the opportunity to ask questions.



The campus counselor or the campus police director passes out his/her business card and tells students how to contact and locate the counseling center and campus police.



15-20 minutes



Outsource Training When Resources Permit

As part of first-year orientation, new students must complete online sexual harassment training by EverFi called "Haven." Through this online training, students learn how to recognize and report sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual harassment.² Although administrators recommend the program, they are unsure if they will continue to integrate this training into orientation due to program costs.

Training Faculty and Staff to Address Students of Concern



Require Faculty and Staff to Undergo Training to Address and Manage Students of Concern

Contacts at **Institution C** emphasize the importance of training faculty members to address students of concern because they interact with students on a daily basis and develop relationships with them. As a result, students often feel comfortable confiding in faculty members.

At **Institution B**, administrators require faculty and staff to participate in annual trainings to address students of concern. Administrators offer these sessions as part of the institution-wide meetings and trainings that occur once per semester. The workshops are one day long and workshop leaders incorporate a variety of sessions (e.g., communicating with students of concern, collaborating with the dean of students and/or counselors to support students of concern). The counselor or dean of students typically lead these workshop sessions.

Faculty and staff also have the opportunity to participate in active shooter training with the local police force, but it is not mandatory.

Mandatory Faculty and Staff Training Related to Student Behavior at Institution B

	Session	Topics	Leader(s)	Format
	Identifying students of concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discern when to intervene and how to express concern 	Counselor	Lecture and role-play
	Managing difficult student behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to validate student's feelings with disciplinary actions 	Dean of Students and counselor	Role-play in small break-out groups

At Institution C, the campus counselor and several faculty members volunteered to attend a training session at the University of Southern Mississippi to learn how to manage challenging student behavior. Similar to the trainings at Institution B, participants reenact scenarios to learn how to identify and strategically intervene to help students of concern. Administrators at the University of Southern Mississippi cap the course at 25 participants to foster participant engagement.

Contacts at Institution C anticipate that the training will become mandatory for all faculty and staff in the coming years.

In the EAB report *Responding to Students of Concern: Best Practices for Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs)*, contacts indicate that BIT performance is challenging to

2) Source: Online Sexual Assault Programs. EverFi. Accessed 28 March 2016. <https://everfi.com/higher-education/haven/#different>

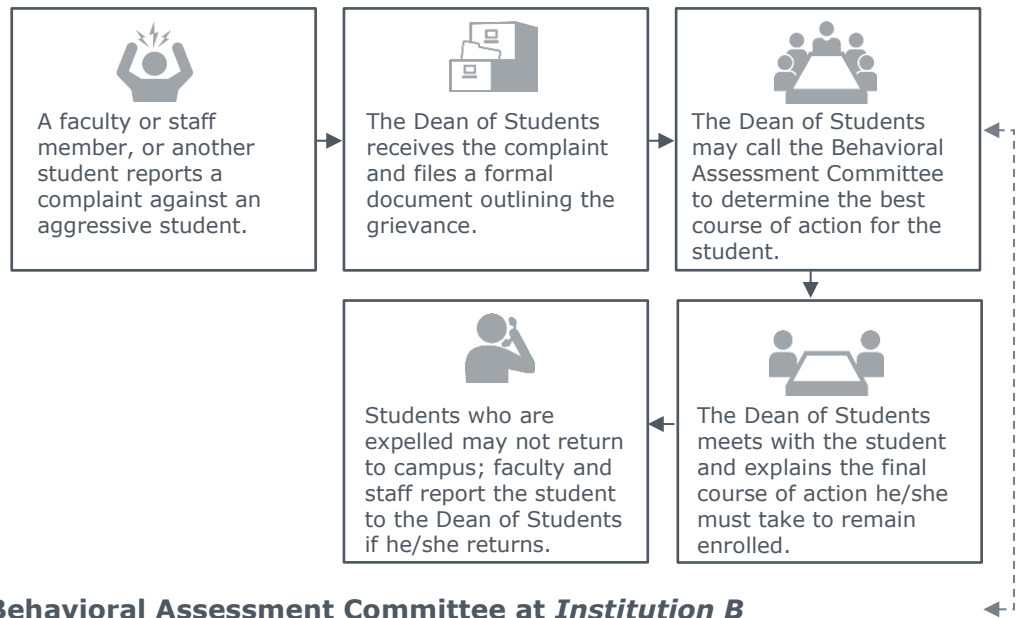
measure due to the difficulties in quantifying non-events. As a result, few schools invest time and effort in evaluating team performance; typically, the existence of the BIT and the lack of major incidents indicates BIT success.⁴

