

Helping Faculty & Staff Respond to a Spectrum of Student Behaviors

Office of the Dean of Students
and
The Counseling Center

Introductions

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Learning Objectives

- Describe different types of concerning student behaviors and optional faculty/staff responses
- Determine the scope of referrals sought by the SOC, Students of Concern, through the **FAST** system
- Provide guidance to campus about how to document behavioral incidents – **FAST/Maxient**
- Consider contacting the Counseling Center/Health Educator for presentations on student stress issues and resources
- Teach others how to have effective conversations and refer through **FAST** to Students of Concern committee

Common Mental Health Issues on Campus

- More students with previously diagnosed and treated mental and emotional problems coming to college
- More students with severe psychiatric disorders
- More students coming with psychotropic medication
- More students coming with a previous hospitalization due to mental illness
- High rates of poly-substance abuse
- 26% of all individuals in the United States age eighteen and over suffer from a diagnosable mental illness in any given year

Students Nationwide

- In the previous 12 months . . .
 - 18% felt overwhelming **anxiety**
 - 21% diagnosed or treated by a professional
 - 14% of students felt so **depressed** it was difficult to function
 - 12% diagnosed or treated by a professional
 - 6% seriously considered **suicide**
 - 5% had at least one incident of deliberate self-harm
 - 1 % attempted suicide at least once

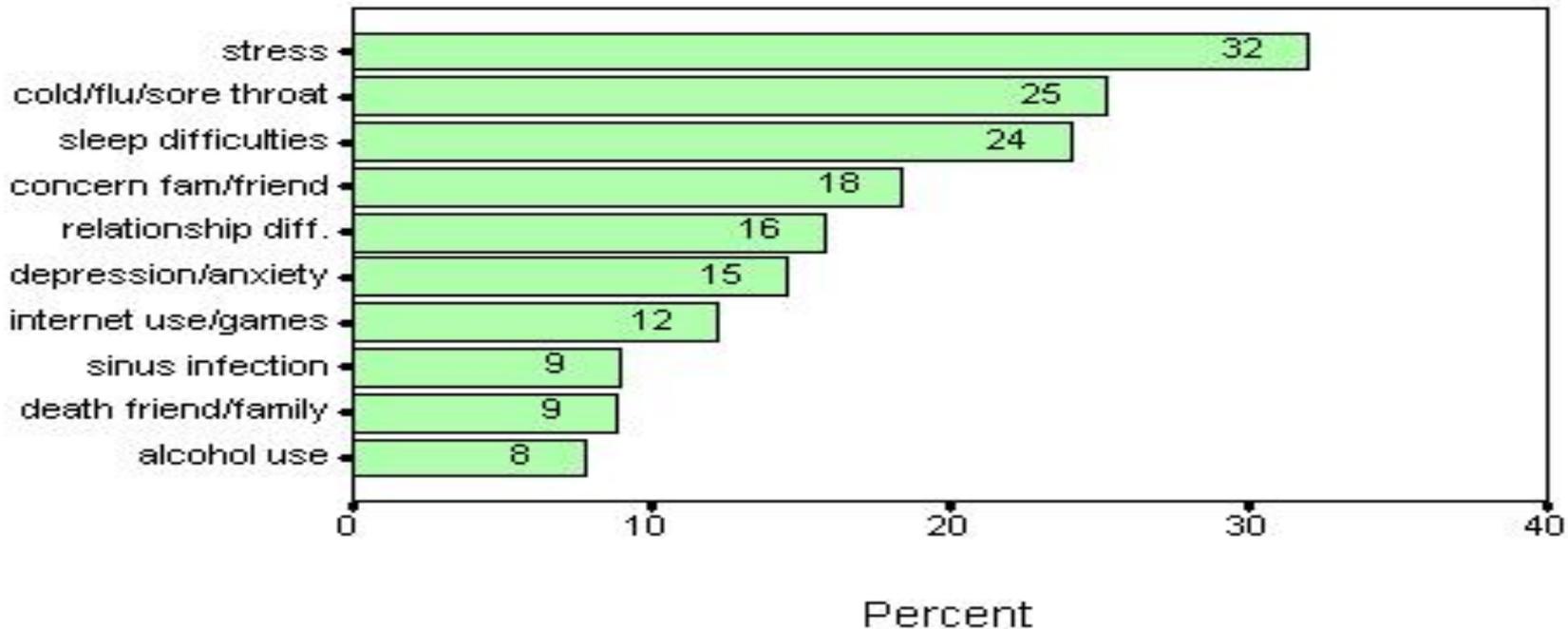
American College Health Assoc, 2012 Survey

AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION SPRING 2010 SURVEY

32 campuses 20,000 students

Top 10 Impediments to Academic Performance

Last School Year



A Real Life Example

Consider this situation from FAU:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0njL4IKI0I>

- 1) What are the key issues: behavior-safety-classroom disruption?
- 2) Why was she allowed to go on so long?
- 3) What are realistic options for the teacher?
- 4) How do you address the impact of this (or any similar) behavior on other class members, during and after the incident?

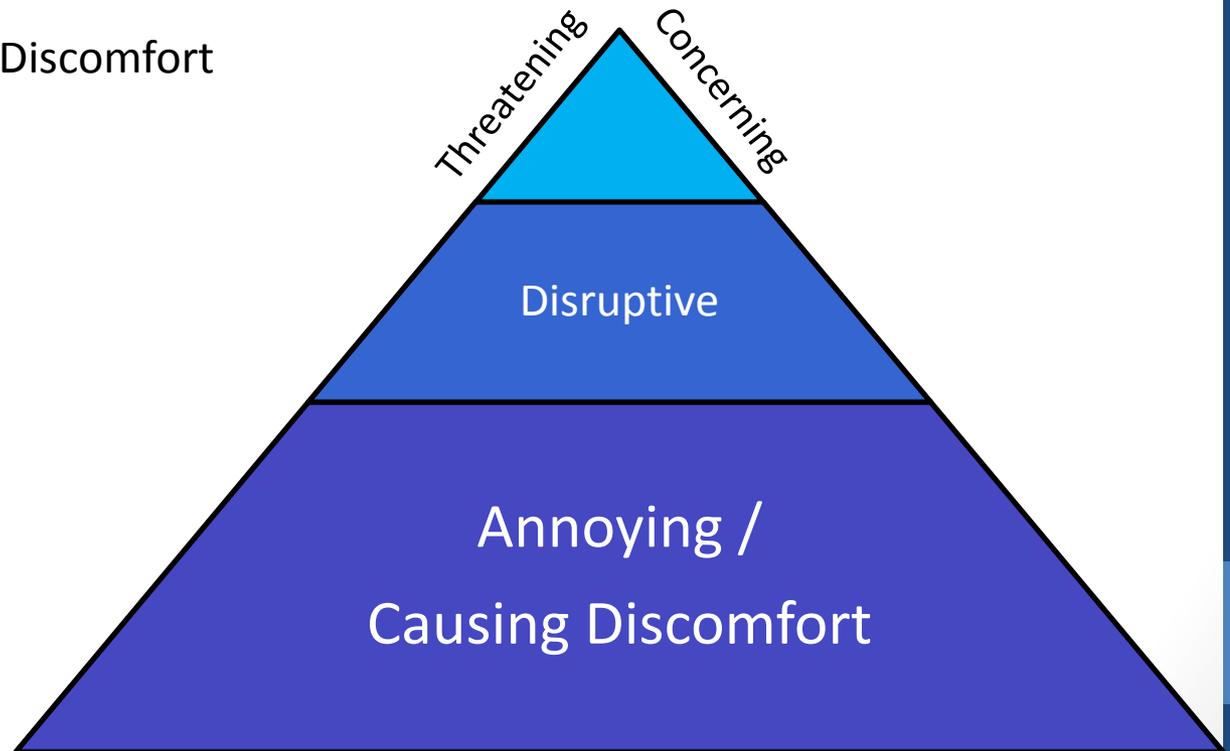
Why Do Students Act That Way?

