CARE Team

What is CARE Team?

The Campus Assessment, Response and Evaluation Team, known as the CARE Team, are a group of staff members from various departments who meet regularly to assist students experiencing difficulty and to help ensure the safety of our campus.

We recognize that college is an exciting time, but it can also be both personally and academically challenging. These challenges are often compounded when students are managing additional issues related to their health, wellbeing or family lives.

What Does the CARE Team Do?

CARE Team members meet on a regular basis to do the following:

- Review critical campus incidents
- Develop intervention strategies to assist students in crisis
- Develop protocols and proactive ways to address recurring student issues
- Make recommendations to campus staff or faculty as appropriate
- The group places a high priority on balancing individuals’ right to privacy with the university's duty to respond to people experiencing difficulty or expressing at-risk behavior
- The CARE Team's primary objective is to connect students with the support and resources they need to be healthy and productive members of our campus community.
- Though our primary focus is assisting students, we do provide assistance for faculty and staff members when needed.

Goals of the AAMU CARE Team:

- Goal 1: – Develop and Implement effective policies and procedures that set out team’s duties and responsibilities
- Goal 2: – Develop sound record keeping procedures utilizing a flexible database system
- Goal 3: – Training for all team members and campus community
- Goal 4: – Marketing plan of services and resources
- Goal 5: – Develop a reporting method community wide – web base
- Goal 6: – Training on Basic Intervention with students
Mission
It is the mission and goal of the AAMU CARE Team is to provide and maintain a safe and secure educational and work environment for all students, employees and visitors at AAMU. In order to facilitate this mission and goal, the AAMU has created a Campus Assessment, Response and Evaluation (“CARE”) Team that is charged with creating processes that will promote and encourage communication, collaboration and coordination of concerns regarding student behavior, providing guidance and recommendations to campus administrators in regard to matters that have the potential to disrupt the safe and secure educational and work environment on campus, and serving as a point of contact and review of reported concerns. The CARE Team’s primary goal is to review, analyze and determine whether particular student behaviors or actions on campus create a risk or threat of harm to the campus community. The CARE Team shall also be responsible for serving as a point of contact for the campus community to report concerns related to threatening or harmful behavior of students on campus for the safety and security of all campus community members.

Meetings
The CARE Team shall meet regularly to review non-emergency referrals or reports of concerning student behavior. In addition, the CARE Team may discuss topics related to student behavior and intervention, trends in student behavior, best practices in intervention and available resources. Additional meetings may be held, when necessary, to assess, intervene and monitor student concerns brought to the attention of the CARE Team.

Behaviors of Concern
The entire campus community plays a significant role in promoting a safe and secure educational environment at AAMU. Individuals are strongly encouraged to report to and/or notify the CARE Team of concerns regarding the behavior or conduct of members of the campus community, including but not limited to students, faculty, staff and/or visitors. Concerning behaviors may include but are not limited to questionable, suspicious, threatening or inappropriate conduct that is displayed through a person’s appearance, expression, communication, action or other manner. Examples of concerning behaviors include, but not limited to:

- Behaviors which regularly interfere with classroom environment or management
- Notable change in academic performance – poor or inconsistent preparation
- Notable change in behavior or appearance
- Impairment of thoughts – verbally or in writing
- Overly aggressive behavior toward others; inability to set limits or re-direct focus
- Poor decision-making and coping skills
- Inappropriate, unusual or agitated behavior
- Excessive frustration
- Overreacting to circumstances
- Lack of resiliency
- Writings and comments endorsing violence; unusual interest in violence
- Indirect or direct threats in writings or verbalizations
- Refusal to communicate
- Known to abuse alcohol or to use illicit drugs
- Engaging in property damage
- Lack of empathy and concern for others; inability to care
- Anger management problems
- Threats to others
- Prior suicide attempts and self-infliction of injuries
- Auditory, command or visual hallucinations
- Significant decrease in personal hygiene and care to self
- Appearance of being overly nervous, tense or tearful
- Expression of suicidal thoughts of feelings of hopelessness

**CARE TEAM INITIAL REVIEW (TRIAGE)**

When a referral is made to a member of the CARE Team, the CARE Team member shall initiate a prompt review of the information and determine whether there is an imminent or potential threat of harm or violence to the subject of the referral or others and whether an immediate response or action is necessary. The following issues should be considered, in addition to any other pertinent information, during the initial review:

