

# Session 4



California Community Colleges

## **Cells and Circles: Strategic Communication in Threat Management**

**Date: November 14, 2024 Time: 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.**

**Presented by: Monique Mendoza, PhD**

Let's keep  
connecting...



Add your **name**, **title/role**,  
and **college** in the chat.

# Welcome and Introductions

**Jacqueline Alvarez,**

Mental Health & Health Services Specialist at [jalvarez@cccco.edu](mailto:jalvarez@cccco.edu)

**Gerilyn Walcott,**

Project Manager for CCC Health & Wellness at [cccsmh@cars-rp.org](mailto:cccsmh@cars-rp.org)

# Housekeeping



**Chat and Q&A:** Please utilize the chat or Q&A function to ask questions throughout.



**Closed Captioning (CC):** Closed captions are available. Click on the (CC) button to read live captions.



**Meeting Materials:** Slides and any follow up materials will be provided following the presentation.



**Recording:** We are recording today's session, and the recording will be made available on the website in the coming weeks.



**Dr. Monique Mendoza**

- Former Director of Behavioral Intervention Teams in Higher Education and a Trauma 1 Hospital
- Subject Matter Expert in Threat Management and Workplace Violence Prevention
- Licensed Psychologist in California for 12+ years
- Organizational Consultant focused on institutionalizing safe initiatives

# During Session Three

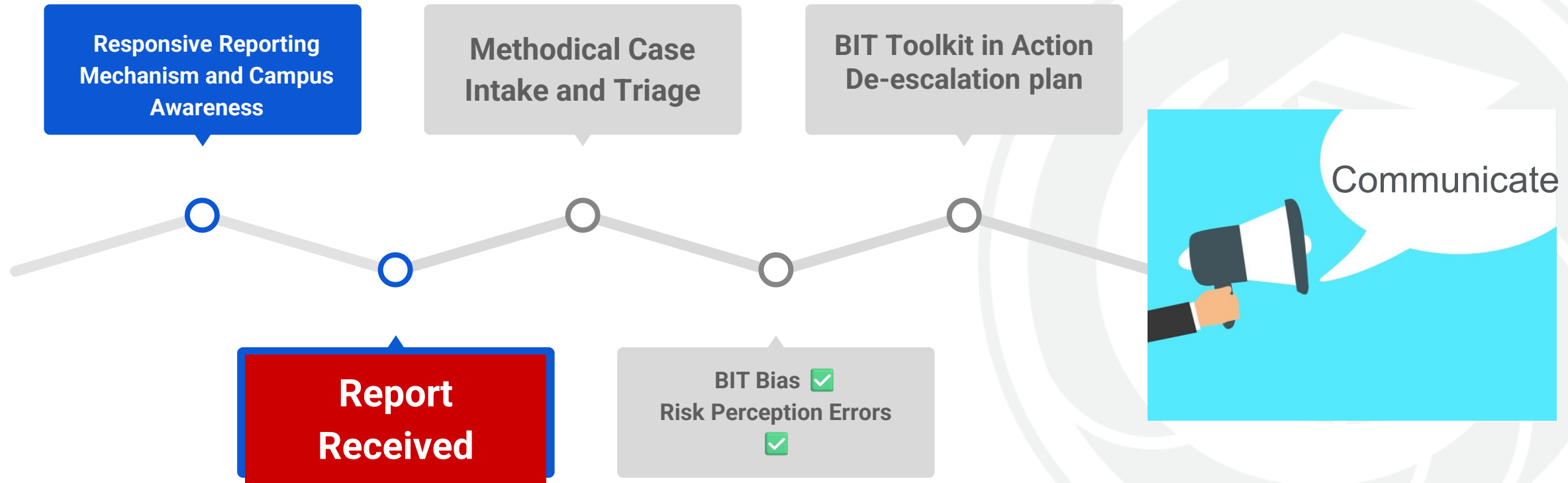
- Reviewed risk perception factors that distort people's views of actual threats
- Identified cognitive biases that can lead to errors in managing reported threats
- Offered a measured approach to engaging around disagreements in options for de-escalation