- Poor sleep, poor nutrition
- Poor time management-creating a crisis at the last minute
- Feelings of entitlement-you owe me
- Feelings of victimization-it's the system, you, my parents, it's not my fault
- Drugs, drugs, drugs: many students are abusing multiple substances – alcohol, marijuana, pain pills, sleeping pills, heroin, stimulants (especially ADHD meds like Adderall), sometimes all at the same time
- Recent trauma – breakup, divorce or death in family, sexual assault
- Vulnerability to depression or anxiety: runs in family, prior problems before college
- All of the above

Types of Behaviors

Types of Behaviors:

- Threatening/Concerning
- Disruptive
- Annoying/Causing Discomfort



Behaviors that May Cause Feelings of Discomfort or Annoyance

- Staring, appearing bored, rolling eyes, sleeping
- Not picking up on social cues
- Interrupting you repeatedly, whether on or off subject
- Talking loudly, odd phrasing, illogical or irrelevant statements
- Asking a lot of questions, attention seeking
- Talking about things that don't relate to class
- Standing within personal space boundaries
- Wanting to speak to your supervisor/chair
- Disrespectful/rude behavior
- Criticizing your syllabus, presentation style, tests, scoring system
- Monopolizing your time
- Crying, unfiltered sharing of personal problems
- Not engaging in class
- Answering phone, talking, texting, on computer in class

Annoying Behaviors

Over the past few weeks, a student comes in a few minutes late to class a few times and makes a production out of unpacking his notebook. During class, he talks to others often about random and unrelated topics. He gets up and leaves randomly. He has begun visiting the professor during her office hours and wants to review every question on the daily quiz.

Disruptive Behaviors

A student posts sexually harassing comments on the course electronic bulletin board. A week later in class, he laughs out loud while a guest speaker is speaking, making it obvious that he is watching a video on his computer instead of listening.

When the instructor asks him to be quiet, he says, “F-you, b*tch”, puts his headphones on, and taps his foot to the music, ignoring the instructor.

Threatening & Concerning Behaviors and Indicators

- Class comments, written assignments or statements to you privately about personal problems-anxiety/depression/abuse
- Repeated requests for private meetings, long detailed emails, or any related boundary violations between teacher and student
- Acts of physical aggression and intimidation-verbal, written or non-verbal
- Threats of violence to you, a specific individual, the class, society

Threatening/Concerning Behavior, cont.

- Articulation of depression, hopelessness, or self-harm-cutting, current suicidal thoughts, past suicide attempts
- Mention of weapons or violence as a way to solve problems, even if intellectualized in a paper or written assignment, or art work
- Expressions of anger/agitation/inability to cope with stress and apparent mood liability – “what mood will they be in today?”
- Reports of abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault

Threatening Behaviors

A student waits until all others have left class. She speaks loudly saying, “I’m pissed that you gave me a D on that paper. You need to let me rewrite it, or else!” She blocks the doorway and has clenched fists.

Concerning Behavior

- A student always looks like they haven't slept well, hair is not combed or brushed, clothes are wrinkled, eyes may be blood shot, verbal comments are often tangential and off topic and other students roll their eyes or move away when the student comes in to class. The student has shared very personal information at odd times including a history of "cutting" and a past suicide attempt. You sometimes hear them commenting to other students about how they "partied hard" the night before.

Reasons to Act

- Get the behavior to stop
- Serve as educators to maintain the quality of CofC's educational environment
- Uphold the class boundaries for the benefit of ALL students in the course
- Role model life skills for students – provide feedback
- Prevent escalation or additional behaviors

Overview of Response Options

- Unhelpful Options:
 - a) Ignore them / minimize it / pretend not happening
ex. “I don’t want to judge them/play psychiatrist/they are just another unhappy student”
 - a) Play caretaker/social worker, try and “fix” their problems, become their confidant
 - b) ex. “They must be going through a rough time, I need to help them”-excuse their behavior
 - c) Take student behavior personal, ex. get angry, scared, feel intimidated, over-react to their behavior

Options cont.

