

Working with Disruptive Individuals

What is disruptive behavior?

Behavior that interferes with other students, faculty, or staff and their access to an appropriate educational, living, and work environment is considered disruptive. Disruptive behavior is disrespectful, rude, defiant, or hostile. Some of these behaviors may also be a violation of the Code of Student Character and Conduct. For more information on the Student Code of Conduct, please visit website:

www.fontbonne.edu/upload/4c34d62380165.doc
(see p. 44)

What are some examples of disruptive behavior?

- Yelling or screaming
- Persistent and unreasonable demands for time, attention, and rewards
- Words or actions that have the effect of intimidating or harassing another
- Words or actions that cause another to feel concern for his/her personal safety
- Threats of physical assault

How should I deal with a disruptive person?

Remain calm. Many disruptive situations involve anger. Recognize that the period of peak anger usually lasts 20-30 seconds. If the person de-escalates, then you can refer to DOs and DON'Ts listed for further steps to resolve the conflict. If, however, the person does not de-escalate, then you may need to remove yourself, and others, from the situation and contact Public Safety.

**IF YOU FEEL THREATENED OR ENDANGERED,
CALL PUBLIC SAFETY at (314) 889- 4596.**

The DOs

- DO allow the person to vent and tell you what is upsetting him/her. Use silence to allow the person to talk it out.
- DO acknowledge the feelings of the individual.
- DO set limits. Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable: "I will be willing to speak with you as soon as you lower your voice."
- DO be firm, consistent, and honest.
- DO focus on what you can do to help resolve the situation.
- DO offer to make referrals. When possible, give the name of an individual who might be able to help.
- DO ask the person to leave the room if the disruptive behavior persists.
- DO report the behavior when necessary according to the Recognize and Respond protocol.
- DO document disruptive behavior for your own records. Write a factual, detailed account of what occurred. Use concrete, behavioral terms.

The DON'Ts

- DON'T interrupt, particularly during the first 20-30 seconds of peak anger.
- DON'T address student behavior when classmates are present unless necessary. If possible step outside the classroom to talk to the student.
- DON'T minimize the situation.
- DON'T get into an argument or shouting match.
- DON'T blame, ridicule, or use sarcasm.
- DON'T touch.
- DON'T ignore safety issues if the person is becoming more agitated.
- DON'T assume you can resolve all situations, seek assistance when needed.