# Objectives

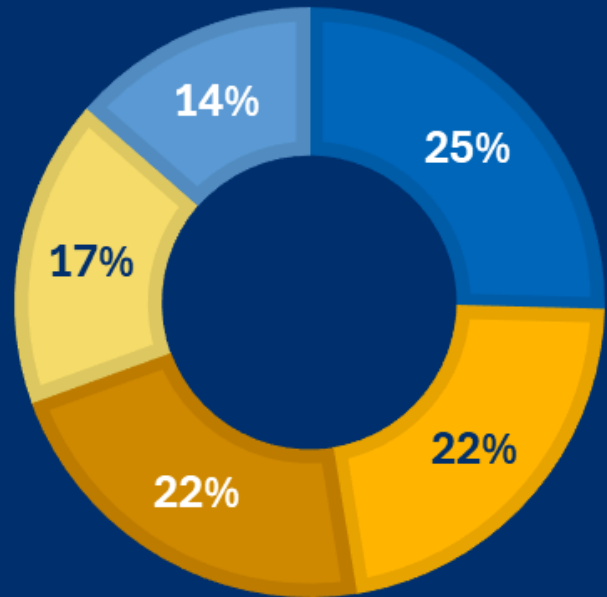
- Design FERPA-compliant information sharing protocols for different stakeholder groups
- Implement standardized communication templates for various threat levels
- Differentiate between necessary information sharing and protected educational records
- Introduce standardized response matrices tailored to campus-specific environments
- Apply clear escalation pathways for various threat levels
- Execute proper information flow management during evolving situations
- Demonstrate effective documentation practices for action-based updates
- Formulate specific, actionable recommendations for different stakeholder groups

# Your BIT Journey



Review Last Week's Poll:

Response to: Which area requires your **attention** in the threat management process?



- Resource coordination 25%
- Response standardization 22%
- Team communication protocols 2%
- Bias recognition and management 17%
- Documentation practices 14%

# Communication Gaps in Threat Management



- Current challenges in campus communication
- Impact of inconsistent protocols
- Real-world consequences of communication breakdowns

**POLL:** Vote in Zoom or add your answer to the chat!

***What is the most common communication concern you hear from stakeholders?***


“I was never notified about this situation until it escalated.”

I haven't heard any updates since the initial report.”

“I don't know what actions were actually taken.”

“Nobody told me what I'm supposed to do about this.”

“I never found out how the situation was resolved.”



**The quickly-evolving, unexpected and chaotic nature of emergencies often makes it difficult to respond the organization's demand for information and reassurance.**



