

Viridis Graduate Institute

Ecopsychology and Environmental Humanities

Violence Prevention Policy

Viridis Graduate Institute is a Distance Education provider. The Institute affirms a commitment to robust intellectual dialogue and disagreement, and to civil conduct during our synchronous online classes and in its ReWilding programs.

When someone, whether a member of the Institutional community or not, jeopardizes that environment or threatens a person or people with violence, Viridis Graduate Institute must call upon its full resources to promptly assess the situation, intervene as appropriate, and support those who raised concerns about the threat and others who may be involved.

In our vibrant community, distinguishing between exceptional creativity and quirky behavior on the one hand and genuinely aberrant behavior on the other can sometimes be difficult. Preventing violence depends on members of the VGI community identifying and communicating behaviors of concern. Early identification of a concern allows VGI officials, if appropriate, to reach out to an individual or individuals, evaluate the circumstances, provide resources, reduce their stress if relevant, and avoid or minimize harm to the individual and others. Our process aims to promote early voicing of concerns and to be supportive, not punitive, while at the same time making safety paramount.

Viridis Graduate Institute staff are available for anyone to share information about any individual who may be planning or is at risk of engaging in violence, who has planned a violent act, or who may be the intended victim of a violent act.

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Threat assessment consists of a process to identify and respond to students, employees (faculty, staff, other academic appointees, and postdoctoral researchers), and others who may pose a danger to themselves or others at ReWildings or even in an online class setting, and to distinguish them from (1) those who may simply be struggling and in need of assistance, and from (2) those whose behavior may be unusual but not threatening or distressed.

The executive staff and faculty at Viridis Graduate Institute will assess concerns that an individual poses, or may reasonably pose, a threat of violence to self, others, or the VGI community, and to initiate an intervention designed to avert the threat if it exists. The Institute will respond appropriately to concerns expressed about behaviors exhibited by anyone—students, employees, and unaffiliated persons—before a critical incident so that students remains safe in a learning environment.

The following is not an exhaustive list but provides examples of behaviors or situations that may indicate risk to the safety of an individual, others, or our community.

- Specific threats to another person, group of people, or the community;
- Statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem;
- Articulated plans to bring weapons to any place or location for any reason; or
- Threatening postings of e-posters, e-flyers, on websites or other media.

Examples of behaviors that may, particularly in combination, or may not indicate a threat include:

- Indication that someone wishes to die or is willing to die;
- Significant changes in behavior that suggest that an individual is in severe distress;
- Outbursts of anger, especially uncharacteristic outbursts;
- Signs of isolation or withdrawal from the community;
- Bullying behavior;
- Display of paranoia, distrust, and devaluation of others;
- Numerous conflicts with and alienation of others;
- Preoccupation with weapons, violent events, or persons who have engaged in violent acts;
- Extreme reaction to a loss or traumatic event; or
- Uncharacteristically poor performance at work or in academics.

If you are aware of an emergency or have an immediate safety concern, you should not hesitate to immediately call Viridis Graduate Institute at 805-889-0169.

If you have a concern about a person or situation, even if you think it may be nothing, you are urged to share the information. You will need to share the name of the person you are concerned about, the behavior you observed and/or communication that worried you, and (ideally) your name.

The information you provide will be used to respond to the situation respectfully, appropriately, timely, and with the dignity of all parties involved in mind. Viridis Graduate Institute will gather information, assess the potential threat, consult with others as needed, and when appropriate, develop and implement a plan to help and support the individual and the safety of the VGI online community including ReWilding experiences.