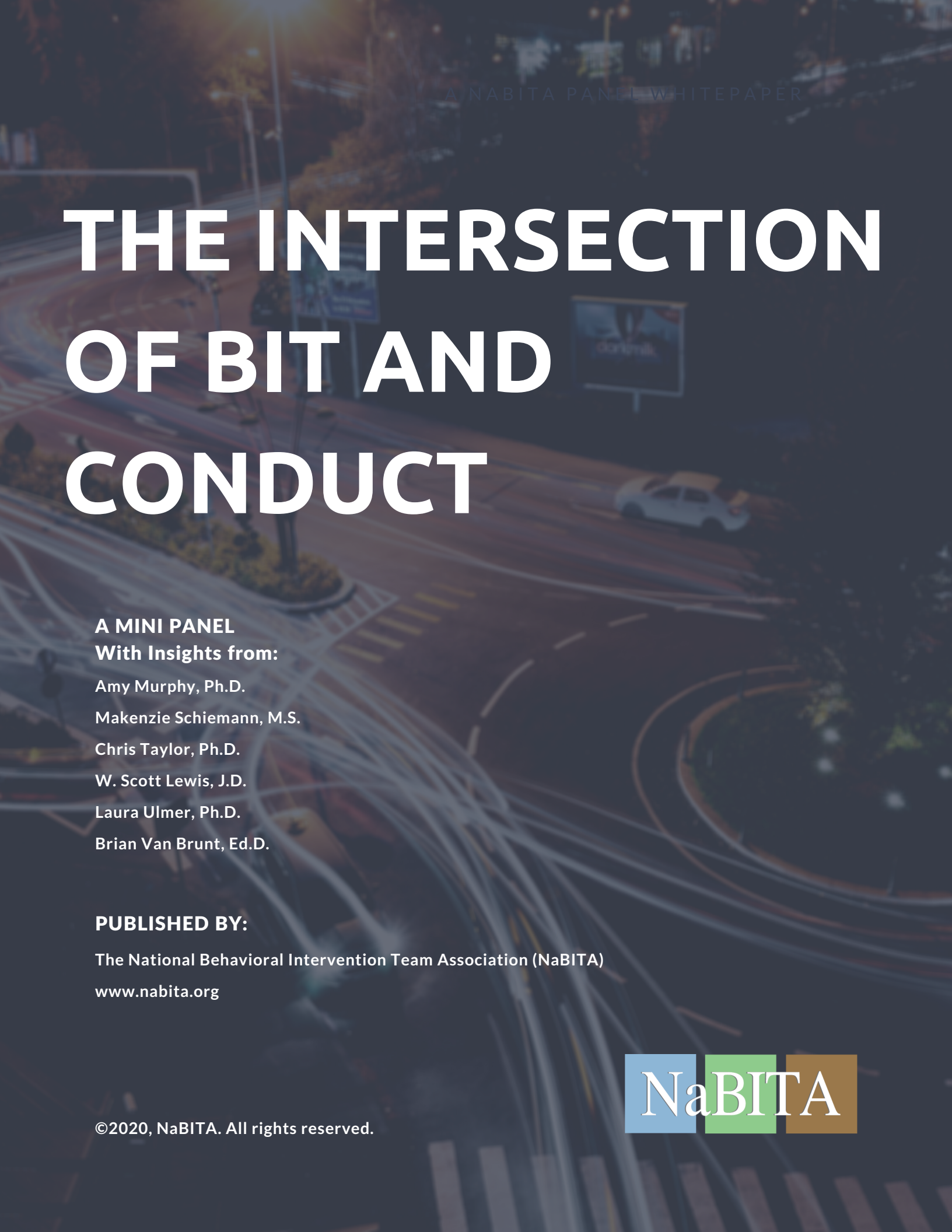

A NABITA PANEL WHITEPAPER

# THE INTERSECTION OF BIT AND CONDUCT


**A MINI PANEL**
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# INTRODUCTION

Given the shared goals of student development, accountability, and community safety, it is not surprising that behavioral intervention teams (BITs) and student conduct or discipline often address overlapping concerns. Students experiencing substance use concerns, behavioral issues (disruption, poor boundaries, hate crimes/bias incidents), and interpersonal conflict (roommate issues, anger management, relationship issues) are likely to be addressed through the office of student conduct or through a school discipline process when their behavior violates school policy, as well as be referred to the BIT for support. In fact, minor conduct issues, major conduct issues, and alcohol and other drug concerns rank among the most common referrals to behavioral intervention teams (Schiemann & Van Brunt, 2018). There is a clear overlap between the cases addressed by the office of student conduct and by the BIT, emphasizing the need for a discussion on how these two areas intersect.

**There is a clear overlap between the cases addressed by the office of student conduct and by the BIT, emphasizing the need for a discussion on how these two areas intersect.**

While the primary approach of the BIT to situations of concern is one of care, support, and resource referrals while also managing risk, the primary approach of the conduct office is to provide a formal option for progressive and educational sanctions, discipline, or accountability processes for scenarios involving violations of school policy. At first glance, these goals and processes can seem contrary to each other – as though administrators must pick one option or the other for handling a case. Instead of an either/or approach, conduct and BIT processes are often best served through a collaborative both/and approach. In fact, one of the most common mistakes a team makes is skipping standard disciplinary actions for BIT cases thinking they are being thoughtful and supportive by avoiding having the student go through the conduct process. Unfortunately, this can create inconsistent standards across the educational community, and the team loses the opportunity to reset expectations and document patterns of concerning behaviors.

# INTRODUCTION

Instead, a collaborative approach that relies of consistent standards, due process, and supportive intervention can improve both the conduct and BIT processes by simultaneously increasing accountability and improving access to resources for success.

