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Collaborative Approaches to Supporting Students with Ongoing Medical and Behavioral Health Concerns

Presenters

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Strategic Risk
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Content Advisory

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This presentation may address topics related to behavioral intervention, violence prevention, discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, or other forms of interpersonal harm. Examples, case studies, and discussion may include descriptions of traumatic events, threatening behavior, or other sensitive subject matter.

We recognize that participants bring a wide range of professional and personal experiences to this work. Please engage in the way that best supports your learning and well-being. You are welcome to step out, take a break, or rejoin the session at any time if needed.

Our goal is to examine these topics thoughtfully and respectfully to strengthen prevention, response, and support practices across our educational communities.

Outline

1. Case Studies
2. Overlap of BIT, Student Conduct, Title IX, and Disability Support
3. Balancing Collaboration and Communication

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Case Studies

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Marcus

- Marcus is a second-year student at your institution. He is academically talented and has performed particularly well in courses related to technology and data science.
- Marcus hopes to pursue a career in cybersecurity and has talked about eventually working in digital accessibility.
- He has disclosed a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder and is registered with the institution’s accessibility/disability services office.
- Marcus has also shared that he works with a therapist outside of the institution on strategies related to emotional regulation and managing frustration.

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Marcus (Cont.)

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- Marcus generally does well when expectations and routines are clear. However, unexpected changes, interpersonal conflict, or situations in which he feels misunderstood can sometimes result in a noticeable escalation in his behavior.
- When overwhelmed or frustrated, Marcus may begin pacing rapidly, rocking or making repetitive hand movements, speaking loudly, or repeating the same statement several times.
- On a few occasions, he has abruptly left a classroom or meeting and continued walking through the building or outside until he felt able to regulate.

Marcus-The Ask

- Faculty and staff who have witnessed these behaviors have described them as disruptive and, at times, concerning because they are unsure how Marcus will respond when he becomes increasingly agitated. Marcus has not made threats toward others or engaged in physically aggressive behavior.
- Some of Marcus's instructors have asked if Marcus could be removed from their classroom due to their concerns about his behavior and its impact on others.

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Marcus Discussion

- What is the best way to address this situation?
- What is the role of your BIT?
- What is the role of Disability/Accessibility Services?
- What is the role of Student Conduct?
- Who leads?

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Maya

- Maya is a motivated and academically capable college student who is actively involved in campus life. Maya was diagnosed with POTS during adolescence and has experienced fainting episodes periodically since that time.
- Although medication has helped manage the condition, fainting has recently become more frequent due to increased academic stress, lack of sleep, and inconsistent medication timing.
- Maya is registered with the university's Disability Support Services (DSS) office and receives accommodations such as extended testing time, note-taking support, and flexibility with attendance policies.

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Maya (Cont.)

- During the semester, Maya began experiencing POTS-related episodes more frequently during lectures and classroom discussions. Some episodes lasted only a few seconds and caused temporary confusion, while more severe episodes required medical attention from campus emergency responders.
- These incidents began affecting:
  - Classroom instruction and participation
  - Peer concentration and emotional comfort
  - Maya's academic performance
  - Faculty preparedness and classroom management

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Maya – The Impact

- Several classmates and some professors expressed concern and uncertainty about how to respond during POTS-related episodes. Some students became distracted or anxious after witnessing fainting in class, especially during longer episodes that interrupted lectures.
- Professors also reported difficulty balancing the continuation of instruction with ensuring Maya's safety and maintaining a calm learning environment.

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Maya Discussion

- What is the best way to address this situation?
- What is the role of your BIT?
- What is the role of Disability Support Services?
- What is the role of Student Conduct?
- Who leads?

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Riley

- Riley is a third-year student who has disclosed diagnoses of Borderline Personality Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Riley is registered with the institution's accessibility/disability services office and receives academic accommodations.
- Riley has generally been academically successful but has described periods when managing stress, relationships, and emotional regulation becomes more difficult.
- During the spring semester, another student filed a Title IX complaint involving Riley. The two students had been in a dating relationship for several months before the other student ended the relationship.

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Riley (Cont.)

