



Louisiana State Police School Safety Initiative



BEHAVIORAL THREAT

ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT:

**A Practitioner's Guide for Preventing Violence
& Enhancing the Safety and Well-Being
of Louisiana Schools & Communities**

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BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Practitioner's Guide for Preventing Violence & Enhancing the Safety and Well-Being of Louisiana Schools & Communities

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Throughout the *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* there are hyperlinks to key resources, nearly all of which are free, open-source materials. These are provided to facilitate BTAM Team member's access to resources to inform and enhance their practices.

The titles of resource materials are provided throughout, so that, if links are broken, BTAM Team members can easily search for the resource.

INTRODUCTION

This resource, *Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management: A Practitioner's Guide for Preventing Violence & Enhancing the Safety and Well-Being of Louisiana Schools & Communities* (hereafter, *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* or *Practitioner's Guide*) was developed at the request of the Louisiana State Police School Safety Initiative in support of its mission to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of Louisiana schools and communities.

The overall objective of the *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* is to help Louisiana schools to establish and operate effective processes to identify, inquire/investigate, assess, and manage concerning, aberrant, or threatening behaviors impacting the school community. This guide will help members of the school's Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) Team to better understand and apply:

- The purpose & process of behavioral threat assessment and management programs
- The nature and process of targeted violence impacting schools.
- Guidelines for BTAM practice
- The essential elements of effective BTAM programs
- Key steps in the behavioral threat assessment and management process
- Key issues regarding information sharing
- Resources to support effective BTAM processes.

The *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* was developed by Dr. Gene Deisinger, a practitioner with over 30 years of experience in developing, implementing, operating, and enhancing behavioral threat assessment & management processes in a variety of settings, as well as in assessing & managing cases involving concerning, aberrant, or threatening behavior.

Dr. Deisinger was assisted by Mr. W. Payne Marks, a practitioner with significant experience in law enforcement, intelligence functions and Fusion Center operations, and behavioral threat assessment and management. Mr. Marks provided valued feedback and editing for the Guide and his contributions are greatly appreciated.

The *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* provides a synthesis of peer-reviewed research and recognized standards of practice regarding threat assessment and management in school settings. The guidance provided in this document is based upon relevant federal statutes and regulations, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The *Practitioner's Guide* also draws from and synthesizes several key resources related to violence and threat assessment and management in schools and workplaces. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- [*The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective*](#) (1999). Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- [*The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States*](#) (2002). U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.
- [*Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*](#) (2002). U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.
- [*Workplace Violence: Issues in Response*](#). (2004). Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- [*Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence: Considerations for Assessment the Risk of Future Violent Behavior*](#) (2006). Association of Threat Assessment Professionals.
- [*Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence; Information Students Learn May Prevent a Targeted Attack*](#) (2008). U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.
- [*Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence: 2nd Edition*](#) (2009). International Association of Chiefs of Police.
- [*Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention: American National Standard*](#) (2011). Society of Human Resource Management and ASIS, International. (Note: Fee for access).
- [*Task Force Report: Predicting Violent Behavior*](#). (2012). Department of Defense; Defense Science Board.

- [Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans](#) (2013). U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- [Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks](#) (2017). Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- [Summary of School Safety Statistics](#) (2017). National Institute of Justice.
- [Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety](#) (2018). Federal Commission on School Safety.
- [Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence](#) (2018). U.S. Secret Service.
- [A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013](#) (2018). Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- [Mass Violence in America: Causes, Impacts and Solutions](#) (2019). National Council for Behavioral Health.
- [A Comparison of Averted and Completed School Attacks from the Police Foundation Averted School Violence Database](#) (2019). The Police Foundation.
- [Crime, Violence, Discipline, & Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings from the School Survey on Crime & Safety: 2017–18](#) (2019). National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- [The Role of Districts in Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans: A Companion to the School Guide](#) (2019). U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- [Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence](#) (2019). U.S. Secret Service.
- [School Resource Officers, School Law Enforcement Units, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) (2019). U.S. Department of Education.
- [Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety](#) (2020). School Safety Working Group Report to the Attorney General.
- [Workplace Violence & Active Assailant- Prevention, Intervention & Response Standard](#). (2020). Note: Fee for access.
- [School Resource Officers: Averted School Violence Special Report](#) (2020). Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
- [Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools](#). (2021). U.S. Secret Service.
- [International Handbook of Threat Assessment 2nd Edition](#) (2021). Meloy, R. and Hoffmann, J. (Eds.). Note: Fee for access.
- [Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2021](#) (2022). National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- [Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management \(BTAM\) Best Practice Considerations for K–12 Schools](#) (2021). National Association of School Psychologists.
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) Regulations](#) (amended 2022). 34 C.F.R. Part 99.
- [A Quick Guide to Information Sharing During Threat Reporting & Assessment](#) (2022). National Center for School Safety.
- [Causes and Consequences of School Violence](#) (2022). National Institute of Justice.
- [Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020](#) (2023). U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- [Improving School Safety Through Bystander Reporting: A Toolkit for Strengthening K-12 Reporting Programs](#). (2023). U.S. Department of Homeland Security

For over 30 years, findings about the pre-incident behaviors of targeted violence perpetrators have validated the use of a fact-based threat assessment and management process relying on an appraisal of behaviors, rather than traits, as the basis for determining the nature and degree of any safety concerns, and for developing a strategic approach to reducing risk and improving the safety and well-being of the organization.

Although communicated or expressed threats of violence typically require assessment (and appropriate response), the *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* for Louisiana schools emphasizes the identification and assessment of a broader range of concerning or threatening behaviors, including but not limited to communicated or expressed threats. The emphasis is on a preventative approach facilitating early identification and intervention with developing concerns. That is, addressing concerning behavior (where possible) before it becomes threatening, or violent.

Incidents of mass targeted violence impacting schools have brought increased attention to issues of school safety in recent years. However, mass shootings are not the only threat faced by schools. This guide emphasizes an approach based on an understanding of the variety and breadth of violence impacting school communities, including, but not limited to mass violence.

The threat assessment and management process is intended to help prevent and mitigate risks associated with a broad range of targeted and patterned affective violence including but not limited to bias, harassment and bullying, intimate partner violence (including domestic & dating violence, stalking, predatory sexual assault, and adult sexual misconduct), grievance-based acts against individuals or groups, suicide in public settings, and lone actor terrorism and violent extremism.

The *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* also emphasizes that effective threat assessment and management best occurs in school and workplace climates of safety, respect, and support – environments in which students, teachers, administrators (and, where appropriate, parents/guardians) pay attention to the social and emotional, as well as academic needs of students and staff and have access to assistance for addressing and resolving problems.

The behavioral threat assessment and management process is only one component of an overall strategy to reduce school violence and it is implemented within the larger context of strategies to ensure schools are healthy, safe, and secure environments. The primary objective of school violence reduction strategies is to create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support within the school, and where possible, in the broader community.

Other school safety strategies that may be employed are:

- Effective communication between school staff, students, and parents or guardians of students
- School climate assessments and timely response to climate or safety concerns
- Emphasis on school connectedness, inclusion, and engagement
- Physical security measures
- Support for reporting concerns and bystander engagement
- Bullying prevention and intervention
- Fair and equitable approaches to discipline
- School-based services for support, guidance, early identification, and intervention
- Trauma informed approaches and programs, recognizing impact of adverse childhood experiences.
- School-law enforcement partnerships, including well-trained school resource officers.
- Collaborative relationships with mental health, social services, and other community-based resources
- Planning and preparation to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from potential crises.

OVERVIEW OF BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Defining Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management

Behavioral threat assessment and management (BTAM) is a systematic, evidence-based process to identify concerning, aberrant, or threatening behaviors; inquire and investigate to gather relevant information from lawfully, ethically, and reasonably available sources; assess the situation based on the totality of information available at the time; and to develop and implement holistic and longitudinal approaches to prevent violence and to support and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of the persons involved, and the school community as a whole.

Effective threat assessment and management processes are intended to be proactive and preventative approaches to facilitate early identification and intervention with developing concerns. This contrasts with crisis-oriented, incident-based approaches which are primarily reactive in nature.

Members of the threat assessment and management team and the administrators to whom such teams may report, should have a strong working understanding of the BTAM process and to be prepared to communicate that understanding to the community they serve.

Members of the BTAM team should also consider how their community members perceive the BTAM process, as those perceptions will affect willingness to utilize the process. For example, if community members perceive that the BTAM process just creates “threat lists,” or that persons on those lists get disadvantaged due to race, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc., these perceptions may greatly diminish community member’s willingness to share concerns with the BTAM program. It is important to operate and demonstrate that the BTAM process, where possible, is a preventative and helping-oriented process, not solely or primarily a punitive process. The earlier that concerning or threatening behavior can be identified and addressed, the less likely that harm will occur, or that disciplinary or criminal justice sanctions will be relevant or necessary.

A Systematic Process of Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management

An effective threat assessment and management program involves a systematic process emphasizing early identification of situations that may pose a threat of violence or harm to self or others, or that indicate a need for intervention and support. The process utilizes a comprehensive approach to understanding and assessing the situation, and a holistic, collaborative approach to managing the concerns identified.

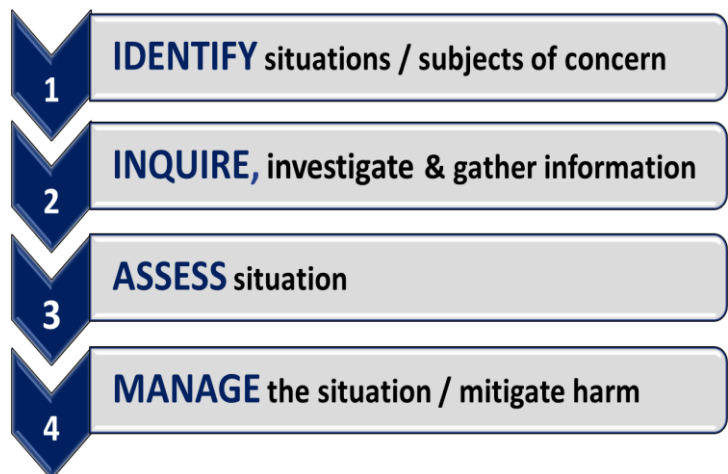
As reflected in Figure 1, there are four key components of the threat assessment and management process:

Identify

Identify subject(s)/situation(s) whose behavior or impact is concerning, aberrant, or threatening. Such behaviors may cause concern for the well-being of the subject, their impact on others, or both.

Most cases originate from information and observations that are provided to the threat assessment & management team by concerned members of the school community. The team may also monitor for and identify patterns of behavior that may indicate a threat or concern that has not yet been reported by persons outside the team.

Figure 1. Key Steps in the BTAM Process



Inquire

Upon identification of potentially concerning behavior, the BTAM Team inquires, investigates, and gathers additional relevant information that is lawfully, ethically, and reasonably available. Beyond the initial report, the team considers what else, if anything, may be known about the situation or those involved. In information technology this is called “pinging the system,” i.e., checking what else is on the network, that is, what else is happening or that may impact on the subject of concern, those impacted directly by the subject’s behavior, or others in the broader school community who may be indirectly impacted.

Note that the BTAM Team is not solely (or even primarily) investigating to prove a crime or policy violation, but rather, trying to understand the situation and how best to address it and prevent harm. Threat assessment and management is different from a criminal or disciplinary investigative process and should not replace those processes when they are appropriate. However, information gained through the BTAM process may (where appropriate) supplement decision-making regarding criminal or disciplinary investigative processes, and those processes may inform the BTAM process.

Assess

The BTAM Team assesses the case comprehensively, considering the totality of information that is reasonably, lawfully, and ethically available at the time of each point of assessment. The assessment reflects a dynamic understanding of the nature and level of concern involved based on the information available, identifies what other information may be needed to better understand the situation, and informs efforts to manage those concerns.

Manage

Based on the assessment, the BTAM Team develops, implements, monitors, and adjusts strategies to manage the situation. The plans are developed to prevent violence and other harm where possible, to reduce/mitigate impact of the situation, to decrease vulnerability and increase the safety of those targeted, provide relevant support and assistance to persons involved, to minimize the future impact of any contributing factors that may stem from the relevant environment or systems, and to consider contingencies for reasonably foreseeable events that may impact upon the case.

- See the ***Threat Assessment and Management Process Flowchart*** provided in the **RESOURCE** section for an example of a systematic process for facilitating identification, inquiry, assessment, and management of a case.

A Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention

Behavioral threat assessment and management involves a public health approach to violence prevention, which has been a recommended practice since 1980, when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued its report (*Promoting Health/Preventing Disease: Objectives for the Nation*) establishing the first violence prevention objectives for the nation. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that a public health approach to violence prevention incorporates several key elements including:

- Emphasizes prevention as a primary goal.
 - Works to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of the community. That is, the process focuses not only on addressing the behavior and needs of the identified subject of concern but balancing those with the needs of others who are impacted by the subject’s behavior, seeking the maximum benefit for the community as a whole.
 - Utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach. BTAM draws from many disciplines including but not limited to education, psychology, sociology, medicine, criminology, economics, and law.
- Engages community & key stakeholders for input and action.
- Continuously evaluates and improves the relevant systems and processes involved.

Recognizing Concerning, Aberrant, or Threatening Behavior

The behavioral threat assessment and management process is intended to facilitate early identification and intervention of concerning, aberrant or threatening behaviors. To that end, BTAM Team members (and the communities they serve) must be able to recognize those behaviors and know (and use) relevant reporting mechanisms to share information about those concerns in a timely manner.

Concerning or Aberrant Behaviors

BTAM is a preventative and helping process (where possible), so BTAM Team members help the community identify behavior that is causing concern even before it may be perceived as threatening. Therefore, the BTAM process enhances early recognition and reporting of concerning and/or aberrant behaviors.

- Concerning Behaviors involve actions, statements, communications, or responses that cause concern for the health, safety, or well-being of the subject (exhibiting the behaviors), or others, or both.
- Aberrant Behaviors involve actions, statements, communications, or responses that are atypical for the person or situation, and that cause concern for the health, safety or well-being of the subject, or others, or both.
- Note that not all aberrant or atypical behavior is concerning. BTAM Team members are careful not to put undue focus on unique, creative, eccentric, or atypical behavior that is not causing concern for the subject or others. The focus is on atypical behavior that does cause concern.

Examples of Concerning or Aberrant Behaviors

Following are several examples of behaviors that may be concerning or aberrant. Such threatening behaviors may include (but not be limited to) any act that a reasonable person would view as threatening or intimidating, such as:

- Withdrawal, isolation, or alienation from others
- Sudden changes to usual attire, behavior, or hygiene
- Changes in attendance/participation in work, school, or social activities
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Sullen or depressed behavior
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Declining work/academic performance
- Fearful, anxious, depressed, tense, reactive or suspicious
- Atypical outbursts of verbal or physical aggression
- Increased levels of agitation, frustration, or anger
- Heightened wariness and suspiciousness in dealing with others.
- Confrontational, accusatory, or blaming behavior
- Consideration of or focus on violence as means of addressing a grievance.
- Fascination with other incidents or perpetrators of violence
- Atypical interest or fascination with weapons or violence

Note that these are not all necessarily associated with risk for violence but are frequently indicators of significant stressors and/or difficulty coping. The threat assessment and management process are intended to support early identification of developing concerns to help the subject address and alleviate those concerns where possible.

Threatening Behaviors

For the purposes of the BTAM process, threatening behavior is defined as:

- Any concerning communication or behavior that indicates that a subject (person or group) may pose a risk for violence, or other behaviors that would likely cause harm to self or others, or that would likely result in serious disruption to continuity of operations.
- The threat may be expressed or communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means, and,
- Is considered a threat regardless of whether:
 - It is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat,
 - Observed by or communicated to a third party, or if,
 - The target of the threat is aware of the threat.

Note that this definition is intentionally broader than what would likely be considered a criminal threat because the BTAM team strives to be proactive and to prevent criminal and harmful behavior where possible.

Examples of Threatening behaviors.

Following are several examples of behaviors that may be threatening. Such threatening behaviors may include (but not be limited to) any act that a reasonable person would view as threatening or intimidating, such as:

- Physical violence toward a person or property
- Weapons acquisition in conjunction with unresolved grievances or ideation for harm
- Possession of weapons in areas, or at activities, where they are not allowed
- Stalking
- Directly communicated threats
- Leakage: Communication with a third party about any aspects of the subject's grievances, ideas or intent for violence, planning, preparations, etc.
 - Research finds leakage very frequently occurs and is one of the most common ways of identifying a person who may pose a threat.
 - Communication varies and may include planned or spontaneous utterances, letters, diaries, emails, journals, social media posts, text messages, video recordings, etc.
 - Leakage could be intentional (e.g., through veiled or ambiguous but ominous statements) or unintentional (e.g., others observing the subject's behaviors).
- Overt physical or verbal intimidation
- Throwing objects or other gestures intended to cause fear
- Making inappropriate statements about harming others
- Bullying or harassment, especially that persists after interventions to stop the behavior
- Statements or behaviors indicating suicidality or intent to harm self
 - Especially with expressed grievances or hostility to others.
- Research or planning related to carrying out violence
- Developing capability to cause harm

The Goal of the Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Process

The primary goal of the threat assessment and management process is to support and enhance the **health, safety, and well-being of the school community**. Everything that threat managers may consider or do during a case is done in service of the health, safety, and well-being of **all** involved, including (but not solely for) the subject of concern.

It is important not to confuse tactics or tools (e.g., counseling, support, discipline, prosecution, dismissal, etc.) with goals or desired outcomes (i.e., enhance the safety and well-being of the situation). So, when we hear ourselves saying that “Our goal is to get the subject to counseling,” we catch ourselves and re-focus on “Our goal is to improve the safety and well-being of the situation. Now, what tools or resources may help us? How will a referral to counseling help us move toward that goal? If counseling is not sufficient in this case, what are other approaches that may work? What do we do if those do not appear to be working? In addition to intervening with the subject, what can we do to enhance the safety of others?”

Threat assessment and management is not approached as a primarily adversarial or punitive process and should not be equated with disciplinary processes. Rather, the threat assessment and management process is designed and intended to be a helping process and is most effective when it is **not** framed or operationalized as adversarial or punitive.

Many subjects of concern are seeking to be heard and understood in their grievances. While some of the ways the subject may be trying to address a grievance may be inappropriate or threatening (and need to be addressed), some of the grievances may be legitimate or may help us understand environmental or systemic issues (such as bullying, harassment, or bias) that are fueling grievances. The BTAM Team uses a holistic approach to understand identified concerns but also (where possible) the underlying factors causing or contributing to them.

Improving Decision Making & Articulate Reasonableness

- Any conscientious threat manager works diligently to be accurate and correct as much as possible. However, in the face of sometimes incomplete, inconsistent, or ambiguous information, it is not always possible to be right. The standard of practice, however, is not perfection, but reasonableness. That is, how would a person in a similar role, with comparable training, receiving similar information or observation, understand the situation, and what would they do based on that understanding.
- Threat managers should be able to articulate that their strategies (e.g., case management interventions) were based on a systematic and structured professional judgment-based assessment, which was informed by the best available information and observations of behavior that were lawfully, ethically, and reasonably available to the threat manager at the time they had to make the assessment or case management intervention.
- The ability to articulate the informed rationale for decision-making, especially when done in a consultative process with other well trained threat managers and key stakeholders helps to ensure reasonableness in decision-making, and greatly diminishes bias and arbitrary or capricious acts.
- The following graphic reflects the process for enhancing and articulating reasonableness.

Figure 2. Articulating Reasonableness in BTAM Processes



Threat managers use the behavior, information and observations gathered to inform the assessment and conclusions about the situation, and from that assessment, develop strategies to address the concern(s) which have been identified. Members of the threat assessment and management team engage in a collaborative and deliberative decision-making process in considering their inquiry, assessment, and interventions. This helps threat managers to be reasonable and to demonstrate reasonableness in their approach. Those are among the duties and standards of practice of threat managers.

Enhancing Communication, Collaboration and Coordination

An effective threat assessment and management process relies on, and in-turn, supports and enhances communication, collaboration, and coordination (Deisinger, Cychosz, & Jaeger, 1993/95) of efforts within the school community. These involve:

Communication

Active communication in a lawful, ethical, and effective manner and in all directions including:

- From school community members to the threat assessment and management team regarding concerning, aberrant or threatening behaviors,
- Within and between participants in the threat assessment & management process, and
- From the threat assessment & management team to relevant community members, based on a legitimate need to know the information to support the health, safety, and well-being of the school community.

Collaboration

A shared sense of commitment and responsibility to work cooperatively to support the health, safety, and well-being of the community.

By far the most valuable prevention strategy identified was the threat assessment and management team

FBI (2017) ***Making Prevention of Violence a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks***

Coordination

Engaging in planful and coordinated efforts, both within and between the school threat assessment and management team, and community partners to proactively, preventively, responsively, and reasonably support the health, safety, and well-being of Louisiana's school communities.

Schools typically have a range of multi-disciplinary processes that may be established to address different but often overlapping concerns. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Bias and harassment prevention and response
- Bullying prevention and response
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)
- Student Assistance Program (SAP)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Special education programs
- School climate initiatives
- Suicide prevention and intervention
- Title IX compliance
- Sexual violence prevention and response
- Trauma-informed approaches

School administrators and threat assessment team members must work diligently to ensure there are adequate processes for effective communication, collaboration, and coordination of efforts when cases cross areas of responsibility. This is critical to ensure that issues do not “fall between the cracks” and that resources are managed effectively and not duplicated unnecessarily.

There are also challenges and opportunities in sustaining effective communication, collaboration, and coordination with processes that exist outside of the school or that may work within the school to assist schools (e.g., local law enforcement, community mental health professionals providing services or supporting processes within schools, etc.). Effective teams work to identify key partnerships and continuously work to establish, sustain, and enhance working relationships between the school and those entities. This may include a variety of activities including:

- Liaisons with local, state, and federal law enforcement partners
- Liaisons with community threat assessment & management processes
- Liaisons with community mental health treatment services
- Liaisons with community crisis outreach/response services [e.g., Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), Mobile Crisis Response Team, Community Alternative Response Teams, Handle with Care Programs, etc.]
- Creating and updating contact lists for local/regional resources
- Establishing and sustaining relationships with key personnel through regular contact
- Collaborating with community task forces to address challenges impacting the school community.
- Establishing memoranda of agreement for collaborative services or referrals.