Conduct or disciplinary officers are a critical part of the core membership for behavioral intervention teams (BITs) in both the higher education and K-12 settings. In higher education, the conduct representative to the BIT is commonly the Director of Student Conduct with an Associate/Assistant Director in a backup position. In K-12 schools, the Assistant Principal responsible for discipline usually fills this role. The representative needs to be ready to share information at the BIT meeting on student conduct history and information about reoccurring behaviors.

They should also able to inform the team about typical conduct processes related to the presenting behaviors and coordinate with the team as these processes occur. This can mean coordinating when a student is going to be suspended or selecting disciplinary conditions that complement the team's selected interventions. The student conduct or discipline team member should also be trained in mandated assessment processes and advanced threat assessment tools in order to support the team when this need arises.

> **"...A collaborative approach that relies of consistent standards, due process, and supportive intervention can improve both the conduct and BIT processes..."**

# BIT & CONDUCT

| PHASES OF BIT | ROLE OF CONDUCT |
| --- | --- |
| **Phase 1: Data Gathering** | Conduct officers or staff involved in school discipline should proactively refer students identified during the normal course of conduct operations to the BIT as appropriate. The conduct or discipline representative to the BIT should also be prepared to gather conduct history and information on students referred to the BIT by other individuals in order to share this history during the BIT meeting. |
| **Phase 2: Risk Analysis** | Conduct or discipline representatives should actively participate during the BIT meeting in the review and identification of a risk level for each referral or case using the team's objective risk rubric. At least one conduct or discipline representative should be trained in advanced threat assessment tools, such as the Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA-35). |
| **Phase 3: Interventions** | The conduct or discipline process, in and of itself, can be an intervention. Additionally, as a result of a conduct or discipline case, the conduct or disciplinary officer can sanction supportive or educational measures such as meeting with a case manager or member of the BIT to discuss the incident and appropriate alternative behaviors. |

# OUR PANEL

To further discuss the intersection of student conduct and the BIT, we have compiled a panel of leaders in the fields of conduct and BIT to share their perspectives.