# Consistent Communication

Needed across different  
types of cases and internal  
stakeholders

**POLL:** Vote in Zoom or add your answer to the chat!

# *What **barriers** prevent you from communicating as effectively as you'd like?*

I'm never sure what I can share without violating FERPA

I don't have time to keep everyone updated with our current workload

We don't have standardized templates or protocols to follow

It's hard to coordinate communication across multiple departments

Our current systems don't make it easy to track and document communications



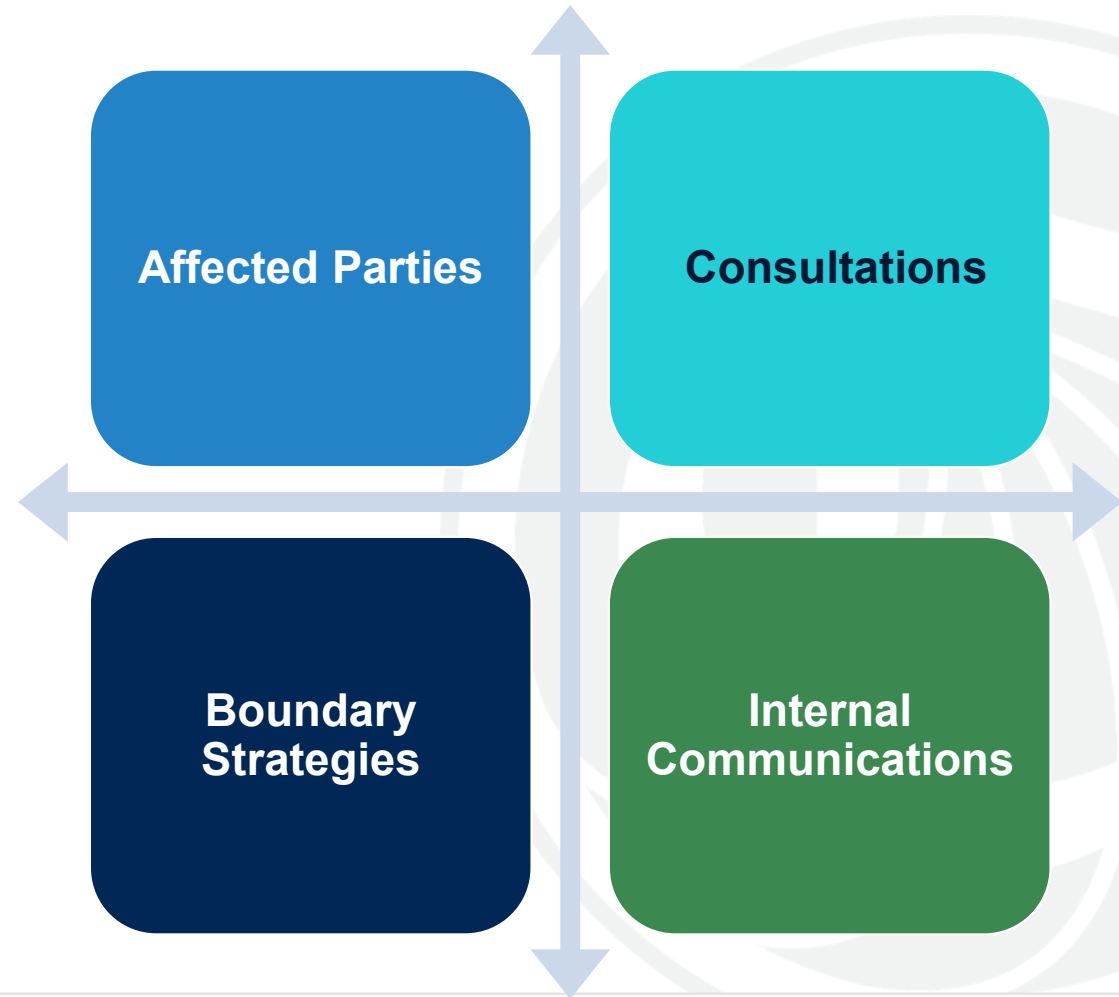
- Gap in establishing consistent communication channels between various stakeholders in the BIT process
- Protocols for information sharing while maintaining FERPA compliance
- Standardized response matrices account for the unique aspects of campus environments
- Consistent response levels across different types of cases (academic concerns, behavioral issues, mental health challenges)