Protocols to Address Students of Concern

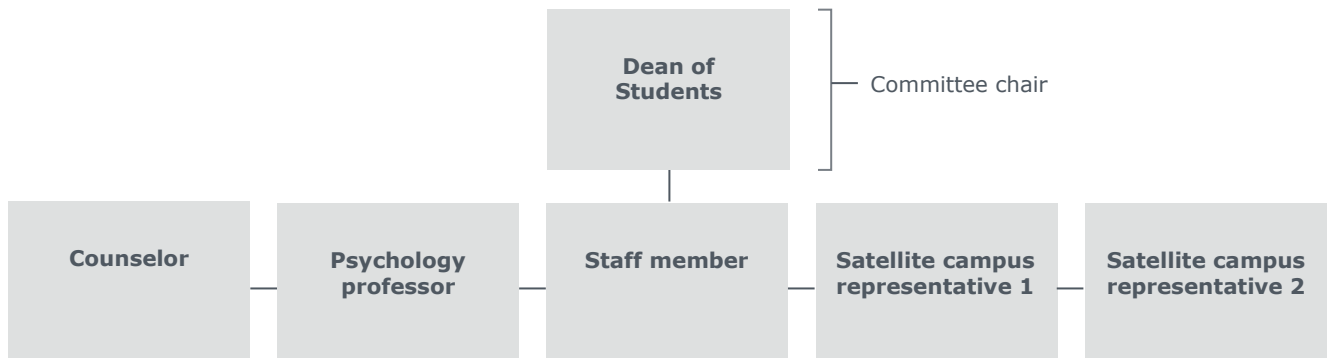
File a Report and Support Students of Concern to Change Their Behavior

At **Institution B**, a faculty member, staff member, or other student may report a complaint against a student who has aggressive, threatening, or unusual behavior. The Dean of Students files this complaint as a formal report, and decides the corrective action for the student in question (e.g., suspension, mandatory counseling). The Dean of Students convenes the Behavioral Assessment Committee on an ad hoc basis to determine corrective actions if she feels she needs extra support.

Process to Address Students of Concern at *Institution B*



Behavioral Assessment Committee at *Institution B*



3) Source: Responding to Students of Concern: Best Practices for Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs). *Education Advisory Board*. Page 90. Accessed 31 March 2016. <https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/student-affairs-forum/studies/2013/responding-to-students-of-concern>

3) Providing Mental Health Services

Ratio of Counselors to Students

Hire at Least One Full-Time Counselor to Provide Counseling Services to Faculty, Staff, and Students

All profiled institutions have at least one full-time counselor. However, contacts indicate that hiring one or two full-time counselors is not sufficient to serve the mental health needs of the entire campus.

Counselors offer other resources in addition to in-person counseling, such as placing pamphlets and hand-outs pertaining to coping with mental health challenges in strategic area (e.g., first-year orientation sessions, dormitories, outside the counselor’s office). Counselors also link resources to the counseling unit’s online page so that students may access information pertaining to mental illness, sexual assault, personal violence, suicide, and drug and substance abuse at all times.