**[AM] Amy Murphy, Ph.D.** was the 2019 NaBITA president, is a member of the NaBITA Advisory Board, a faculty member, and a former student affairs administrator. She currently coordinates a master's program in student development and leadership in higher education at Angelo State University. Dr. Murphy previously served as the dean of students at Texas Tech University, as well as a graduate faculty member in higher education. Dr. Murphy's role included serving as chairperson for the BIT for more than 10 years. Dr. Murphy co-authored *A Staff Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior On Campus* and *Uprooting Sexual Violence in Higher Education: A Guide for Practitioners and Faculty*. Her research includes the development of the ERIS: Extremist Risk Intervention Scale, alongside Dr. Brian Van Brunt.

**[MS] Makenzie Schiemann, M.S.** is the Vice President of Case Management Initiatives for TNG and the Executive Director for the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA). Makenzie started her professional career as a teacher working in middle grades education and then moved to the higher education setting where she spent nine years overseeing the behavioral intervention team, case management program, and victim advocacy department at both a small private college and a large public university. Makenzie has presented at numerous national conferences including NASPA, the Higher Education Case Manager's Association (HECMA), NaBITA, and ASCA. She currently serves on the advisory board for NaBITA, is an editor for the *Journal for Campus Behavioral Intervention*, and has previously served on the leadership board for the Higher Education Case Managers Association (HECMA). Her areas of expertise include policy and program development for behavioral intervention teams, case management, and victim advocacy, strategies for chairing BITs, research and assessment, and strategic planning for comprehensive educational and awareness programming.

# OUR PANEL

**[CT] Chris Taylor, Ph.D.** currently serves as the Interim Vice Provost for Student Affairs at Wright State University and chairs the University's Behavioral Intervention Team. He graduated from Miami University with a B.A. in Philosophy and a Ph.D. in Student Affairs in Higher Education and received his M.A. in Student Affairs from Ball State University. He is certified in mediation and conflict resolution, has worked in student conduct, residence life, and international programs, and his research focuses on college age men and masculinities. He is a national consultant on the Clery Act and has published on the development of college age men and has an upcoming book on the understanding and treatment of men involved in the incel movement

**[WSL] W. Scott Lewis, J.D.** is a Partner with TNG. He is a co-founder and advisory board member of ATIXA, the Association of Title IX Administrators and NaBITA, the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association, and was a board member and president of ASCA. He has worked with the Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women and the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights as a trainer and consultant, training staff and investigators. He was a consultant to the Office of the Vice President and the White House Task Force on issues of Sexual Misconduct, as well as a core member of the United States Olympic Committee's Task Force that proposed and created the United States Center for SafeSport, for both of which he consults and trains.

# OUR PANEL

**[LU] Laura Ulmer, Ph.D.** has worked in the field of higher education behavioral intervention and threat assessment for over a decade. After serving at Wingate University focusing on leadership development, she began working with student care teams at the University of Louisville and currently serves on the threat assessment and student care team as the Director of Student Conduct & Academic Integrity at Old Dominion University. Her dissertation also focused on structure, work, and outcomes of the Student Care Team at the University of Louisville. Outside the office, she enjoys spending time outdoors kayaking, hiking, camping, and exercising.

**[BVB] Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D.** has worked in the counseling field for more than 25 years, and specializes in educational counseling, behavioral intervention and support, and issues related to mental health and alcohol/substance abuse by students. He served as Director of Counseling at New England College and Western Kentucky University. He is a Partner with TNG and serves as the President of the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA). Dr. Van Brunt is also a prolific writer, having authored numerous books, book chapters, and articles. He has additionally produced various assessment instruments, video training materials, and is a blogger and photographer during his spare time.