- The complainant alleged that following the breakup, Riley had difficulty accepting requests to end communication and continued attempting to re-establish contact.
- The complainant reported:
  - Frequent texts, direct messages, and emails, including multiple messages sent within short periods of time
  - Attempts to contact the complainant through different platforms after being asked to stop communicating
  - Confronting the complainant in a campus common area and becoming visibly upset when the complainant declined to talk
  - Social media posts that did not name the complainant but contained references the complainant believed were directed toward them and perceived as intimidating

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Riley-The Ask

- During the Title IX process, Riley disclosed the diagnoses and explained that the breakup occurred during a period when Riley was experiencing significant emotional distress and difficulty managing symptoms.
- Riley expressed concern that aspects of their behavior were being interpreted without consideration of their disability and requested modifications to the investigation and interview process.

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Riley Discussion

- What is the best way to address this situation?
- What is the role of your BIT?
- What is the role of Disability/Accessibility Services?
- What is the role of Student Conduct?
- What is the role of the Title IX Office?
- Who leads?

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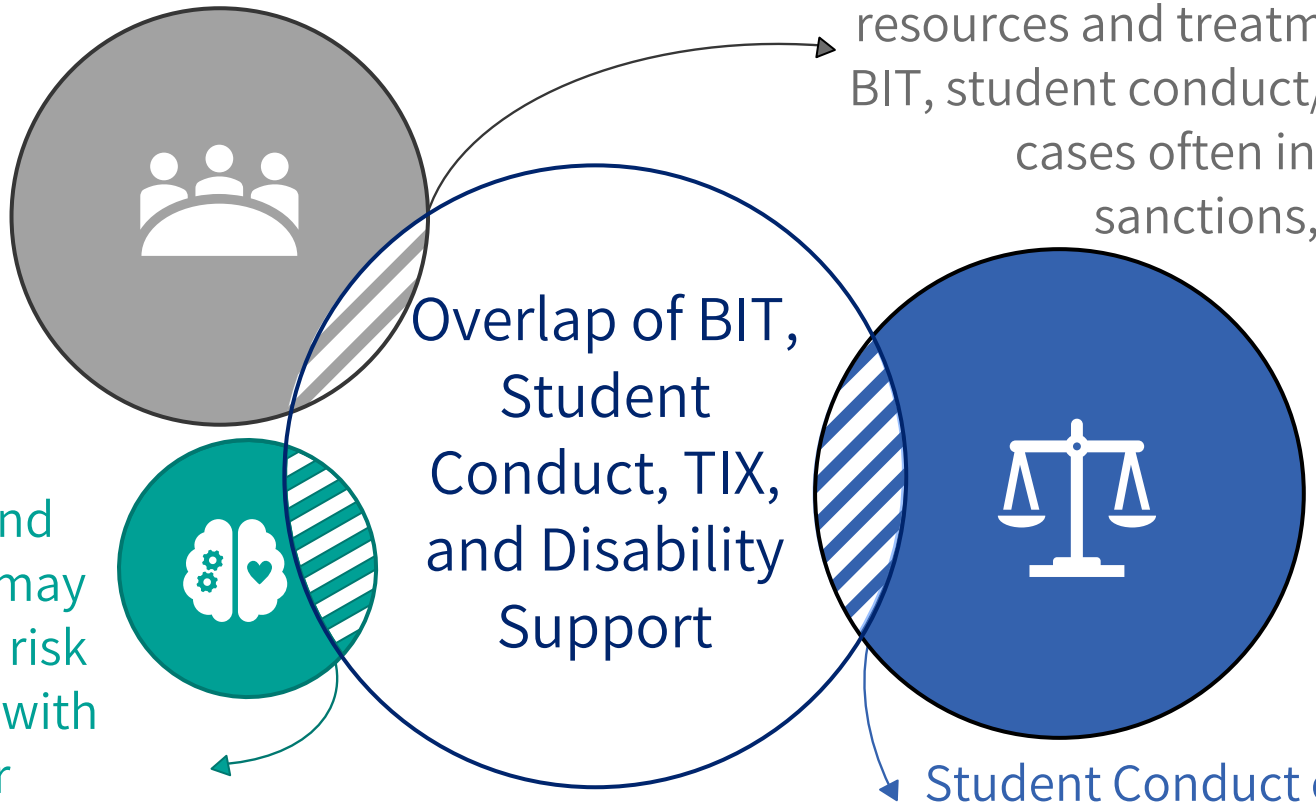
Coordinating Overlapping Processes

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Overlap of BIT, Student Conduct, TIX, and Disability Support

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BITs provide non-clinical support and refer to resources and treatment as appropriate. While, BIT, student conduct/TIX, and disability-related cases often intersect, BIT does not issue sanctions, ongoing requirements, or accommodations.