Teams that engage in proactive efforts to develop and sustain relationships through ongoing communication, collaboration, and coordination are better prepared to deal with the range of threats they may face.

Guiding Principles

Research and practical experience have helped identify several principles that guide the behavioral threat assessment and management process. These include:

Effective assessment is based upon observations of behavior rather than on general characteristics, traits, or profiles.

Perpetrator “profiles” do not provide a reliable basis for making judgments of the threat posed by a particular individual. The threat assessment process examines the behavior of the subject in relation to the context, issues, challenges, and resources involved. This provides for an individualized, holistic, and contextually based assessment of and response to the situation.

Violence stems from an interaction among the Subject(s), Target(s), Environment/ Systems and Precipitating Incidents (*STEP Framework; Deisinger, 1996; Deisinger & Nolan, 2021*).

Identifying, assessing, and managing potential acts of violence or other harm requires a comprehensive and holistic perspective of the situation involving four key domains and their interactions.

Effective approaches consider each of the four domains that may impact both the assessment and management of cases:

- S** Is the Subject engaging in behavior(s) that may pose a threat of violence or harm to self or others, or significant disruption, or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention?
- T** Are Targets (or others impacted) vulnerable to harm, in need of or taking protective actions, impacted by the situation, or otherwise indicating a need for support, assistance or intervention?
- E** Are there Environmental/Systemic issues contributing to or impacting upon the situation?
- P** Are there reasonably foreseeable Precipitating Events that may impact the situation (Subject, Target, and/or Environment)?

Where there are concerns noted in any of the STEP domains, BTAM Team members should determine if there are actions or interventions that they can facilitate to address those concerns, beyond those already being effectively done.

Violence is a dynamic process.

No one is either always dangerous or never dangerous. The level of concern depends on the totality of the situation. An assessment is only as good as the quality of information on which it was based and at the time that it was made. The dynamics of the case can and will change as the team engages in interventions, as subjects, targets and others interact, and as other life circumstances (including those outside the control of the team) impact on the case and the level of danger and concern posed. Threat assessment and management involves ongoing review, re-assessment, and modification of intervention strategies through the point at which the case is adequately resolved.

Figure 3. STEP Framework (Deisinger, 1996)



Threat assessment is about prevention, not prediction.

The threat assessment process is not intended to be used to predict whether a subject is a “violent person.” Instead, the BTAM Team is trying to determine under what circumstances the subject may become violent or engage in other harmful or significantly disruptive behaviors, what the impact of the situation is upon others (even when a subject poses no identifiable threat of violence), what environmental/systemic factors may be contributing to the situation, and whether there are any precipitating events on the foreseeable horizon. That comprehensive perspective helps prevent violence and assist those in need, even if they were never going to be violent.

An inquisitive, objective, and diligent mindset is critical to successful threat assessment and management.

Members of the threat assessment and management team strive to be thorough, diligent, accurate and fair, continuing throughout the assessment process both to gather pieces of information and to fit the pieces into a larger picture and to gain understanding of the context and situation. One hallmark of a good inquiry or investigation is corroboration or fact-checking. Where possible, it is important to see where information from one source is confirmed information from another source.

A collaborative and coordinated approach between systems within an organization, and the community in which it exists, is critical for an effective threat assessment and management process.

Effective working relationships and collaborations with services and programs both within the school (e.g., school-based mental health professionals, administrators, disciplinary officers, human resources, etc.) and in the broader community (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, law enforcement) are critical to identifying, assessing, and managing individuals who may be on a path to carrying out an act of targeted violence.

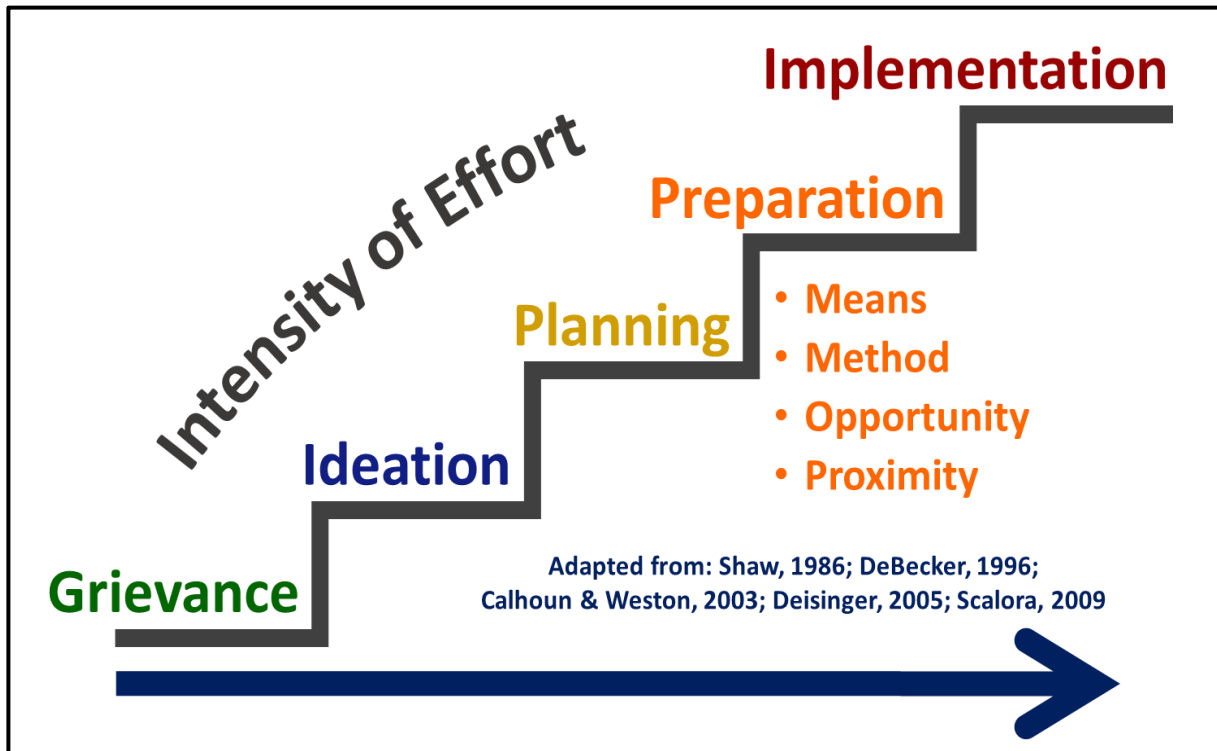
A multi-disciplinary approach works best in preventing violence and enhancing the health, safety, and well-being of the school community.

A multi-disciplinary approach brings the varied skills, resources, and abilities to prevent, identify, assess, manage, deter harm, and to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of schools.

Targeted violence is the result of an understandable and usually discernible process of thinking and behavior.

Individuals who committed acts of targeted violence rarely “just snapped.” Instead, they engaged in a process of thought and behavior that escalated over days, weeks, months, and even years. That process is often referred to as “The Pathway to Violence” and is represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The Pathway to Violence



The steps along the pathway include:

Grievance

A grievance may be a real or perceived sense of loss, mistreatment, or injustice, often fueling a feeling of being wronged. Most people will experience grievances through life and the vast majority do not engage in acts of violence. However, for those who do engage in targeted violence, grievances (or other motivations) are common precursors. Factors that increase risk of grievances leading to violence include a fixation upon the grievances with co-occurring decrease in functioning, and a strong sense of shame or humiliation related to the grievance.

Ideation

Expressing thoughts or fantasies regarding the use of violence to address a real or perceived grievance. Note that many people have occasional or fleeting thoughts of violence in response to perceived grievances. Most do not act on those thoughts or move forward along the pathway. Therefore, knowledge that someone is thinking about violence does not confirm that a danger exists but should orient us to the possibility, and that the subject is struggling with a grievance of some sort.

Planning

Giving thought and consideration not only to the idea and intent of committing violence, but also to the who, what, when, where, and how of doing so. Expressions here may begin to reference timing, location, targets, means, methods, etc. The subject may seek out and gather information regarding their grievances, their targets, means of causing harm, equipment, etc. They may research other incidents of targeted violence to learn from other perpetrators.

Preparation

Beyond just having or acquiring weapons, this stage involves attempts to prepare for the violence and to develop or acquire the capability to cause harm to the intended target(s)/victim(s). They obtain or try to obtain the means to fulfill their plans, which may be weapons, tools, clothing to match their fantasies/role-models, etc.

As they move forward in planning and preparation, they may adjust plans as they encounter barriers or opportunities to the original ideation and plans. They may seek or take advantage of opportunities and circumstances that support their fantasy and plans. Finally, much of targeted violence (though not all) occurs in relative proximity to targets. Subjects may conduct surveillance or probe boundaries or security systems to see if they can access areas where they do not belong or get close to people in ways that are inappropriate or atypical.

Implementation

Once the subject perceives that they have the capability to do so, they pose a significantly greater likelihood of implementing the intended act of violence. Capability is based on the subject's perceived skill (to cause harm) and their will to do so. As a subject moves along the Pathway to the right, and more of the steps are present, capability and risk for violence increases along the vertical dimension. The horizontal line at the bottom of the Pathway model represents time. As a subject moves right along the pathway, there is often an escalation in the rate of movement or changes in the frequency or pattern of behaviors causing concern (e.g., some concerns over time). Conversely, where a subject has caused numerous concerns over time and then suddenly there is no more information about concerns regarding the subject (i.e., they "go off the radar"), the BTAM Team should check whether the concerning behavior has stopped, if the subject has become more covert in their actions, if community members have stopped reporting concerns, or other reasons why the subject's behavior has "dropped from the radar."

Research indicates that while targeted violence incidents are rarely spontaneous and impulsive, they can escalate rapidly from ideation through implementation. That is, the time span between the subject's decision to cause harm and the actual incident may be short. This may be expedited by a sense of desperation for resolution, lack of concern for consequences, or the influences of others encouraging escalation (e.g., through social media or direct communications). Consequently, when there are indications that a subject may pose a threat to the school or broader community, the BTAM Team will need to move quickly to inquire about and intervene in that planning or preparation.

As with any model, the Pathway reflects a general framework for understanding intentional actions. However, for a given case, the process is not necessarily as linear as the model depicts. Rather, the person may ebb and flow in their rate and direction of movement toward (or away from) violence, and cycle between phases of the process (e.g., from preparatory behaviors back to planning, then more preparation). As the subject exerts or demonstrates increased "intensity of effort" (Scalora, 2021) around the ideation, planning and preparation, e.g., more attention, time, energy, resources, etc., there is greater risk for harm, and likely a greater impact on others.

The steps along this path indicate opportunities to observe, identify and intervene with threatening and/or aberrant behaviors that cause concern for violence by, or the well-being of, the individual. Frequently, information about an individual's ideas, plans and preparations for violence can be observed before violence can occur. However, information is likely to be scattered and fragmented. For example, a teacher may see a certain set of behaviors of an individual in her class, a coach observes other behaviors or expressed thoughts by the individual, a school resource officer has other concerns, and a school administrator is aware of certain conduct violations. The challenge, and the key, is to act quickly upon initial reports of concern, gather other pieces of the puzzle, and assemble them to determine what picture emerges.

A key area of inquiry is the degree to which a subject may pose a threat (i.e., has or is developing the capability and intent to harm), not solely whether the subject has made a threat (i.e., communicated or expressed intent to harm).

Research on targeted violence has found that few perpetrators directly communicated a threat to their target before the violence, especially when there was no prior intimate relationship between the perpetrator and target. In most incidents of targeted violence, perpetrators did not directly threaten their targets, but they did communicate their intent, plans or preparations to others before the violence. This indirect expression or third-party communication of intent to cause harm is often referred to as “leakage.” Individuals who are found to pose threats (i.e., developed the capacity and prepared to engage in violence) frequently do not make threats directly to their targets. Therefore, the absence of a directly communicated threat should not, by itself, lead to the conclusion that a subject poses no threat or danger to self or others.

The relationship between mental illness and violence is complex.

Most persons living with mental illness will not be violent toward others. Most people who are violent are not mentally ill. The presence of serious mental illness increases general risk of violence, but it is rarely the sole or primary explanation for a violent act. Other risk factors such as having a history of violence, childhood exposure to violence, substance abuse or dependence, or difficulties coping with stress or challenges, have more significant correlations with violence overall.

Beyond the presence of diagnosed mental illnesses, BTAM Team members should monitor for symptoms or indicators of decreased well-being that may impact perceptions of grievance, diminished ability to cope with stressors, or decreased ability to engage in effective (and non-violent) problem-solving.

Social media and online activity are critical considerations in many cases.

Use of social media and internet-based communications are ubiquitous in our society. Subjects of concern, and those concerned about those subjects, often use social media or other internet-based communications to express such concerns. For those who may pose a threat, their expressions of grievances, violent intent, planning and preparation, can often be observed in online activities. This may be a result of the subject expressing those elements in the subject's online activity, or others commenting about the subjects' behaviors or statements.

THE NATURE AND PROCESS OF VIOLENCE

Violence takes many forms, and it is critical that school BTAM Team members understand the nature and process of how such violence may manifest. School personnel may have opportunities to identify, prevent, and disrupt violence during daily school activities or events. Awareness of the different modes of violence and the indicators of the mobilization to violence are important to proactively prevent violent outcomes and bring criminal investigations to their logical conclusions.

Modes of Violence

Humans (and most, if not all, members of the animal kingdom) exhibit aggression and violence in two main modes: Affective (also called Emotional or Reactive) and Targeted (also referred to as Predatory, Proactive, or Instrumental) violence. Those modes are best understood as the ends of a continuum of behaviors expressing aggression and violence from pure Affective violence at one end, and pure Predatory violence at the other. In practice, few if any of us are always either affective or predatory across all situations but exhibit different modes and degrees of expression depending on the context and our individual proclivities and capabilities.

Meloy (2000) in his book *Violence Risk and Threat Assessment*, contrasted the two modes across several dimensions as seen in Figure 5:

Figure 5. Modes of Violence

Affective Violence:		Predatory Violence:
Intense emotion & expression	↔	Minimal emotion or expression
Violence is reactive & immediate	↔	Violence is planned & purposeful
Violence against perceived threats	↔	Violence against intended targets
Heightened & diffuse awareness	↔	Heightened & focused awareness
Goal is threat reduction	↔	Violence serves variable goals
Primarily emotional & defensive	↔	Primarily cognitive & goal-oriented
Rapid displacement of target	↔	Minimal displacement of target
Reactions are time limited	↔	Not time limited;
<i>Meloy, R. (2000) Violence Risk & Threat Assessment</i>		

Affective Violence

This is the most common form of human violence and is characterized at the left side of the behavioral continuum by intense emotionality and expressivity. Affective violence is reactive and relatively immediate, in response to an acute perceived threat or provocation. The person, feeling threatened, exhibits significantly heightened and diffuse awareness to anticipate and detect other perceived threats that may impact the situation.

Driven by the heightened autonomic nervous system (e.g., fight, flight, freeze responses) and fueled by significant hormonal changes with the body, the purpose of affective violence is to reduce the perceived threat and to return to a state of homeostasis or balance. Therefore, violence is defensive in nature and given the heightened awareness (and wariness) can result in rapid displacement or redirection of violence to any other perceived threats. Given that affective violence is fueled by acute changes in hormone levels which cannot sustain (in the absence of stimulant drugs or novel threats) for more than a few hours, the violence is time limited. That is, the exhaustion resulting from the activated autonomic system will result in diminished agitation and violence over a relatively brief period.

Patterned Affective Violence

Note that some subjects may engage in Patterned Affective Violence. That is, while the acute violent incident may be more reactive and spontaneous to an immediate perceived threat or provocation, the subject tends to express such threat reactions across similar situations or settings. In Patterned Affective Violence, the risk level may not diminish as quickly or fully as with singular incidents of affective violence but instead persist and recur over time.

Targeted Violence

In contrast to Affective Violence, Targeted Violence is characterized by minimal expressed emotionality as the subject's focus has changed to a cognitive, problem-solving process. This does not mean that a subject exhibits no emotion about grievances, just that it will be much less pronounced than with Affective Violence. Violence here is more targeted and pre-meditated and is characterized by a heightened but focused awareness, reflective of goal-directed behavior. Motivations for predatory behavior may be more complex and varied than the primary focus on threat reduction in Affective Violence. There may be multiple grievances that motivate violent intent, some of which may not be acutely present, so it may be more difficult to discern in the moment. The subject's primary energies are cognitive in nature and do not require activation of the autonomic system, so they are less bound by the effects of exhaustion. Therefore, the risk for violence is much less time-limited than observed with Affective Violence.

Definition of Targeted Violence:

Targeted Violence is defined as an:

- Incident(s) of violence
- In which (a) potential assailant(s)
- Chooses (a) particular target(s)
- Prior to a violent/destructive act.

Adapted from: FBI (2017). Making Prevention of Violence a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks

This form of violence is much less of an emotional reaction and more of a problem-solving process. It is more of a goal-oriented, cognitive process for considering, planning, and preparing ways to address unresolved grievances. Therefore, the behavior associated with Targeted Violence will be quite different from a purely or primarily affective driven reactivity to acutely perceived threats or provocations. Threat assessment and management teams (and the school community they serve) need to be prepared to recognize and respond to behaviors across the continuum.

Examples of Targeted Violence:

There are several examples of types of Targeted Violence, or types of violence that may involve predatory behaviors. These include, but are not limited to:

- Public Mass Violence/Active Assailant Incidents
- Terrorism/Violent Extremism
- Grievance-Based Violence Impacting:
 - Workplace, Schools, & Campuses
 - Houses of Worship/Faith communities
 - Government agencies/Military facilities
 - Public figures
- Espionage/Disruption/Sabotage
- Domestic/Dating/Intimate Partner Violence*
- Predatory Sexual Assault or Sexual Misconduct
- Stalking

- Human Trafficking
- Gang Violence*
- Harassment/Bullying/Mobbing
- Bias and Hate Incidents & Crimes
- Suicidal Behaviors in Public Locations*

NOTE: * indicates that some, but not all, of these behaviors regularly involve predatory violence, while some may involve Affective, Patterned Affective, or Targeted Violence.

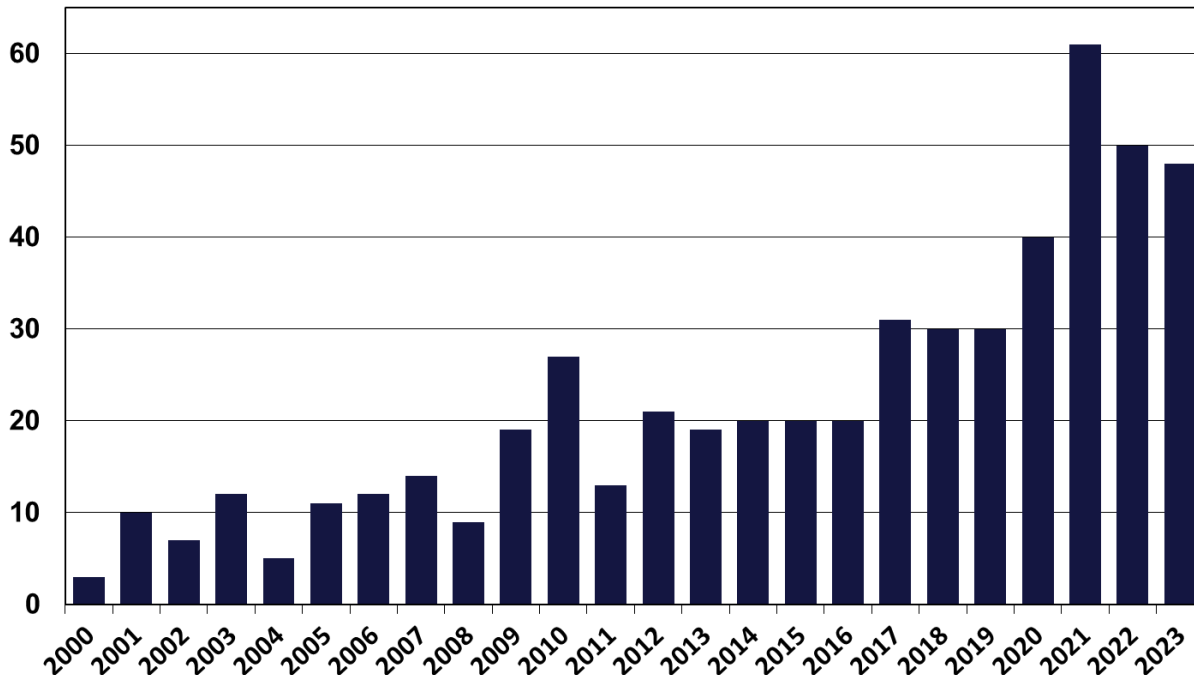
The root causes of these different forms of violence are many and varied. However, the core behaviors that facilitate the development of capability and intent to cause harm are more similar than different across the different forms of targeted violence. Therefore, it is important for threat managers (and the community they serve) to understand and recognize indicators of ideation, intent, planning and preparation that enhance capability for any harm, rather than try to make a priori determinations about specific intended acts of harm.

Overview Of Targeted Violence

Mass Casualty Incidents

Over the past several years, there has been greater concern regarding incidents of mass violence in public settings. These “Active Shooter/Active Threat” incidents, while relatively rare in the past, appear to have increased over the past few years as seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Active Shooter Incidents in the United States (2000-2023)



Sources: FBI Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the US Between 2000-2013;
 FBI Studies of Active Shooter Incidents in the US Between 2014-2023.

<https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/safety-resources/active-shooter-safety-resources>

These mass casualty incidents occurring in public places (e.g., shopping centers, schools, campuses, workplaces, military bases, houses of worship, etc.) have garnered increased attention over the last several years. While such incidents are not new, until the early 2000’s they had occurred at a relatively stable rate in relation to the population. However, the last few years have shown increases in both the raw numbers of incidents (as reflected in Figure 6) and in the rate of incidents in relation to population. This has been particularly significant in that the

rates of violence in general have generally been decreasing over the past 20-25 years. This change may be an indication that other factors may be influencing the occurrence of mass casualty incidents, both those that occur in private settings (e.g., familicides) and those occurring in public settings.