# DISCUSSION

### How do the BIT and conduct processes intersect and where are they independent from one another?

**AM:** BIT and conduct should operate simultaneously as parallel processes and should be in alignment with one another. They converge at the point of identifying students of concern and sharing of information about what is occurring with the student. They can work together to coordinate the timing of processes, speeding up or slowing down in order to coordinate resource referrals or to better engage with a student when scheduling a meeting. One area of confusion for BITs and conduct often relates to the decision to mandate an assessment for a student of concern. BIT and conduct need to coordinate closely in these situations. For example, BIT would coordinate the mandated assessment communication to the student, and conduct would utilize the "failure to comply" policy to enforce the mandate as appropriate. There needs to be an independence in policy and process at the actual determination of policy violations, and the disciplinary status determination by conduct needs to remain independent especially when it relates to disciplinary suspension and expulsion. However, the two can work together to identify other resources and options for educational sanctions appropriate for different types of situations and they can and should coordinate when it becomes known that a student will be separated from the academic community for disciplinary reasons.

> **BIT and conduct should operate simultaneously as parallel processes and should be in alignment with one another.**

**MS:** BITs and conduct, or student discipline, intersect as they both respond to behaviors of concern, threats to others, disruption, and other interpersonal or behavioral issues. In other words, BITs and conduct deal with similar issues and will often have overlapping cases or students. However, BIT and conduct differ in the scope of their work and in the overall purpose of their work. The scope of BIT is quite broad – BITs respond to any concerning behavior, including low level concerns all the way up to imminent threats, with the purpose of assessing risk and deploying interventions to reduce that risk.

# DISCUSSION

**MS (cont.):** Conduct's scope and purpose is narrower – conduct addresses potential violations of the student code of conduct with the purpose of adjudicating the incident and applying appropriate sanctions to promote understanding of and compliance with the school's standards for behavior. Given the intersection of cases and students, BIT members and conduct staff should be mindful that their processes are well coordinated with each other. When done well, neither process replaces the other as they happen as parallel approaches to the same issue, both informing the other as they go.

**CT:** I think it is crucial to have conduct staff as part of the process as they may have information on stressors a student is facing or ways they are acting out. They also can gain information that provides context to an alleged violation or provide information that may aid in the sanctioning process. I think it is important, however, that decisions made about responsibility (or lack thereof) are independent of this information. Students can be held accountable if warranted while still giving deference to other issues affecting their life.

**WSL:** I like to say that BIT informs conduct and conduct informs BIT. The conduct office staff can get a lot of information and context from a BIT, and vice-versa, especially when the behavior reported to the BIT violates policy. The pillars of conduct are education and accountability while the mission of the BIT is care, support, and prevention. The independence of these two areas can get even more cloudy when the head of the student conduct office is the BIT Chair, which is common.

**LU:** In the everyday work of the CARE team and a conduct office, there are similarities and differences. The outcome of meetings with each office comes with education, resources, and assistance. Some also use the same databases to maintain records and sometimes, they see the same students. As Title II indicates, we are required to hold students accountable for their behavior that violates policy, regardless of a documented disability. Therefore, the BIT and conduct processes are separated momentarily because conduct must facilitate their process.

# DISCUSSION

**LU (cont.):** However, to intersect these processes, the CARE team can identify an employee or another member of the team with whom the student has a relationship to reach out to support the student and offer resources. This may decrease stress and allow for questions to be answered in the moment for those who may respond negatively to getting information from the conduct office. A member of the CARE team and/or designee may also serve as an advisor to a student during the hearing to promote additional support. There are also times a student is referred to the student CARE team because of the interaction in the office and/or hearing, for additional support and resources.

**BVB:** I wish there was a simple answer to this. The trouble we run into is there are some minor conduct cases involving alcohol, classroom disruption, difficulty with authority, and odd or concerning behavior that may be the early warnings signs of targeted violence or suicide. When these lower behaviors are excluded from the BIT, they lead to the team losing optics on these puzzle pieces as early warning signs. When the NaBITA risk rubric was updated in 2019, part of this was to reflect the government and law enforcement guidance on early attendance to potential at-risk behavior. When the conduct office handles these cases outside of the BIT, we lose optics on the BIT. One way to address this is including conduct on the BIT and ensuring behaviors that have a potential life risk, threat to others, difficulty with authority figures, and hardened points of views are reviewed by the BIT. This does not need to be a long, time consuming process, but inclusion of these behaviors gives larger breadth to the BIT's ability to get out in front of larger violence risks. As a final thought, consider operationalizing what kind of behaviors that have a primary conduct involvement must be forwarded to the BIT in a fair and equitable manner. This means operationalizing some factors that will help define the process. For instance, those with multiple office involvements (e.g. ADA/504, counseling, police, academic integrity), those that are repeated disruptive behaviors in the classroom, and those which are based on a hardened and inflexible point of view centered on politics, religion, or social justice.

