OVERVIEW

Threatening, Disruptive or Disorderly, and Difficult Behavior

The information below describes and provides examples of threatening, disruptive or disorderly, and difficult behaviors.

THREATENING BEHAVIOR

*Behavior is considered threatening if it suggests the possibility of violence and physical harm.*

Examples of THREATENING behavior:

- Fighting
- Making statements such as “I am going to come back and ... (commit a violent act).”

DISRUPTIVE OR DISORDERLY BEHAVIOR

*Behavior is considered disruptive or disorderly if it interferes with the operation of the Libraries, infringes upon the rights of others to freely participate in Libraries’ services, or poses a risk to Libraries’ facilities, equipment, or collections.*

Examples of DISRUPTIVE OR DISORDERLY behavior:

- Talking loudly
- Destroying Libraries’ property (books, computers, trashing group study rooms)
- Deliberately misusing facilities, materials, or equipment

DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR

*Some persistent behavior may not be disruptive, but may nevertheless make staff or other users uncomfortable. Supervisors and staff must always maintain a respect for users’ individual rights of expression, while at the same time fostering an environment that is non-threatening. Persistent difficult behavior may require the intervention of University Police, or may indicate emotional or psychological issues.*

Examples of DIFFICULT behavior:

- Unsolicited attempts at conversation with staff or users. May be about unusual or controversial topics.
- “Claiming” a public area (table, corner, etc.)
  - leaving personal effects for extended periods of time when the owner is not actually in the facility
  - using a library computer for non-library activities for an extended period of time.
- Personal body odor. All people have some odor to them. However strong or offensive smells, especially when detected when standing a distance from a person, could make those in the area uncomfortable.
• Unwanted advances or flirtation with staff or users
• Attempts to intimidate staff or users, including to obtain preferential treatment or access to services for which the individual is not eligible
• Vagrancy, sleeping –
  o There is a clear distinction between someone using the facility primarily as a residence and/or to sleep and someone who occasionally naps when using the facility for study, research, etc. The former is a clear misuse because it discourages others from making full use of the facility and its resources.
• Viewing of legal/adult pornography
PROCEDURES

Threatening, Disruptive or Disorderly, and Difficult Behavior

Library personnel must respond to reported or observed behavior that is disruptive, threatening, or difficult in order to maintain a safe and scholarly environment in library facilities.

HOW TO HANDLE THREATENING BEHAVIOR:  Behavior is considered threatening if it suggests the possibility of violence and/or physical harm.

- If you feel threatened:
  - Leave the area, even if you are the only staff at the service point
  - CALL 911
  - Report incident to your supervisor as soon as possible. Supervisors should report the incident up through their chain of command.

- If threatening behavior is reported to you:
  - CALL 911
  - Report incident to your supervisor as soon as possible. Supervisors should report incident up through their chain of command. Follow any other procedures that may exist in your unit (e.g. Libraries with multiple units/departments may have further procedures for notifying other units/department in their facility)

HOW TO HANDLE DISRUPTIVE, DISORDERLY OR DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR:  Such behavior interferes with the operation of the Libraries, infringes upon the rights of others to freely participate in Libraries’ services, poses a risk to Libraries’ facilities, equipment, or collections, or makes staff or other users uncomfortable.

- Notify individual(s) that their behavior is disruptive or making others uncomfortable
- Request that the behavior stop. If it stops, still report the incident to your supervisor
- If the behavior doesn’t stop, explain calmly that you will be contacting your supervisor or the UI Police (this should NOT be conveyed as a threat)
- If the situation continues, contact your supervisor, you building supervisor, and/or the Libraries Facilities Coordinator.
- If your supervisor, the building supervisor, or the Facilities Coordinator is not available and the behavior persists, call the UI Police (5-5022).
- If behavior appears to be caused by emotional/psychology issues, this additional information may be helpful.
  - Always contact University Police immediately if an individual's behavior suggests the possibility of violence against himself/herself or others.
  - CALL University Police (5-5022 or 911), if the individual appears highly agitated. Officers will investigate to determine if the individual poses a risk or should be hospitalized.
- Remember that individuals experiencing emotional or psychological problems may have little or no control of their behavior.
- Be prepared by taking courses related to mental health, such as the Mental Health First Aid seminar (http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/program_overview/).
- Report incident to your supervisor as soon as possible.

