

Food for Thought

# Supporting Students in Distress and the Role of BAT

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# Objectives

- Recognize common academic, personal, and physical indicators of students in distress
- Determine your role in responding to students in distress
- Utilize BAT in responding to students in distress





# The Prevention Continuum

## Primary Prevention

Target: All students, staff, faculty, and settings. College wide.  
Goal: Prevent Harm

= 80%

## Secondary Prevention

Target: Specialized groups, at risk students  
Goal: Reverse Harm

= 15%

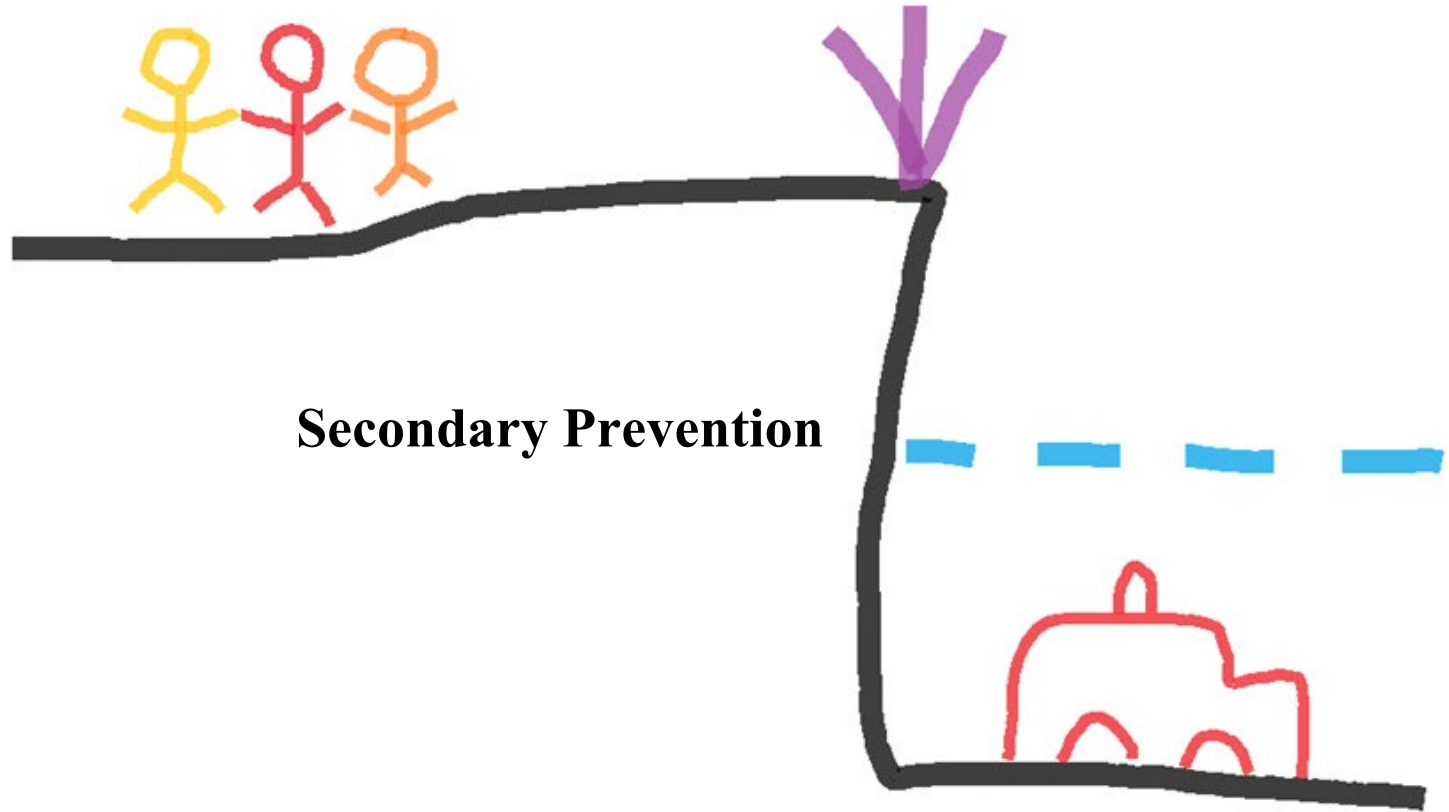
## Tertiary Prevention

Target: Specialized *individuals*, students with high risk  
Goal: Reduce Harm

= Less than 5%



# Primary Prevention



# Secondary Prevention

# Tertiary Prevention

# Asking for help

- People have problems all the time
- Most of the time, we can work through our problems with the help of self-care, our friends, and family
- Dealing with barriers and challenges helps us to grow, mature, and learn about ourselves and the world



# It's not easy

- Asking for help is not easy

Only ½ of the students who seriously considered or attempted suicide in the past 12 months told ANYONE (professional or not) of their intentions

- Many of us don't reach out for help
  - Even if help is available
  - Even if we really need it