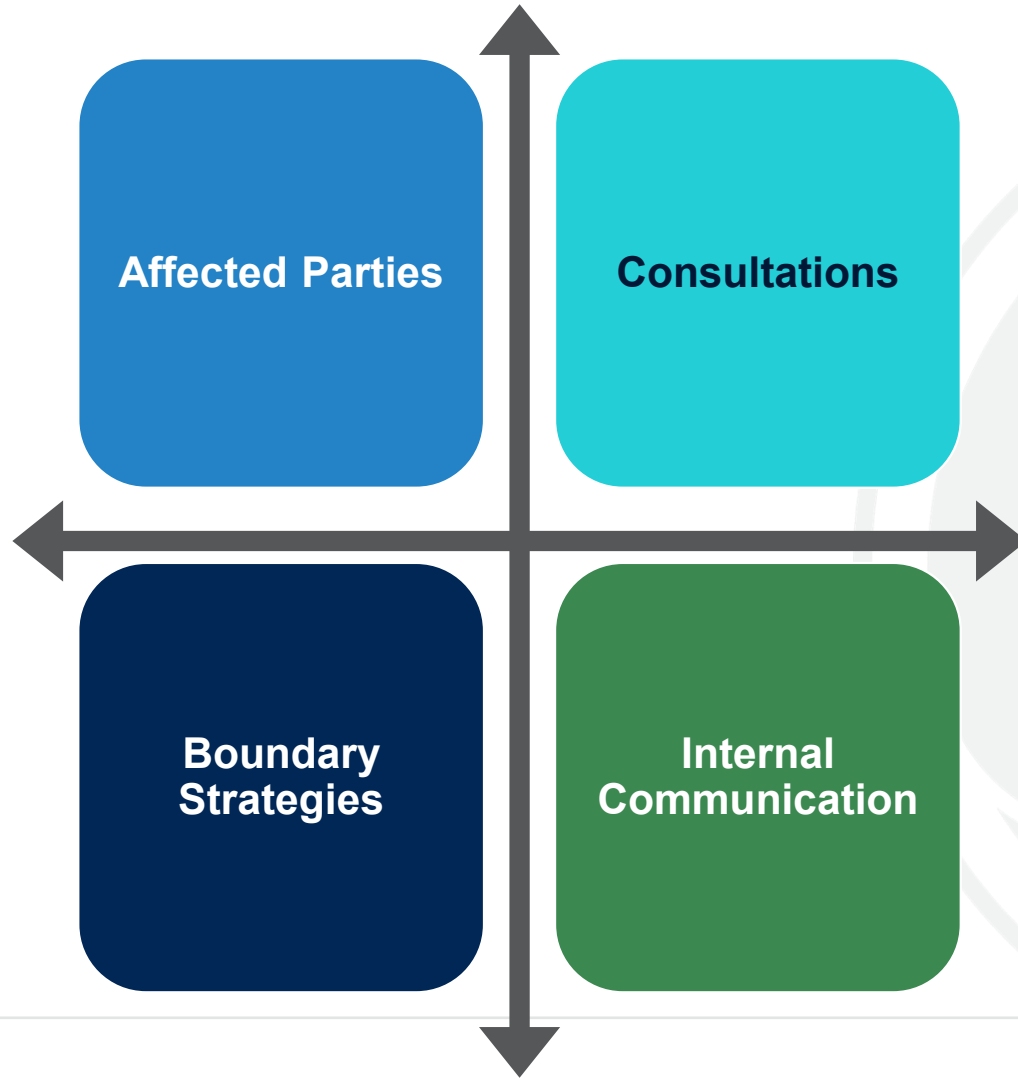


# Structured Response Framework

Structured Communication  
Channels for Campus  
Stakeholders

# Cells and Circles: Streamlining the Response Process







## Casey

- A *third-year communications student* has shown **increasing signs of distress** over the past month.
- Academic advisor notes a **sharp decline** in attendance and assignment completion.
- The student recently posted **concerning comments** on their department's social media about "*making everyone pay attention*" and "*running out of options.*"
- The counseling center has had two brief interactions with the student, who expressed **feelings of hopelessness** but denied any specific plans of harm.
- BIT suggests continued monitoring, noting the student's willingness to engage with counseling and no direct threats.
- The academic department wants to place this student on ***interim suspension.***

# Response Process: Casey

- Direct communication with the Casey
- Communication with those involved, e.g., faculty, staffperson

**Affected Parties**

**Consultations**

- Academic Advisor
- Comms Department
- Counseling Center
- Risk
- Notice of behavior across social media platforms

- Single point of contact
- Code of Conduct
- Notice of disruptive behavior
- Support Resources
- Safety precautions