**HOW TO HANDLE CAMPUS SECURITY OR LOCKDOWN SITUATIONS:** Such behavior is usually life-threatening and each person should take responsibility to safeguard themselves. It is wise to set your Hawk Alerts to multiple devices (email, text (fastest), and phone) and follow any instructions from UI law enforcement personnel.

- Campus or building lock-down: If instructed by police to lock down the building, do so and then contact your supervisor. Each library facility may have additional instructions for a building lock-down.
- Hawk Alerts: If the UI Police has issued an alert about a threatening person or a building being locked down elsewhere on campus
  - The University Librarian or in her absence, an Associate University Librarian, will decide whether to lock the doors to the building (in the case of the HLHS, Main Library, and Sciences Library) or the door to the library (in the case of Business, Engineering, (Music), and (Art) and notify the UI Police of this decision.
  - Evening and weekend staff should contact their supervisor, who will contact the University Librarian or an AUL.
  - If a building or library is locked down, the PA system should be used to keep the occupants informed.
- Active Shooter in the building or immediate vicinity
  - Be prepared!
    - Take the Violent Incident Survival Training (http://police.uiowa.edu/services/educational-programs/violent-incident-survival-training/). This training advises these options, depending on the situation:
      - Running away should always be your first option, if possible, and you should not stop until you are many blocks away from the situation/person.
      - Call 911 with specific information such as room numbers where you or the shooter is and physical description of the shooter.
      - If the information you are receiving does not allow you to evacuate, then a lock-down situation is necessary (i.e. you cannot get away without putting yourself in danger). You should remain calm, secure the room, and eliminate noise.
      - The Violent Incident Survival Training offers excellent examples and demonstrations of how you can disrupt the act of shooting...
and how to secure the weapon, if your immediate area is breached. Hiding is usually not advisable.

- Remember that a situation will be unique and there is not one set of procedures you can follow.
- Take personal responsibility to protect yourself.

- **Active Shooter on campus**
  - Follow instructions received from UI Police via Hawk Alerts.
  - See information above about Hawk Alerts.
TIPS
Disruptive or Disorderly and Difficult Behavior

- Always remain calm
- Respond quickly and appropriately
  - Pair with another staff member, if possible, when confronting one or more users.
- Always focus on behavior
  - Not individuals or traits. Avoid personal accusations.
- Watch others for cues when assessing behavior
  - For example, if a group is talking loudly, do others around them appear to be disturbed?
    - If no, it may not be disruptive.
    - If yes, then try to address the problem before someone complains.
- Offer alternatives if available
  - If a group is talking loudly, suggest a group study room.
  - If food/drink is not allowed in one area, direct the user to other areas where food is permitted.
- Calmly explain to the individuals WHY their behavior is disruptive, being specific (i.e., excessive noise distracts other library users) rather than the cite rules (i.e., library policy prohibits excessive noise).
- Simply talking to individuals who are behaving disruptively will resolve most problems
- Do not threaten
  - When explaining that you will notify your supervisor, or University Police, you are simply providing information. The user’s behavior will determine the course of action.
- Clearly communicate potential issues with your supervisor
- Remember that:
  - For some behavioral issues, there may be no legal or administrative remedy.
  - Disruptive behavior in public areas is sometimes difficult to assess. Be sure to consider the immediate and practical consequences of the behavior.
  - Viewing adult pornography is legal. Viewing child pornography is NOT legal. UI Police (5-5022) should be called if a person is viewing child pornography. You should first help the user who is disturbed by the viewing of legal pornography find another location to work. UI Police should not be involved if a person is viewing legal pornography, unless they become belligerent or threatening or displaying inappropriate behavior.
IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Each service point should have a calling tree or trees specifically for that unit. Other important phone numbers to know:

- University Police (5-5022)
- Local Police (911)
- Libraries Administration (5-5867)
- Main Library South Circulation Desk (5-5912)
- Interim Facilities Coordinator, Pat Hogan (5-5899)
- Main Library Information Desk (5-5299)
- Main Library North Desk (5-6294)
- Business Library (5-3077)
- Engineering Library (5-6047)
- Hardin Library (5-9151)
- Sciences Library (5-3083)

All interactions of this nature should be reported to your supervisor and/or Facilities Coordinator in person or via email / note immediately following the incident.

RESOURCES:

University Police:  http://police.uiowa.edu/
University of Iowa Operations Manual:  http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/
University of Iowa Code of Student Life:  http://dos.uiowa.edu/current-policies-and-regulations-affecting-students-2010-2011-academic-year/