Violent Extremism

School staff may not consider schools to be places where concerns about terrorism or violent extremism may exist, yet experience shows that can be the case. The FBI stated:

High school students are ideal targets for recruitment by violent extremists seeking support for their radical ideologies, foreign fighter networks, or conducting acts of targeted violence within our borders. High schools must remain vigilant in educating their students about catalysts that drive violent extremism and the potential consequences of embracing extremist beliefs (FBI, 2016, [Preventing Violent Extremism in Schools](#)).

Experiences related to adverse childhood experiences and development challenges can leave youth at risk for targeting by others with violent ideology, often utilizing the ubiquitous use of social media by youth as a gateway to connection. The FBI noted the importance of school threat assessment teams being prepared to recognize and address such concerns effectively. The approaches advocated for (by the FBI) to identify and reduce risks for involvement in violent extremism overlap significantly with the general roles of the threat assessment team:

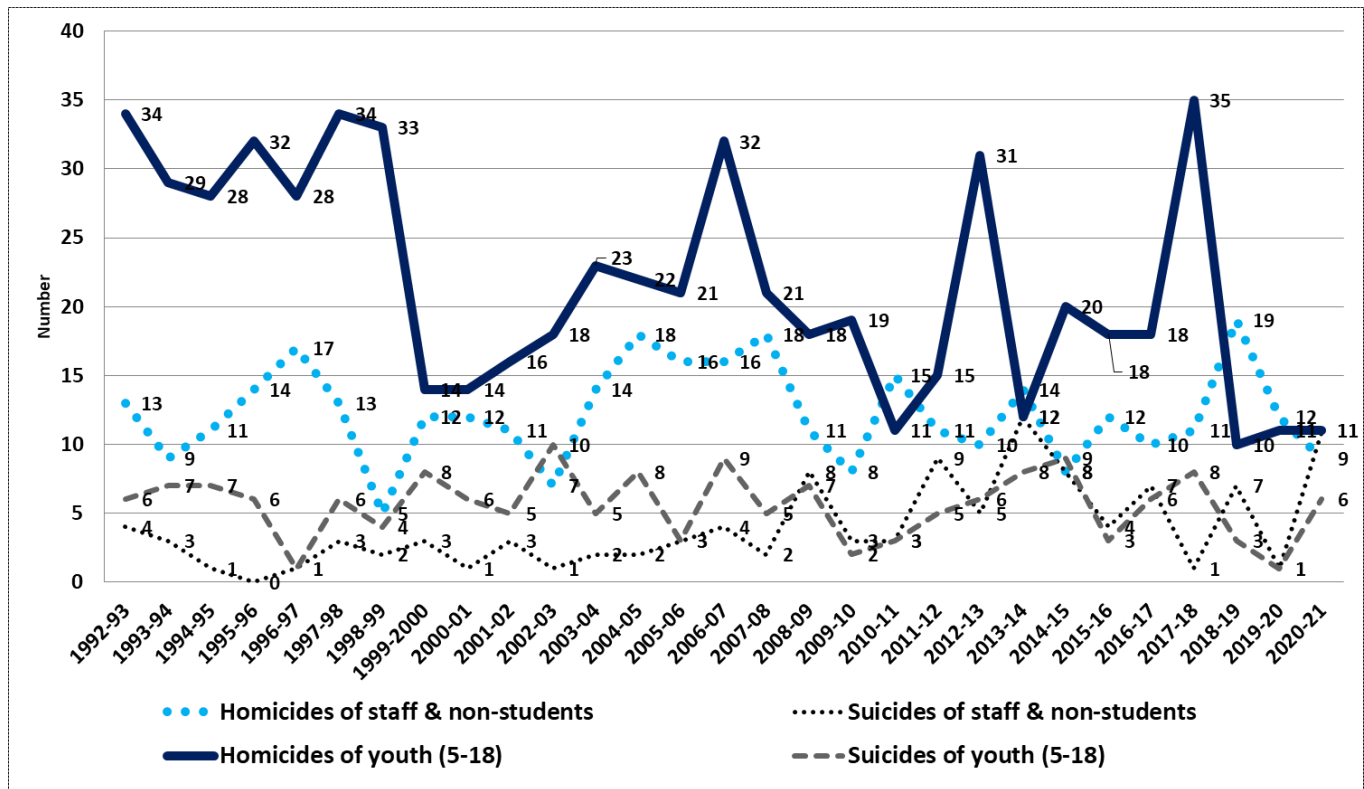
- Building resilient schools through enhanced student social and emotional well-being
- Increasing awareness about the forms and dynamics of violent extremism
- Enhancing information sharing among those stakeholders who can provide support and services to students
- Facilitating disengagement programs to turn at-risk youth away from violent trajectories
- Leveraging school programs to deter youth from embracing extremist ideologies
- Fostering ideals of diversity, equity, inclusion, and tolerance, while upholding Constitutional freedoms and rights under the law.

School-Associated Violent Deaths & Injuries

Mass violence impacting schools has also been an increasing concern over the past several years. While the rate of occurrence of multiple victim incidents in schools has increased since 2010 (CDC, 2019), they are still relatively rare. However, when they do occur, such incidents can have a catastrophic impact on the community in which they occur, and a ripple effect across the nation. Mass casualty incidents impact student, staff, and parent perceptions regarding the safety of schools and the preparedness and responsiveness of school administrators. Schools must develop and utilize systematic processes that consider the risk for such eventualities and be prepared to prevent, respond to, and recover from them to the extent possible.

In addition to mass-casualty incidents, there are other incidents at schools that result in the homicides or death by suicide of students, staff, and others. The School-Associated Violent Death Surveillance System has tracked such incidents since the early 1990's (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. School-Associated Violent Deaths



National Center for Educational Statistics. (2023)

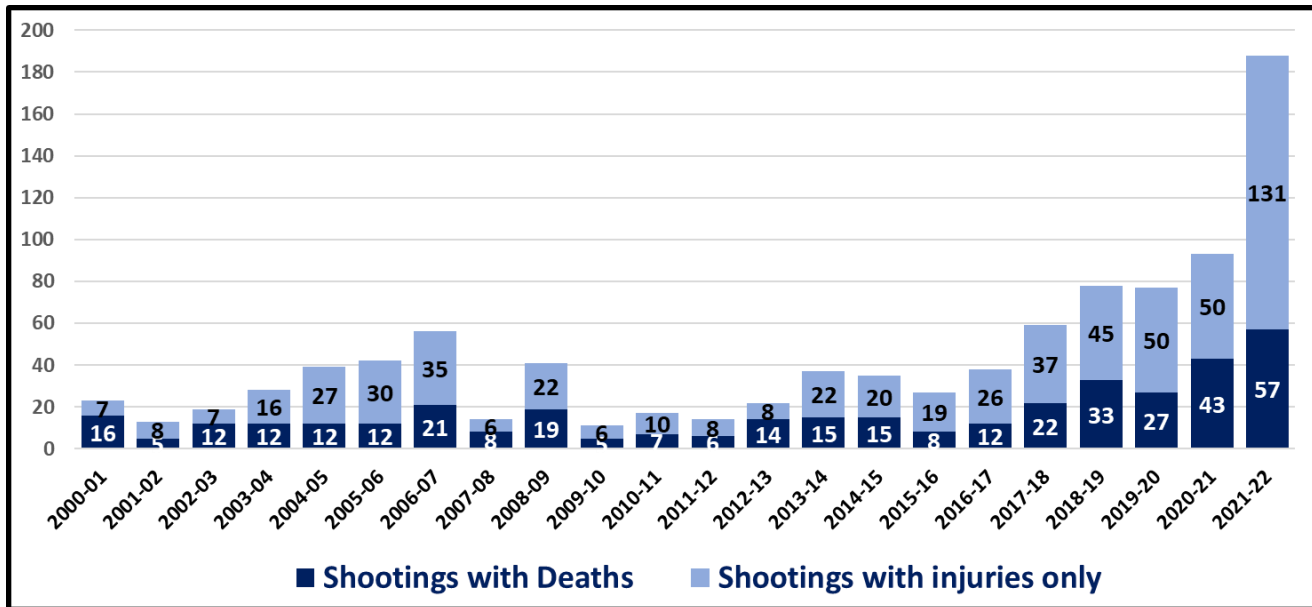
[Table 228.10. School-associated violent deaths 1992-93 through 2020-21](#)

Not surprisingly, most multiple victim homicides involve use of firearms by the perpetrator. While firearms were used in over 60 percent of single victim homicides at school, another 22 percent involved use of edged weapons and 8 percent from blunt force injuries. BTAM team members should consider any weapon that may be available to a subject of concern, not just firearms.

It is also important to note that students were not the only perpetrators of homicides at schools. While students account for 44 percent of single victim homicides and 38 percent of multiple victim homicides, over 30 percent of all school-associated homicides are perpetrated by persons with no affiliation with the school.

As seen in Figure 8, there has been a significant increase in shooting incidents with casualties at schools across the nation. Other data available through the U.S. Department of Education shows a substantial increase in school shootings (with and without casualties) since 2016 (See [Digest of Education Statistics 2022, table 228.12](#)).

Figure 8. Shooting Incidents With Casualties at Public and Private Schools



<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/a01/violent-deaths-and-shootings?tid=4>
[Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2022](#)

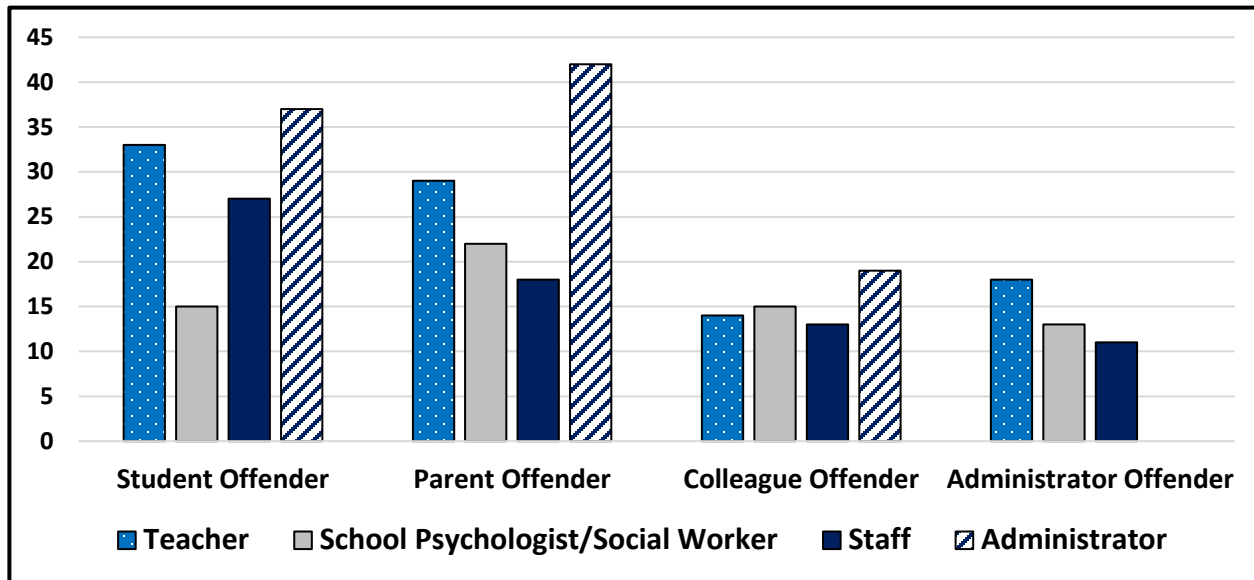
While the trends above are troubling, most cases faced by school threat assessment teams do not involve concerns about mass attacks, or homicide, or even shootings. Instead, cases will typically involve individuals who are struggling with real and perceived grievances and other life stressors, have few or compromised coping skills, and will be engaging in behaviors that are concerning or threatening to a relatively small number of staff or students. BTAM Team members should be familiar with risk factors, protective factors and warning signs for individuals who may pose a threat of violence or harm to self or others. The following are several examples of types of threats that may be posed.

Threats and Fear for Safety

In 2021, about 7 percent of students indicated they were threatened or injured with a weapon while at school in the last year. Approximately 9 percent of high school students did not go to school because they felt unsafe at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey, with girls more likely than boys to report such concerns and at increasing levels since 2011 ([Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report 2011-2021](#)). Students experiencing threats or injuries with a weapon at school are more likely to carry a weapon, including guns.

A 2022 study by the American Psychological Association found significantly elevated reports of school staff experiencing verbal threats, cyber bullying, intimidation or sexual harassment during COVID ([Violence Against Educators and School Personnel: Crisis During COVID](#)). The verbal threats and intimidation came from students, parents of students, colleagues, and school administrators (See Figure 9). That study also noted that 14 to 22 percent of school staff (depending on their role) had experienced any physical violence from students.

Figure 9. Reports of Verbal Threats or Intimidation, or Harrassment against School Staff



American Psychological Association (2022).

[Violence Against Educators and School Personnel: Crisis During COVID](#)

Intimate Partner Violence

Domestic, dating, or intimate-partner violence are significant issues affecting a broad range of organizations. Overall rates of violence at work have decreased steadily for the past 20 years. However, incidents of domestic/relational violence coming into the workplace (or other organizations) have not decreased in the same way and (for some organizations) have increased over the past few years. BTAM team members should understand foundational issues related to violence risk in such cases, especially the importance of recognizing the significance of attempted strangulation, immediate availability of a firearm, and other significant risk factors for continued violence including homicide.

Dating violence and sexual assault disproportionately affect teens and young adults. Hundreds of thousands of young people are experiencing dating abuse, sexual assault, and stalking every year. Among adult victims of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, 22% of women and 15% of men first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Division of Violence Prevention).

The [Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report 2011-2021](#) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control found that 8.5% of high school students had experienced physical violence by someone they were dating and 9.7% of students had experienced sexual violence, including non-consensual sex. Girls were more likely than boys to report both physical and sexual violence by a dating partner. There is significant diversity in youth dating abuse victims including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) individuals, immigrants, those with limited English proficiency, and those whose religious or cultural values may limit disclosure (of the abuse) to others.

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveys show that sexual minority students experience higher risk for violent victimization. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey defines sexual minority youth (SMY) are those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB); who are not sure of their sexual identity; or who have sexual contact with persons of the same or both sexes.

In February 2020, the U.S. Secretary of Education emphasized the need for schools to comply with obligations under Title IX to address issues of sexual discrimination including harassment and sexual violence (e.g., domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, stalking). Schools may face increased scrutiny and compliance reviews

regarding their handling of incidents of sexual violence and misconduct, including circumstances where schools are perceived as not effectively resolving concerns about staff who engage in sexual misconduct.

Teen dating violence has significant effects on physical health, mental health, and educational outcomes. Youth victims of dating violence are more likely to experience depression and anxiety symptoms, engage in unhealthy behaviors like using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol, exhibit antisocial behaviors, and more frequently express thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Female students who experienced both physical and sexual dating were twice as likely to attempt suicide as students who reported experiencing one type of violence. Male victims of both types of violence were about 3 times as likely to attempt suicide as male students who experienced one form of victimization.

Stalking

- Stalking is a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. One in six women, and one in 17 men will be stalked in their lifetime. Approximately 5% of high school students acknowledged having stalked someone in the prior year. Stalkers use many strategies to stalk their victims. The acronym S-L-I-I (Logan & Walker, 2017) can help teams consider the range of a stalker's behavior and its impact:
 - Surveillance: How is the stalker tracking or monitoring the victim?
 - Life invasion: How has the stalker invaded the victim's life?
 - Interference: What has the victim lost and/or what is s/he afraid of losing because of the stalker?
 - Intimidation: How has the stalker intimidated or threatened the victim?

Stalking is a significant risk factor for lethality in cases of intimate partner violence with as many as three-quarters of femicide victims murdered by intimate partners being stalked prior to being killed. Yet very few stalkers are charged, arrested, or prosecuted.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit a person for labor or commercial sex. Any minor (i.e., under the age of 18) who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is a victim of human trafficking according to U.S. law, regardless of whether there is force, fraud, or coercion.

Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked in countries around the world – including the United States. Many of these victims are lured with false promises of financial or emotional security; and they are forced or coerced into commercial sex (prostitution), domestic servitude, or other types of forced labor.

Increasingly, criminal organizations such as gangs are luring children from local schools into commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking. Human trafficking can involve school-age youths, particularly those made vulnerable by unstable family situations, or who have little or no social support. The children at risk are not just high school students – studies show that the average age a child is trafficked into the commercial sex trade is between 11 and 14 years old. Traffickers may target young victims through social media websites, after-school programs, or through other students used by the traffickers to recruit other victims.

Indicators of Human Trafficking

Threat assessment team members should be familiar with potential indicators of human trafficking. While no single indicator is necessarily proof of human trafficking, recognizing the signs is the first step in identifying and helping potential victims.

- Unexplained absences from work/school, or not attending regularly.
- Sudden changes to usual attire, behavior, or relationships
- Suddenly has more (and/or more expensive) material possessions
- Chronically run away from home
- Act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous and paranoid.

- Defer to another person to speak for him or her, especially during interactions with authority figures (this may include an adult described by the student as a relative, but also may be a friend or dating partner)
- Show signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or other serious pain or suffering
- Appear to have been deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care, or other life necessities.
- Possess their own identification documents (e.g., student identification card, driver's license, or passport), vs someone else having control of them.
- Presence of a "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" who is noticeably older.
- Engaging in uncharacteristically promiscuous behavior or making references to sexual situations or terminology that are beyond age-specific norms.
- Appear to be restricted from contacting family, friends, or his or her legal guardian.

Adapted from: [U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Human trafficking 101 for school administrators and staff.](#)

Adult Sexual Misconduct Perpetrators

There has been increased attention to concerns about school staff members who have engaged in predatory sexual misconduct towards others. The Education Week Research Center (2018) found that over 30% of school staff had observed or experienced sexual misconduct from or between colleagues, and 15% had observed staff engage in misconduct toward students. Nearly 7% of students have reported unwanted sexual contact that most commonly came from coaches, teachers, substitute teachers, and bus drivers. Most incidents involved physical contact, but technology played a significant role in three-quarters of cases (Henschel & Grant, 2018). Perpetrators who work in schools target students using the same methods as those who target children in other settings: they zero in on those who are vulnerable, are calculating in their approach to isolate, manipulate, and lie to children to gain sexual contact and make them feel complicit (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Grooming, Trolling, and Exploiting

To keep their conduct secret, perpetrators coerce and "groom" potential victims. That is, as sexual contact escalates, they methodically increase the attention and rewards they give to their targets. Grooming allows perpetrators to assess their targets' silence at each step, pressing boundaries as they go. To nurture the relationship, perpetrators make the target feel "special" by, for example, brandishing gifts and/or spending extra time with the target in nonsexual ways, all to learn whether the target will keep silent (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

At the same time, the perpetrator also tests others surrounding the target, including those who work with the victim, peers, and the victim's caretakers or supervisors. More subtle behaviors may be done publicly so that the perpetrator can gauge reactions, share information to manipulate how the caretakers/supervisors/peers interpret the behavior, and further control the victim. For example, a teacher may lead their colleagues to believe the parent has provided consent for them to drive a student home because the parent needs help. In response, the perpetrator receives accolades and gratitude from their colleagues and has begun grooming peers. It is also harder for the victim to feel believed by others. The perpetrator gradually progresses to engaging in sexualized behaviors, often using threats and intimidation tactics with the child to keep his or her sexual misconduct secret. Keeping silent implicates the targets, making the child believe they have been complicit in their own abuse and are therefore responsible for the abuse. Perpetrators will often threaten wavering targets, or those who seem likely to report the misconduct, with a reminder of their powerlessness and that the victims will not be believed (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Bullying

Bullying is generally defined as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and

victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying. Bullying does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict. Key elements of bullying behavior include:

- Unwanted and aggressive behavior intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate
- A real or perceived imbalance of power between the subject(s) doing the bullying and the victim
- Repeated behavior over time or causes physical or emotional harm

In 2021, about 15 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied at school and 16% said they were cyber bullied during the school year. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), involvement in bullying, along with other risk factors, increases the chance that a young person will engage in suicide-related behaviors compared to students who do not have any involvement in bullying. Note that this includes students being bullied and those perpetrating bullying behavior.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (2022) *Youth Risk Behavior Survey: 2011-2021*.

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/YRBS_Data-Summary-Trends_Report2023_508.pdf

While we have the most data about bullying in schools, that does not mean schools are the only places (nor that students are the only victims or perpetrators). Bullying and patterns of bias and harassment occur across a wide range of settings, victims, and perpetrators. Bullying is often a significant factor associated with targeted violence and bullying victims attempt to address unresolved grievances against those who have bullied them, or those that failed to do anything to stop the bullying or failed to support the victim.

Potential indicators of bullying:

- Physical signs like torn, damaged, or soiled clothing; unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches; missing or damaged items like work materials without a credible explanation
- Social isolation, sudden loss of friends, or avoidance of social situations
- Frequent headaches, stomach aches, feeling sick, illness or feigning illness
- Changes in eating habits, difficulty sleeping, frequent nightmares
- Declining work/school performance, loss of interest in school/work, or not wanting to go to school/work
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors or talking about suicide

Barriers to seeking help among persons being bullied:

- Might feel helpless, weak, or fear being seen as a snitch or tattletale
- Fear of backlash or more bullying
- Feel humiliated and not want adults or others to know
- Feel socially isolated
- Fear being rejected by peers and losing support

Material adapted from National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments

[*Understanding and Intervening in Bullying Behavior.*](#)

Weapon Carrying at School

In 2021, about 13 percent of students in grades 9–12 reported that they had carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club anywhere at least 1 day during the previous 30 days, and 3.1% reported carrying a weapon on school property at least one day during the previous 30 days. In the 2021-22 academic year, approximately 2.7% of students reported access to a loaded gun without adult permission during the school year (Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey; Digest of Education Statistics, [Tables 231.40](#) and [231.70](#)).

