

## Policy and Definitions of Threat

Fairleigh Dickinson University recognizes that civility, understanding and mutual respect toward all members of the University community fosters a climate intrinsic to excellence in teaching and learning. Violence or threats of violence on campuses or at campus-sponsored events will not be tolerated.

Threats of violence include, but are not limited to, any situation initiated from internal and external sources that:

- Endangers the safety of any employee, student, visitor or faculty member;
- Has an impact on an individual's physical and/or psychological well-being;
- Causes damage to personal or University property;
- Creates a hostile campus environment.

Any individual who commits a violent act or threatens to commit a violent act toward other persons or property on campus or at campus sponsored events shall be subjected to disciplinary actions, up to and including dismissal from employment or the University. In addition, civil and/or criminal penalties may be pursued as appropriate. Every member of the campus community is expected to take any threat or violent act seriously, and to report these acts to the appropriate contact resources.

It is recognized that violence or threatening acts are complex, intimidating and confusing. Students, faculty, visitors or staff should not put themselves in danger, but rather, utilize campus resources to assess the level of danger, design an appropriate intervention plan and employ reasonable safety measures.

## Recognizing/Acting on the Early Warning Signs of Violence

Extreme violence is rarely an isolated event but, rather, the last link in a chain of progressively dangerous, interdependent and highly visible behaviors. Troubling behaviors in their early stages are largely correctable and minimally volatile. When these behaviors are allowed to progress over time to more aggressive acts, the offender becomes increasingly frustrated, committed to and confident of his/her ability to deliver violence.

Most people who commit extreme violence do not just snap without warning and may even tell others what they plan to do. Violence profiles list various personality traits and behaviors associated with those who have used extreme violence in the past. Identifying at-risk characteristics can bring attention to a troubled individual or may suggest that the process of manufacturing violence has begun. While few of these individuals will commit extreme violence, they should be monitored closely when *several* of the following behaviors accompany one or more of the personality traits.

### Behaviors

- History of aggression/violence/bullying
- Specific/detailed threats to harm another
- Destruction of personal and/or school property
- Recent attempts to secure weapons
- A pattern of poor interpersonal relationships
- Recent attempts/talk of suicide
- Involvement with hate groups or criminal gangs
- Frequently angry, easily frustrated
- Defiance of authority

## Personality Traits

- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Mental health issues
- Socially isolated
- Recent problems at home/school/work
- Extreme paranoia/suspicion
- Recent serious attacks to self-esteem

## Preventing a Crisis

Violence prevention is best accomplished by stopping the process before it gets started. Maintaining a healthy campus environment and addressing minor violations of University policy lower the risk of aggressive responses and increase the possibility of peaceful solutions. Recognizing the early warning signs alerts us that the process of violence may have begun and provides opportunities to intervene before an individual becomes committed to violence. Various strategies to prevent a crisis include:

- Communicate a clear policy against and consequences for violent behavior.
- Identify potential offenders and victims early.
- Report threatening behaviors promptly; respond quickly to reports.
- Train/sensitize staff to conflict management, communication and anger control skills.
- Identify resources (internal and external) for faculty, staff and students.
- Conduct focus groups, surveys to determine the wellness of the workplace.
- Do not assume threatening behaviors will stop; take all threats seriously.

## Defusing a Crisis

When confronted with a potentially dangerous individual, actions should be taken to defuse the situation. In dealing with an aggressive person, it is best to refrain from hostile, threatening, or apathetic communications. Rejecting demands from the

start, showing disrespect, trivializing the situation or invading the individual's personal space can set the individual off. Avoid challenging body language such as placing your hands on your hips, moving toward the person, or staring directly at the person. Remain seated and do not attempt to physically touch the individual. Do not agree or argue with distorted statements. The following steps to defuse a situation should be considered.

**D**o stay calm and control your anger.

**E**stablish ground rules; take breaks to calm the person down.

**F**ocus on positive outcomes and the consequences of violent actions.

**U**ncover what the person wants; repeat what is requested.

**S**peak slowly, confidently, quietly; utilize active listening techniques.

**E**ncourage the person to consider possible solutions; offer support.

## Post-crisis Response

Do not expect or pretend that business as usual conditions exist after there is a serious violent attack. You should expect that many will feel stressed following an incident. The following strategies should be considered.

- Provide detailed facts (who, what, where, when) to public safety, human resources and the dean of students.
- Discuss/debrief the incident with your staff/faculty and/or students.
- Consider the need for immediate counseling services.
- Don't feel that you should have all the answers; ask for help.
- Look for signs of stressed individuals.
- Change locks, add alarms and other types of physical security.

*See next page for Contact List.*

# Contact List

As a University member, it is important to know that your safety and the University community's safety is of utmost importance to the administration. Campus representatives have been designated and trained to deal with a variety of threatening situations. They are available to assess the situation and specify appropriate safety measures.

**If a threatening behavior or situation occurs, it is imperative that you take these threats seriously and contact the appropriate resource immediately. For any type of preventative or non-emergency assistance, the current campus contacts are listed below. In the event of an imminent threat, contact public safety immediately:**

Metropolitan Campus —  
201-692-2222 or

College at Florham —  
973-443-8888

## Student Issues

Protocols have been delineated and are currently in use by the Dean of Students Office for the following occurrences:

- Disruptive behavior/physical assault.
- Psychological emergency.
- Arrest of a student.
- Racially motivated or bias disturbance on campus.
- Attempted assault.
- Possession of a weapon.
- Other violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

Anyone who observes any of the above occurrences must immediately contact public safety. Once public safety is contacted, the Dean of Students Office will be notified, and the necessary protocol will be employed.

**For any type of preventive or non-emergency assistance, the contacts are listed below:**

Description	Department	Metropolitan Campus	College at Florham
Verbal Threats	Public Safety	201-692-2222	973-443-8888
Physical Violence	Public Safety	201-692-2222	973-443-8888
	Human Resources	201-692-2702	973-443-8940
Sexual Harassment	Human Resources	201-692-2702	973-443-8940

The Department of Student Counseling and Psychological Services is available to any University member and student who desires individual counseling — Metropolitan Campus at 201-692-2174 or College at Florham at 973-443-8504.

# Threat Response Protocol

*This document provides information on what to do if you encounter a potential threat at the University.*

The following topics are addressed:

- Defining University policy and threats.
- Recognizing early warning signs.
- Offering strategies to prevent, defuse and respond to a crisis.
- Identifying established campus contact resources.

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