**Boundary Strategies**

**Internal Communication**

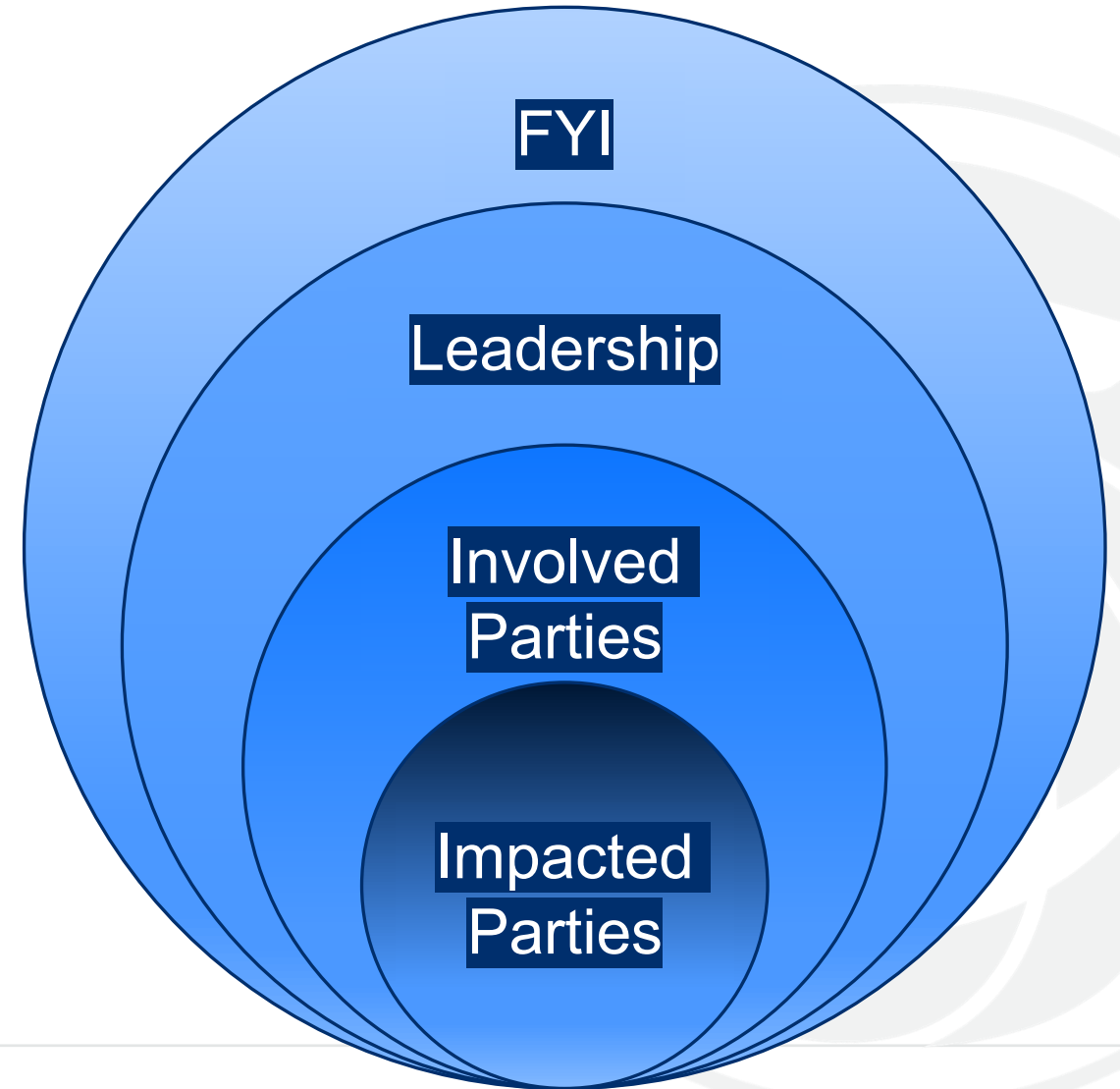
- FYI only
- Recommended steps of communication
- Ways to escalate concerns

In the chat....



How has your communication  
about cases evolved over  
time?

# Cells and Circles: Stakeholder Communication



# Internal Communication Networks

- Provides direction to parties involved
- Improved communication to internal administrators
- Controls the flow of communication
- Fact-based updates around evolving situations



# Action Recommendation Framework

- Clear steps reduce decision paralysis
- Studies in emergency response show that clear, specific directives result in better outcomes than general guidance.
- Structured responses improve consistency and reduce errors
- Fact-based updates around evolving situations increase organizational trust



## Components of Strategic Crisis Communication: **The Identified Party**

- **Concerned Party** (*limited identifying information*)
- **Affiliation** *both current and former (if available)*
- **Brief Synopsis:** This information provides 1-3 sentences about the case that is high level and does not reveal additional medical or health information.
- **Brief history of contact** with the individual.

# Components of Strategic Crisis Communication: **Action-oriented**

- *Information sharing reminder:*
- *Communication Plan with the party*
- Administration points of contact
- Recommend that this communication be sent to the following individuals:
- Notification of any ongoing recommendations/communication follow-up.
- Case escalation

# Case Example: Everly

*Affiliation: Spring Semester 2024 – General Public Enrollee*

This UPDATED information has been sent to you as a FYI only and is not to be shared or forwarded without first consulting with the sender.

**Concerning Party:** EH

**Affiliation:** Spring Semester 2024 – General Public Enrollee

**Brief Synopsis:** EH has recently informed campus partners and PD that she no longer has plans to be a student. However, she continues to contact various departments. When she believes her needs are not being met, she may accuse staff members with misconduct and/or discrimination. Those that have interacted with her in recent days have described the events as significantly disruptive and have resulted in a call to PD. EH may also attempt to record all interactions with staff and police.