Suicidal Behaviors

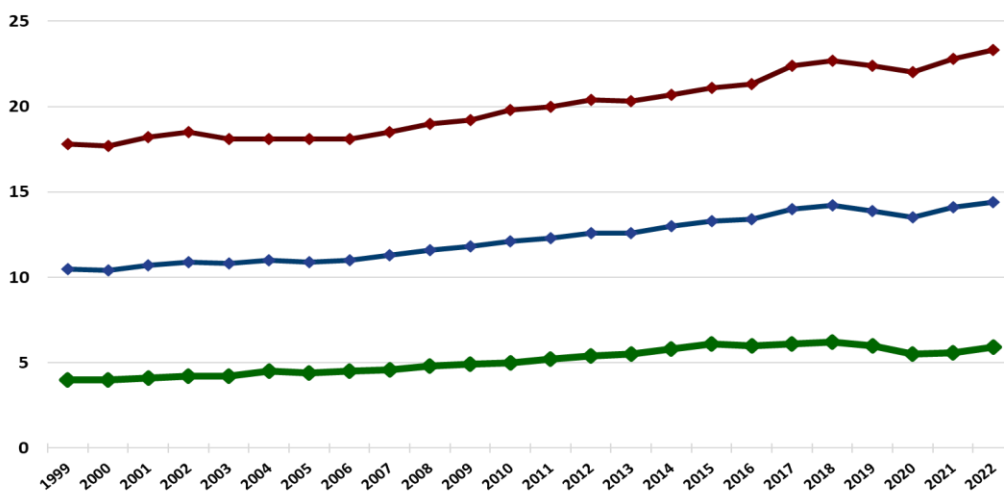
Research on targeted violence, especially those that engage in homicidal behavior, shows that in addition to their violent thoughts or acts toward others, many perpetrators were also suicidal.

It is important to note that most people who are suicidal are not homicidal and rarely pose an intentional danger to others. They are most likely to exhibit despondency, depressive behaviors, hopelessness, and/or a desire to escape their pain or the pain/burden that they perceive they impose on others. Over 75% of persons engaging in suicidal behaviors have engaged in behaviors (e.g., warning signs) that caused concern for their well-being. BTAM Team members should screen for risk to others when there are indications of suicidality but should not presume such risk is always present. As the BTAM process focuses on improving the health, safety, and well-being of the community, BTAM Team members facilitate effective interventions to minimize suicide risk, and to address any impact the subject's suicidal behavior has had on others.

In contrast, subjects who are homicidal and suicidal may exhibit suicidal behaviors more overtly than those associated with intent to harm others. In addition to expressions of hopelessness and despondency, there are more likely to be co-associated hostility and unresolved grievances against those that they perceive caused their pain or hopelessness, or contributed to it, or failed to address their grievances. Thus, in addition to suicidality, there is a greater risk of intended harm to others.

Suicidal behaviors are a significant and growing concern across all genders and age groups. From the mid-1990s to 2019 there was a steady upward trend in rates of death by suicide, despite more prevalent suicide prevention/intervention programs. In 2020, deaths by suicide dropped slightly, especially for many adults, and this trend has continued through the pandemic. However, in 2021, suicide rates returned to pre-pandemic levels (see Figure 10).

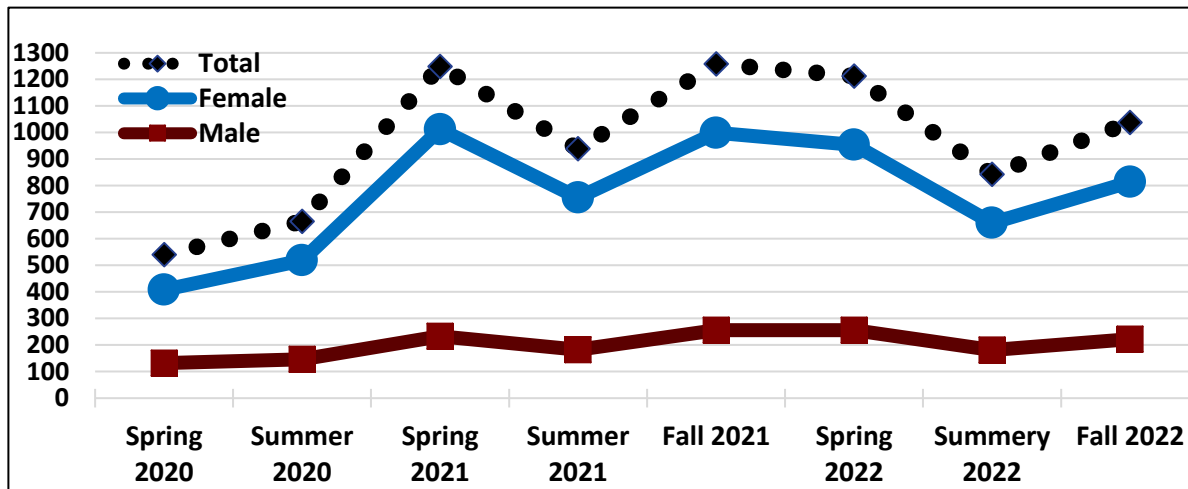
Figure 10. Age-Adjusted Suicide Rates per 100,000 by Sex: US 1999-2022



Center for Disease Control WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports.
<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/suicide-data-statistics.html>

During the pandemic, rates of suicidal behaviors resulting in emergency department admissions increased significantly for adolescents in the early spring of 2021, especially among 12–17-year-old girls (see Figure 11). Those elevated rates have largely sustained for adolescent girls.

Figure 11. Emergency Department Visits for Suicide Attempts for Adolescents, by Sex.



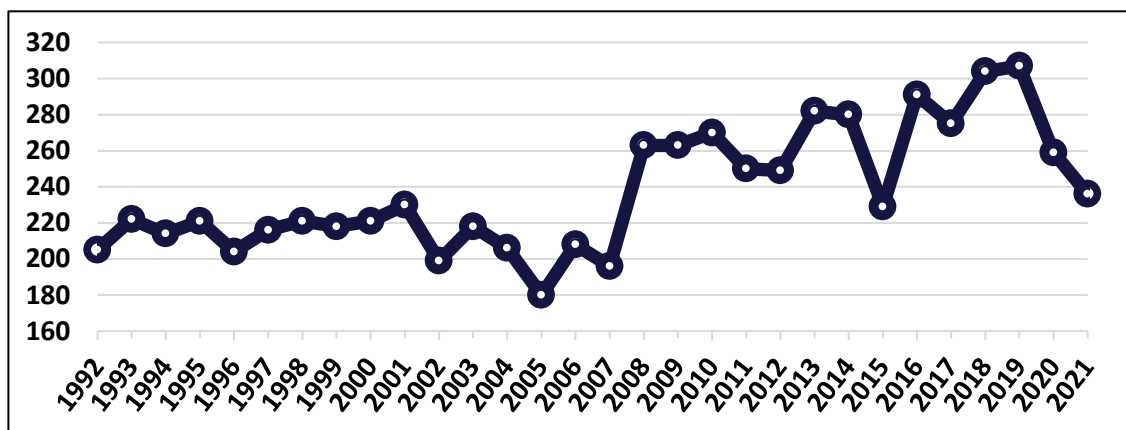
CDS Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (May 12, 2023). 72(19), 502-512

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/pdfs/mm7219a1-H.pdf>

This cohort of adolescents, unless effectively treated, is likely to pose increased risk for self-harm, and (for a smaller subject where unresolved grievances and hostility co-occur with despondency) risk for harm to others for the next several years. This should be considered as a potential risk factor when considering cases involving persons from this cohort.

Finally, suicidal behavior that occurs in public settings (e.g., workplaces, schools, campuses, etc.) rather than in private settings (e.g., homes, apartments, places of personal safety, etc.) are much more likely to involve subjects with unresolved grievances and hostility toward to workplace/location and/or the people that are associated with that location. Figure 14 describes a concerning trend of deaths by suicide occurring in workplaces in the United States.

Figure 12. Workplace Deaths by Suicide in the US, 1992 to 2021.



US Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Dept. of Labor (2021)

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.t02.htm>

Since 2004, there has been a steady trendline for increased numbers of workplace suicides until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, when many workplaces shifted to having employees work from home rather than in the primary workplace setting.

While these incidents rarely include active attempts to physically harm others, such incidents in the workplace or school can have significant impact on perceptions and experience of the health, safety, and well-being of that location, and can significantly disrupt continuity of operations.

Key Findings About Targeted Violence

As noted above, this guide is informed by research and lessons-learned from a wide range of sources. The BTAM field has benefitted a great deal from this enhanced understanding of the nature and process of targeted violence. Among the key findings:

There is no demographic profile of a perpetrator of targeted violence.

There is no useful set of traits or demographics that described all—or even most—of the perpetrators. Instead, the demographic, personality, history, and social characteristics of the attackers varied substantially. Knowing that a subject shares general characteristics, behaviors, features, or traits with prior perpetrators does not greatly help in determining whether that subject is thinking about or planning for a violent act. The use of profiles in this way is not an effective approach to identifying subjects who may pose a risk for targeted violence or for assessing the risk that a particular subject may pose.

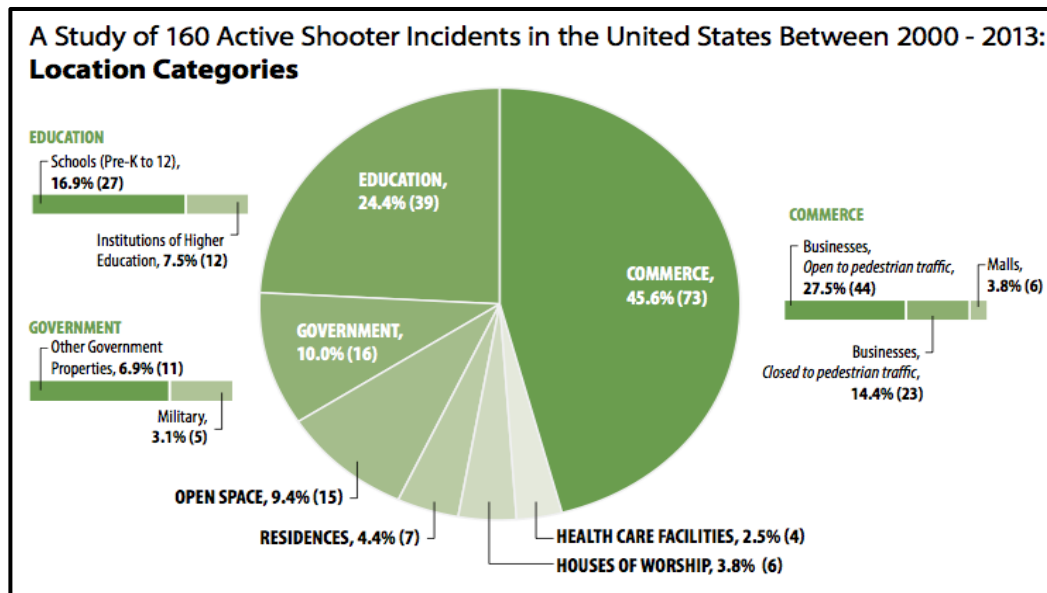
Reliance on profiles to predict future violent acts carries two substantial risks: (1) the great majority of subjects who fit any given profile of a "workplace shooter/attacker" will not actually pose a risk of targeted violence, and (2) using profiles will fail to identify some subjects who in fact pose a risk of violence but share few, if any, characteristics with prior attackers.

Rather than trying to determine the "type" of subject who may engage in targeted violence, an inquiry should focus instead on a subject's behaviors and communications to determine if that subject appears to be planning or preparing to cause harm and, if so, how fast the subject is moving toward harm, and where intervention may be possible.

There is no profile for the type of organization or place that has been targeted.

Acts of targeted violence have occurred in a variety of organizations, in a wide range of locations across the nation and around the world. In examining active shooter events, for example, the FBI found that they had occurred across nearly all types of public settings (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Locations of Active Shooter Events in the US: 2000-2013



[FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. \(2018\). A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013](#)

Most perpetrators of targeted violence act alone in the commission of the violent act.

For all forms of targeted violence, most perpetrators act alone. It is important to recognize, however, that in some cases, perpetrators collaborate in teams with harmful intent. This is more common in cases involving violent extremism, gang violence, and predatory sexual misconduct. Outside of those contexts, when considering mass violence as an intended act, “killing teams” are more likely among adolescents rather than adults. BTAM Team members should be attentive to the possibility of perpetrator collaborations.

In many cases, others were involved in some capacity.

In many cases, others influenced or encouraged the perpetrator to take violent action, aided in the planning or preparation of the violent act, or (despite knowledge of violent intent of the perpetrator, chose not to report concerns or take other steps to intervene.

Any investigation of potential targeted violence should include attention to the role that the subject's friends, peers or social media contacts may be playing in that subject's thinking about and preparations for an attack. It is possible that feedback from friends or others may help to move a subject from an unformed thought about attacking to developing and advancing a plan to carry out the attack.

Incidents of targeted violence are rarely sudden or impulsive acts.

Perpetrators of targeted violence engage in considering, planning, and preparing for acts of targeted violence. See discussion of the “Pathway to Violence” above.

Most subjects did not threaten the targets directly.

The majority of the attackers in targeted violence incidents did not communicate threats to their target(s) beforehand - whether in direct (“I will kill YOU”), indirect (“You won't want to be here next Tuesday” said to a third party), or conditional (“If you don't give me a decent performance evaluation, I will _____”) language prior to the attack. However, many expressed their grievances and aspects of their thoughts or plans to others, often through social media or online activities. This finding underscores the importance of not waiting for a communicated threat before beginning a protective criminal investigation; other alarming or troubling behavior can prompt threat managers to gather more information and make an assessment, even if the person of concern does not threaten a target directly.

Perpetrators often had multiple grievances or motives that fueled violent intent.

The most common involve unresolved grievances with a peer (co-worker or classmate) or a romantic relationship. However, grievances may involve other unresolved personal issues, a desire to kill or harm, suicide, notoriety/fame, etc. BTAM Team members, upon identifying a likely grievance, should consider if there are other grievances (perhaps known only to sources that have not yet been identified) that may be relevant to the case. This comprehensive approach will facilitate more effective problem-solving.

Many subjects felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to their act of violence.

In school settings, almost three-quarters of the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked, or injured by others prior to the incident. Research on both school and workplace violence shows that patterns of bullying or harassment are often related to violence. Bullying was not a factor in every case, and clearly not every person who is bullied in an organization will pose a risk for targeted violence in the organization.

Nevertheless, in several of the cases studied, attackers described being harassed or bullied in terms that suggested that these experiences approached torment. These attackers told of behaviors that, if they occurred in the workplace, likely would meet legal definitions of harassment and/or assault. School administrators play an important role in ensuring that school students and staff are not bullied or harassed, and that the school not only prohibits bullying but also empowers staff and students to report situations in which bullying may be occurring.

Most subjects had multiple stressors and difficulty coping with those stressors.

In addition to the circumstances that were the basis for their grievances, many perpetrators had significant other stressors and/or difficulties with losses or failures. Many were suicidal. Most attackers appeared to have difficulty coping with losses, personal failures, or other difficult circumstances. Almost all the attackers had experienced or perceived some major loss prior to the attack. These losses included a perceived failure or loss of status; loss of a loved one or of a significant relationship, including a romantic relationship; and a major illness experienced by the attacker or someone significant to him. Although most attackers had not received a formal mental health evaluation or diagnosis, most attackers exhibited a history of suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts at some point prior to their attack (78%). When considering case management approaches, there may be many things we can do to help someone who is having difficulty coping with stresses, losses, or failures – or who is desperate or even suicidal.

Most subjects had access to weapons, and had used weapons, prior to the attack.

Access to weapons among some subjects may be common. However, when there are unresolved grievances along with consideration for use of violence to address those grievances, any effort to acquire, prepare or use a weapon or ammunition may be a significant move in the subject's progression from idea to action. Any inquiry should include investigation of and attention to weapon access, use, fascination with, or communications about weapons. A large proportion of subjects (who have engaged in attacks with firearms) acquired their guns from home, relatives, or friends. This points to the need for school and law enforcement officials to collaborate on policies and procedures for responding when a subject is thought to have, or to be bringing a firearm into the school.

Experience using weapons and access to them was common for many attackers. Nearly two-thirds of the attackers had a known history of weapons use, including knives, guns, and bombs (63 percent, n=26). Over half of the attackers had some experience specifically with a gun prior to the incident (59 percent, n=24), while others had experience with bombs or explosives (15 percent, n=6). Of course, many people (especially those in military or law enforcement roles, or who engage in hunting or recreational target shooting) have experience with weapons and do not pose a threat based solely on that experience. Attention should also be given to indications of any efforts by a subject to build a bomb or acquire bomb-making components, or any other means of harm to others. The critical consideration is the capability for harm (e.g., means of harm) in someone expressing intent to act violently regarding unresolved grievances.

Many perpetrators exhibited psychological, behavioral, or developmental symptoms.

Note that the emphasis is on having exhibited symptoms of mental health conditions, rather than on meeting criteria for diagnosis. Approximately 30-40 percent of perpetrators had a known mental health diagnosis which is significant given that the population base rate is around 20-25 percent. This does not necessarily mean that mental illness caused the violence, only that it was a co-occurring factor which may have impacted perceptions of grievances or ability to cope effectively with them. Perpetrators also often had significant histories of substance use or abuse, though they were rarely under the influence of a recreational drug during the targeted violence incident.

Note that the greatest risk for violence is not solely the diagnosis of a mental health condition but the absence of effective treatment. When a person living with a mental health condition is effectively treated, and remains engaged with and compliant with that treatment, violence risk drops similar to levels as those with no mental health conditions.

The three main categories of mental health symptoms displayed prior to acts of targeted violence include:

- Psychological (e.g., depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, anxiety, psychosis)
- Behavioral (e.g., defiance/misconduct, attention deficit disorder, aggression, anger, animal cruelty)
- Neurological/developmental (e.g., developmental delays, cognitive deficits, learning disabilities).

Again, the significance of any of these is largely the degree to which they impact perceptions of grievances, or ability to cope with grievances or other stressors.

Most subjects had seriously concerned others prior to their act of violence.

Nearly all the subjects engaged in behaviors—prior to their attacks—that caused concern or alarm to at least one person, and most concerned more than one person. Most individuals who perpetrated violence engaged in multiple behaviors prior to the incident that caused others to have serious concerns about their behavior and/or well-being.

Almost all the perpetrators engaged in some behavior prior to the attack that caused others—supervisors, colleagues, peers, family members—to be concerned. The behaviors that led other individuals to be concerned about the attacker included both behaviors specifically related to the violent act, such as efforts to get a gun, as well as other disturbing behaviors not necessarily related to the subsequent violence, e.g., degree of fixation on the grievance, personalization of the grievance, difficulty coping with life events, etc.

- Many perpetrators were preoccupied with violent interests, incidents, or perpetrators.
- Many perpetrators had a history of violence.
- Most perpetrators of mass violence had a history of school/work disciplinary actions.
- Many had prior contact with law enforcement. The contacts did not necessarily result in criminal/juvenile charges but includes welfare checks or calls regarding suspicious or disruptive persons.
- Many perpetrators were suicidal in addition to their violent thoughts or acts toward others. Note that suicidal behaviors are a significant and growing concern across all genders and age groups.

Prior to violent acts, others usually know aspects of subject's grievances, ideas, plans or preparations.

Peers are often the ones that observe those behaviors and can be an important part of prevention efforts. A friend, colleague or organization mate may be the first person to hear that a subject is thinking about or planning to harm someone. Nevertheless, for a variety of reasons, those who have information about a potential incident of targeted violence may not alert someone on their own. Organizations can and should encourage their members to report those concerns.

Schools also benefit from ensuring they have a fair, thoughtful, and effective system to respond to concerns brought forward. If school community members have concerns about how school staff will react to information that they bring forward (e.g., overreact or under-respond), they may be even less inclined to volunteer such information.

Many bystanders who had knowledge of concerning behaviors did not report them.

In most incidents of completed acts of mass violence, others (who knew of violent intent, planning or preparation of the perpetrators) did not report their concerns before the violent act. Where bystanders report and/or address concerning, aberrant, or threatening behaviors, violence has been averted.

Despite prompt law enforcement response, most incidents were brief and were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention.

Even though law enforcement responded very quickly to these shootings once notified, most school-based attacks were stopped through intervention by school administrators, educators, and students, or by the attackers stopping on their own. This seems largely to be a function of how brief most of these incidents were. The short duration of most incidents of targeted violence argues for the importance of developing preventive measures in addition to any emergency planning for a school or school district. The preventive measures should include protocols and procedures for responding to and managing threats and other behaviors of concern.

Implications for Prevention

The key message in all of this is that many acts of targeted violence are preventable. Information about a subject's ideas, behaviors, plans & preparations for violence can often be observed before harm can occur. The challenge is that while there are usually pieces of the puzzle available, the information is likely to be scattered and fragmented.

This reality is represented in many of the incidents of targeted violence that have impacted organizations. This was true regarding the mass casualty incident that occurred at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007.

