The Dean of Students’ Office understands that providing a response to situations that occur in and/or outside of the classroom may be difficult. This guide has been designed to provide resources and suggestions in handling difficult situations with students.

Faculty and staff are often the first point of contact for many student issues, therefore it is encouraged that development and reinforcement of the skills necessary to handle difficult situations be developed and reinforced regularly. Academic departments are encouraged to develop standards on ways to handle difficult situations as well.

The Dean of Students Office and the Behavioral Consultation and Assessment Team (BCAT) recommend that faculty review the issues in this document and include a statement about appropriate classroom behavior in your syllabus in order to proactively address these situations. If there is no threat, often the best approach is to deal with these instances in a supportive and structured manner.

You are not expected to handle every situation alone. You are encouraged to know and utilize your campus’ resources, which are recommended throughout this document. Use this guide as a starting point to begin communication about difficult student situations in and out of the classroom environment.

Please familiarize yourself with campus resources and policies available to you:

- **Student Code of Conduct** to determine what constitutes a violation of behavioral standards.
- **Identifying Students in Distress Folder** for a flow chart and contact information for University resources.
- **Classroom Behavior Resources** for classroom management tips.

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**On Campus Resources**

- Your Supervisor
- Your Department Chair
- Dean of Students Office 239-590-7900 or email doso@fgcu.edu
- Office of Equity and Diversity
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Adaptive Services
- Practicum/Internship Supervisor
- Director of Field Education
- Faculty Colleagues
- University Ombuds
- Student Health Services
- University Police

**Dean of Students’ Office**

Office of Student Conduct 239-590-7900
doso@fgcu.edu
StudentConduct@fgcu.edu
Cohen Center, room 288
Examples of Disruptive Behavior Could Be:
• Making loud and distracting noises.
• Passing notes.
• Repeatedly answering cell phones or allowing communication devices to make noise.
• Persisting in speaking without being recognized.
• Repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom.
• Inappropriate emails and continuous persistence.
• Harassment over email.
• Making physical threats or verbal insults to the faculty/staff member or other students.
• Exhibiting erratic, irrational behavior.

Suggestions for Avoiding Classroom Disruption:
• Clearly state course and behavioral norms and expectations on the first day of class, also include in your syllabus.
• Model professional behavior.
• Do not overreact to disruptive behavior, but do not ignore it either.
• Address behavior clearly and directly with students, they may not be aware that it is disruptive.
• Treat students with respect and fairness, they will sense that and be more eager to comply.
• Do not publicly humiliate students; call them aside to discuss the behavior.
• Consistently document conduct and your attempts to resolve the situation.
• Report patterns of disruption to the Office of Student Conduct and your department chair.

Tips for Handling Difficult Student Situations:
• Do not internalize the situation or make it personal. Take a breath and look at the situation as objectively as possible.
• Identify the specific behavior of concern.
• Avoid creating a combative relationship where there is no room for movement.
• Look for the educational opportunity. An educational conversation from a University official can have a lasting impact on a student.
• Maintain professional communication.
• Address inappropriate, disruptive, or concerning behavior from the beginning. If you have a concern, do not wait to see if it happens again.
• Use "I" statements:
  "I am happy to discuss this/speak with you about this matter, however:
  I do not/will not speak with another adult who is yelling (cursing, etc.);” and/or
  As an educator, I do not/will not speak to someone who uses vulgar/crass/inappropriate/disrespectful language."
  "I hear that you are frustrated, however: (see “a” and “b”, above)."
  "I recognize how frustrated you are and I want to work with you. We need to take a step back for a minute so we can look at this situation together."
  Repeat the statement calmly two times. The third time, add, "I am going to end this conversation. I do not... (see “a” and “b”, above)."
• Maintain records of interactions with difficult students.
  Report to the Dean of Student and the department chair.