**Communication Plan with the party:** We do not recommend responding to EH's requests. Contact PD 555-HELP immediately if she presents in your areas.

**Administration points of contact regarding questions and information that is received:** Please reach out to PD regarding any interactions with this individual. Please also follow-up with **named contact** for any questions or other communication from EH. Please forward all contact from EH to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Recommend that this communication be sent to the following individuals:** We recommend that front desk staff and resource centers be made aware of the communication plan related to EH.

**A notification of any ongoing recommendations/communication follow-up:** Additional updates will be provided if the plan for engaging with EH changes in the coming days.

**If at any point the concern for this case elevates to the point of needing direction intervention, PD will notify you directly.**

# Case Example: JG

*Affiliation:* Former enrolled student, last enrollment July 2023

This information has been sent to you as an FYI only and is not to be shared or forwarded without first consulting the sender.

Previous information about this individual was sent in January 2024. Please see updated information.

**Brief Synopsis:** Former student, JG, has had recent engagement with the main campus. Mr. G has repeatedly sought meetings with the \_\_\_\_ School and campus administration regarding a potential re-enrollee. He has been briefed that this is not the protocol for his questions and follow-up, but he continues to do so. He has also made vague statements of threats in the past. Mr. G presents as insistent and often verbally escalates.

**Communication Plan:** We do not recommend any parties respond to Mr. G requests for re-enrollment. Instead, if he presents either by phone, email, or in person, to contact PD immediately. Mr. G regularly seeks meetings with administration about his concerns but does not provide details or reasons for his meetings. Thus, we recommend that Mr. Gs' **single campus point of contact be CARE team member(\_\_\_\_\_)**. This will allow for CAREs to vet his needs and route him appropriately or remind him of the protocols for engaging with the campus.

**Administrative Points of Contact:** Regarding additional concerns and additional information that is received about this individual, please direct all additional communication that you receive from this individual to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Recommended communication to be sent to the following internal parties:** We recommend this be sent to campus administrators and their front line staff that may assist with scheduling appointments for visitors.

**Additional resources:** PD is available to provide safety escorts to all staff and faculty, including to and from their cars. This can be arranged at any time by calling 888-555-HELP.

**Communication follow-up expected:** No additional communication follow-up will be sent unless there is new direction regarding this case.

# Information Flow Management

- Timing and frequency of updates
- Documentation requirements
- Privacy maintenance
- Emergency communication procedures

*Education involves more than ensuring the accuracy of labeling; we must **communicate the context** of the message so that the words make sense to the audience.*

**POLL:** Vote in Zoom or add your answer to the chat!

***What communication strategy has been most **effective** when responding to **emergent threats** requiring immediate stakeholder notification?***

Pre-written templates with threat-level specific messaging

Notify BIT membership and ask them to share broadly

Required read receipts

Single Point of Contact

Automated notification

# Communication Best Practices

## Single Point of Contact

- For the students of concern
- For the internal stakeholders

## Specific Options for Action

- Identify the stakeholder's next step

## Follow-up

- Provide a follow-up notification, even if nothing has changed about the case

## Document and Review

- Review information and make changes as the case evolves



# Mandated Interventions

- Mental Health Evaluations
- Required Meetings
- Required responses from students/staff/faculty

# Resources to **enhance** your BIT team

- **Cells and Circles - Strategic Crisis Communication Guide**
- **Review the following:**
  - **Documentation requirements**
  - **Confidentiality maintenance**
  - **Emergency communication procedures**

A group of four students, three men and one woman, are walking away from the camera on a paved path. They are all wearing backpacks. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a building in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Questions or Thoughts?" is centered in white, bold font.

**Questions or Thoughts?**

**NEW WEBINAR** | **Protecting Students: Preventing Firearm Violence and Suicide on Campus**

Date: November 20, 2024 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Don't miss this vital webinar on preventing firearm violence and suicide among college-age students. Join us to explore the profound impact on students and at-risk groups and learn practical intervention strategies for both individuals and communities. Gain insight into using legal protection orders effectively as a tool to prevent violence.

Register today: [https://bit.ly/GVRO\\_Registration](https://bit.ly/GVRO_Registration)



# California Community Colleges

Thank you!

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