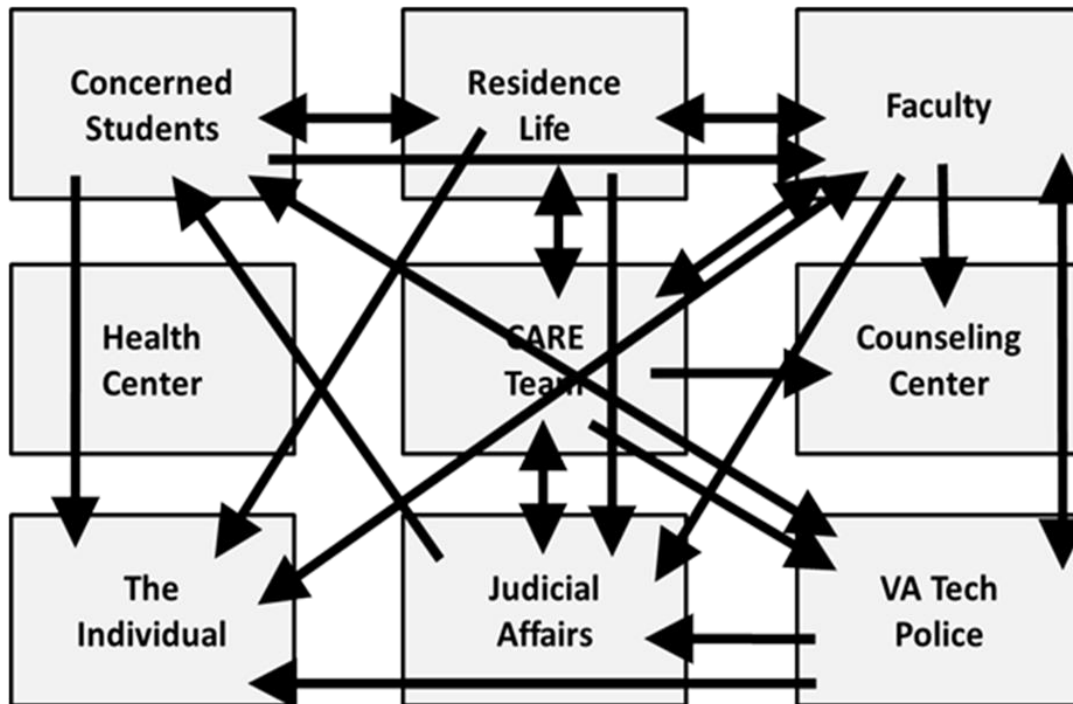
The graphic in Figure 14 summarizes key finding from an after-action review conducted by the Inspector General for (what is now) the Department of Behavioral Health Services for the Commonwealth of Virginia and captures the scattered and fragmented nature of the concerns regarding the subject (who ultimately engages in violence) and communication about those concerns.

The nine boxes in the graphic represent people, groups, or departments at Virginia Tech in the time leading up to the mass-casualty incident. The "Individual" at lower left, is the person who will ultimately engage in the mass casualty incident on April 16, 2007.

The arrows represent pathways of communication between the different entities represented.

All the communication represented in the arrows involve concerns regarding the "Individual." All of these are either concerns for his wellbeing, or concerns regarding the impact he is having on others, or both. Importantly, all the concerns represented were significant enough that they were either documented or conveyed to a reliable source (that could later verify the concern). Further, all the concerns represented occurred during a relatively brief period in the fall of 2005 (e.g., early October to mid-December 2005), approximately 1.5 years prior to the mass casualty incident at Virginia Tech.

Figure 14. Communication of Concerns Regarding the Subject of Concern at Virginia Tech



SOURCE: OIG Report #140-07: Investigation of the April 16, 2007, Critical Incident at Virginia Tech. Prepared by: Office of the Inspector General for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services – Commonwealth of Virginia

The graphic demonstrates several key points.

- First, there were many concerns regarding the individual. Each arrow represents a path of communications about concerns, and many of the arrows reflect multiple concerns (about the subject) expressed between groups.
- No individual or department on campus was aware of all the concerns.
- No individual or department was designated with the responsibility or authority to be aware of concerns occurring across departments, i.e., there was no centralized awareness of the breadth and depth of concerns regarding the individual or the impact he was having on others.
- The institution did not know what it did not know about the situation.
- Therefore, there was no comprehensive or coordinated response to attempt to address the concerns.

While this graphic is about the situation at Virginia Tech at the time leading up to the mass casualty incident, the same problems have occurred across multiple incidents of targeted violence that have impacted organizations of various types across the nation.

Key findings from several reviews of critical incidents include:

- Failure to build an effective system to identify and detect developing concerns
- Failure to support effective communication to, with, and between elements of that system, based on trust and engagement with the community

There is often much discussion about the importance of “connecting the dots.” However, this fails to address what is necessary for the dots to be connected. BTAM expert Rich Wilson puts this rather succinctly in his work with organizations, “You can’t connect the dots, if you don’t collect the dots.” That is, effective BTAM processes build processes for gathering information about developing concerns (“collect the dots”) so that they can better understand the situation (“connect the dots”), so they can better manage the situation.

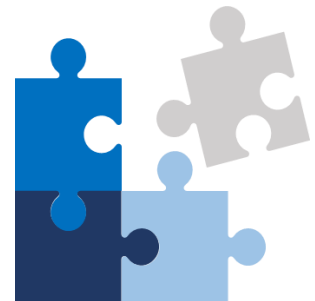
**You can't connect the dots,
 if you don't collect the dots.**
 -Rich Wilson, CPP

In summary,

- Many acts of violence can be prevented.
- Information about a subject's ideas, behaviors, plans & preparations for violence can often be observed before harm can occur.
- Information about a subject's ideas, behaviors, plans, or preparations tend to be scattered & fragmented.
- Keys for the community and the BTAM Team are to:
 - Recognize concerns.
 - Act quickly upon report of concerns.
 - Gather relevant information.
 - Enhance understanding of situation.
 - Facilitate intervention.

Collect the dots, so you can better connect the dots!

BTAM is somewhat like putting together a puzzle. The BTAM team may not have all the pieces but by working collaboratively with others, they can better find lost pieces, figure out how they go together, understand the picture that is emerging, and intervene appropriately.



GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

This section provides guidance for the development, implementation, and operation of comprehensive and effective behavioral threat assessment and management processes. This guidance is a synthesis of relevant research and recognized standards of practice. All guidance herein should be considered with relevant state and federal laws and school policies and procedures related to threat assessment and management. This *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* highlights key elements and considerations for practice but is not designed or intended to be a comprehensive compendium. BTAM practitioners should also consult other relevant resources as appropriate.

Essential Elements of an Effective Threat Assessment and Management Process

Research and practice have shown that to establish and sustain an effective behavioral threat assessment and management process, organizations must have a systematic process that:

- Utilizes an effective and relevant multi-disciplinary approach that enhances the team's ability to address all threats.
- Enables coordinated & timely awareness of developing concerns through active community engagement.
- Conducts a thorough holistic and contextual assessment of the situation (e.g., using the STEP framework).
- Implements proactive and integrated case management strategies (e.g., using the STEP framework).
- Monitors and re-assesses cases on a longitudinal basis so long as concerns continue.
- Conducts all practices in accordance with relevant laws, policies, and standards of practice.
- Sustains a focus on continuous improvement of the process and adapts to challenges and changing needs.

© Deisinger (1998); Deisinger & Nolan (2021)

Note that, for each essential element, the focus is on implementing, operating, and sustaining a systematic approach to practice. Each of these elements requires on-going efforts to develop, refine and enhance processes to facilitate high-quality BTAM practices. Effective teams work diligently and consistently to build capacity across these elements. Throughout this section, the *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* will address aspects of each of the essential elements.

A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Address All Threats

Professional standards of practice recommend the use of multi-disciplinary approaches to behavioral threat assessment and management. Such an approach greatly enhances the organization's ability to identify, assess, and manage all threats that may be posed to the organization, its members, its facilities, and its operations.

Multi-Disciplinary Threat Assessment & Management Process

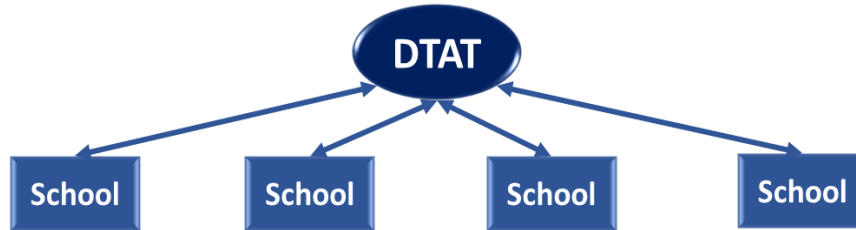
A well-developed multi-disciplinary process helps maximize the knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to address concerns and to enhance the team's ability to identify, inquire, assess, and manage cases. There are several considerations for establishing and operating a multi-disciplinary approach to behavioral threat assessment and management.

There are several considerations for establishing and operating a behavioral threat assessment and management team. This section is primarily focused on setting up a program within an individual school, although some school districts may opt to set up a team at the district level that can help schools within their district as needed. A district-level team is more commonly done in smaller school districts or in more remote areas where access to resources (e.g., mental health professionals, law enforcement, etc.) at the individual school level is very limited. In either case the considerations below generally apply.

BTAM Team Structure

Schools should structure their team(s) to meet their needs and based on the resources available.

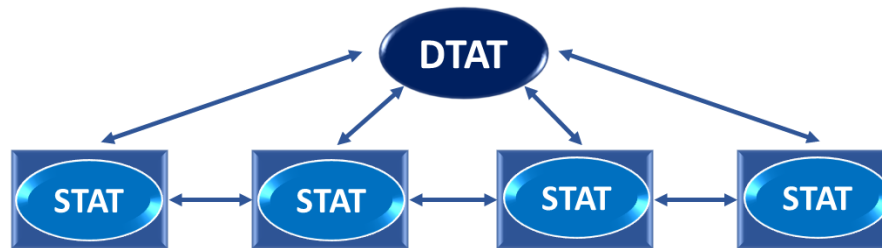
- Schools may have one district-level team that handles all threat cases, typically supported by triage teams in schools or areas of operation.



- The district may have teams for each school or group of schools (by geographic area, grade level, function, etc.). These teams communicate with other schools as appropriate.



- The district may have a hub & spoke arrangement of one central team that provides oversight, consistency, and accountability for all BTAM processes (and manages threats impacting whole district, as well as individual teams that address cases in their respective areas of responsibility, but all information shared with the central district level team.



Note: DTAT=District Threat Assessment Team; STAT=School Threat Assessment Team

Note that Louisiana law requires schools to have a District Threat Assessment Team (see <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=81032>)

Multi-Disciplinary Threat Assessment Team

BTAM Team Membership

A multi-disciplinary approach to threat assessment and management works best. This enhances the team's ability to:

- Facilitate early awareness of developing concerns/threats.
- Maximize skills and resources to address concerns and manage & monitor outcomes.
- Enhance:
 - Communication (to, from, & among the BTAM team and the relevant community)
 - Collaboration (working together for the best awareness and outcomes)
 - Coordination (engaging in planful and coordinate actions and interventions, within the team and with outside partners).
- A well-developed multi-disciplinary approach helps maximize the knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to address concerns and to enhance the team's ability to identify, inquire, assess, and manage cases.

Key membership for threat assessment teams typically involves people with expertise in school administration, counseling, instruction, and law enforcement.

Louisiana statutes require that the District Threat Assessment Team shall include:

- The local school superintendent
- The principal of each school
- A person with responsibility over the school facilities
- A mental health professional employed by the governing authority, or, if the governing authority has no such employee, a mental health professional selected by the local school superintendent
- Any school resource officer employed by the governing authority
- Any Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor employed by the governing authority; and
- The emergency preparedness and recovery point of contact

Source: <https://www.legis.la.gov/legis/Law.aspx?d=81032>

Following are examples of roles within schools that typically reflect the relevant expertise required and common roles for those members as part of the BTAM Team:

School Administration (e.g., principal, or assistant principal)

- Typically leads or chairs the team and facilitates the process
- Appoints members of the team and back-ups (as resources allow)
- Consults with team members to determine when threat assessment is necessary
- Ensures integrity and diligence of the process
- Assists in conducting interviews with the subject, targets, witnesses, etc.
- Ensures that the intervention/safety plan is followed
- Coordinates referrals to school or community resources
- Ensures compliance with relevant laws, regulations, standards of practice and memoranda of agreement

Counseling (e.g., school counselor, psychologist, social worker)

- Assists in conducting interviews with subjects, targets, witnesses, etc.
- Assists in reviewing information, including educational records, medical information, mental health evaluations, etc.
- Provide perspectives about motivations for violence or any impact of trauma, emotional distress, or psychological, behavioral, or cognitive issues that may impact risk or response to intervention
- Evaluates the need for additional assessment (e.g., mental health assessment, special education evaluation, disability, violence risk, fitness for duty, etc.)
- Facilitates involvement of counseling/mental resources within school and community resources
- Helps develop and implement management, intervention, and monitoring plans

Instruction (e.g., teacher, special education professional)

- Assists in conducting interviews with subject, targets, parents, teachers, and other students
- Liaison and support with teachers, coaches, parents
- Assists in gathering and assessing information for review (e.g., classroom behavior, performance, challenges)
- Guides and supports classroom management, peer support of staff

Law enforcement

- Take necessary steps to ensure safety and security
- Assists in conducting interviews with subject, targets, parents, teachers, and other students as appropriate and lawful
- Determines if legal action is necessary
- Facilitates appropriate follow-up activities in the community
- Serves as a liaison with law enforcement, probation/parole, juvenile justice, etc. as needed
- Assists in gathering information (e.g., law enforcement records or contacts)

Other considerations for membership include persons with expertise in:

- Human Resources (advise on personnel policy, practices, and resources such as Employee Assistance Programs)
- Special Education staff (assess for impact of any disability upon behavior, design accommodations or modifications to help address behavior, develop/update individual education program (IEP) or behavioral intervention plans)
- Legal Counsel (to advise on legal standards, liability concerns, compliance with law, regulations, and policy)
- Ad hoc members (to help team engage more effectively with underserved communities, or to minimize gaps in awareness or reporting, or who have special expertise to help the team deal with an issue)
- Key gatekeepers or stakeholders, i.e., someone from the school, (e.g., teacher, counselor, coach, nurse, other school employee) or community (e.g., probation officer, clergy member, social service worker) who may have a strong connection with the subject or target or have special expertise to help the team deal with an issue

Roles for all BTAM Team members:

- Provide guidance to the school community regarding recognition and reporting of concerning or threatening behavior that may pose a threat to the school community.
- Identify where and how concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior should be reported.
- Identify means and mechanisms for sharing concerns about situations (i.e., reporting options).
- Ensure communication, collaboration and coordination with other relevant resources and processes.
- Provide notifications (e.g., to administrators, parents/guardians, or law enforcement) as required under law or per the needs of a case.
- Respect confidentiality and privacy of the threat assessment and management process.
- Comply with relevant laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Facilitate review of records that may be relevant to the BTAM process, and to determine when, how, and with whom that information can be shared. Each member of the team should consider:
 - In your day-to-day role, what relevant information sources can you access lawfully and ethically?
 - Of that information, what can you share with other team members?
 - Are there any conditions that limit information sharing from your information source, or conversely, that require you to share information? If so,
 - What are those conditions?
 - What are the thresholds that impact when and to whom you can share information?

Designated team leader

Each team should have a designated leader to facilitate the team process and ensure compliance with legal requirements and standards of practice. This is typically a school administrator with oversight of the threat assessment team process for the school(s) covered by the team but may be any staff member with the requisite leadership skills, appointed by school administration.

Back-up members

Schools should (as resources allow) identify back-up or secondary team members to fulfill responsibilities if the primary team member is not available. Ideally, each core member would have at least one back-up, typically from the same area of expertise. Note that back-up members must have adequate training and support to be prepared to fulfill their roles when needed.

Supplemental Resources

Finally, BTAM Teams should consider having (or having access to) external consultants as needed. This may include:

BTAM Subject Matter Expert / Specialist.

A professional who has the relevant education, training, and experience to help with the inquiry, assessment, and management of challenging cases, to coach and ensure consistency of process, to assist with continual improvement of the process, and to sustain training of team members.

Independent Medical / Psychological Evaluator

This is a qualified forensic psychologist or psychiatrist who has the relevant education, training, and experience to conduct clinical/forensic violence risk assessments when necessary. It is best to have a pre-established relationship with at least one, and preferably two qualified evaluators. Having a pre-established relationship allows better opportunity to vet potential providers (to ensure their competence and experience), to understand costs and process for assessments, and for them to understand the needs and resources of your organization.

Maximizing Effectiveness of the Threat Management Process

Team membership should not be viewed only in terms of what positions or offices are represented on the team. Team membership can also factor in which types of individuals may be best suited to serve on a group like this. In choosing team members, it can help team functioning to have the following skills and attributes in those who make up the team:

- People who are passionate about the goals of the team – who believe prevention is possible.
- People who are familiar with (and trained in) threat assessment principles and practices.
- People who are inquisitive and can have a skeptical mindset for working on the team.
- People who exercise a good sense of judgment, and who are objective and thorough.
- People who relate well with others and can work well in a group.
- A team leader who can effectively lead team discussion – and keep the team on track
- People who can advocate for necessary resources – for the team and for the cases.

Key Dynamics of Successful Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Research across several organizations has identified common factors related to the success of multi-disciplinary problem-solving teams. While little of that research has directly involved Threat Assessment Teams, the lessons learned are important for consideration. For example, Google did an exhaustive analysis of many of its teams and found that team success was largely unrelated to the technical skill of the team members. Rather, the team's success was driven more by dynamics related to interpersonal communication and collaboration.

The 5 key dynamics related to team success were:

Psychological Safety: Able to take risks in discussion of issues without feeling insecure or embarrassed.

Dependability: Can count on each other to do high quality work on time.

Structure & Clarity: Clear about our goals, roles, and plans.

Meaning of Work: Working on something that is personally important.

Impact of Work: Fundamentally believe that the work matters.

Julia Rozovsky (2015). The five keys to a successful Google team.

<https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/five-keys-to-a-successful-google-team/>

Other Resources and Approaches to Increase Effectiveness

There are several activities that help make BTAM Teams more effective. These include:

- The authority and support from the school administration to engage in threat assessment and management activities on the school community's behalf
- Having and implementing standard procedures to build a systematic BTAM process
- BTAM training for all BTAM team members, backups, and key gatekeepers. Trained threat managers are better prepared to tackle cases when they arise and know better how to access resources and expertise for help when needed
- Multiple ways for people to report concerns— such as through an anonymous tip line, or through calling a hotline, or telling a key gatekeeper, for example. Consider the use of social media and mobile apps (for reporting) as they are so commonly used
- In addition, it can help the threat managers' work to have some simple and searchable database that allows them to quickly determine if a subject who has just been reported to them is someone they may have looked at.
- Threat managers should engage in regular outreach and engagement with the school community to develop awareness regarding reporting mechanisms and the BTAM process. Make sure key gatekeepers who often receive reports of all kinds know when to pass those reports for threat assessment actions.
- Communication with staff, students, etc. for what to do when someone has knowledge of a threat impacting the organization
- Threat managers should work proactively to develop, research, implement, and enhance other resources that can help the process work more effectively. Considerations include:

Teams should work proactively to develop, research, implement, and enhance other resources that can help the process work more effectively. Considerations include:

- Identify and list local resources (school-based and community-based): community mental health services, child protective services, law enforcement crisis response units, emergency psychiatric screening services, Handle With Care programs, etc.
- Establish liaisons with resources and be familiar with how to access services (including after-hours): Build relationships and communication with resources.
- Develop relationships with other school districts: Be familiar with what other school districts do for their threat management programs. The team's next case may be the last one for another school district!
- Identify state-level resources: Guidance and technical assistance from state board of education, school board association, state center for school safety, law enforcement fusion center, etc.
- Identify potential subject matter expertise: What resources does the team have access to regarding implications when disabilities are present, independent violent risk assessments, tracking social media threats, etc.
- Access to informed/relevant legal counsel input (e.g., on questions such as FERPA exceptions, compliance with legal requirements).

Implement & Sustain an All-Threats Approach

In addition to a multi-disciplinary approach, effective BTAM processes consider the range of all potential threats, regardless of whether they are internal or external to Louisiana's schools.

Subjects who may pose a threat

A school must establish a multi-disciplinary threat assessment team process that enhances the school's ability to identify, inquire, assess, and manage a range of threats that may be posed to the school community. While current students are the largest constituency served by a school and will likely represent most threats faced by a school, the range of subjects who may pose a threat is much broader and includes:

- Students: current, former, and prospective
- Employees: current, former, and prospective
- Indirectly affiliated:
 - Parents, guardians, or other family members
 - Persons who are or have been in relationships with staff or students
 - Contractors, vendors, or visitors
- Unaffiliated persons

Teams should develop processes to facilitate the identification and reporting of concerns regarding any subjects who may pose a threat to the school, its staff, or students. The team must also be prepared to adequately assess and (to the extent reasonable) manage the risk posed by the full range of potential subjects of concern. This includes procedures for referrals to relevant community services not only for students, but for staff, parents, or others with whom the team may intervene.

Range of Violent Acts

Finally, the all-threats approach considers the breadth of targeted violent acts that may cause harm or significantly disrupt continuity of operations. As referenced above, these include (but are not limited to):

- Public Mass Violence
- Lone Actor Terrorism/Violent Extremism
- Grievance-Based Violence impacting:
 - Workplace, schools, & campuses
 - Houses of Worship/Faith communities
 - Government agencies/Public figures
 - Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence
 - Predatory Sexual Assault/Sexual Misconduct
- Stalking
- Human Trafficking
- Gang Violence
- Harassment/Bullying/Mobbing
- Bias and Hate Crimes
- Suicidal Behaviors

Enables Coordinated & Early Awareness of Developing Concerns

Effective BTAM processes develop systems to facilitate coordinated and early awareness of developing concerns through active school community engagement, that is, they sustain a systematic effort to collect and connect the dots and work actively to engage their school community in those processes.

Identifying and Reporting Concerning, Aberrant or Threatening Behavior

All school division employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to report immediately to the school administrator or designee any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest a student may intend to commit an act of targeted violence.

Facilitating Bystander Engagement

Research and practice have shown that, where incidents of targeted violence have occurred, other people tend to have concerns about the subject or to be aware of behaviors that indicated thoughts, planning or preparation for a violent act. People choose not to come forward for a variety of reasons. The witness or impacted person isn't sure their observation is important or whether they should get involved, or don't know what to look for, or where and how to report concerns, or are concerned about what will (or will not) be done if they report their concerns. Where community members have knowledge or concerns about the safety or well-being of a situation but do not come forward, that is often called the Bystander Effect.

To help bystanders be more actively engaged in supporting the safety and well-being of the school, members of the school community need to know:

It is everyone's role and responsibility to share and address concerns.

