



EDISON STATE COLLEGE

Threat Response Protocol

To provide information on what to do if you encounter a potential threat at Edison State College.

The following topics are addressed:

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

**Public Safety and Security
Building D, Facilities and Planning**

Policy and Definitions of Threat

Edison State College recognizes that civility, understanding and mutual respect toward all members of the College 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 College 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 College. 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 College 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 them individual. Do not agree or argue with distorted statements. The following steps to defuse a situation should be considered.

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; repeat what is requested.

Speak slowly, confidently, quietly; utilize active listening techniques.

Encourage 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 District Vice-President for Student Success and Enrollment Management.
- 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.

Contact List

As part of Edison State College, it is important to know that your safety and that of the College community is of utmost importance to the administration. Campus representatives deal with a variety of threatening situations and 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 911 then Edison State College Public Safety & Security immediately:

Lee Campus —
239-489-9203 or extension **1203**
8099 College Parkway
Fort Myers, Florida 33906
Building D, Room 101

Charlotte Campus —
941-637-5608 or extension **5608**
26300 Airport Road
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950
Building PP, Room 105

Collier Campus —
239-732-3708 or extension **3712**
7007 Lely Cultural Parkway
Naples, Florida 34113
Building A, Room 135

Hendry-Glades Center —
863-674-0408 or extension 6017
1092 East Cowboy Way
Labelle, FL 33935

Student Issues

Protocols have been delineated and are currently in use by the College 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 office of the Dean of Students will be notified, and the necessary protocol will be employed.

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

Student Counseling Services are available to any student and can provide short term counseling for students who find their academic or vocational progress hindered by concerns of a personal, social or emotional nature. Individual and group assistance is available directly, or by referral, to responsible on-campus or off-campus sources—

Call 239-489-9388 (extension 1388), or visit the office, S-262, Taeni Student Services Hall.