# Barriers

- Barriers are enhanced due to:
  - Familial background
  - Cultural / Racial / Ethnic background
  - Multiple sources of stigma
  - Economic disparities
  - Racism, prejudice, discrimination



# Gatekeepers

- Often the FIRST to see students in distress, you will have the first opportunity to help
- Remember:
  - Most people want help
  - Most people have trouble asking for help
  - Most people respond well to being offered help
  - Most people need help getting help





# Gatekeeper Role

- Trust yourself and your “sense”
- Provide opportunities for social interaction
- Model good communication
- Reminder of resources
- Involvement opportunities
- Observe and respond to early warning signs



# What to look for

- None of these indicators alone is sufficient for predicting when someone might be personally or emotionally struggling
- Each is a “flag” and when presented alone or in combination, may indicate the possible need for inquiring and offering support
- Know your limits
- Better to act sooner rather than later



# Physical Indicators

- Lack of personal hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Smelling of alcohol
- Appearing sick or ill



# Personal Indicators

- Tearfulness
- Direct statements of distress
- Expressions of hopelessness/worthlessness
- Exaggerated behaviors



# Interpersonal Indicators

- Verbal aggressiveness
- Unprovoked anger/hostility
- Disorganized or erratic behavior
- Continual seeking of special accommodations



# Safety Risk Indicators

- Any statement of suicidality or self-harm
- Giving away prized possessions
- Self-injurious behaviors





# What can you do?

- Discuss your concerns with the student
  - Be direct
  - The reason you are discussing with the student is because you want to support them
- There are many resources available, connect the student to them



# 1 statement, 3 questions

- Statement
  - I've noticed \_\_\_\_\_ and I am concerned about you.
- Questions
  - How long has this been going on for you?
  - What do you think is the best way to handle it?
  - Can I offer you some ways to support you?





# Using 1 statement, 3 questions

- Listen for:
  - Global thinking
  - Stable thinking
  - Personal thinking
  - Negative thinking



# Four problematic ways of thinking

Global

Everything

Stable

Always

Personal

About me

Negative

Is Bad

# Its not easy

- The students who are likely to benefit most from you reaching out are the same ones who it's hardest to reach out to...
  - Withdrawn
  - Dramatic
  - Angry
  - Disruptive
  - “High maintenance”
  - Seem to not respond



# Barriers

- Perception that there are no resources available to help (formal or informal)
- Stigma
- Lack of ability to communicate distress



# Barriers vs Pathways

- Students in distress focus on barriers
- Our job at PC is to highlight pathways



# Asking for Help

## *If...*

Our distress:

- is *severe or intense*
- Last a *long time*
- Keep getting *worse*
- Seem to be *repeating* themselves

## *And...*

The usual ways of dealing with things are not working



# Supporting Positive Change

- Supporting someone's academic achievement supports their emotional health
- Supporting someone's emotional health supports their academic achievement
- Each PC department, faculty, and staff play a role
- The mission should be the same:

*Support student persistence and retention through a focus on the whole person*



# Behavioral Assessment Team

- Provides proactive assistance to students who are exhibiting concerning behaviors, both to support students and assist faculty/staff





# Behavioral Assessment Team

- Created to:
  - Act in a proactive manner to assist students
  - Maintain confidentiality and handle all matters discreetly
  - Provide consultation and support to faculty and staff
  - Connect students with needed resources
  - Recommend interventions or sanctions



# BAT Team Members

- Debbie Webster (co-chair), Faculty
- Cecilia Quiroz (co-chair), Manager of Conduct & Compliance
- Roberto Villegas-Gold, Faculty
- Heather Kruse, VPSA
- Julie Voller, Dean of Student Affairs
- Ralph Thompson, Dean of Student Affairs
- Wilbert Nelson, Dean of Academic Affairs
- Kristine Kincaid, Athletic Director
- Diana Martinez, Director of Student Life
- Gene Heppard, Disability Resources Services Director
- Cesar Rodriguez, Sergeant/College Police
- Debra Palok, Commander/College Police



# Where to report

Go to [employees.phoenixcollege.edu](https://employees.phoenixcollege.edu)

or

<https://www.phoenixcollege.edu/employees/divisions/student-affairs/speakup>

\*note: never promise confidentiality to student(s) if they share information with you that may require some intervention



# What happens next?

- BAT
- Student Conduct
- Title IX
- CARE referrals



# Resources

- Public Safety
  - Non-emergency: 480.784.0900 or 602.285.7254
  - Emergency: 480.784.0911
- Consultation
  - Counseling Department – 602.285.7392
  - Manager of Conduct & Compliance - 602.285.7567
  - Title IX - 602.285.7229



# Feedback

Your feedback is important to us, please complete the form:

[Food for Thought Google Form](#)



# Food for Thought Questions?

Explore our site:

[phoenixcollege.edu/employees/behavioral-assessment](https://phoenixcollege.edu/employees/behavioral-assessment)

Submit a Report:

[Employees.phoenixcollege.edu](https://employees.phoenixcollege.edu)