Supporting the safety and well-being of the community means that everyone has a role, not because the policy says so, but because that is the responsibility of the school community to each other – to recognize concerns, to respond in a helpful manner (where appropriate) and to report the concerns to persons who can best help the situation. Members of the school community should be encouraged on an ongoing basis to report any threatening communication or troubling behavior and be reminded that reporting is an act of caring. The threat assessment process is developed and implemented to facilitate early identification and intervention with those needing

assistance and/or considering violence as a means of addressing their concerns. Building and supporting a safe and positive school climate enhances connection and engagement from and with the community.

Effective threat assessment and management processes encourage a perspective of **No One Alone** (Deisinger, 2004). No member of our community should be (or feel) alone with a concern and unable to deal with it. Complex situations are best dealt with in a collaborative manner using the best resources available. It is rare for one person to have all the knowledge, skills and resources needed to address concerns, and it is not reasonable to expect that of any one person. We are better together!

**Build and sustain a culture of care, concern, & engagement
for the safety, health, and well-being of the school community.**

A team should periodically examine where they get the most reports and the least. The team may want to do some targeted outreach or additional liaison to areas from which they currently receive few or no reports, or where they receive reports that are significantly delayed or mis-directed. They should also consider the factors that may be impacting areas from which they are receiving the most reports.

Consider:

- Are those areas well informed and engaged in the process and so are better at recognizing and reporting concerns?
- Do those areas have unique environmental/systemic issues impacting the nature or number of concerns?
- What resources may be needed to address those issues?

Reports of concern can come from:

- Staff (including volunteers, contractors/vendors)
- Students
- Parents
- Community members
- Other entities

Require all members of the school community to report concerning or threatening communications or behaviors indicating intent to harm self or others, or that a person may otherwise need intervention or assistance.

[RS 17:409.3](#) requires any school administrator, teacher, counselor, bus operator, or other school employee, (whether full-time or part-time) who learns of a threat of violence or threat of terrorism, whether through oral communication, written communication, or electronic communication, shall immediately report the threat to a local law enforcement agency and, if the employee is not the school administrator, to the school administrator.

Upon being informed of the threat, the school administrator shall make reasonable efforts to attempt to inform all persons who are targets of the threat and shall take all necessary measures to protect their lives and safety.

The school administrator next shall make reasonable efforts to attempt to notify the appropriate personnel within the school district administration.

The school administrator and the school district administrator then shall determine if risk is imminent for any other persons because of the threat, and if so, notify them and make reasonable efforts to attempt to take measures to protect their lives and safety.

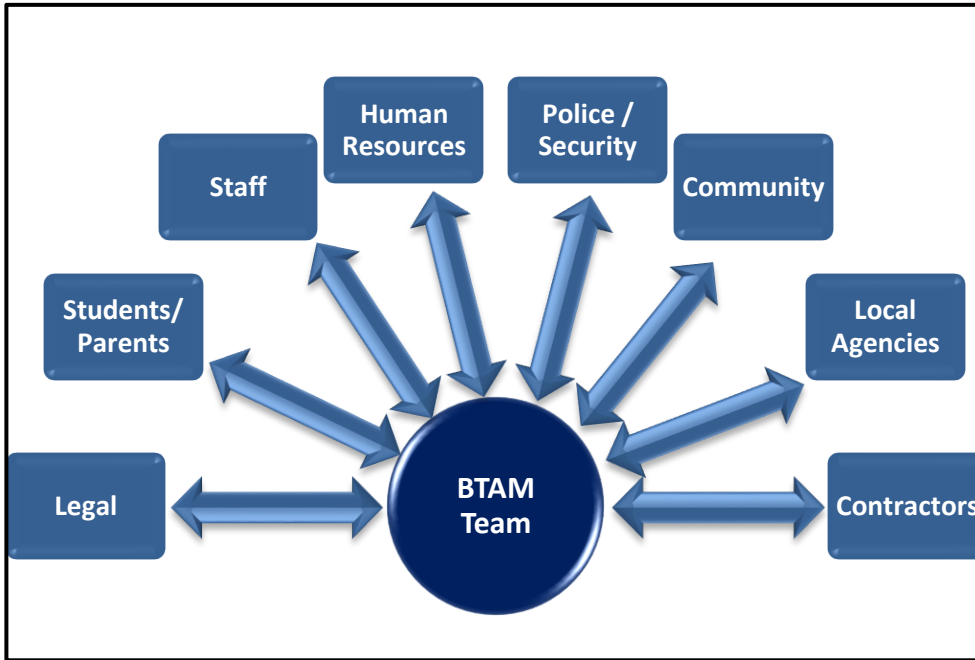
The school administrator and the school district administrator then shall determine whether to notify parents of the students at the school.

The Code provides immunity from civil/criminal liability for reports made in good faith reports.

Establish and Promote Effective Reporting Mechanisms

School community members need to know where, how, and with whom they should share concerns. The school should have effective mechanisms to foster reporting and centralized awareness of concerns by the threat assessment team as in the following figure.

Figure 15. Facilitate Coordinated and Early Awareness



In Figure 15, the diagram shows examples of various sources of information – within and outside of the school– that may report concerns to the BTAM Team. Likewise, these are various places where BTAM Team members can check in periodically and see if they have any additional concerns or updates to report.

Notice that all the communication pathways are bi-directional to support continued engagement in and support of the threat management process. This is not to say that the threat managers disclose all aspects of the case to those outside of the school, but rather that disclosures of information (within the limits of law and professional ethics) are based on what those persons have a need to know, to support the safety and well-being of the situation.

Encouraging reporting can be accomplished through various mechanisms such as general awareness training for all employees, providing multiple ways to report a concern to the school BTAM team, and notification to contractors/vendors or others with access to facilities.

Identify Concerning, Aberrant, Threatening, and Prohibited Behaviors to be Reported

School community members will want to understand what behaviors to watch for and what sorts of concerns are best handled by the BTAM Team. While there is no one list of behaviors that may cause concern, providing examples of concerns with which the team can assist will help community members better recognize, respond to, and report concerns appropriately. Examples should include prohibited behaviors (e.g., engaging in violence, bringing a weapon to the school, communicating threats, bullying, etc.) but should also include examples of behaviors that may be concerning, aberrant or threatening behaviors.

Concerning Behavior:

- Behaviors or communications that cause concern for:
 - The health, safety, or well-being of the subject
 - Their impact on the health, safety, or well-being of others, or
 - Both

Aberrant Behavior:

- Behaviors or communications that are unusual or atypical for the person or situation, and that cause concern for the health, safety or well-being of the subject, others, or both.

Concerning or Aberrant Behavior (Examples):

- Withdrawal, isolation, or alienation from others
- Sudden changes to usual attire, behavior, or hygiene
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Sullen or depressed behavior
- Declining work performance
- Atypical interest or fascination with weapons or violence
- Fixation on violence as means of addressing a grievance
- Fearful, anxious, depressed, tense, reactive or suspicious
- Atypical outbursts of verbal or physical aggression
- Increased levels of agitation, frustration, or anger
- Confrontational, accusatory, or blaming behavior
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem

Threatening Behavior:

- Is any behavior or communication that indicates a subject may pose a danger to the safety or well-being of the school community through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others.
- May be expressed or communicated:
 - Behaviorally, orally, visually
 - In writing, electronically, or through any other means
- Is considered a threat regardless of whether:
 - Observed by or communicated directly to the target or
 - Observed by or communicated to a third party or
 - Whether the target is aware of the threat

Threatening Behaviors (Examples):

- Threatening statements or gestures.
- Leakage
- Overt physical or verbal intimidation
- Bullying that continues after interventions to stop the behavior
- Throwing objects or other gestures intended to cause fear
- Making inappropriate statements about harming others
- Research or planning related to carrying out violence
- Stalking
- Any statements or behaviors indicating suicidality
- Physical violence toward a person or property
- Unlawful possession of weapons on school grounds, buses, or at school events

Note that [RS 17:410](#) requires schools (in consultation with law enforcement agencies) to develop and distribute age and grade appropriate information to each student regarding internet and cell phone safety and online content that is a potential threat to school safety. The information shall include how to recognize and report potential threats to school safety that are posted on the internet, including but not limited to posts on social media. The information shall either be distributed to or explained to students and school personnel at the beginning of each school year and shall be posted on an easily accessible page of each school's website and the website of the school's governing authority.

The information shall include the following:

- Instruction on how to detect potential threats to school safety exhibited online, including on any social media platform.
- Visual examples of possible threats.
- The reporting process, as discussed below

Each public school governing authority shall develop procedures for reporting potential threats to school safety. The reporting procedures, at a minimum, shall include:

- A standardized form to be used by students and school personnel to report potential threats which requests, at a minimum, the following information:
 - Name of school, person, or group being threatened.
 - Name of student, individual, or group threatening violence.
 - Date and time the threat was made.
 - Method by which the threat was made, including the social media outlet or website where the threat was posted, a screenshot or recording of the threat, if available, and any printed evidence of the threat.
- A process for allowing school personnel to assist students in completing the standardized form.
- A process for allowing reporting by an automated voice system.
- A process for allowing anonymous reporting and for safeguarding the identity of a person who reports a threat.
- For every threat reported, a school administrator shall record, on the form provided for by this Subsection, the action taken by the school.

If information reported to a school pursuant to Subsection C of this Section is deemed a potential threat to school safety, the school shall present the form and evidence to local law enforcement agencies. If the information poses an immediate threat, school administrators shall follow procedures provided in R.S. 17:416.16.

Establish and Identify How Concerns Are to be Reported

BTAM members should be aware of the range of reporting mechanisms available for sharing concerns and of how those mechanisms are monitored and triaged to identify concerns relevant to the BTAM process. Consider mechanisms that allow for confidential as well as anonymous reporting. In confidential reporting processes, the reporting party is known, and their identity and information are treated confidentially within the boundaries of relevant law and policy. BTAM members can follow up with confidential reporters for clarification or additional information as the inquiry, assessment and interventions processes move forward.

In anonymous reporting the identity of the reporting party is not known, which can involve some challenges. Sometimes anonymous reporting parties do not include enough information to understand the problem or how to intervene. As they are anonymous, there may not be a way to follow up for more information or to consider the credibility of the report. However, some community members will only come forward through an anonymous reporting mechanism and it is likely better to have an anonymous report (of a legitimate concern) than to have no report. Where anonymous reporting is recommended or utilized, emphasize the importance of good faith reports, and encourage reporting parties to share any information that would help understand the situation.

Note that some newer, application-based reporting tools allow for anonymous reporting with a capability to follow-up with the reporting party through the app, without disclosing the identity of the reporting party. This allows for better understanding of concerns and engagement with the reporting party to support them through the process.

BTAM teams should also provide the school community with information about any protections for good faith sharing of concerns (e.g., immunity from civil liability, non-retaliation policies, etc.).

Respond to Concerns in a Timely and Effective Manner

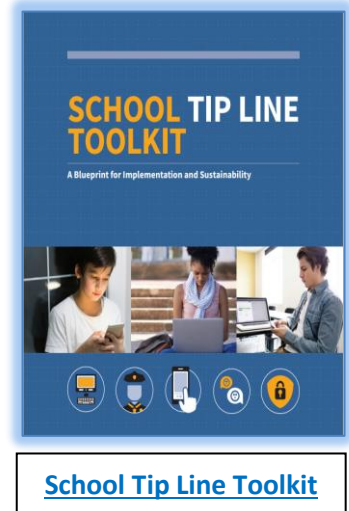
School community members are often worried that their concerns are not significant enough to be reviewed, that they would be wasting the team's time, or that concerns will not be taken seriously. BTAM Teams strive to inform school community members that reports are wanted, even if the situation does turn out to be nothing. Community members are more likely to come forward with concerns where they understand the process of how those concerns will be addressed, that they will be taken seriously, and the concerns will be addressed appropriately. To that end, BTAM teams are responsive to reports, acknowledge receipt of concerns, engage in timely follow-up with the reporting party (where possible) and take timely actions to address or resolve concerns.

Regular Reminders of Issues and Processes

Schools can be vibrant and exciting due to the regular turnover in the school community. Unfortunately, that also means that everyone that understood the points (above) last year does not represent the whole of the community this year, so the messaging needs to be regular and ongoing.

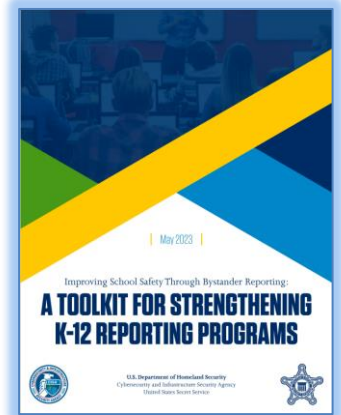
Examples of strategies to support this effort include:

- Outreach/Awareness presentations regarding targeted violence, BTAM and school safety to:
 - Administrators/Supervisors
 - Members/Staff
 - Contractors/Vendors
 - Community groups/Organizations
 - Local partners (e.g., law enforcement)



School Tip Line Toolkit

- Training/awareness sessions
 - Recognition & reporting of concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior
 - Overview of the BTAM process
 - Verbal de-escalation and effective conflict management
 - Incident survival & response
- Information: Available and sustained through multiple formats
 - Administrative briefings
 - Brochures/pamphlets
 - Website
 - Mobile Apps
 - Newsletters/email
 - Social Media



[Improving School Safety Through Bystander Reporting: A Toolkit for Strengthening K-12 Reporting Programs](#)

See the linked resources referenced on this page for other guidance about developing and implementing school tip lines and enhancing reporting programs.



[Safe Schools Louisiana Website](#)

[Online Tip Form:](#)

Safe Schools Louisiana provides a safe, anonymous way to help someone who may be struggling or hurting in various ways. We want to help you learn what to look for, what to listen for, and more importantly - how to help.

Facilitate a Thorough & Contextual Assessment

Upon developing and implementing a multidisciplinary approach and facilitating coordinated and early awareness of development concerns, the BTAM team is prepared to better facilitate a thorough and contextual assessment of cases that come to their attention. This section will provide an overview of key components of the assessment process.

Intake & Initial Review of Relevant Records

The BTAM team should establish a process for the intake and triage of a report regarding concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior. When a potential threat is reported, the BTAM team leader shall initiate an initial inquiry/triage and, in consultation with team members, decide of the seriousness of the potential threat as expeditiously as possible in accordance with BTAM guidelines.

Intake Process

Upon receipt of the initial report, the team will obtain basic information about the situation including (but not limited to):

- Initial Report of Concern: Date/time reported, date/time reviewed, person receiving report.
- Reporting Party: Name, affiliation, contact information, relationship to subject of concern.
 - Incident/Nature of Concern: Date/time occurred, location, nature of threat/concern, weapons involved/threatened, details about concerns, and any relevant background about situation.
- Subject of Concern: Name, affiliation, contact information, relationship to reporting party or target(s).
- Identified/Identifiable Target(s): Name, affiliation, contact information, relationship to or subject.
- Witnesses: Name, affiliation, contact information, relationship to reporting party, subject, or target.

Note that, if school community members are asked to provide too much information on forms, especially before BTAM teams have established trust, community members tend to be cautious. However, if BTAM teams ask for too little information, they may not receive enough to understand the situation and how best to respond. BTAM teams should regularly monitor and adjust to best serve their community.

If the initial report contains information that indicates a serious and imminent threat, then the team will activate or recommend activation of the appropriate crisis response plans and initiate the BTAM process.

Indicators of a Serious and Imminent Risk

- Subject intends imminent and/or serious harm to self/others, e.g.:
 - Has unauthorized weapon on premises, or at a school activity, or enroute to/from either of those
 - Attempting to breach security and/or to gain access to targets
 - Expressed imminent intent to use weapon(s) or cause serious injury
 - Has released a “legacy token” (e.g., statement of justification for violence)
- Lack of inhibitions for using violence, indicated by:
 - Feels justified in using violence to address grievances
 - Has no perceived alternatives to the use of violence
 - Lack of concern for or desiring of consequences resulting from violent act
 - Has the capability, intent, and the will to cause harm

If emergent or imminent:

- Involve law enforcement and appropriate security personnel.
- Initiate relevant security protocols.
- Notify key administrators.
- When safe to do so, continue initial inquiry and initiate BTAM process.

If there are no indications of serious and imminent risk, then continue to triage & screening step.

Triage and Screening

Upon receipt of a concern, the BTAM team conducts an initial review to facilitate triage and screening of the case.

Definitions

Triage: Determining the level of concern regarding a case to determine if there are imminent or serious threats posed, or issues that require crisis management procedures.

Screening: Determining if the case falls within the purview/mission of the BTAM process. That is, does the case exhibit elements (e.g., STEP Framework concerns) that merit further inquiry, assessment, management or monitoring by the BTAM Team, or whether any such concerns are existing services or resources adequately addressing either, or do not fall within the purview or mission of the BTAM process.

Triage/Screening Process and Structure

All BTAM teams will engage in triage/screening processes to determine whether emergency situations exist and whether the case is appropriate for the BTAM process. Triage and screening decisions will be based upon:

- The initial report(s) of concern
- Initial inquiry regarding the subject, target, reporting party/witness(es), including:
 - Initial review of relevant records and information sources
 - Initial interviews of key parties of key parties as appropriate

Initial Review of Records

Upon receipt of initial report(s) of concern, the Triage/Screening process gathers other relevant information (“pings the system”) about the situation (i.e., about the Subject, Target, Environment, & Precipitating Events) from various sources, such as:

- Prior BTAM team contacts regarding any parties or entities involved
- Recent (and historical) performance and behavior
- Disciplinary or personnel actions
- Security or law enforcement contacts within school or relevant community
- Criminal or civil proceedings
- Prior critical involvement with mental health or social services
- Presence of known stressors, grievances, or losses
- Current or historical grievances that may be related to the behavior of concern
- Online searches: internet, social media, email, etc.

Initial Interviews

In addition to a review of relevant records, the Triage/Screening process conducts initial interviews as necessary to make triage/screening decisions. When circumstances allow, prior to conducting an interview with a person involved in a case, threat assessment team members are best served by being well acquainted with the information available about the reported concerns, as well as any relevant information about the interviewee’s background, behaviors, and relationship to others involved.

These may include:

- Initial interviews to verify or clarify report:
 - Person(s) reporting threat
 - Person(s) receiving report of threat
 - Target or recipient(s) of threat
 - Witness(es)
 - Subject who made the threat

- Other potential sources:
 - Peers: Friends / Co-workers / Classmates
 - Administration
 - People in supervisory roles, e.g., teachers, coaches
 - Parents/guardian (where students/minors are involved)
 - Relational partners
 - Local or state law enforcement
 - Community services

The team should also give consideration not only to who should be interviewed, but:

- By whom? What team member or key gatekeeper is best positioned in terms of role or relationship to have the most effective interview with the least conflict or bias?
- With what skill set? What training, experience, preparation, or mentoring will be necessary or helpful to support an effective approach?
- In what setting?
- What goals are in mind for the interview?
 - Information gathering and assessment
 - Redirect from violence/targets
 - Problem solving/support
 - Set boundaries/limitations
 - Admonishment/confrontation
 - Intervention/referral
 - Monitoring

The team should also consider the risks associated with each potential interview. Peers of subjects may warn the subject that the team is looking into their behavior. Co-workers or relational partners may have biases for or against the subject (or target) that skews their response. The subject may be alerted that the organization is aware of concerns and may escalate their behavior before they are stopped. The very act of asking questions about a subject may cause concern/fear that they are dangerous, even if that turns out not to be the case.

Rarely will team members know all those potential dynamics before interviews are initiated but should be aware of the potential impact and reactions and monitor and plan for relevant contingencies.

Effective teams regularly monitor for, assess and work to minimize the negative impact of bias in decision-making. The team should also seek out, and factor in, information from multiple sources in its assessment, rather than relying on just one piece of information or perspective. The team should consider whether a source has direct and first-hand knowledge, their credibility, and the consistency of that source information with that of other sources.

Interview with threat recipient(s)/target(s) and witness(es):

Individuals who have been identified as potential targets of the subject of concern should also be interviewed where possible, along with any persons who witnessed the concerning behavior. The threat assessment team should inform the subject of the interview that the primary purpose of that interview is to gather information about a possible situation of concern with the goals of preventing harm to staff or students and helping those involved.

A potential target should be asked about their relationship to the subject of concern and queried about recent interactions with that subject. The interviewer should gather information about grievances and grudges that the subject of concern may hold against a target or against others. Interviews with potential targets should be conducted with special sensitivity. Care must be taken to gather information without unduly alarming a potential target. If the threat assessment team believes that there may be a risk of violence to an identified target, that target should be offered assistance and support for their safety.

The assessment process facilitates increased and revised understanding of issues over time. That is, when new information is made available to the team during or after the initial assessment, the team should review the new information and re-evaluate the threat accordingly. The team will want to maintain contact with the target/recipient to obtain information about any further behaviors of concern, improvements in the situation or other relevant developments.

Interview with Subject of Concern:

Generally, an individual who is part of the school (staff or student) should be asked directly about his or her actions and intentions. Many subjects will respond forthrightly to direct questions approached in a non-judgmental manner. An interview conducted during a threat assessment inquiry can elicit important information that permits the threat assessment team to better understand the situation of the individual and possible targets. This understanding, in turn, will help the threat assessment team to assess the risk of violence that the individual may pose in each situation. Interviews with the individual of concern also can generate leads for further inquiry.

Generally, it is best to have the subject learn from the team that people are concerned about her or his behavior and have a chance to explain that behavior or contributing circumstances, rather than have that subject hear through the grapevine that they are being “investigated” by the threat assessment team.

An interview can also tell the individual that their behavior has been noticed and caused concern. Interviews give individuals of concern the opportunity to tell their perspectives, background, and intent; to be heard and experience support/empathy where appropriate; and to reassess and redirect their behavior away from activities that are of concern. The interview may suggest to a subject who has mixed feelings about attacking, that there are people interested in their welfare, and that there are better, more effective ways to deal with problems or specific people.

Although an interview with a subject of concern can provide valuable information, relying too heavily (or solely) on that interview as a basis for making judgments about whether that subject poses a threat is likely to present problems. The information offered by the subject may be incomplete, misleading, or inaccurate. It therefore is important to collect information to corroborate and verify information learned from the interview.