Student Conduct, TIX, and Disability Support staff may refer students to BIT for risk assessment, assistance with supportive measures, or multidisciplinary support.

Student Conduct or TIX may require/sanction students to meet with support staff or attend educational programs.

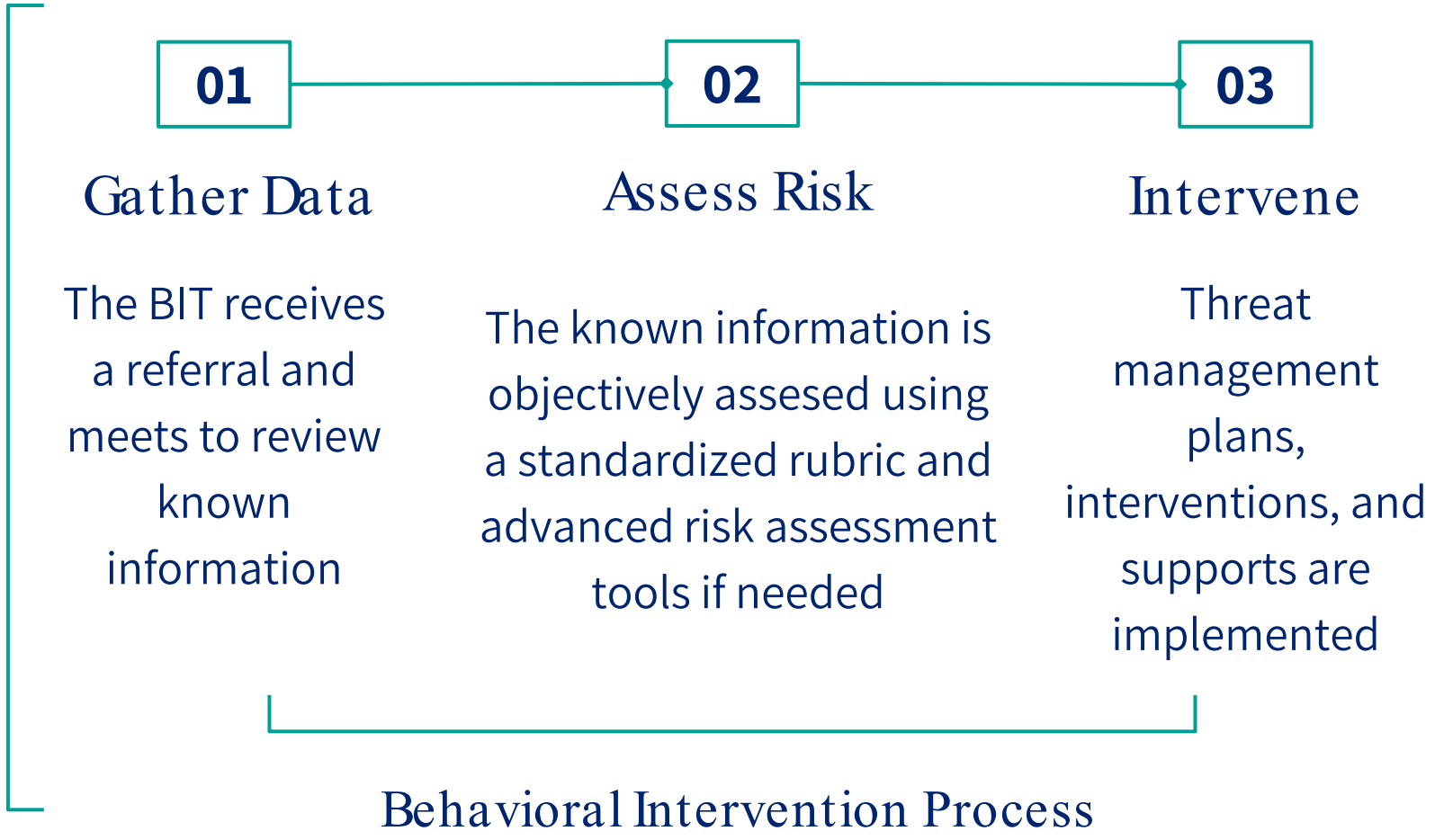
The BIT Process

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School-Wide Education

Schools can only respond to the concerns they know about.

Increased support and violence prevention starts with school-wide efforts to train faculty, staff, students, and parents to identify and refer.



Applying the Code of Conduct/ Title IX Process

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- Address the behavior, regardless of disability status/mental health diagnosis (e.g., classroom disruption, threatening behaviors, failure to comply)
- If there is a potential violation of the code of conduct/TIX, you can initiate the appropriate process
  - Does the behavior/reported violation warrant interim action?
    - Yes: Initiate appropriate interim action
    - No: Student participates in activities/benefits (e.g., housing, class) normally while the student conduct process proceeds

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Due Process Requirements

Dixon v. Alabama

- Six Black students were expelled from Alabama State College for unspecified reasons
  - Seemingly because they participated in a sit-in
  - Students argued that their due process rights were violated
- Fifth Circuit Court ruled in favor of the students
  - All tax-supported institutions are required to provide due process:
    - Notice
    - Hearing
- Has been referred to as “the leading case on due process for students in public higher education”

Source: Smith, Wilson; Bender, Thomas (2008), American Higher Education Transformed, 1940–2005, JHU Press, p. 521, ISBN 978-0-8018-8671-3

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Protections for Students with Disabilities

- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act -** Students cannot be denied or excluded from an opportunity on the basis of their disability
- **Americans with Disabilities Act -** Schools and employers must provide an equal opportunity for success and access by providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities
- These laws may affect how an institution acts to suspend, place on leave, or withdraw a student who has a disability
  - Protection under the law applies to those who have a documented disability, those with a history of disability, and those regarded as having a disability
- Institutions may not discipline on the basis of the disability itself, but may address the conduct/behavior exhibited with the student conduct process

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Summary of the Overlap

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Disability Support for Accommodations

- Assist in accessing accommodations to mitigate risk or change behavior
- Examples:
  - Housing change
  - Schedule adjustment or other academic support
  - Classroom interventions by faculty

Mandated Assessment

- Requirement to attend risk assessment to help staff understand risk and protective factors
- Psychological Assessment vs. risk assessment
- Student permitted to remain on campus/in classes during assessment process (**exception:** conduct warranting interim actions/ restrictions)

Case Management and BIT Support

- Engagement with student at the earliest signs of distress
- Helps to support student
- Assistance with accessing resources, navigating academics, etc.
- Involve other support networks such as parents/guardians

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Balancing Collaboration and Communication

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Information Sharing: BIT and Student Conduct



BIT and Student Conduct

- Student Conduct history of students referred to the BIT
- Referrals to BIT for students interacting with the Student Conduct office who have engaged in/threatened violence, pose a risk to self/others, are experiencing distress, or need additional support
- Updates from Student Conduct on shared cases regarding pending hearings, outcomes, sanctions, etc.
- Updates from BIT on shared cases regarding changes in risk rating, interventions, additional referrals, etc.
- Referrals to Student Conduct when BIT referrals indicate egregious conduct violations, disruption to others, etc. and/or when the student does not comply with a mandated assessment

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Information Sharing: BIT and Disability Support Services