# DISCUSSION

### How should the BIT and conduct processes work together when behavior is impacted by mental health?

**AM:** It can be helpful to start by having all conduct staff trained in basic aspects of recognizing and identifying mental health concerns as well as how to respond to suicidal students. Conduct and BIT need to work closely when responding to conduct incidents involving mental health and especially issues of self-harm. Conduct officers should be focused on behaviors that violate conduct policies and not mental health disorders or diagnoses. When a student threatens suicide, this is a disturbing and concerning behavior, but it may not rise to a policy violation in the code of conduct. The BIT has broader capabilities to assess the full scope of what is occurring with the student's experience, coordinate notification to a parent or emergency contact as appropriate, and to follow the student's access to mental health care and support well after a conduct process has ended.

**MS:** The great thing about the code of conduct is that it applies to all students, including those with a disability or a mental health issue. If a student has violated the code of conduct, we should hold them accountable for their behavior.

> **The great thing about the code of conduct is that it applies to all students, including those with a disability or a mental health issue.**

We've seen teams skip the conduct process in favor of "helping" the student by letting the BIT address the behavior. At face value, this seems helpful and supportive for the student. In reality, this has actually taken away a student's due process, created a separate process for students with a mental health issue, and has delayed the school's ability to hold the student accountable for their behavior. When we hold all students accountable for their behavior, including those with mental health issues, we are able to clearly demonstrate to the student which behaviors are acceptable and which are not. In this way, the conduct process becomes a mechanism for behavior change and a valuable tool in fostering student development and success.

# DISCUSSION

**MS (cont.):** In cases where behavior is impacted by disability, and the behavior also violates the code of conduct, the BIT and conduct process can work together by collaboratively evaluating appropriate sanctions or interventions that help the student be successful and remain on campus. In these instances, it can also be helpful to collaborate with disability services as either a core or middle circle member of the BIT to determine reasonable accommodations for the student.

**CT:** Again, all students, even those with mental health issues, can and should be held accountable if they violate policy. Members of the BIT team who may engage with a student, such as counseling staff or disability services staff, may also be able to sit in on conduct meetings if the student requests that they do so and may ease the process for that student. By that, I mean not in terms of easing accountability but in understanding the process and in helping a student be less stressed about it. It is also worthwhile to consider including a disability accommodations statement in your conduct process letters and it's a good idea to have staff from disability services or your ADA Coordinator assist with language.

**WSL:** If the behavior reported violates policy, then the BIT and the student conduct office need to decide how to proceed. Will the BIT reach out first and also reach out to Disability Support Services to see if the student is registered or receiving accommodations? Will the SCO reach out first and do the same? Or, will both reach out and then keep the other informed? This should be strategically decided based on the case facts. There is not really a default position.

**LU:** To respond to behavior stemming from a mental health concern, conduct is required to facilitate their process. However, students with mental health concerns may benefit from additional referrals and resources when going through the conduct process. For example, if someone is interim suspended because of behavior that could be associated with a diagnosis, the conduct office should collaborate with the CARE team to facilitate appropriate referrals. This allows the university to temporarily separate as needed during an interim suspension process and the student gets additional support, as they may need.