- More Helpful Option:
 - a) Pay attention to your emotions, as vital information/data
 - b) Manage/address what you can using your skills
 - c) If you feel comfortable, refer student to campus resources telling student you care about them and are concerned based on your observed behavior (what you see or what they say/do)
 1. the Counseling Center – counseling, including substance abuse help
 2. Office of Victim Services – any victimization
 3. Public Safety – victim of crime
 4. Dean of Students – stalking, bullying etc.
 - d) Refer to DOS via **FAST**, can be anonymous: Describe your concern focused on student behavior, give examples, quotes

Approaching Situations: Questions to Ask

- 1) Is there immediate or imminent danger?
- 2) Is there a threat of *possible* violence?
- 3) Can I resolve this situation?
 - a) Can I help manage it until I can get support?
 - b) What follow-up steps are needed?
- 4) If I ignore this, what else might happen?
- 5) What information should I report and to whom?

Strive to resolve the situation at the lowest level possible.

Preparing for Difficult Conversations

- Remind yourself the discussion is about the behavior, you still have a relationship with the person.
- Identify and manage your triggers.
- Consider how you might be perceived.
- Determine the best/safest environment.
- Remind yourself that low-level intervention can prevent high-level issues.
- Seek to understand and address, not to judge, defend, or excuse.

Outline for Difficult Conversations

Develop your relationship with the student & promote success:

- 1) Build rapport with the student – explain why you are meeting.
- 2) Describe the behavior and its impacts
- 3) Listen to the student's perspective & response
 - Do not get defensive.
 - Ask clarifying questions.
 - Set appropriate boundaries if needed.

“Preventing” Misconduct

Developing Relationships: The Key to Effective Prevention

- Learn and use students' names
- Exhibit care to learn about students
- Set and discuss expectations AND consequences – both in writing and verbally
- Anticipate high-risk issues, due to course content and audience
- Know the boundaries of your influence
- Manage your own personal triggers
- Establish your authority and respond to behaviors using your best style

Students Aren't Mind-Readers, Tend to be Entitled, Push Limits

- How you feel about cell phone use in class?
- When to take a break?
- When they can collaborate with others?
- If participation affects the course grade?
- How to best communicate with you?
- Whether to raise hands or just talk out loud?
- Can students eat in class?
- Cell phones on silent?
- Laptop use?
- Guidelines for online communications?

Accountability Measures

- Communicated expectations are the key to helping students understand what constitutes disruption and how to address it:
 - **Student Code of Conduct**
 - Course syllabi and departmental procedures
 - **Campus policies and procedures**
 - Interim action when situation warrants
 - **Laws and police responses**

The greatest impact usually comes from your willingness to listen and understand their concerns and how you can or cannot help them with their goal.

“In the Moment” Responses

Initial Management

- Resolve any immediate concerns:
 - Protect yourself and others.
 - Relocate to appropriate space
 - Get the individual to a place of support
 - Set immediate goals (clear the room if not safe to relocate with student)
 - Call Public Safety if warranted (threats of harm to self/you/others)
- Be cautious of your body language and limitations – consider what you can resolve

Documentation

Following any incident:

- **Document** the situation. Possible formats:
 - Personal notes (keep any communications from the student!)
 - Email to student
 - Email to chair/Dean, and/or Dean of Students-**FAST Report**
- Report it formally to Supervisor/Chair/Dean, or any other appropriate source including Students of Concern via FAST
- **Make a FAST report when**
 - you believe the student needs additional help or resources beyond what you can give, or
 - when you believe the behavior will continue or get worse

Documentation & Reporting

- Objective, detailed, fact/student behavior-based
- Write as if the student will read it
- Likely subject to FERPA – student/parent/lawyer will read it

Important Questions:

- What did you see?
- What did you hear? Use quotes when possible?
- What are your key concerns for this student?
- Do you feel the student's behavior is a disruption to the class?