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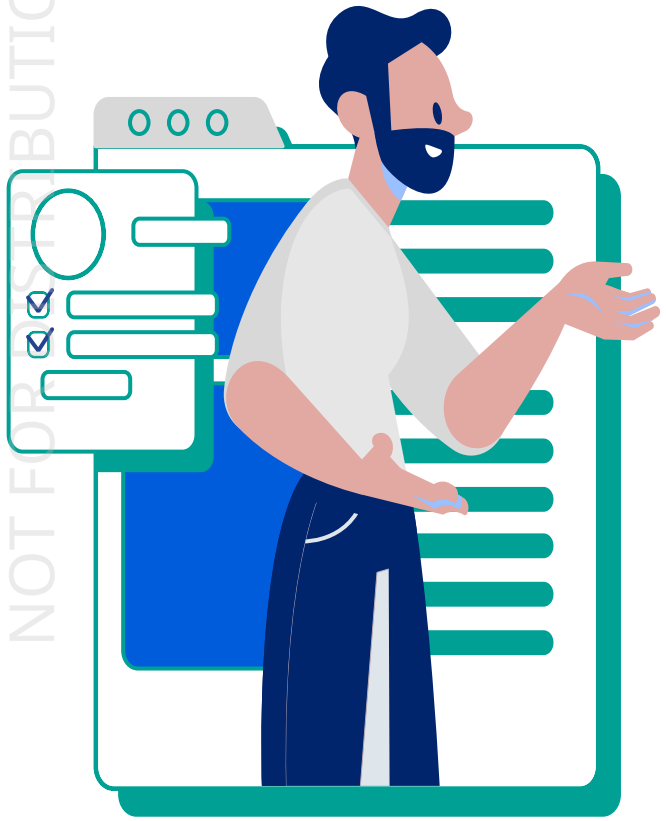
BIT and Disability Support Services
Status or updates related to registration with Disability Support Services*
Accommodations offered (e.g., academic, residential, other) and usage*
Consultation related to accommodations the BIT may need to incorporate/provide/support
Guidance related to behaviors that may be consistent with a known disability diagnosis
Updates from BIT on shared cases regarding changes in risk rating, interventions, additional referrals, etc.



*DSS staff should be judicious in determining what information someone has an educational need to know

Information Sharing: BIT and Title IX

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BIT and Title IX

Overview of involvement in TIX process. Updates from TIX on shared cases regarding pending hearings, outcomes, sanctions, etc.
Referrals to BIT for students interacting with the TIX office who have engaged in/threatened violence, pose a risk to self/others, are experiencing distress, or need additional support
Assistance from BIT re: supportive measures
Referrals to TIX when BIT referrals indicate TIX related concerns
Updates from BIT on shared cases regarding changes in risk rating, interventions, additional referrals, etc.

Summary

	BITs	Student Conduct/ Title IX	Disability Services/ADA
Primary Goal	Prevention, support, and risk management	Policy enforcement	Equitable access to the education environment
Focus	Behavioral concerns, emotional distress, & safety	Policy violations	Individuals with disabilities
Approach	Collaborative, proactive	Due process/ fundamentally fair process	Receive documentation, coordinate accommodations
Scope	Broad risk assessment	The code of conduct/TIX Regulations and policy	Implementing accommodations
Involvement	Multidisciplinary team	Student conduct officers, investigators, TIXC	Disability support services/ADA coordinator

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Questions?

Stay Connected to ATIXA's Community

- Build skills with **20-Minutes-to…Trained** and get practical guidance at **Time with IX**
- Schedule a **Training and Certification course** and explore **Thought Leadership** from experts
- Expand your network with **Mentor Match** and **Community Connections**
- Stay informed with **ATIXA's "More Likely Than Not" Podcast**
- Refer Members. Earn **Rewards**.
- **K-12:**
  - Exchange ideas through **K-12 CommunityServ** and streamline your work: **TIXKit for K-12**
  - Access a complimentary **K-12 Community Membership**
- **Higher Education:**
  - Exchange ideas through the **ATIXA Listserv** and streamline your work: **TIXKit**

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Stay Connected to NABITA's Community

- Build skills with **20-Minutes-to…Trained** and get practical guidance at **Talking BITs**
- Schedule a **Training and Certification course** and explore **Thought Leadership** from experts
- Expand your network with **Mentor Match** and **Community Connections**
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- **K-12:**
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  - Streamline your work with **BTAMKit** templates
- **Higher Education:**
  - Exchange ideas through the **NABITA Listserv**
  - Streamline your work with **BITKit** templates

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