

5.32 Safe Zone Program

In an effort to create a safe and healthy learning and working environment, South Puget Sound Community College offers a formal Safe Zone program. Safe Zone programs are designed to provide a safe space or a place of refuge, where members of the campus community can turn when they:

- ⌘ **feel that their safety is immediately threatened, and/or**
- ⌘ **have been on the receiving end of bigotry of any kind.**

The goal of the Safe Zone Program is to ensure that members of the college community find a sanctuary on every floor of every building on campus if they feel under siege, physically threatened, or even just in need of a kind word. A Safe Zone is a friendly and secure area that offers immediate safety and security personnel, if necessary, to provide a sanctuary and safe passage through the campus. Becoming a Safe Zone participant is voluntary, a choice, and requires a serious commitment. Thus the absence of a Safe Zone sign does not mean that an individual is “unsafe” but rather that circumstances have prevented them from committing to the formal Safe Zone Program.

When a student or employee comes to a designated Safe Zone location, procedures will be followed to ensure the safety and support of the individual in need. In most cases the door to the office or room will be closed and locked. The response of the participant can vary depending on the situation, but could include contacting Campus Security or local law enforcement and making a referral to Student Support Services to see a campus counselor. Safe Zone participants are not counselors (unless that is their function at the college) and should not be utilized in such a manner.

In addition to the established Safe Zone program, the college has a Bias-Motivated Incident Response Team (BIRT). All bias related incidents, that is, an incident that occurs due to a bias (typically based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability status or age) should be reported to the BIRT. BIRT address campus climate issues related to bias incidents on-campus. See Chapter 5.33 for information and procedures for BIRT.

5.32-1 Participant Requirements

- A. Participants must have access to an office, with a lockable door and a telephone that can make on and off campus calls. If an office is shared, each person occupying the office must agree to the terms of the Safe Zone program and be a certified participant.
- B. Participants must complete the entire required Safe Zone participant training.
- C. Participants must keep a Safe Zones Participant Folder in the office at all times, stocked with Bias Incidence reporting forms.
- D. Participants must display the Safe Zone sign in a visible location. A listing of all Safe Zone locations will be on display and available on the Office of

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Diversity and Equity web site.

<http://saw.spscc.ctc.edu/Diversity/safezones.htm>

- E. Participants must agree to the commitment to never turning away an individual seeking support.

5.32-2 Participant Training Program

Anyone that offers their office as a Safe Zone is required to complete Safe Zone Participant training. Participants will learn how to best deal with situations and gain a level of cultural competence that will allow them to be helpful and supportive to individuals in need. The initial training is comprised of the following:

- A. Safe Zone Orientation – An introduction to hate crime statistics, the need for Safe Zones, and the commitment required of certified participants. (1 Hour)
- B. Stop the Hate Training – Special training designed to combat hate crimes on college campuses. The training is broken into two 1 ½ hour modules.
 - **Module One** will provide specific definitions of hate crimes and bias incidents.
 - **Module Two** will build awareness and teach techniques on how to be an ally.

In addition, supplemental trainings will be offered throughout the academic year. Participants are required, after the initial training, to attend a **minimum of 2 hours of training per academic year** in order to remain a certified Safe Zone participant. Trainings will be offered through the Office of Diversity and Equity and/or the Center for Professional Excellence and will be clearly designated as eligible for Safe Zone Participant **Requirements**

5.32-3 Safe-Zone Locations

All Safe Zone locations must display the colleges designated Safe Zone emblem in a visible location at all times. The college strives to have a minimum of one designated Safe Zone on each floor of every building on campus. The designated Safe Zone emblem includes a map of Safe Zone locations located within that building and specifically on that floor and information regarding campus wide Safe Zone locations.

<http://saw.spscc.ctc.edu/Diversity/safezones.htm>

5.33 Bias-Motivated Incident Response Team (BIRT)

When a hate crime occurs on a college campus, the ideal of a college as a place for learning and growth is disrupted. Bias-motivated violence or threats targeting students and staff not only impair the college's mission but also deprive everyone the chance to learn and work in an atmosphere free of fear and intimidation. No college is immune to the risk of hate violence.

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A hate crime can, generally, be defined as a crime which in-whole or in-part is motivated by the offender's bias toward the victim's status. Hate crimes include: murder, manslaughter, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, arson, forcible and non-forcible sex offenses, intimidations, vandalism and any other crimes involving injury to any person or property in which the victims is intentionally selected because of actual or perceived race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability of the victim.

A bias motivated incident is an action in which a person is made aware that her/his status is offensive to another, but does not rise to the level of a crime. These include harassment and verbal slurs may be precursors to more serious hate motivated violence.

5.33-1 BIRT Purpose and Composition

The BIRT addresses campus climate issues related to bias-motivated incidents and act as advocates for persons affected by such incidents. The team is comprised of members from:

Diversity and Equity Office
Student Support Services
Human Resources (if an employee is involved)
Vice President for Student Services
Security Office
College Relations Office

Dependant on the nature of the incident other departments may be involved (e.g. Disability Support Services and International Student Services)

5.33-2 Campus Response

An incident should be immediately reported to the BIRT Coordinator (Director of Campus Security) for review. Depending on the nature of the incident the BIRT will be activated. BIRT will communicate with the college community and media as appropriate to reduce rumors. All hate crimes are reported to law enforcement via Campus Security. The following are factors considered in making a determination of whether the incident is a Suspected Bias Incident:

- Is the motivation of the alleged offender known?
- Was the incident known to have been motivated by racial, religious, ethnic, gender, disability or sexual orientation bias?
- Does the victim perceive the action of the offender to have been motivated by bias?
- Is there no other crimes involving injury to any person or acts which are known to represent a hate group or perceived race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity or other day of the victim.
- What do the demographics of the area tell you about the incident?