Reporting Your Concern **FAST**



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COLLEGE HOME / THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

The Office of the Dean of Students



Promoting care, civility, and accountability

Greetings from the Office of the Dean of Students

Welcome to the College of Charleston! Whether you're a newcomer or a returning student, we are thrilled to have you as a member of the College's community. The Office of the Dean of Students serves as a unit ready to assist throughout your collegiate exploration.

We are committed to providing a community that promotes integrity, learning, positive growth and development. The challenge belongs to each of us to make the C of C experience one that all students will treasure for a lifetime. Please join us in building a respectful and responsible community.

Let us know if we can be of assistance to you as you enjoy the many offerings available through the College and the City of Charleston.

Go Cougars!

[SOCIAL MEDIA](#)

[QUICK LINKS](#)

Report a Concern Using **FAST**

Wed Aug 15, 2018 MyCharleston Library Directory Site Index Emergency Info Search CoFC Site



ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID ABOUT ACADEMICS CAMPUS LIFE ATHLETICS ALUMNI

THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS COLLEGE HOME / THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS / STUDENTS OF CONCERN

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Contact Us

Students of Concern



You May Choose to Remain Anonymous

SOC Contact Number: 843.953.5522 (Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5pm)
Report Emergencies and after hours to Public Safety: 843.953.5611
Report a student concern online

APPLY TO THE COLLEGE

PLAN A VISIT

Information, Guidelines, and Frequently Asked Questions

The Student of Concern ("SOC") Committee is a campus resource established to help maintain a safe college environment by receiving, collecting, considering, and—when deemed appropriate—acting upon information regarding behavior of concern exhibited by a student or group of students.

FAST Help & Guidelines, a brief tutorial on using FAST is available at:

<http://capp.cofc.edu/fast/fast-tutorial.php>

FAST Report Example Write-up

- A student recently approached me after class and stated she has a history of mental health counseling and has tried to commit suicide before, two years ago I think. She has missed several classes (4) and looks like she is not getting any sleep, does not really participate in class and is behind on several assignments. She revealed in a written assignment that she thinks she may have an eating disorder. I am concerned for her mental health, not to mention physical, and I feel as though the situation has escalated to a point where I, not being a professional, can no longer handle it. Please keep this as confidential as possible -- but please, PLEASE help her. Her name is XXXXX XXXXXXXXXX.

Summary:

When to Refer/Report

	PS/911/x5611	Student Conduct	FAST/SOC
WHAT	Emergency situations, immediate safety concerns, or violations of the law	Significant disruption or behavior that appears to have violated the Student Code of Conduct	Concern for <i>potential</i> threat of violence or significant concerns that aren't manageable
WHO	Any person – student, staff, faculty, visitor, parent, former student, unknown, etc	Students only	Any person – student, staff, faculty, visitor, parent, former student, unknown, etc
WHEN	Immediately – especially when safety is in question.	Timely manner – preferably the day of the incident	Timely manner – preferably the day of the incident
WHY	Immediate threats, or for support while you intervene/confront.	Formal action by the College is warranted	You want someone to be aware of the situation, assess, and to act if warranted
ALSO	Orders of protection, filing a report, escort service.	Academic dishonesty	FYI, to report how you addressed a situation, case monitoring.
HOW	Call 911 or x5611	Call x 5522 for Dean of Students or email cabotj@cofc.edu	Online reporting form: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?CollegeofCharleston&layout_id=10

NOTE: *If you are not sure, call to consult!*

Outline for Difficult Conversations

- Discuss what appropriate behavior looks like and provide examples
- Discuss resources to promote success:
 - Offer resolution options and suggestions
 - Offer ways that you can assist with resolution
 - Offer resources to assist the student

Example: Setting Boundaries

Ex. Problem: student sends long, personal emails and does not stop when asked. They respond, “You are the only one who truly understands me...” or “You have always been so patient and kind...” or “I have shared so much with you already I just really couldn’t start over with someone else...”