# DISCUSSION

**BVB:** Many have heard this before, but the easy answer to this question is to focus on behavior and not diagnosis. This applies both in the assessment process and in interventions and sanctions. The presence of a mental illness is never the issue, but rather how those behaviors associated with the student reach beyond reasonable accommodation and violate the code of conduct. For example, a student with ASD (previously Asperger's) who engages in repetitive disruptive behaviors in the classroom should be part of a conduct discussion and process. This would be the same with a veteran student with PTSD who yells and screams at students in the classroom to "listen to the professor! Stop disrespecting him or I will disrespect you!" There may be differing sanctions for those with mental illness compared to those who engage in the same disruptive behaviors out of anger. Skipping the conduct process because someone has a mental illness driving their conduct violating behavior actually results in the student losing their due process protections. I've seen a number of cases where supportive and caring staff skipped a minor conduct violation to "help out the student" and then found themselves six months later with a bulleted list of dozens of classroom disruptive incidents and an argument for the student to be suspended or separated from the program. As they used to say during my tenure as a director in Kentucky; that dog won't hunt.

> **"...If someone is interim suspended because of behavior that could be associated with a diagnosis, the conduct office should collaborate with the CARE team to facilitate appropriate referrals."**

# DISCUSSION

### What can the BIT and the conduct staff do to increase communication and collaboration?

**AM:** There should be a clear understanding of the types of concerns that will be reported to the BIT from conduct and the types of information conduct will be prepared to provide to the BIT about student situations. It can be helpful for BIT to talk proactively about how conduct processes typically work: what are the typical timeframes, what constitutes a policy violation for conduct involvement, and what are typical sanctions given for different violations. If the conduct office uses a sanctioning grid, it can be beneficial to share this with BIT to help them understand what often occurs with different types of behaviors. There should also be a discussion about how information shared in BIT would or would not be used in a conduct process.

**MS:** Creating a strong, consistent, and commonly understood process for how the BIT and conduct staff communicate and collaborate will improve both the efficiency and quality of the communication and collaboration. At a basic level, including a conduct representative in the core membership of the BIT fosters shared communication. As part of their participation on the BIT, the conduct office or student discipline representative should be well versed in what behaviors or incidents should be referred to the BIT as well as prepared to share conduct history, prior incident reports, and insights into how the conduct process works. The second area of focus for increasing communication and collaboration is relationships. Quality communication, working through conflict, engaging in healthy debate, and coming together for solutions is often easier when the individuals involved have a relationship built on trust and rapport.

**CT:** It is vital that members of the BIT team know the conduct process; this is a great training topic for the BIT. It is also helpful to put process flow charts or other documents in the hands of team members. Not only will it aid BIT members in better understanding the full picture of a student's situation, but it will also allow team members who may be working directly with a student to help explain the process and ease a student's fears about it if they have them. It is important for staff to note that detailed questions should be deferred to the conduct staff.

# DISCUSSION

**WSL:** Share information. On campuses where there are enough staff to not have the leadership of the offices be mixed (usually just very large campuses), the leadership of the BIT and student conduct office should have a collaborative communicative relationship and share access to each other's data. In those instances, the student conduct office should also be a core member of the BIT.

> **Taking time to talk with each other beyond the times there is an ask or a need between conduct and BIT staff can deepen the connection...**

**LU:** Maintaining a shared electronic database of students allows each office to see if there has been an interaction with the student when they hit the radar. Communication between offices about that interaction may be very important to understand how a student's behavior progresses over time. In other words, BIT and conduct can assist each other greatly if communicating well. So, make a quick call to your colleague and check to see what they already know. Students in the conduct process often feel supported when BIT is involved in providing additional support.

