UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA
SAN JUAN • ORLANDO • MIAMI

CRISIS INTERVENTION POLICY

The purpose of this protocol is to establish a clear and simple procedure whose objective is to detail the steps to be followed in a crisis intervention. This protocol will be applied to situations involving students, employees and visitors of the University.

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I. Introduction

The Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico has a responsibility with the university community to promote the quality of life of its students and maintain a safe environment. This protocol will establish a clear and simple guide for the management of emergency situations or mental health crisis intervention at the university.

It will serve to coordinate services with the corresponding offices in cases where immediate action needs to be taken and to manage such incidents that may result in risk situations.

II. Establishment of motives

According to statistics on mental health in Puerto Rico, there has been an increase in people with such diagnoses that affect the general population. A person with a mental health diagnosis can, in a stressful moment, lead to a crisis that prevents them from functioning adequately in their daily routine. With a university career being such an important challenge for students, the associated stressors can accelerate a mental health crisis. It is for this reason that we have implemented this policy in order to assist the staff of the university community in case of emergencies and to establish the steps to follow in order to prevent an unfortunate event from occurring.

III. Definitions

A. **Stressful situations** = The emotionally negative experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive, and behavioral changes aimed at altering the stressful event or adjusting to its effects.
B. **Risky behaviors** = Risky behaviors are actions that the person performs that may endanger their life or the lives of others. (Examples: aggressive behavior, alcohol and drug use, self-mutilation, sudden mood swings, deep sadness, isolation, among others).
C. **Crisis** = Major change in daily life that produces emotional instability (Examples: death of a family member, job loss, illness, low academic achievement, among others).
D. **Suicidal thoughts** = Suicidal thoughts occur when a person wishes and understands that they would be better off if they were dead, but it does not necessarily lead to action.

E. **Suicidal attempts** = going beyond a suicidal thought, the person executes a plan to deprive him/herself of life and performs acts to carry out this plan.
F. **Self-mutilation** = When a person assaults himself, mutilating his body with an object.

IV. Limits of confidentiality

Confidentiality is a fundamental principle at the time of a crisis intervention process, however it has some limits to safeguard the safety and well-being of the parties involved. The limits of confidentiality are the following:

- If the life or that of a third person is in imminent danger.
- If there is suspicion of abuse of a minor or a person who is unable to care for him/herself.
- If you waive your right to confidentiality.
- In a court proceeding as ruled by the court.

V. Warning behaviors

1. Absenteeism
2. Aggressiveness
3. Disinterest
4. Changes in appearance or personal hygiene
5. Obsession with death
6. Intimidating or threatening comments
7. Indicators of being disoriented in time, person or place
8. Low academic achievement
9. Incoherent ideas or behavior
10. Excessive sadness, crying or fear
11. Feeling of self-loathing
12. Feeling of guilt
13. Hopelessness or feeling of emotional emptiness
14. Difficulty in identifying solutions
15. Use of alcohol, drugs or other substances
16. Self-mutilation or appearance of bumps

VI. How to identify a person in crisis?

A person in crisis can be identified when:

a. Try to hurt themselves
b. Manifests threats to others or property.

c. Exhibits behaviors that demonstrate deterioration of mental or physical health

VII. Directory

Office	Extensions	Building
Guidance and Counselling	248, 478	Main (floor1)
Vice-President of Student Services	270, 276	Main (courtyard interior)
Security	111,216, 476,263	Multipurpose
Human Resources	320, 494	Main (2nd floor)
Evening Schedule	9-1-1 PAS Line 1-800-981-0023	

VIII. Procedures

A. Students

If the professor observes a student with symptoms that they believe the student needs help with, they should refer them to the Guidance and Counselling Office so that they can be offered the necessary tools to deal with their situation. For this purpose, they should use the *Referral for Counselling Services* document (available on the Guidance and Counselling Office website: https://www.pupr.edu/consejeria/) or contact directly at extension 248.