I am asking that you not contact me anymore, either in person or in writing. I have tried to be clear about this limit, while still communicating my professional concern for you as a (current/former) student, but it has clearly been difficult for you to honor this request. I feel strongly that it is not in your best interest to continue to contact me, and it is clearly distressing for you.

I remain concerned for your well-being and encourage you to use the counseling resources that you have at your disposal. I understand that this may be difficult for you to hear. However, I must be firm with this limit and ask that you respect it. The number to the Counseling Center is 953-5640. They can also help you with a referral off campus if that would be better for you.

I wish you nothing but the best and hope that you will continue to reach out to the appropriate people who are here to support you.

FAQ:

Cater to your audience

Q: What about Student Conduct? I don't want to get them in trouble

- Student Conduct serves to:
 - Promote learning, student success, and campus standards
 - Facilitate a fair resolution process when a complaint about student behavior is received – i.e., provide the student with the chance to respond to the information about their behavior.
 - Provide consultations to faculty, staff, and students about the conduct process
 - Conduct investigations of sexual misconduct/harassment
 - Maintain records of Honor Code violations

Student Conduct, cont.

- Student Conduct does NOT:
 - Make assessments about a student's character
 - Serve as a lawyer or prosecutor
 - Kick students out of school without a chance to respond to the information presented
 - Use the Student Code of Conduct for employees, parents, or community members.
- Student Conduct will refer to the Counseling Center or the appropriate helping agency as needed.

Q: What about FERPA & privacy?

FERPA is the law that governs student records. You should never feel concerned about sharing information about a possible threat or concern with other *campus* officials that have a legitimate educational interest in the information.

Once you share information and it becomes part of an official record, you could be violating the student's privacy rights if you share it outside of a legitimate educational interest.

Q: What about a student with a disability?

- A disability is not a reason to hold someone to a different standard.
 - Not a “free pass” to violate the rules
 - Not a reason to refer a student to HEAT or Student Conduct
- If a student discloses a disability, inform him/her that ADS is a resource that can assist students with disabilities. You can also contact ADS if you have questions. You can and should ask for an ADS accommodation letter if the student requests accommodations.
- Talk about the behavior. Ask:
 - Is/was the behavior a problem in the past or elsewhere?
 - Are you connected to any campus resources – is there anyone that can assist you with strategies to change your behavior?
- Strategize about ways to align behavior with expectations

Q: Can I remove a student from class?

- Strive to manage the behavior.
- If it can't be managed in the moment, try taking a break and speaking 1 on 1.
- Check with your department about policies:
 - If the student is too disruptive or does not respond to your directions, you may ask him/her to leave for a specified time (usually one class period) and work to change behavior through the campus conduct process.
 - If there is violence or threat involved, the police may choose to remove the person.

Q: How do I balance students' rights and the college standards?

- Set & communicate what is expected of students, using your course syllabus and other department publications to communicate with students
- Inform students of complaint procedures/options
- Consistently uphold appropriate academic standards
- Utilize the campus conduct process when appropriate
- Document student behaviors, your conversations and interventions, and the student's response

More information is available at:

<http://deanofstudents.cofc.edu/policies-and-procedures/classroom-disruption.php>

Summary

- Set and articulate expectations for behavior in class.
- Apply your expectations consistently, taking into consideration appropriate accommodations (but not student excuses).
- Address concerns when they first come up. Don't wait for things to explode.
- Don't take their behavior (verbal or nonverbal) personally
- Respond to behaviors rather than judge a person.
- Report information / document appropriately.
- Use campus resources at any stage – including knowing when to refer on (ex. the Counseling Center).
- Remember the power of a conversation! You are learning about each other, a teacher-student “relationship”