Ratio of Counselors to Student Body at Profiled Institutions

Lowest ratio ↑
Highest ratio ↓

Institution	Total Student Body ⁵	Total # of FTE Counselors ⁶	Ratio of Counselors to Students
Institution B	2,847	2	1 : 1,424
Institution C	4,455	1.5	1 : 2,970
Institution A	4,140	1	1 : 4,140

Create a Behavioral Intervention Team in Lieu of Hiring Counselors during Periods of Financial Constraint

Financial constraints prevented administrators at the **Institution A** from hiring counselors. Before hiring the first FTE counselor in 2015, administrators created a Behavioral Intervention Team composed of the chief of campus police, residence assistants, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Services. The team met on an ad hoc basis to discuss students of concern.

Counseling Services

Ensure Counselors Are Qualified to Help Students Cope with Debilitating Life Challenges

Students meet with counselors to cope with major life challenges (e.g., death of loved one) on an ad hoc basis. At **Institution C**, students may receive 11 one-on-one counseling sessions for free each year.

Academic counselors typically help students resolve minor challenges.

4) Determined for all profiled institutions using the College Navigator. Source: College Navigator. *National Center for Education Statistics*. Accessed 28 March 2016. <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/>

5) Determined via research calls.

Administrators at rural community colleges that do not have full-time counselors typically refer students to external local counseling agencies.

Services Provided by Counselors and Academic Advisors

Student Challenge	Counselor	Academic Advisor
Grief	✓	
Substance abuse and/or addiction	✓	
Sexual assault	✓	
Interpersonal violence	✓	
Anxiety, depression, or other mental illness	✓	
Suicide	✓	
Time management		✓
Minor stress management		✓
Setting and achieving personal and professional goals		✓

Do Not Screen Students for Mental Illness during the Admissions Process

Contacts indicate that they do not screen students for mental illness during the admissions process due to possible FERPA or HIPPA violations.

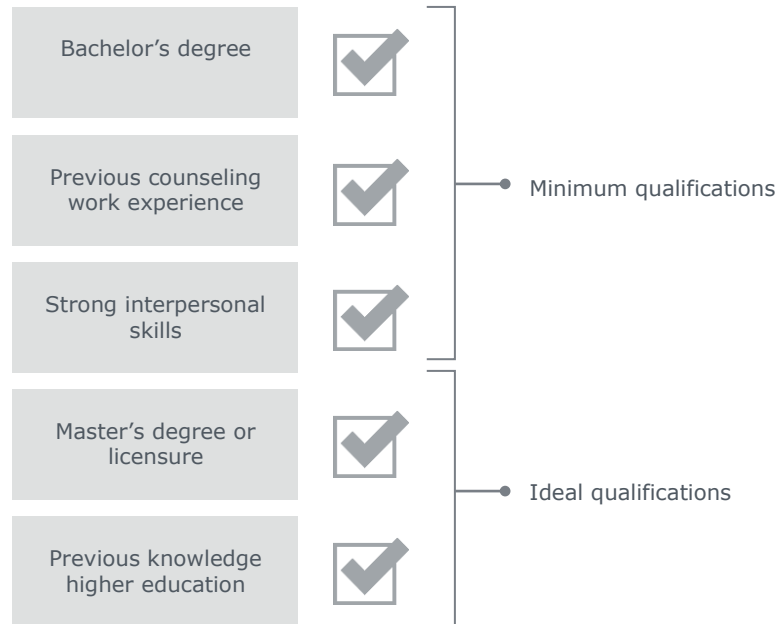
Recruiting and Hiring Counselors

Hire Counselors Who Have at Least a Bachelor's Degree and Previous Counseling Experience

Competitive candidates applying to be a counselor typically have a master's degrees or licensure (e.g., licensed clinical social worker, licensed master of social work) and at least three to five years of previous work experience. Contacts at **Institution C** emphasize the importance of hiring licensed counselors who are capable of helping students with serious issues like suicide. The human resources department typically recruits all new personnel, including counselors.

Contacts offer counselors a salary that is commensurate with the standard of living and candidate credentials and experience; for example, the FTE counselor at **Institution A** has a counseling license and previous work experience, and received a salary of \$40,000 during the 2015 to 2016 academic year.