When a student observes a classmate with any of the above indicators, they may contact the professor and report the observed behavior or go directly to the Guidance and Counselling Office or the Vice President of Student Services.

The person receiving the information from the student or professor will schedule the student for an evaluation process and, if necessary, refer the student to psychological services for professional help.

1. In the classroom

Primary indicators:

- Absenteeism
- Significant changes in the way of acting
- Low academic achievement
- Feeling of guilt

- Feeling of emotional emptiness
- Use of alcohol, drugs or other substances

2. **Outside the classroom**

When a student observes that a classmate is exhibiting risky behavior or expresses the feeling of going through an emotional crisis, they should talk to them and convince them to go to the Guidance and Counselling Office or the Vice President for Student Services and report the observations made and, if possible, provide all the information they have about the other student (name, department they belong to, places they frequent, among others).
If a student understands that they are experiencing an emotional health crisis, they should seek services from the Guidance and Counselling Office staff.

If it is determined that the student warrants referral to a mental health hospital, the student will be notified of the need to break confidentiality taking into account that the life of this person or that of a third party may be affected. The parents or contact person will be contacted. If family members cannot be reached and the student represents a potential danger to others or is considered to be in danger of harming himself/herself, the Security Office will be called at extension 111. If necessary, an arrest warrant will be requested (see Section IX).

3. **Crisis Cases**

Warning Indicators

- Suicidal thoughts
- Self-mutilation
- Aggressiveness
- Use of alcohol, drugs or other substances
- Threats to self and others
- Manifestation of bizarre behavior (disorganized thoughts, incoherent language, exaggerated emotions, loss of contact with reality, among others).

If any person within the university community is observed exhibiting one or more of the risk behaviors mentioned above, they should immediately notify any of the offices in charge of working with Crisis situations (see Directory, Section VII). In the event that the person is presenting behaviors that demonstrate that they are in crisis, they will proceed to contact personnel from the Security Office, Guidance and Counselling Office or the Vice-Presidency of Student Services.

The personnel from the Offices mentioned in the directory who receives this referral will proceed to obtain the following information, if the situation permits:

- Name
- Student Number
- Phone number of immediate family member
- Situation or main complaint
- Explore the conditions of the student
- Identify if the student has delusions, suicidal thoughts or emotional crisis as mentioned above.

B. Employees

In case of observing an incident of mental health crisis where the affected person is an employee of the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, the Human Resources Office will be notified so that they can use the corresponding protocol in cases of employees.

C. Visitors

In case the person is a visitor, the case will be referred to the Security Office for action and work will be done according to the particular situation and according to the security policy established for these cases.

IN CASE THE SITUATION OCCURS DURING DAYTIME HOURS, PLEASE CALL THE SECURITY OFFICE EXTENSIONS: 111,216, 476,263. DURING NIGHT HOURS: TO EXTS. 111 Y 263.

YOU CAN ALSO CALL 9-1-1 AND THEN CALL THE PAS LINE AT 1-800-981-0023.

IX. Additional intervention processes

a. If the person shows signs that his or her condition will be exacerbated, it will be recommended that he or she go to a psychiatric facility or emergency medical services (if physically injured) for evaluation.
b. If the person accepts voluntarily, the referral and transfer to receive the pertinent service will be coordinated.
c. If the person refuses to receive professional help or to be transferred to a psychiatric institution or to an emergency medical services ward, the person will be

Law 408 and/or Law 67 will apply. For information on these laws you can access the following links:

- Law 408 = "Mental Health Act of Puerto Rico". http://www.ramajudicial.pr/leyes/Anejo-1-Ley-de-Salud-Mental-de-Puerto-Rico.pdf
- Law 67 = "Mental Health and Addiction Services Administration Act" http://www.pr.gov/presupuesto/aprobado_2012/suppdocs/baselegal/095/67-1993.pdf

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