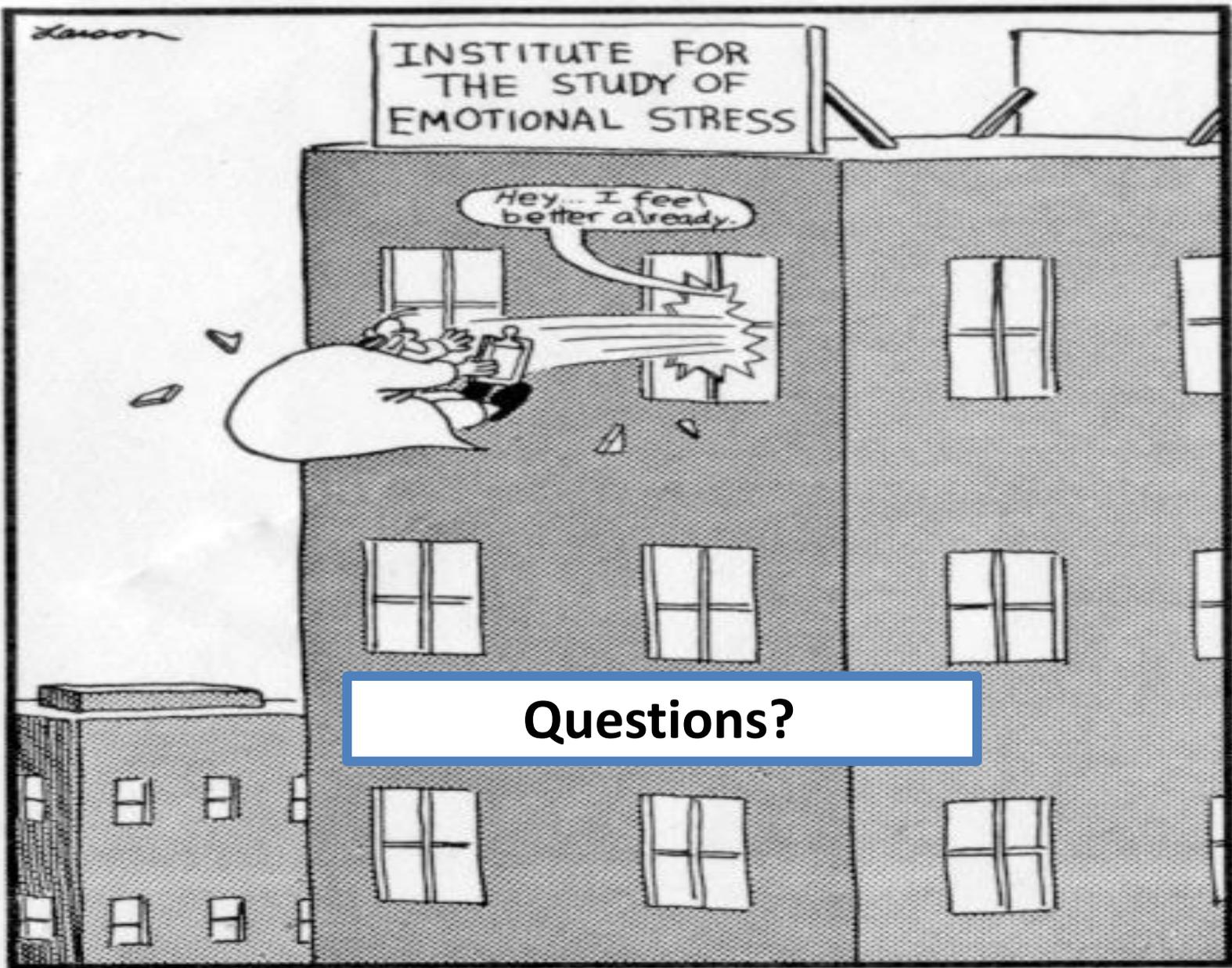
Students May:

- Be odd
- Be “creepy”
- Have a psychological condition
- Have a disability (and disclose/not disclose)
- Have different opinions than you
- Challenge your opinion or information
- Have a criminal history
- Be entitled or self-centered
- Have different cultural expectations

Students May Not:

There are consequences when students:

- Significantly disrupt the educational environment so that other students can't learn
- Engage in or threaten violence towards others
- Steal, cheat, harass, etc
- Fail to comply with directions of college officials
- Violate the standards of the college



Questions?