

Working on a campus should raise emotions of happiness and anticipation, not fear and anxiety. The increase in school violence, both in K-12 school systems and in higher education, has probably forced you to question your own safety on campus. You may have thought, "What if something happened in my classroom or office?"

Faculty members create student learning environments based on principles of challenge and support, relationship building and open door policies. How can you maintain the underlying principles at the heart of your work while making every effort to keep yourself, and your campus community, as safe as possible?

While certainly not comprehensive consider the following eight ideas as a way to start thinking about your personal safety.

1) Observe and Alert - In many instances of violence, there are warning signs well in advance. Take note of unusual or troubling student or colleague behavior and alert the proper authorities to these concerns.

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2) Lock It Up - How many times have you gone somewhere without locking your office door? When working in your office late at night or early in the morning, lock your door.

3) Model Emergency Behavior - Tragedy provides an unfortunate reminder of the value in being prepared for any crisis to occur. Model the way by demonstrating the importance of cooperating with emergency preparedness drills. Run through emergency

evacuation procedures at the start of each semester or quarter. It will take some valuable time, but could make a world of difference in the event of an emergency.

4) The Buddy System - The "buddy system" isn't just for students. When you walk to your car at night, or to a late meeting across campus, walk with someone or request a campus escort. Try to host evening and early morning office hours at the same time as a colleague, so you aren't ever alone in your department.

5) Never Make a Promise You Can't Keep - It's common for students to go to faculty seeking a listening ear, experienced wisdom and advice. Sometimes, during these

Keeping Yourself Safe: Eight Quick Ideas For Faculty

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exchanges, they may ask you to promise not to disclose something they have shared. Protect yourself - and potentially others - and never make that promise prior to hearing what they have to share. You are obligated to take information that leads you to believe individuals may pose a threat to themselves or to others to the appropriate people. Plus, it's often the best way to get students the help they may need.

6) Stay Connected - Stay up to date on your institution's emergency plans and policies. Routinely ask if any changes have been made that you or your colleagues should know.

7) Save Written Correspondence - Keep a record of all written exchanges you have with colleagues and students. Should a problem present itself, you may need the files to establish a pattern of behavior.

8) Open Your Door - Keep your office or classroom door open/cracked when meeting with individuals. You may also want to design your office so that your desk is closest to the door. You'll be less likely to be accused of something "behind closed doors," you'll have an accessible exit if threatened, and your voice will carry more effectively, if necessary.

Source - *Keeping Yourself and Your Classrooms Safe: A Resource for Faculty* by PaperClip Communications

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