

MARKETING YOUR BIT/CARE TEAM: THE CONCERN FORM

When building out the form to use to collect information from community members, there are a few considerations to consider. While each college and university will be different in the application of their approach, there are some general discussion points and template examples that are worth consideration.

The Goal of the Form

When applying for a job, the goal of a cover letter is to get an employer to read the resume, which leads to a phone interview, which leads to an in-person interview. Thus, caution should be taken to avoid trying to do too much with the cover letter. Similarly, the form to collect information for a referral should be limited in scope. While there is an understandable desire to elicit as much information as possible from the referral source, lengthy forms or those with many required fields create a much higher likelihood of a person walking away from the process before completing the form. Teams with these types of forms may assume the form is working well based on the reports received, but there may be reports missed because of the difficulty in accessing or filling out the form.

Report vs. Sharing a Concern

The language we use when requesting information for the team is important. The term report can imply that the subject is in the wrong or there will be a punitive response, like in a police report. This perception is increased when the website or form used to share a concern with the BIT or CARE team uses similar language to student conduct, Title IX, or academic misconduct reporting forms. Unlike these other reports, sharing a concern with the BIT or CARE team should be less formal and allow the person making the report more flexibility in the manner and detail of sharing. Overall, DPrep Safety’s recommendation would use the phrase ‘sharing a concern’ rather than report.

Allow Anonymous Contacts

While there are very good reasons to ask for the referral source’s contact information, schools need to consider the impact that being required to share a concern. There are several reasons someone might not want to share that information, from not wanting to get more deeply involved to fearing retribution from the subject of the referral. It is best practice to allow anonymous referrals, as an anonymous referral is preferred to none.

Expecting too Much

Beyond the length of the form, there can be times when forms expect the referral source to have a deeper understanding of the process than they are likely to have. The form should not ask the referral source for the level of risk, as they lack the training and objectivity to rate the behavior in terms of overall all risk. Similarly, they should not be asked which team or department the concern should be forwarded to. There is often overlap between departments or teams, or the role of each might not be clearly and easily defined, leaving the referral source to guess. While in theory, both of these make for faster triaging of reports, relying on the referral source to give this information accurately can lead to cases being mishandled or siloed.

Internal Forms

Arguably, the most common misstep in creating these referral forms is building them behind firewalls that require the referral source be a member of the campus community. Not only does this go against the best practice of allowing anonymous reports, but it shuts down access for those in the larger community who may have seen something and are willing to say something about it. In the same way we give anonymous and unrestricted access to police tip lines or fire alarm pulls, the benefit of having early access to information, even if that information is not complete, outweighs any hesitation to make the forms publicly accessible.



Sample Form

[INTRODUCTION]

As part of the University's commitment to community safety, this form should be used to share a concern regarding a student's well-being. This form should be used to share information about a student who is exhibiting behaviors that are of concern in relation to their personal, physical, or emotional wellbeing or who could benefit from increased support.

If you are concerned about a faculty or staff member, please contact XXXXX

[EMERGENCY STATEMENT]

This form should not be used for emergencies. If there is an immediate concern about a student's safety, please contact 911 or Campus Safety at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

[REFERRAL SOURCE]

You may complete this form anonymously, but please know that anonymous reports of concerning or worrisome behavior may limit our ability to act, particularly when details are vague or unclear. Please consider providing your name and contact information if we need to follow-up with you.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

College Affiliation: [drop down] student, faculty, staff, not affiliated

Are you comfortable with the team letting the student know you filled the report? (yes/no)

[STUDENT OF CONCERN]

As best you can, please provide the contact information for the student that you're concerned about. If you're completing this form about yourself, put your information below. If you are reporting multiple students, please complete and submit one report per student.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

[DETAILS OF CONCERN]

Please check any behaviors below that have led you to be concerned about the individual involved. If none apply, please use the text box below to describe your concerns in detail.

Anger/Aggression

- Disturbing written material/class discussion
- Threats to harm others
- Insulting, profane or aggressive language
- Preoccupation with ammunitions or weapons
- Hostility or angry outbursts

Environmental Circumstances

- Death of a loved one or pet
- Removed from sports team or activity
- Pending suspension, police charges, or court involvement
- Medical trauma or Injury
- Academic failure or loss of major

Financial insecurity

- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity
- Victim of crime or harm
- Loss of dating relationship

Concerning Behaviors

- Intense sadness, tearfulness, expressions of dread
- Excessive absences
- Extreme withdrawal
- Ongoing academic disruptions
- Unusual or odd behavior
- Suicidal Remarks, thoughts, or actions
- Self-harming or cutting behaviors
- Preoccupation with death and dying
- Alcohol or other drug abuse/concern

Please describe the behaviors that have prompted you to share your concerns. Please use as much detail as possible, including dates for any specific incidents related to the concern. If you did not witness the behavior first-hand, please share how you came to know of this information.

[open narrative]

Duration of Behavior: [drop down] Single Incident, Ongoing Behavior, Unsure

Date of the incident (if this has been an ongoing concern, list the date of the most recent incident):

Have you spoken to or corresponded with the student about your concern? (yes/no)

Have you told the student that you will be submitting this referral? (yes/no)

[ADDITIONAL INFORMATION]

Please share any reports, emails, videos, text messages, audio recordings, may be uploaded in most formats (e.g., pdf, word, mov, mp3, JPEG, etc.). 5GB maximum total size. As a reminder, attachments require time to upload, so please be patient after submitting this form.

[upload link]

[FINAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT]

I understand that referrals from this form will be received during normal business hours (Mon - Fri, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) and are not monitored after hours, on weekends, or during official University holidays. I understand that if there is an immediate risk of harm to self or others prior to submitting this form, I should contact University Police.

If you would like a copy of the form you completed for your records, please enter your email here.

[open text box]