

Preventive or Non-emergency Assistance Contacts:

VERBAL THREATS:
Public Safety
334-229-4400

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE:
Public Safety
334-229-4400

HARASSMENT:
Human Resources
(Employees)
334-229-4667

**Office of Student Affairs
(Students)**
334-229-4241

The Office of Student
Counseling Services is
available to any University
employee or student who
desires individual counseling.

McGehee Hall 109
334-229-4382

As a member of the University family, it is important for you to know that your safety and the University community's safety are 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.

In the event of an imminent threat, immediately contact the Department of Public Safety at 334-229-4400.

Student Issues

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

- Disruptive behavior/physical assault
- Psychological emergency
- Arrest of a student
- Racially motivated or bias disturbances 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 the Department of Public Safety. Once public safety is contacted, the Associate Provost of Students Affairs will be notified, and the necessary protocol will be employed.

THREAT RESPONSE PROTOCOL

What to do if you encounter
a potential threat at
Alabama State University

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

PROTOCOL & DEFINITIONS OF A THREAT

Alabama State University recognizes that civility, understanding and mutual respect toward all members of the University community foster a climate intrinsic to excellence in teaching and learning. Violence or threats of violence on campus 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 at 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 and intimidating. 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. 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 behaviors accompany one or more hostile personality traits.

Warning Signs

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
- Low 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 protocol lower the risk of aggressive responses and increase the possibility of peaceful solutions. Recognizing the early warning signs alerts us that violence may occur and provides opportunities to intervene before an individual becomes committed to performing an act of violence. Various strategies to prevent a crisis include:

- Communicate a clear protocol against and consequences for violent behavior.
- Identify potential offenders and victims early.
- Report threatening behaviors promptly and 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 and surveys to determine the wellness of the campus community.
- 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 may trigger a violent outburst. Avoid challenging body language, such as placing your hands on your hips, moving toward the person, or staring directly at the person. Do not attempt to physically touch the individual. Do not

**Violence prevention
is best accomplished
by stopping the
process before it
gets started.**

agree
or argue
with distorted
statements.

The following steps can help defuse a situation:

- Do stay calm and control your anger.
- Establish ground rules; take breaks to calm the person down.
- Focus on positive outcomes and the consequences of violent actions.
- Uncover what the person wants and repeat what is requested.
- Utilize active listening techniques by speaking slowly, confidently and quietly.
- Encourage the person to consider possible solutions and offer support.

POST-CRISIS RESPONSE

After there is a serious violent attack, many individuals feel stressed following an incident.

The following strategies can help:

- Provide detailed facts (who, what, where, when and how) to public safety, human resources, and the associate vice president for Student Affairs.
- 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.