**BVB:** The best approach here is spending some time getting to know each other outside of the immediate issue or crisis. While it is best practice for conduct to be on the BIT, having conversations outside of the BIT among counseling, conduct, ADA/504, police, and residential life will certainly help. If the only time individual members of the BIT talk with conduct is when they are in the middle of a difficult case, good communication becomes limited as there is a large amount of conflict and difficulty. Taking time to talk with each other beyond the times there is an ask or a need between conduct and BIT staff can deepen the connection or put 'money in the bank.' When we skip the relationship building and only see each other when there is a conflict, this limits the depth of the relationship and collaboration. Beyond spending time together, another way to understand each other's perspectives could be running table-top exercises where you switch roles. This would mean during a table-top exercise, the conduct officer would play the role of the counselor, police would be ADA/504, the Dean of Students/Principal would play the role of Title IX, and so on. This kind of exercise helps improve empathy and understanding between the groups, particularly if you are able to talk in the voice of the other person (impressions encouraged!)

# DISCUSSION

### What are some ways conduct can use creative, progressive sanctions to support students?

**AM:** To identify creative and progressive sanctions for your institution or school, conduct officers can work in advance of incidents with the BIT to identify resources and opportunities that may make valuable educational experiences and sanctions to reduce incidents of violence. BITs should be knowledgeable of protective factors. Protective factors include conditions and experiences that reduce the influence of motivating elements related to targeted violence. The team could consider sanctions that help to academically and socially connect individuals to healthy and positive influences, opportunities for access to non-violent outlets for involvement and problem-solving, and experiences that promote the development of empathy and compassion for others.

**MS:** Any good conduct officer will tell you that the conduct process should be focused on the growth of the student, preservation of the educational environment, and the safety of the student and the community. To achieve this, sanctions should be aimed at student development, behavior change, and safety, creating opportunities to help the student learn from their behavior and connect with resources to support them. Sanctions that create these opportunities do take more effort from the conduct offer – they require intentionality, creativity, and individualization to develop. Conduct officers creating progressive sanctions that support students must be aware of the student's needs, the resources available at the school, and appropriate interventions for the behavior. This is often where the BIT can help. The BIT can assist in identifying resources that can help the student develop conflict management skills, reduce disruptive or problematic behaviors, improve interpersonal relationships, and increase overall protective factors. Examples of these types of sanctions include, meeting with the school's case manager, mandated counseling to work on specific behavioral skills related to the incident, programs or courses for specific skill building, engagement in restorative justice to promote reflection and growth, etc.

# DISCUSSION

**CT:** I think with any sanction it is important to meet students where they are, which is why I have never been a fan of mandatory sanctions. I think we have to work with students and use what we learn in the conduct process and in the BIT team to create sanctions that make sense. I've been part of conduct systems which would have mandated a student take a basic alcohol education course even though they were already in residential treatment for alcohol issues. We have to be ready to think outside the box and work with the student to create what will truly have an impact.

> **Conduct officers can use information from the BIT and the student themselves to learn about the student's circumstances, what motivates them, and how they are most likely to learn from the situation.**

**WSL:** With the pillars of student conduct being education and accountability, it is actually their job to come up with creative sanctions that meet the student where they are developmentally. Conduct officers can use information from the BIT and the student themselves to learn about the student's circumstances, what motivates them, and how they are most likely to learn from the situation. On one hand, too often conduct turns to community service and research papers (which they forget they have to read and grade, and generally aren't that well done). Sometimes conduct sends students out to interview people without checking with or vetting the interview subject (e.g., making someone interview a victim's advocate) or sends the student to an AA meeting, where they are not going voluntarily and thus defeats the purpose. (I talked to one student who came from a sanctioned AA meeting and his takeaway was "Man, I am not that bad off! I only get hammered two or three days a week!") On the other hand, conduct often asks (on listservs) for "educational sanctions other than suspension or expulsion." I reject the premise that suspension or expulsion are not developmental.

# DISCUSSION

**WSL (cont.):** For the learner who is at (or has regressed to) the dichotomous stage of learning, the mere fact that there is a strong consequence to their action is the learning. But in order for the suspension to truly be developmental, when the student is suspended, give them things to do. I regularly added this to my suspensions: while suspended, you must either be enrolled somewhere, have a job, or volunteer to the equivalent of full-time. (e.g., full-time enrollment, full-time job, or half-time enrollment, 10 hours a week of work and 10 hours of volunteer work, etc.). I cannot expect a student to just be suspended and somehow self-actualize on their own. They need to be productive. It also gave me the opportunity to work with them while they were out. All that to say, conduct should be progressive and creative by nature, not by mandate.