Minimum and Ideal Qualifications of Counselors



4) Impact Assessment of Mental Health Services and Programs

Measuring Counseling Unit Use

Track How Many Students Use Counseling Services and the Types of Cases Counselors See Annually

Administrators at **Institution B** track the number of violent student occurrences (e.g., stalking, sexual harassment). At **Institution C**, administrators track the number of students that use the counseling and academic services.

Contacts at Institution C emphasize the importance of soliciting buy-in from faculty members so that they will refer students of concern to the counseling unit. This is because the unit sees most students via faculty referrals. Increasing buy-in from faculty and expanding the publicity of the services the counseling unit offers has resulted in greater student use of the counseling unit services at the College; previously, the counselors served approximately eight students per week, and now they see up to 25 students per week.

Indicators to Measure Counseling Unit Impact

Indicator	Case Type	# of Cases per Year	# Students Reporting Cases	# Accused Students
Violence	Sexual Assault			
	Stalking			
	Interpersonal violence			
	Other			

Indicator	Case Type	# Cases per Year	# Students Accessing Counseling Services
Counseling Services	Suicide		
	Depression		
	Anxiety		
	Bi-polar disorder		
	Grief		
	Other		

Indicator	Case Type	# Cases per Year	# Students Accessing Academic Counseling Services
Academic Counseling Services	Career Planning		
	Time management		
	Stress management		
	Transferring to a university		
	Other		

Soliciting Student Feedback

Distribute Surveys to Collect Student Feedback of Counseling and Academic Unit Services

At **Institution C**, administrators ask students to provide feedback about workshops that the student success unit and counseling units offer (e.g., tutoring sessions, transferring to a four-year university). Administrators gather feedback through a paper-based survey upon completion of each session and workshop. Contacts indicate that this feedback has been positive.

Sample Student Feedback Survey

	Agree	Disagree
The workshop was engaging and I learned new skills and/or concepts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The content and handouts were relevant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This workshop has increased my ability to shape my personal and/or professional goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this workshop to another student.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- What strategies do administrators use to prevent campus violence on campus, and which strategies are the most effective?
- What security measures are in place at other campuses (e.g., swiping cards to access buildings, campus police)?
- What processes, technology, or equipment do security personnel need to be effective?
- How are faculty and staff trained to address aggressive students and/or students with mental challenges?
- Who develops and leads these trainings?
- How do administrators train faculty and/or staff to identify students who are at risk for harming themselves or others?
- What are the protocols and policies related to addressing aggressive students at other rural community colleges?
- Do other rural community colleges have full-time on-staff counselors, or do they refer faculty and students to outside agencies?
- If contacts have full-time on-staff counselors, what is the ratio of counselors to students? How do administrators recruit counselors, and what are the ideal qualifications and salary?
- How do administrators provide grief counseling for faculty, staff and students?
- What resources besides counseling are available for students dealing with grief or anxiety about safety?
- Are students given a mental health evaluation during the admissions process? If so, how and when is this evaluation administered, and who is responsible for conducting evaluations?
- How do administrators assess the impact of services and programs that prevent campus violence?
- How do administrators assess the impact of services and programs that help faculty and students address mental health needs?
- How do administrators solicit feedback regarding programs or services? What changes have been made based on this feedback?
- How do administrators measure the impact of training programs for faculty and staff to manage aggressive students or students with mental challenges? What changes have been made based on this feedback?
- What challenges have administrators encountered when creating services and programs to manage violence and mental health needs? How were these challenges overcome?
- What recommendations do contacts have with regard to implementing campus safety and mental health initiatives?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB’s internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
 - Responding to Students of Concern: Best Practices for Behavioral Intervention Teams: <https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/student-affairs-forum/studies/2013/responding-to-students-of-concern>
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (<http://nces.ed.gov/>)
- EverFi: <https://everfi.com/higher-education/haven/#different>

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed administrators and counselors at the following institutions:

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location	Approximate Institutional Enrollment	Classification
Institution A	Midwest	4,140	Associate’s
Institution B	South	2,300	Associate’s
Institution C	South	4,500	Associate’s