

TODD: What's the Best Name for Our Team?

Having a good name for your team helps make your marketing and advertising pitches more effective to your overall population. The team's name is for the population you are serving, not for the team itself. In many settings, there is a debate about picking a name that spells something clever or leans into law enforcement terminology. At the heart of any team name discussion has to be the central focus of "does the name we picked make it more likely or less likely for students, faculty, staff and/or employees to share information with the team?"

There is quite a debate in the field around the name of a given team in relationship to its function. Threat Assessment Teams (TAT) are said to focus primarily on identifying threats to campus safety. Behavioral Intervention Teams (BIT) focus on identifying behaviors of concern and providing intervention strategies and action plans to address the behavior. Other names reflect attempts to improve communication between departments such as Campus Partners, Networks, Risk Assessment, Student of Concern, and Care and Concern teams. K-12 commonly uses tiered model names for their teams or the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) model.



The CARE team movement began about five years ago with that National Association of Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA) pushing CARE as a more inclusive and easier to market name

for colleges and universities. While CARE does not need to stand for anything specific, many have come up with their own meaning for the CARE acronym. These include C) coordination, concern or campus, A) assessment or assistance R) response or referral, and E) education or evaluation. In the end, the word CARE itself really does most of the lifting. "What is the CARE team? Well, we care about you and the community and want to help."

Part of this CARE movement has been the use of mascots in front of CARE. Panthers CARE, Sycamore CARES, Tigers CARE, Lions CARE (oh my). This is a creative way to pull in other imagery and branding that already speaks to the community to help elevate the CARE team to receive concerns from the community. There are some mascots (sorry Spartans, Vikings and Raiders) that obviously won't work. Other times, the mascot may be aggressive, like a shark, but then the shark is known around campus as Finn. This has potential to be effective.

When choosing a name, avoid an overly technical, scary or law enforcement focused name that has the potential to deter community members from sharing concerns. Likewise, avoid silly or overly therapeutic names (e.g., Helping Hands or HUGS for Help Understanding Guidance and Support). Choose a name that falls somewhere in the middle of these, that does not shut down reporting or scare students but also doesn't come off as overly therapeutic or specialized in the help they offer.