**LU:** All sanctions should provide education to the student about the expectations of the community for behavior. It is important to consider students' learning styles when designing what we want them to learn in sanctions, just as it is in classrooms. Therefore, sanctions may be modified to support the student. For example, the conduct office may note that a student's ability to adequately communicate their message in writing is difficult. Therefore, a follow-up meeting with a conduct officer instead of a reflection paper may be appropriate.

**BVB:** When looking at conduct, it's helpful to understand the three primary conduct approaches. Conduct often operates in a punitive, developmental, and/or restorative justice approach. It may be that all three are involved in a case, where a student has a sanction, attends counseling or writes an essay to learn about their behavior, and has to pay back the wrong they did the college community. Other conduct cases may be fairly straight forward and focused on punitive sanctions such as fines. When developing creative sanctions, the developmental and restorative justice approaches certainly lend themselves more to creativity. Using case managers, counselors, and those on the team who can help improve the learning process of the individual can create some larger feelings of inclusion back into the community from the restorative approach.

# DISCUSSION

### Describe some common pitfalls regarding the intersection of BIT and conduct.

**AM:** The most common misstep in BIT and conduct work is deciding not to use the conduct process because of a student's involvement with BIT or because of mitigating information shared to the BIT. Don't do this! Always continue with the conduct process if you would normally do so. It is a means of communicating clear expectations to the student and documenting concerns with behaviors. Should things escalate or a pattern of behaviors continue, the student should not be surprised when the institution's response to behaviors becomes more serious as well. The second pitfall is when the intersection of BIT and conduct results in the disproportionate use of conduct processes toward certain populations based on race, disability, gender, or other student characteristics (athletes, fraternity, etc.).

**MS:** The most common pitfall regarding the intersection of BIT and conduct is deciding to forego one process in favor of the other. This can happen in either direction – a case has conduct components so the decision is made that conduct will handle the case and not BIT, or a case has mental health or emotional components so the decision is made that BIT will respond and not conduct. What we would rather see is for these two processes to happen in a coordinated, collaborative way instead of as an either/or approach.

> **The most common misstep in BIT and conduct work is deciding not to use the conduct process because of a student's involvement with BIT or because of mitigating information shared to the BIT.**

**CT:** One common pitfall that comes to mind is when team members might attempt to exert pressure on the conduct process in deference to someone's situation. This is why it is necessary to have discussions and educate everyone on the process. It is also important that these include the developmental nature of conduct, as it may seem to others that the conduct process is at odds with the caring nature of the BIT, which is not the case.

# DISCUSSION

**WSL:** A common pitfall is using your BIT as either a sanctioning body or an enforcing body. Another is asking the BIT to recommend sanctions and a third is when the BIT suggests interim restrictions (or suspension) based on its assessment. I am not even sure how the last one happens, but I see it on the listserv and hear it mentioned too often. Once that happens, your BIT is not a BIT, it is a conduct office with no due process. Finally, BITs sometimes don't communicate with other offices and try to manage everything themselves. Use surrogates. It takes a village.

**LU:** A potential pitfall is lack of communication. It is important for these areas to have a good flow of communication and avoid the mentality that the processes must be kept strictly from one another. I am not advocating that the BIT knows all conduct cases, but for those that need it, the communication lines need to be open.

**BVB:** My biggest concern is the operationalize of a list of conduct behaviors that should be handled directly by conduct and not involved with the BIT. While I understand the desire to create a tightly defined process to reduce bias, having an inflexible standard that creates an overly narrow separation of cases leads to the BIT missing things. While having the conduct officer on the BIT can help reduce this risk, there is a still a risk of not referring minor conduct issues such as substance use, academic integrity, or disruptive or argumentative behavior that could have been an important puzzle piece for the BIT.