For subjects of concern who are not part of the school community, school threat assessment teams should carefully weigh the risks and benefits of attempting to engage directly with the subject especially when the subject may have engaged in criminal behavior. In such cases, local law enforcement or school attorneys should be consulted regarding whether the subject should be interviewed, who is best positioned to conduct the interview, and the likely benefits and risks of such an interview. For subjects engaging in potentially threatening behavior from a distance (e.g., through social media) or who are anonymous, it may not be practical to be able to conduct an interview and the team would focus more on building protective strategies for the school community and monitoring the subject's behavior/communications as best as circumstances allow.

The Triage/Screening process shall:

- Consider the nature and level of concerns present.
- Initiate any crisis responses as appropriate.
- Determine if existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns.
- Determine whether the BTAM team needs to further assess and manage the situation.

Triage/Screening Team

BTAM Teams that deal with many cases may consider implementing a Triage/Screening Team that is a subset of the full BTAM team.

If so, consider the following in establishing and operating the Triage/Screening Team:

- The Triage/Screening team involves at least two (2) members of the BTAM team, preferably from different roles, departments/functions, and perspectives.
- Any Triage/Screening team member may activate crisis protocols based on a reasonable assessment that criteria are met.
- Cases are advanced to the full BTAM teams when, either:
 - The Triage/Screening Team has full consensus that the case is appropriate for BTAM, or
 - There is any disagreement as to whether to advance the case to the BTAM team.
- All Triage/Screening Team members must agree to screen out a case, i.e., those cases that will not go to the full BTAM team for action. Cases may be screened out if:
 - Identified concerns and inquiry results indicate no issues that are within the purview or mission of the BTAM process.
 - Identified concerns are being adequately addressed by existing resources and no BTAM expertise or resources are needed to manage or monitor concerns.
- Consider, when cases are screened out, having the BTAM team (at their next staffing) review cases that were screened out for consideration of elevating them to the full BTAM process if needed.

Full Inquiry & Assessment Process

For those cases that are elevated for a full BTAM inquiry and assessment, the BTAM team should keep a few points in mind. First, that violence is a dynamic process – meaning that as different factors change, so too does the threat that a subject may pose – or not pose. The threat managers are not trying to predict/determine whether this subject is a “violent person.” Instead, they are trying to determine under what circumstances this subject might become violent or might resort to violence, what the impact of the situation is upon others (even when a subject poses no identifiable threat), what environmental/system factors may be contributing to the situation, and whether there are any precipitating events on the foreseeable horizon.

BTAM teams should also seek out, and factor in, information from multiple sources as part of the assessment, rather than relying on just one piece of information or perspective. Threat managers should consider whether a source has direct and first-hand knowledge, the credibility of the source(s), and the consistency of that source information with that of other sources.

Effective teams regularly monitor for, assess, and work to minimize the negative impact of social and cognitive bias in decision-making.

And finally, BTAM team members should consider when/whether to talk with the subject of concern as part of the inquiry, and who is best to have that conversation. Where the subject of concern is from within the organization, we generally recommend attempting to engage with and interview the subject. Threat managers should think carefully about the best people to talk with the subject, because asking for the subject's side of the story can help diffuse hostility and start to build a rapport that will help make intervention possible, if it's needed.

Generally, it is best to have the subject learn from the threat managers that people are concerned about her or his behavior and have a chance to explain that behavior or contributing circumstances, rather than have that subject hear through the grapevine that they are being “investigated” by the BTAM team.

The full inquiry provides for a more comprehensive and in-depth review of information that may be relevant to the case and includes reviews of records and sources as discussed in the triage/screening process above, and any

other that may be relevant to the case. Similarly, the full inquiry involves more in-depth or follow-up interviews with relevant parties, as discussed in the triage/screening process above.

Throughout the assessment process, consider issues related to records reviews and interviews as outlined in the triage/screening process, and, at any point, be prepared to determine if a serious and imminent threat exists (or is rapidly developing) that may necessitate activation of crisis protocols.

Key Areas for Inquiry/Investigation

Following are key areas for inquiry and investigation by the team and that have been developed based on research and standards of practice regarding threat assessment. These resources include (but are not limited to): [*Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks* \(Amman et al., 2017\)](#); [*Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence* \(NTAC, 2018\)](#); [*The International Handbook Of Threat Assessment*, 2nd Edition \(Meloy & Hoffmann, 2021\)](#); [*The Role of Warning Behaviors In Threat Assessment* \(Meloy, et al., 2012\)](#); [*Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* \(U.S. Secret Service, 2000\)](#).

The following are not intended as questions that would necessarily be asked directly of the subject of concern or target, etc., though some may be used that way. Rather, the team should review the totality of the information available and use the questions to guide their understanding of the situation, need for intervention, and to inform plans for interventions and follow-up.

Note that this section is not intended as an exhaustive or complete list of areas of inquiry, but rather, as core areas that support assessment and understanding of the situation, the nature and severity of any risk, and that may guide interventions. Additional questions may be asked for clarification and/or to probe more deeply to fully understand the circumstances.

Note: Proximal Warning Behaviors (Meloy et al 2012) are indicated by those terms that are bolded and have a single asterisk (*). See the Definitions section for definitions of these terms.

Areas of Inquiry Regarding Potential Subjects of Concern

Inquiry regarding a subject of concern seeks information regarding the nature and severity of concerns, whether the subject may pose a threat of violence or other harm to self or others; or is otherwise in need of assistance or intervention. The inquiry considers all sources of information that may be relevant to gaining as comprehensive an understanding of the subject and their concerns, as circumstance may allow. Consider the presence of risk and protective factors, warning signs, coping skills and support systems that may be relevant to the case.

What situation(s) or behaviors are causing concern?

- What concerning, aberrant, or threatening behavior(s) are causing concerns?
- Does the situation or circumstance that led to these concerns still exist?
- When and where do the behaviors occur?
- Is there a pattern to the behaviors or a change in behavior pattern causing concern?
- If the behaviors have occurred previously, how has the subject dealt with the grievances?
- Has the subject previously come to someone's attention?
- Are the subject's behaviors causing others concern for the welfare of the subject, or others, or both?

Have there been any concerning, aberrant, threatening, or violent communications?

- Were there **Directly Communicated Threats*** (threat made directly from subject to target or sources of grievance)?
- Has there been **Leakage*** (communications to third parties about grievances, ideation, or intent to use violence, planning or preparation)?
- How and to whom is the subject communicating?
 - What is the relationship between subject and target?
 - What means or modes of communication have been used (e.g., in person, letter, email, diary/ journal, social media, website, etc.)?
- What is the **Intensity of Effort**** in communications or attempts to address grievance?
 - Frequency and duration of contact,
 - Multiple means used,
 - Multiple recipients or targets of communication
- Do communications provide insight into motives, grievances, ideation, intent, planning, preparation, targets, etc.?
- Has anyone been alerted or “warned away”?

NOTE: Threat managers will want to obtain the specific language used in any concerning communications and in what context. It is also important to understand how the communication(s) were sent/received, the volume and pattern of the communications, and how specifically or broadly the same communications were sent.

What are the subject's motives and goals?

- Does the subject have a major grievance or grudge?
- Against whom? What is the relationship?
- Are there other motives that support the use of violence such as desire for notoriety/fame?
- What do they seem to want to achieve?
- Is the subject exhibiting **Fixation***?
 - Increasing perseveration on person/cause or need for resolution.
 - Increasingly strident and negative characterization of target.
 - Angry emotional undertone, especially when accompanied by,
 - Social or occupational deterioration.
- What efforts have been made to resolve the problem?

Has subject demonstrated significant or novel interest in violence or other perpetrators?

- Do they exhibit heightened interest, fascination, obsession, or fixation with acts of violence?
- Do they immerse themselves in exposure to violence through movies, videos, books, video games, social media, etc., to the detriment of other life activities or in ways that negatively impact themselves or others? Note: The concern is with the degree of exposure, modeling, identification with, or rehearsal of violence; and the associated lack of other interests or influences, not with incidental or occasional interest in such media.
- Is there **Identification*** (strong desire or need to emulate/be like others) with:
 - Perpetrators of targeted violence or powerful figures. (E.g., specific perpetrators, pseudo-commando, warrior, agent of change
 - Grievances of other perpetrators
 - Weapons or tactics of other perpetrators
 - Effect or notoriety of other perpetrators
 - Ideologies or groups that support and encourage violence

Having heightened interest in acts of violence does not necessarily indicate that the subject poses a threat or is otherwise in need of some assistance. Consider context, developmental age, and other factors that may contribute to perceived fascination or obsessive interest. However, if a subject shows some fascination or identification on any of these topics and has raised concern in other ways, such as by expressing an idea to do harm to others or to himself/herself, recently obtaining a weapon, or showing helplessness or despair; the combination of these facts should increase the team's concern about the subject.

Does the subject have (or are they developing) the capacity to engage in targeted violence?

- Are there Pathway Warning Behaviors*?
 - Planning: Are they researching or gathering information to support a plan for violence?
 - Preparation (Means, Method, Opportunity, Proximity):
 - Does the subject have the means and methods (e.g., access to a weapon, tools, materials) to carry out an attack? Note: Weapons may not be limited to firearms. Consider knives/edge weapons, bombs, arson, vehicles, etc.
 - Are they trying to obtain or get access to the means (e.g., weapons, tools, materials) to carry out an act of violence?
 - Is the access to or possession of a weapon a new interest and/or related to grievances or violent intent?
 - Is the subject attempting to get proximity to target(s), or otherwise create opportunity to cause harm?
 - Is the subject engaging in stalking or surveillance activities?
 - Are they practicing or rehearsing for the violence?
 - Have they developed the capability (skill and will) to cause harm?
- Where is the subject on the Pathway? How quickly are they moving?
- Are there changes in activity levels or ***Energy Bursts**** (flurries of or changes in frequency/variety of activity)? Do certain circumstances or events tend to impact their movement?
- Is the subject's thinking and behavior organized sufficiently to engage in planning and preparation?
- Is there a history of violence that speaks to capacity or potential targets?
- Are there aspects of ***Novel aggression*** * (testing limits/boundaries or atypical aggression) when there is no history of violence?

These provide an indication of how far along the pathway the subject has progressed and may also help the team understand how quickly the subject is moving forward toward an attack – i.e., how imminent a threat there may be. Any development of capacity for attack-related behaviors should be a serious indication of potential violence.

Practice Note: It is often helpful to build a timeline of subject behaviors to help detect any patterns or changes in patterns of behavior. This is especially helpful in complex or longer-term cases.

Is the subject experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?

- Has the subject experienced perceived loss, failure, injustice?
- Does the subject express shame or humiliation related to the loss, failure, or injustice?
- Is the subject having significant difficulty coping?
- Are there multiple stressors?
- Are there any indications of ***Last Resort Behaviors****?
 - Desperation, despair, finality, or imperative action
 - Violence justified to address perceived grievance
 - Lack of perceived alternatives
 - Lack of concern for, or welcoming consequences
- Has the subject engaged in behavior that suggests that he or she has considered ending their life?

Many persons who have engaged in significant acts of targeted violence have been despondent and/or suicidal prior to their attacks or at the time of their attacks, hoping to kill themselves or be killed by responding police. Note that most people who are feeling hopeless, desperate, or even suicidal will not pose a threat of harm to others. However, these people may still need assistance and intervention.

- Development of a **legacy token****

** Source: FBI. A legacy token is a communication created by subject and delivered (or staged for discovery) in which subject:

- Claims credit for planning and acts, or
- Articulate motivations and reasoning so others may understand grievances suffered or
- Perpetuate media of coverage to enhance notoriety/infamy

JACA

In *The Gift of Fear* (de Becker, 1997) noted that dangerousness is dynamic and situational and that four key factors influence the subject's movement from idea to action on the Pathway to Violence:

Justification: The subject feels justified in using violence to address grievances.

Alternatives: The subject perceives few or no alternatives to violence to address grievance, running out of options.

Consequences: The subject is no longer concerned about, or accepts the consequences, of acting violently. Notes this is all the more significant when a subject *desires* the consequences to prove or draw attention to the injustices suffered (martyrdom).

Ability: The subject perceives their ability to engage in violence. Self-efficacy, the belief in our own ability is a strong predictor in human performance, including violence.

The presence of Justification, lack of perceived Alternatives, and lack of concern for Consequences are all indicators of Last Resort Warning Behaviors, and the development of perceived ability is an indication of Pathway Warning Behavior.

Adapted from: de Becker, G (1997). *The Gift of Fear*.

Has the subject's behavior indicated or raised concern of need for intervention or supportive services?

- Does the subject have difficulty coping or exhibit indications of poor mental wellness?
- Does the subject exhibit symptoms of serious, acute, or untreated mental illness, e.g.:
 - Significant lack of contact with reality:
 - Hallucinations (especially command hallucinations)
 - Delusions (especially paranoid/persecutory or grandiosity)
 - Extreme wariness, distrust, paranoia
 - Symptoms that impact the subject's perceptions of grievances or how others respond to the subject
 - Significant or sustained agitation or anxiousness
 - Significant or sustained depressed mood
 - Alcohol or other drug use/abuse
 - Pervasive patterns of maladaptive behavior
- Is the subject actively engaged in treatment, compliant with the treatment plan, including any prescribed medications, and making progress toward treatment goals?

Threats to Self: The Nexus Between Threat Assessment and Suicide Risk Assessment

- If triage identifies any of the following concerns, in addition to, or in place of, a potential threat to self, then the BTAM team should assume primary responsibility:
 - Subject expresses ideation or intent to harm others.
 - Subject expresses co-occurring anger or hostility to others.
 - The subject's intent, preparations, or acts of harm to self would pose a threat of harm to others, whether intended or not.
 - Subject's suicidal or self-harm behaviors are responses to victimization, bias, bullying, harassment, or to other environmental/systemic issues within the school.
 - Others are, or may reasonably be, significantly impacted or feel endangered by the threat of harm to self.
- If none of the above conditions are met, then no other actions are needed by the BTAM team, and the threat assessment case can be closed.
- The suicide risk assessment and interventions are addressed by the suicide prevention and intervention team as relevant for the case.
- School or community mental health professionals retain primary responsibility for the direct assessment and mental health interventions with the subject at risk, according to school and professional guidelines.
- Other team members assist with assessment, intervention, or support actions, and address any other concerns impacting upon the case.

Does the subject have protective factors, stabilizers, or buffers that inhibit use of violence?

Several factors may decrease risk or inhibit escalation to violence. Check for these protective factors to see if they are present and stable, absent, or diminishing, or need to be bolstered.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ▪ Views violence as unacceptable, immoral | ▪ Values life, job, relationships, freedom |
| ▪ Accepts responsibility for actions. | ▪ Fears loss of reputation, job, freedom, life |
| ▪ Demonstrates remorse for inappropriate behavior | ▪ Maintains, uses, and builds effective coping skills |
| ▪ Respects reasonable limits and expectations | ▪ Treatment access, compliance, engagement |
| ▪ Uses socially sanctioned means of addressing grievances | ▪ Sustains trusted and valued relationships/support systems |

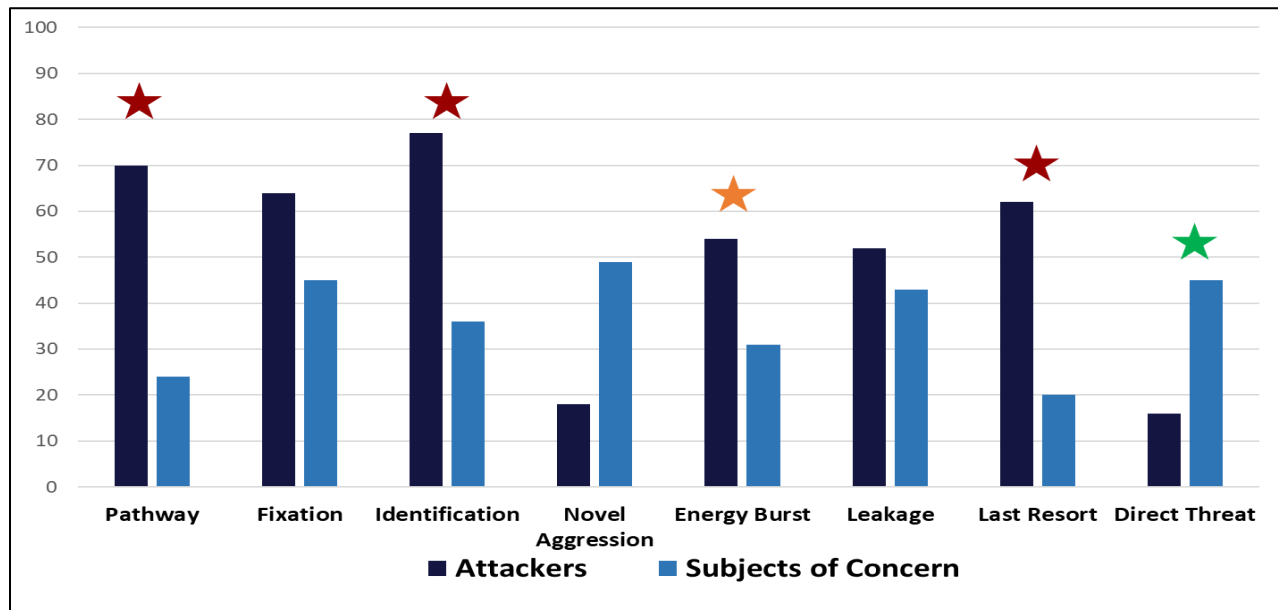
A sustained, trusting, and valued relationship with at least one responsible person can be a key stabilizer and inhibitor to violence. That person can provide support, challenge distorted perceptions or violent ideation and help connect the subject with support. Consider:

- Does the subject have at least a friend, colleague, family member, or other person that he or she trusts and can rely upon for support, guidance, or assistance?
- Is that trusted person someone that would work collaboratively with the team for the well-being of the subject of concern? Does that other person have skill and willingness to monitor, intervene, support subject?
- Is the subject emotionally connected to and engaged with other people?
- Is there a deterioration of support, increased withdrawal, or isolation from, or alienation by prior support systems?

Having someone that the subject trusts can be a protective factor, but it is important to understand the nature of the relationship. A connection with a responsible person can be a good influence on the subject. However, if the trusted person has a negative influence, then this can have a profound risk-enhancing effect. If the team decides that the subject in question poses a threat of harm, the team can solicit the help of this responsible person to assist in developing and implementing a management plan. The team should monitor the relationship's status in case it falls apart and then becomes a risk factor for escalation.

Note the several studies have found that proximal warning behaviors discriminate between those who express intent for targeted violence and act (Attackers), from those who express intent for targeted violence and do not act (Subjects of Concern). See Figure 18, below.

Figure 18. Proximal Warning Behaviors Discriminating Between Attackers and Subjects of Concern



Meloy, J. R., Goodwill, A. M., Meloy, M. J., Amat, G., Martinez, M., & Morgan, M. (2019);
Challacombe, D. J., & Lucas, P. A. (20198); Meloy, J.R. & Gill, P. (2016)

Across several studies, key proximal warning behaviors were found to discriminate between Attackers and Subjects of Concern who did not attack. Attackers were more likely to exhibit Warning Behaviors of Pathway, Identification, Last Resort and Energy Burst. Subjects of Concern were more likely to have expressed Directly Communicated Threats.

While threat managers always consider the totality of information related to their subject of concern (rather than working from generalizations or profiles) data such as these are helpful in considering prioritization of risk.

Note that, in addition to these general key areas of inquiry related to the Subject/Person of Concern, there may be other critical areas of inquiry with sub-types of targeted violence, e.g., violent extremism, intimate partner violence, stalking etc. Threat managers should consider relevant areas of inquiry when those potential risks are present.

Areas of Inquiry Regarding Potential Targets

Targets (and others impacted by the subject's behavior) may behave or respond in ways that indicate the level of threat they perceive, that increase their vulnerability or diminish their ability to protect themselves, or that reflect needs for assistance or support.

Are Targets (or others) indicating vulnerability or concern about, or impact by, the subject's behavior?

- Are those who know the subject concerned that he or she might act based on violent ideas or plans? The team should recognize that some people – such as parents, significant others, or anyone else who is very close to the person in question – may not see the potential for violence even if others do. Those in close relationships with a person may be too close to the person/situation to admit violence is possible or even likely.
- Are those who know the subject concerned about a specific target?
- Are they concerned for the well-being of the subject?
- Are targets or others around the subject engaging in protective actions (e.g., distancing, avoiding, minimizing conflict, modifying routines or behaviors, etc.) even if they do not define the subject as a threat?
- Are targets engaging in behavior or in situations that increase their:
 - Desirability: A source of subject's grievances or fuel fantasies for violence
 - Availability: The proximity or access between the subject and target
 - Vulnerability: Lack of protective factors or behaviors, or coping abilities of the target.

FBI resources indicate that subjects are influenced in their choices of targets by several factors, including the desirability, availability, and vulnerability of potential targets. We may not always know what supports the perceived desirability of a target as we may not know the subject, their grievance/motives, or how a given target fuels their fantasies for violence. However, we can often help a target decrease their availability and vulnerability to reduce risk.

- Do targets have adequate coping and support resources?
- Are targets or others experiencing stress, trauma, or other symptoms that may benefit from intervention?

Key Areas of Inquiry Regarding Environmental/Systemic Factors Impacting the Situation

These are factors that impact or stem from the school/workplace/family environment or systemic issues or challenges that may allow, encourage (or not discourage), or exacerbate the use of violence to address concerns, may inhibit reporting of concerns, or that may impact ability to effectively resolve concerns.

Are there Environmental/Systemic factors that are impacting the situation?

- Systemic, policy, or procedural problems
- Unfair, inconsistent, or biased disciplinary processes
- Silos, gaps, or delays in reporting of concerns
- Poor conflict management skills
- Poor supervisory skills and/or willingness to address
- Inadequate resources to address needs
- School/family/social climate concerns: e.g., harassment, bullying, bias, neglect, or abuse
- Lack of support or treatment resources in community
- Social influences of others in environment
 - Actively encourage the subject's use of violence
 - Assist the subject with planning or preparation
 - Reinforce or escalate subject's perception of grievance(s)
 - Deny or minimize the possibility of violence by the subject
 - Passively collude with subject through failure to share concerns

Key Areas of Inquiry Regarding Precipitating Events

Violence risk is dynamic and situational. It is important to consider not just the current situation involving the subject, target, and environment/systems, but also those that may change in the near to mid-term, and whether those changes could make things better or worse for the case.