- Whether the person has stated or indicated through his/her actions thoughts or plans of harm or violence.
- Whether the person has stated or indicated through his/her actions thoughts or plans of suicide or made a suicide attempt.
- Whether the person has exhibited other behaviors or actions that cause concern for his/her and the well-being of others.
- Whether the person has access to or the ability to gain access to a weapon.
- Whether the person’s statements, actions or behavior have been disruptive to the academic or work environment.
- Whether any of the above is imminent or is reasonably likely to occur within a very short time and without any notice.
- Upon the review, if the CARE Team member determines that immediate action or response is required, then the matter should be handled pursuant to the emergency response provisions herein. If the CARE Team member determines that no immediate response or action is required because the person does not pose an imminent threat of harm or violence to him or herself or others, or the situation does not constitute an emergency, the CARE Team member will add the person’s name to the weekly agenda as soon as possible and the case will be reviewed at the next regularly scheduled CARE Team meeting.
Emergency Situations
Upon conducting the initial review under these provisions, if a person appears to pose an imminent threat of harm or violence to him or herself or others and/or creates a situation that constitutes an emergency, the CARE Team member should contact University Police or dial 911 for assistance. If the student is willing and capable, the CARE Team member and/or University Police may escort the student to the Health and Counseling Services (HCS) for an emergency Risk Factor Assessment to determine the critical level of response. The CARE Team member will then contact AVP for Student Affairs to report the concern. A staff member from the AVP for Student Affairs will inform the remaining CARE Team members of the situation as soon as practicably possible. If warranted, the responding CARE Team member will coordinate the immediate assembly of the CARE Team to conduct an immediate threat assessment.

Non-Emergency Situations
If the person does not pose an imminent threat or the situation does not constitute an emergency, the CARE Team member will add the person’s name to the weekly agenda as soon as possible and the case will be reviewed at the next regularly scheduled weekly meeting.

CASE REVIEW/RISK AND THREAT ASSESSMENT:

Collection of Information
Upon the receipt of a referral, CARE Team members will collect and compile additional information in regard to the subject of the referral for the purpose of obtaining a thorough understanding of the situation at hand. CARE Team members shall make every effort to promptly distribute this information to other members and the Case Team, especially in emergency situations. Many sources of information may be used or reviewed depending on the person or specific incident referred to the CARE Team. Sources of information may include, but are not limited to the following: incident reports, police reports, conduct records, medical and mental health insight, previous CARE Team records, faculty interviews with the student, his or her family members or friends, faculty, staff or students, social media data, online resources or other contact and/or communication with the student’s family or friends.

Case Review and Discussion
CARE Team members will submit names to be added to the agenda two hours before the weekly care team meeting. All CARE Team members will review the agenda prior to the meeting to determine whether the names listed on the agenda are person who have had contact with their respective offices or have used their services. If a member of the CARE Team has relevant documentation such information should be forward to the CARE Team Chair prior to the meeting if possible.

Risk Assessment
Upon consideration and review of all relevant information, the CARE Team will use the following priority levels to determine the level of risk that each case, incident or person poses to him or herself or the campus community:

- **Priority 1 (Extreme Risk):** Appears to pose an *imminent threat* to self or others, a threat is made and is specific or direct
• **Priority 2 (High Risk):** Appears to pose a *non-imminent threat* to self or others, but a threat is made or present; however, vague and indirect.

• **Priority 3 (Moderate Risk):** Does not appear to pose a threat to self or others at this time, but *exhibits behaviors that are concerning* or likely to be disruptive to the community.

• **Priority 4 (Low Risk):** Does not appear to pose a threat to self or others at this time, and *does not exhibit behaviors that are concerning* or likely to be disruptive to the community.

• **Priority 5 (No Identified Risk):** Does *not appear to pose a threat* to self or others at this time, and no intervention or monitoring is necessary.

Each case will be assigned a level of risk at which the CARE Team considered the individual’s behavior or actions along with the factors and/or basis used to reaching this determination. The level of risk determined by the CARE Team shall not be considered a professional, medical or clinical evaluation or diagnosis of a person’s real or perceived ability or capacity to commit harm or violence to him or herself or others. It is simply used as a tool to determine the CARE Team’s necessary, appropriate and immediate course of action as an educational institution in response to a person’s behavior or action to maintain and promote the safety and security of the educational and work environment on campus. Upon completion of the process the CARE Team will forward recommendations to the appropriate university official.

To contact the CARE Team please email CARETeam@aamu.edu or call AAMU Public Safety any time at 256-372-5555.

CARE Team Members:

AVP for Student Affairs – Dr. Terrence L. Frazier - Chair
Academic Affairs – Dr. Constance Adams
Director of Counseling & Health Services – Dr. Jennifer Parker Ayers
Director of Resident Life – Ms. Rakesha Hines
Director of University Public Safety – Chief Monica Ray
Director of Disability services - Mrs. Sonoyia Williams