If these or other factors indicate that the offender may have been motivated by bias, the incident should be classified as a suspected bias-motivated incident. While the mere utterance of a racial epithet by the offender does not provide sufficient basis to report a crime as a suspected bias-motivated incident, it, combined with other factors could do so.

5.33-3 Reporting and Assistance

The college's highest concern is for the emotional and physical well being of persons affected by a bias-motivated incident or hate crime. Persons affected shall have access to all college services that can help them maintain emotional and psychological well-being and provide for their safety. The Incident Response Coordinator will be the first official college point of contact for facilitating access to needed services.

Members of the campus community who believe they are victims of a bias-motivated incident should immediately report the incident. Although reporting is not required, it is strongly encouraged. Immediate reporting to campus security or law enforcement is an important factor in successful investigation and prosecution of hate crimes. While persons affected or victims are not required to pursue prosecution just because they report a crime; the reporting of a bias motivated incident or hate crime may prevent others from being affected.

Any member of the college community can file a third party report with the BIRT Coordinator detailing a potential bias motivated incident or hate crime. It is important to note that the college cannot initiate student judicial action or a criminal complaint against the alleged offender based on a third party report; however, the report is encouraged, nonetheless, as it can provide useful information for protecting the community-at-large and connecting similar reports while protecting the victim's anonymity.

5.33-4 Legal Recourse and Disciplinary Actions

Where there is sufficient evidence to believe the college regulations prohibiting harassment, physical/emotional abuse have been violated, the college may pursue disciplinary action according to college policy and Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities
http://spscc.ctc.edu/student_services/code_of_rights_responsibilities.html
Sanctions for persons found in violation of these policies may include expulsion from the college and termination of employment.

The college reserves the right to pursue disciplinary action in the case of an off-campus incidents, when the alleged offender and behavior involved threatens the health, safety, and/or property of the college, its staff and students.

No individual shall be penalized or retaliated against in any way for his/her participation in the college's complaint process. An individual affected by a bias-motivated incident has the right to avoid face-to-face interaction with the offender (if known) during any campus judicial hearings. It is the victim's right to decide whether or not to file a complaint. Campus authorities will assist victims in notifying proper law enforcement authorities.

5.33-5 Role of the BIRT Coordinator

The BIRT Coordinator will neither investigate nor adjudicate complaints relating to a bias-motivated incident or hate crime. In the event of a bias-motivated incident complaint, the BIRT Coordinator ensures appropriate services are made available. These may include:

- Crisis counseling
- Appropriate medical referral
- Referral to Student Support Services to meet with a college counselor
- Providing advice on the college's complaint process and procedures
- Contacting the victim/person affected within 24 hours and encourages them to seek assistance.

In addition, the BIRT Coordinator:

- Encourages person(s) affected to report the occurrence to law enforcement.
- Notifies the following offices, or others as appropriate and with the victim's consent: Vice President for Student Services (if incident involves a student), Vice President for Human Resources (if incident involves an employee), Student Support Services – Counseling, and International Student Services (if either the victim or the alleged offender is involved in that program)
- Maintains confidentiality
- Provide statistical information and data to Public Safety as required under the Jeanne Clery Act www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/campus.html

5.33-6 Third Party Involvement

Individuals who are contacted by a person affected by a bias-motivated incident should encourage that person to:

- Contact Campus Security and/or law enforcement to file a report.
- Report the incident to the BIRT Coordinator

If the victim wishes to speak only to the Third Party:

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- A. Ascertain whether the victim needs immediate medical assistance. Ask the victim directly if he/she is all right physically and call 911 for immediate medical assistance.
- B. Find out the victim's most critical concerns and respond in a non-judgmental way. Recommend appropriate resources for the victim and feel free to consult with the BIRT Coordinator for additional guidance.
- C. Remember, the person affected may wish to do nothing further, other than have this conversation.
- D. Report the incident to Campus Security (names of victims are not required) so the college can comply with legal reporting requirements.

5.33-7 Education for Prevention

The Diversity and Equity Office is committed to providing effective education and outreach related to combating hate and bias on campus. This includes ally development, tolerance, self-actualization and reflection, sensitivity trainings and exposure to a variety of topics and issues that address multicultural issues.

The Diversity and Equity Office believes in the development of a set of cultural competencies that assist and prepare students for life after college. Programs and events include cultural celebrations, issue-based lectures and forums, advocacy trainings and personal development.

Contacts

Diversity and Equity Office	596-5383
Student Support Services - Counseling	596-5261
Vice President for Student Services	596-5231
Vice President for Human Resources	596-5360
Campus Security	596-5299
Safeplace (Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Services) 24-Hours Crisis Line	360-754-6300
Crisis Clinic (24 Hours)	360-586-2800
Police/Medic/Fire	911