

Guidelines for Confronting Disruptive Student Behavior

During the Confrontation:

- Identify your role on campus, include your name. It is important that the student(s) know who you are.
- Remove the person from his/her peers. (This is needed to allow the person to “save face.”) It is easier to control a situation with one individual rather than a group. If you do need to confront a group, bring along back-up, but decide first who will be the “lead.”
- Be simple and direct as you speak, but proceed smoothly and openly. Rushed encounters of any type are usually not conducive to increased awareness.
- Do not stand too close to the person and do not touch them.
- Be specific and clear in your confrontation. You are confronting the person’s **behavior**, not the person or his/her personality.
- Do not threaten to act in any prescribed manner (e.g., “I’ll call the police if you don’t cooperate!). This only serves to escalate, rather than de-escalate, situations.
- Confront behaviors, not values. Pushing your values will not work. Specify what behaviors are causing others a problem and specify what behaviors you observe that may be causing others a problem.
- Care. At every available opportunity, communicate your interest in the person and ask him/her clarifying questions. (e.g., “How do you view your behavior?” “Do you understand why we have this policy?”)
- Generally attempt to make the confrontation objective, in terms of the specific observed behavior. Be subjective about your interest in the person. Control your feelings about the confrontation. It’s ok for the person to know that you don’t enjoy confronting the situation, but you have to do so because it’s your job.
- If the student escalates the situation, do not hesitate to call for back-up. This includes contacting your supervisor, Campus Police, and/or the Student Conduct Office. Never put yourself in a physically threatening situation.
- Keep the conversation centered on the person’s behavior and don’t get off track. Keep the confrontation as short as possible.
- Stick to the issues. Do not let the person bring in a lot of outside circumstances and rationalization.
- Know the facts regarding the behavior you are confronting. What conditions surround the observed behavior? What relationship do you have with the person you are confronting? How does the person view you?
- Let the person know that you will be documenting the incident and submitting the report to the Student Conduct Office and that they should expect communication from that office.
- End the confrontation with an open invitation to discuss the incident.

Following the Confrontation:

- Write a thorough incident report. Include only the facts: what you observed, heard, smelled. Who was in the room/area? Make sure you get all of the information available to you. It helps to be more objective if you write the report in the third person.
- Continue to maintain contact with the student throughout the year. Say “hi” and show interest in him/her. Remember, you are confronting negative behavior, not the person.
- Consider contacting Student Conduct to “debrief” the incident. This can be especially helpful if this was your first experience. We will be able to assist you in any needed changes to your style.
- You may be interviewed by the Mgr. of Student Conduct (or designee) in order to clarify information contained in your incident report. Additionally, you may be asked to participate in a Conduct Review Committee hearing if the behavior/incident warrants such a hearing.

Quick Tips for Documenting Incidents/Disruptive Behavior

- Tell the story
- Non-judgmental (Objective Observation)
- Report only that which was observed and is “fact”
- Answer Who, What, When, Where, & How
- Include Date, Time, Names, Action Taken, Response by Students, Direct Quotes.
- Include something in the “Description” section for each person listed on the report.
- Complete the report immediately.

**Submit completed incident reports to the Student Conduct Office, A252.
Incident reports can be found on the Student Conduct website and MyMCC.**

Questions? Call Manager of Student Conduct & Campus Life, Talia Koronkiewicz at 815-455-8734 or email tkoronkiewicz@mchenry.edu

Adapted from:

- *The Resident Assistant: Working with College Students in Residence Halls*, G.S. Blimling and L.J. Miltenberger.
- “Top Ten Confrontation Tips” from the Ohio State University Residence Life