



Early recognition, intervention, referral and reporting are critical in the prevention of violence in the classroom, workplace or residential environment. What follows is some practical information about identifying persons who may be in distress as well as some guidelines for dealing with disruptive behavior and referral.

## WARNING SIGNS

- Uncharacteristically poor performance
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Reduced motivation, excuses or blaming
- Irritability
- Angry outbursts or tearfulness
- Intense emotions
- Inappropriate responses
- Strained interpersonal relations
- Substance abuse
- Isolating behavior, low self-esteem
- Change in personal hygiene or dress
- Allusions to disruptive acts or violence
- Evidence of depression or stress
- Hyperactivity, difficulty concentrating



## WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU OBSERVE WARNING SIGNS?

- Talk with a trusted colleague about the situation
- Call Counseling Services (students) or Employee Assistance Office (Faculty/Staff) for advice
- Speak with the person privately
- Remain calm; maintain your composure
- Actively listen to what the person is saying
- Communicate understanding, not sympathy
- Don't make judgments or establish blame
- Be respectful and patient
- Set clear boundaries/behavioral expectations
- Never make promises you can't keep, particularly about confidentiality. You may be obligated to report information if you believe the person is a danger to him/herself or others.

## HAVE A PLAN OF ACTION BEFORE VIOLENCE OR DISRUPTION OCCURS

- Don't ignore warning signs.
- Know in advance where you would retreat. Establish an internal "safe room", not known to the public, which can be locked and has a telephone.
- Be familiar with emergency procedures. An Emergency Procedures Guide can be found at [www.uwupd.wisc.edu](http://www.uwupd.wisc.edu), under Forms and Pamphlets.
- Have resource and emergency telephone numbers posted or in a place easily reached.

If the situation becomes physical, dangerous or more serious than you can handle on your own, **CALL 911 FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

## INDICATORS THAT THE SITUATION MAY ESCALATE

Justification to use violence: The person may have been suspended, disciplined or terminated.

Lack of alternatives: The person appears to have a sense of hopelessness or helplessness and does not see alternatives in the situation.

Consequences: The person believes their violent or disruptive actions outweigh the consequences.

Ability: The person may have the resources or physical capability to perpetrate violence, which may or may not include access to weapons.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

**If the person is not present, but exhibits these indicators, or threatens violent acts for the future, immediately contact the Office of the Dean of Students, Employee Assistance Office or University Police non-emergency number.**

**If violence or disruption occurs, immediately call 911 for emergency assistance.**