Are there Precipitating Events that may impact the situation currently and in the foreseeable future?

Common precipitants are related to loss, failures, or injustices, as well as events or circumstances that trigger memories of past grievances, or situations that create unexpected opportunities to act.

- Loss, failure, or injustice related to:
 - Work or school status or performance
 - Relationship/support
 - Health
 - Community/Identity (Rejection or ostracization of others with whom subject identifies)
- Key dates/events
 - Relational (e.g., anniversary, end of relationship, birthdays, holidays)
 - Employment/disciplinary action
 - Administrative action/order (Issuance, service, violation)
 - Court order (Issuance, service, violation)
 - Return to school or work following separation (e.g., holidays or breaks)
Note that the Protecting America's Schools study found that 41% of violent acts occurred in the first week back following time away from the school.
- Triggers and reminders of any of the above
 - Consider the impact of social media or mass media reminders!
- Opportunity (unexpected availability and vulnerability of target)
- Contagion effect of other high profile or locally significant acts of violence
- Case Management Interventions

Note that even well designed and intended interventions can be a precipitant for change (a good thing when in the right direction!). Any intervention can:

- Help things get better.
- Making things worse.
- Have no discernable effect.
- Create new concerns.

It is important to monitor the effect of interventions.

Key Areas of Inquiry Regarding the Integrity of the Assessment Process

What is the consistency, credibility, and completeness of information about the situation?

We must always be attentive to consistency, credibility, completeness, accuracy, and gaps in our knowledge about a situation. Consider:

- Are the subject's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?
- Do collateral sources confirm or dispute what the subject says is going on and how they are dealing with it?
- Are there multiple sources? Are they providing consistent information?
 - Do sources have direct and unique knowledge of the subject and/or situation?
 - Do any sources have ulterior motives?
- What gaps exist in understanding of the situation? What don't we know?
- What bias or misperceptions may be influencing witnesses, targets, or members of the threat assessment team? Consider sources of bias/distortion in our thought processes, for which we should monitor, these can include (but are not limited to):
 - Confirmation bias: Seeking and integrating information that supports/affirms our prior beliefs.
 - Anchoring: Base final judgment on information gained early on – first impressions may bias future perspectives.
 - Over-Confidence: Failure to spot limits of knowledge and therefore perceive less risk. Too much faith in ability.
 - In-Group bias: Overestimate abilities, value, and credibility of people we know (or are like) more than people we do not know or who are different.
 - Availability: Overestimate likelihood of events that have greater availability in memory due to being unusual, recent, or emotionally salient.
 - Probability neglect: Overestimate risks of harmless or low probability events, while underestimate risks of high probability events even when they are not harmless (1/84 chance of dying in vehicle accident vs 1/5,000+ of dying in plane crash).
 - Fundamental attribution error: Place blame for own bad outcomes on external events. When others have bad outcomes, make judgements about them – failure to account for interactions between the person and the situation.
 - Hindsight bias: Overestimate predictability of past events based on current knowledge of facts and outcomes.

Source: Daniel Kahneman (2013) Thinking Fast & Slow

Throughout the threat assessment and management process, the BTAM team seeks to enhance decision-making by reducing errors and increasing insights and creativity in managing cases.

Supplement Structure Professional Judgment

BTAM teams may consider the use of relevant supplemental tools to facilitate structured professional judgement. As the field has developed, there are a broad range of tools that may be helpful in support general threat assessment, or focused areas of inquiry. Following are lists of tools that may be relevant and helpful:

General/Core Threat Assessment Tools

- Structured Assessment for Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY)
- Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21, 3rd Edition)
- Historical Clinical Risk Management-20, Version 3
- Cawood Assessment Grid
- MOSAIC (de Becker)
- Psychopathy Checklist Revised (PCLR) *
- Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG) *
- Classification of Violence Risk (COVR) *
- Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP 18)**

*More appropriate for forensic violence risk assessment

**Most appropriate for consideration of risk related to violent extremist ideology

Note: This is a partial listing of supplemental instruments and not an endorsement of any particular approach.

Threat Assessment Tools for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV); Domestic/Dating Violence (DV)

- Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk Version 2 (B-SAFER)
- Danger Assessment (Campbell, 1986).
- Domestic Violence Inventory
- Domestic Violence Risk Appraisal Guide
- Idaho Risk Assessment of Dangerousness
- Lethality Assessment Program
- Mosaic (DV module)
- Ontario Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (ODARA)
- Spousal Assault Risk Appraisal Guide (SARA)

Note: This is a partial listing of supplemental instruments and not an endorsement of any particular approach.

Supplemental Threat Assessment Tools: Stalking

- Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk Version 2 (B-SAFER)
- Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH)
- Guidelines for Stalking Assessment & Management (SAM)
- Screening Assessment for Stalking & Harassment (SASH)
- Stalking and Harassment Assessment & Risk Profile (SHARP)
- Stalking Risk Profile

Note: This is a partial listing of supplemental instruments and not an endorsement of any particular approach

Appropriate use of instruments:

BTAM team members should only use instruments designed for the population and issue of concern. The team should also avoid reliance on the instrument only. The team also needs to make sure that the evaluator is properly trained. The evaluator in turn should make sure that the instrument is reliable, valid, and current. Ultimately the team needs to consider the results of any assessment tool used as simply one piece of information and integrate it in with all of the other pieces of information gathered.

- Ensure that the instrument is reliable and valid.
- Be aware of the limitations of the instrument.
- Use for purpose for which it was designed.
- Stay current with new data and versions.
- Ensure evaluator is properly trained.
- Avoid reliance on using only the instrument to make decisions.
- Integrate information with structured professional judgment.

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (2006). *Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence*.

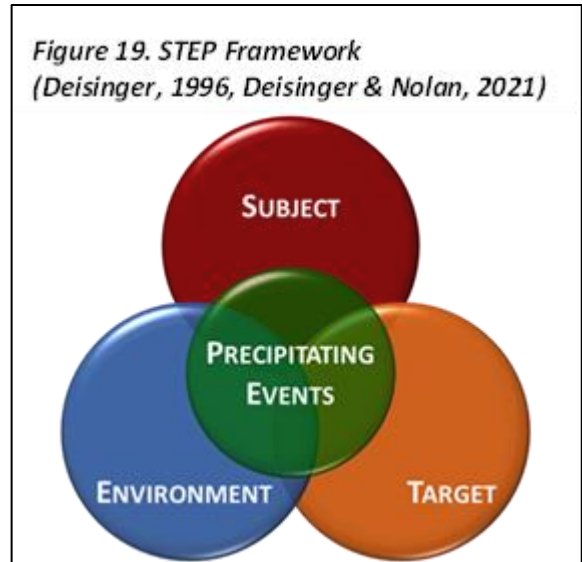
Formulating an Assessment of the Case***Fostering Effective Case Discussions:***

When the team discusses the case to make its assessment, it can be helpful to keep in mind the following tips:

- All team members should actively engage and participate in the assessment and case management process, sharing their perspectives and concerns with the team.
- Keep the discussion focused on the case's facts and consider the potential importance of the unknowns.
- Avoid the tendency to profile based on generalizations or stereotypes.
- Focus on behavior and any context that helps to understand the threatening behaviors.
- Consider whether behavior is improving or deteriorating over time or if certain circumstances are impacting the situation.
- Try to corroborate critical information – check the facts among multiple sources, work to resolve discrepancies.
- Team members should be inquisitive and challenge assumptions that are often made in cases. Consider the basis for the information and/or the assumption, along with its credibility and relevance.
- Seek to minimize bias in decision-making.
- The team should not focus only on concerns and risks, but also on protective factors, strengths, resources, and capabilities of the persons involved, and the school community.
- Focus on active problem-solving and resource utilization.

Enhancing Case Decision Making:

- Organize information systematically, e.g.:
 - STEP Framework
 - Pathway Model
 - Proximal and Distal Warning Behaviors
 - JACA
 - Risk and Protective Factors
 - Timeline
 - Pending Issues/Tasks
- Use tools to support structured professional judgement as appropriate.
- Prepare summary for BTAM team prior to case staffing where possible.
- Team members review case(s) before case discussions.
- Have a break/sleep between review of case materials and discussion.



Classifying Priority/Level of Concern

The team may use a classification system to prioritize cases. Teams are encouraged not to focus only on the dangerousness/risk of the subject of concern, but rather the overall level of concern associated with a case. Many in the threat assessment field advocate the use of “Level of Concern” or “Priority” over “Risk” as a means of categorizing and prioritizing cases (e.g., Scalora et al, 2002; Meloy et al, 2011; Amman et al, 2017).

The concept of level of concern is particularly applicable to threat assessment in dynamic, operational conditions, because it is judged on what information is currently available, which may be quite incomplete. A risk judgement, by contrast, requires all relevant information to have been gathered. Secondly, concern levels can reflect circumstance (Meloy, et al, 2017, p. 258).

Key factors that impact case priority or level of concern include:

- Severity
- Immediacy
- Impact
- Probability/Likelihood/Credibility

However, other factors may also impact upon the Level of Concern/Case Priority

- Rate of change in situation
- Vulnerability/Reactivity of target
- Complexity/Number of environmental factors
- Political/Social influences
- Impact (current or impending) of precipitants
- Unknowns

An effective classification (e.g., Priority or Level of Concern) approach considers a holistic view of the case (e.g., using the STEP framework) and incorporates several factors including:

- The nature, severity and immediacy of any threats posed by the subject or the capacity for becoming a threat
- The impact of the situation on targets and others (i.e., nature, severity, immediacy of harm)
- The nature and level of interventions necessary to prevent or mitigate harm/impact and assist those involved

Following is a sample priority classification utilizing those key elements as well as the STEP Framework to support a multi-dimensional assessment:

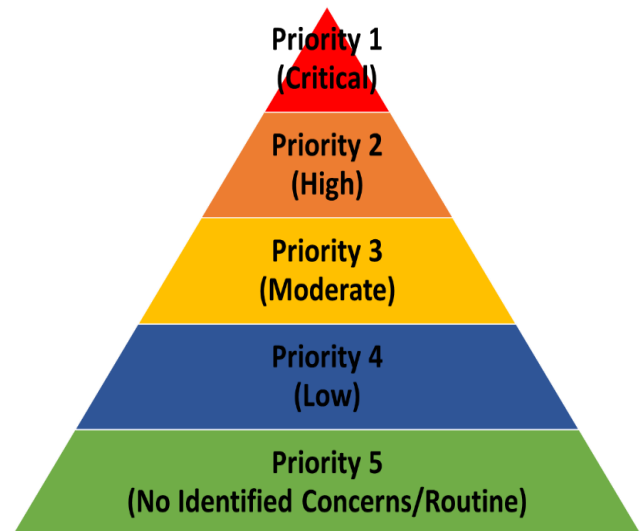
Priority 1 (Critical) – Subject exhibits intent and capability and poses immediate or imminent threat to cause serious violence or harm to self or others. Target/others are vulnerable and/or have support needs. Environmental/Systemic factors & Precipitating Events typically present. Requires immediate law enforcement and administration notification, subject mitigation & containment, activation of crisis response and emergency notification protocols, target protection & safety planning, ongoing assessment and case management, active monitoring, and target/community support.

Priority 2 (High) – Subject poses, or is rapidly developing capability for, a threat of serious harm to self/others or is in urgent need of intervention/assistance. Target/others vulnerable and/or have support needs. Environmental/Systemic factors & Precipitating Events typically present. Requires law enforcement & administration notification, subject mitigation, activation of crisis response protocols as needed, target protection and safety plan, ongoing assessment and case management, active monitoring, and target/community support.

Priority 3 (Moderate) – Subject not known to pose a threat of serious harm. Subject may be developing capability for harm and/or engaging in disruptive or concerning behaviors that indicate need for intervention. Targets/others likely concerned and impacted. Environmental/Systemic & Precipitating factors may be present. Consider law enforcement, security & administrative notification as appropriate. Requires ongoing assessment and case management, active monitoring, and target/community support as necessary. Referrals as appropriate.

Priority 4 (Low) – Subject does not indicate a threat of violence or harm to self/others; but would/may benefit from intervention/assistance. Target vulnerabilities and needs may be present at a low level. Environmental/Systemic concerns or Precipitating Events may be present at low levels. May involve ongoing assessment and case management with periodic active monitoring or passive monitoring. Referrals as appropriate. Close case if no BTAM interventions or monitoring indicated.

Priority 5 (No Identified Concerns) – Subject does not pose threat of harm to self or others or need for assistance or intervention. No target needs, environmental factors, or precipitants that need BTAM intervention. Close case



Implements Proactive & Integrated Case Management Plans

Considerations in Case Management

Based on the information gathered through the inquiry and a comprehensive and holistic assessment of the situation (e.g., STEP), the team will then develop a case management plan, as necessary. The plan should be individualized and specific to the facts and situation of the case in question, and provide for an integrated, holistic, and collaborative response to the case. The team will work so that recommended interventions are coordinated and so that different entities work together toward the same goals – the health, safety, and well-being of the school community. Good case management is informed by research where possible, but mostly by practice and experience as case management is often more art than science.

An engagement model works well with most cases, especially those involving internal threats. Most subjects who come to the attention of threat assessment teams are often struggling or at a crisis point and are looking for assistance. Many have distanced themselves from others or feel alienated from others and typically respond positively to someone who will hear their concerns, not over-react to emotional venting, will engage in problem-solving, and who demonstrates care for them and their situation. While this model generally works well, there are some cases in which such direct engagement may inflame or escalate the situation. Therefore, each situation should be evaluated based on its own case facts to best determine whether such direct engagement would be appropriate.

Teams should use the least intrusive interventions that fit the needs of the case. Interventions that create distance (e.g., changes in work assignments, suspension, expulsion, termination) can make further assessment, intervention and monitoring difficult. That is not to say to avoid those interventions, but to be mindful that when they are used, the team should consider how to sustain monitoring of their effect.

Finally, when considering who will facilitate interventions, remember that in addition to a team member's role or skill, personalities and chemistry can impact the effectiveness of the intervention. A given team member may be very skilled, but just not able to relate to certain subjects or targets. Work together for the best approach based on available resources, setting ego aside. Intervention strategies selected should have the greatest potential for addressing short-term crises and longer-term preventive power.

While holding students and staff accountable for their actions, Administrators must be fair and reasonable in disciplinary responses. It is important for threat assessment teams to recognize that even fair and reasonable discipline can be perceived as another grievance to which the subject may react. In such cases, the disciplinary response could lead to escalation in threatening behavior. The most punitive responses may or may not prevent acts of violence. Suspension or termination/discharge can create the risk of precipitating either an immediate or a delayed violent response unless such actions are coupled with containment and support. For example, a staff member who has been terminated, may conclude: "I have lost everything. I have only a short time to act. I will give them what they deserve." In addition, an employee/member who is suspended or terminated/discharged is often under less supervision than if he or she were to remain in a work setting.

That is not a reason to withhold appropriate and fair consequences for inappropriate behavior, but rather when the situation arises, for BTAM teams to have considered and planned for those contingencies. Administrative leave, suspension, expulsion, or termination options that focus solely on accountability and controlling the person do not (by themselves) address the ongoing challenges of:

- Moving the subject away from thoughts, plans, and capacity for violence and/or disruption
- Connecting the subject to resources (where needed)
- Addressing or mitigating organizational/systemic factors that impact the situation
- Monitoring subjects when they are no longer connected to the school community

Use accountability and separation strategies equitably, and with intentionality, awareness of limitations, and plan for contingencies based on responses to the interventions.

Although detaining a subject may be necessary in a particular situation, without careful attention to the need for confinement, weapons removal, or interpersonal intervention, that action may be insufficient to prevent violence at an organization or otherwise protect a target. Similarly, simply referring a subject to the mental health system, without seeing that referral in the context of an overall case management plan, may not be enough to prevent violence. Singular interventions tend to not be sufficient to address complex and on-going situations.

Utilize key relationships to engage with subject, target, and witnesses.

Engagement (communication, interaction, and empathy) can help build key relationships with subjects, targets and witnesses and can foster more effective:

- Information gathering and assessment
- Redirect from violence/targets
- Problem solving/support
- Set boundaries/limitations
- Admonishment/Confrontation
- Intervention/referral
- Monitoring
- Deterrence

Consider the goals for the engagement and use that to inform the best approach, by whom, when, and where to engage.

Consider involving someone the subject/target trusts

A key to establishing an effective working relationship with the subject/person of concern (and some targets and witnesses) is identifying a responsible person they already trust. One key step to defusing a potentially violent situation involving someone with a grievance is to allow him or her to feel “heard” and validated. Even if they cannot get their way – which oftentimes they cannot – feeling as if someone has understood their position can go a long way toward moving the subject away from thoughts and plans of violence. Examples of a trusted ally include:

- BTAM Team member
- Administrator/Teacher
- Peer (positive influence)
- Mentor
- Parent/Family Member
- School Resource Officer
- Coach/Trainer
- Counselor
- Clergy
- Other

Develop an individualized, contextually relevant, plan based on inquiry and assessment.

- The case management plan is contextually relevant and situationally specific. It is based on the information associated with this case, and not based on generalizations or stereotypes.
- Consider the STEP Framework - maintain a comprehensive and holistic approach to addressing concerns associated with the case.
- Accountability is critical in case management.
 - Assign tasks/interventions to a specific person responsible for ensuring the task is completed whether they perform the task or to someone under their span of control/influence.
 - Set a timeline for completing the task/intervention based on the case's needs.
 - Establish a plan for monitoring the effects of the tasks/interventions on the case.
- Rapport and engagement matter
 - Consider the experience, personality, background, and skills of BTAM team members when assigning tasks. Where possible, match people to their tasks.
 - Consider the use of trusted sources or third parties where appropriate.

An Integrated and Holistic Approach to Case Management

Effective case management integrates interventions, where appropriate and feasible, across the (relevant) domains of the STEP Framework:

- S** De-escalate, assist, refer, contain, or control the **Subject** who may pose a threat of violence, harm or significant disruption to self or others; or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention.
- T** Decrease vulnerabilities, provide support and assistance for the **Target** and others impacted or otherwise indicating a need for assistance or intervention.
- E** Address **Environmental/Systemic** issues to minimize impact, escalation, or recurrence.
- P** Prepare for and mitigate against **Precipitating Events** that may impact the situation (i.e., the subject/person of concern, target/others impacted, or the environmental/systemic factors relevant to the case).



Consider if there are actions the BTAM team can or should facilitate (to address any concerns noted), beyond those already being effectively done.

Source: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger & Nolan (2021)

Subject-based strategies or interventions

Organizations regularly use many of the following examples of interventions or strategies to address situations involving concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior. Teams should consider a broad range of interventions that may de-escalate, assist, refer, contain, control, or redirect the subject away from plans and preparation for violence; and toward engaging adaptively and safely with others, problem solving, adapting, and improving their coping skills and well-being.

Following are examples of subject-based strategies or interventions:

- Check-in/Checkout
 - Maintain channel of communication & engagement
 - Gather information
 - Build rapport and relationship
 - Decrease isolation
 - De-escalate volatile reactions
 - Set expectations
 - Provide feedback & mentoring
 - Monitor reactions to grievances and precipitating events
- Problem solving about legitimate grievances
- Spouse/Parental/Family involvement.
 - Family/Parent training and support (where the subject of concern is a minor) and parents may benefit from mentoring/guidance for dealing with the subject more effectively or need support and counseling for the associated stresses.
- Assistance or support services
 - Trauma informed approaches
 - Work mentoring/Academic tutoring
 - Modification of work schedule or assignments
 - Alternative work/school placement
 - Accommodations for work/school

- Social/Emotional learning
- Behavioral management plans
- Positive behavioral intervention & support (PBIS) programs
- Involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Performance improvement plans
- Peer coaching/Mentoring
- Recognition/Positive engagement
- Counseling/mental health services
 - Check-in/Check-out with mental health staff
 - Disability/Mental health/Violence risk assessment
 - Suicide prevention & intervention programs
 - Outpatient counseling/Mental health care
 - Emergency psychiatric evaluation & care
- Disciplinary measures
 - Subject confrontation or warning/boundaries
 - Parental involvement (students)
 - Disciplinary processes
 - In-school detention/After-school detention
 - Administrative orders for no contact of communication
 - Suspension
 - Termination/Expulsion
- Criminal Justice Services
 - Law enforcement/juvenile justice involvement
 - Court issued protective orders
 - Emergency risk protection (“Red flag”) orders
 - Diversion programs
 - Mandated mental health services

Considerations in Use of Leave, Suspension or Termination in Case Management

Times of interim separation or permanent removal may not only be precipitating events that impact subjects, targets and potentially the school community, but also result in changes in the Team’s ability to monitor and manage the situation.

Leave, suspension, or termination options that focus solely on controlling the person do not address the long-term challenges of:

- Moving subject away from thoughts & plans of, and capacity for, violence and/or disruption
- Connecting subject to resources (where needed)
- Addressing target vulnerability/needs
- Mitigating organizational/Systemic factors
- Monitoring subject

Use with intentionality, fairness, awareness of limitations, and anticipation of consequences. Use separation approaches in conjunction with other supportive approaches (where possible) and monitor the situation.

When school officials remove someone from the school on an interim basis, the BTAM team should work to address a variety of concerns to support changes for a safe and effective re-integration to the school.

Prepare for re-integration of subject:

- Establish conditions for return. Ensure that return conditions are fair, proportional, and clearly communicated, including any assessment or evaluation necessary for consideration of return.
- Assess subject readiness to return safely and effectively to participate in their school or work experience. Anticipate the date/event that allows for consideration of return to school/work. Facilitate relevant assessment or evaluations as appropriate.
- Develop proactive case management plan with the following considerations:
 - Align ongoing interventions. Coordinate action steps across relevant entities: Discipline, HR, Security, teachers, etc.
 - Coach subject about re-entry. Help prepare the subject for return to school/work. Provide resources and support as appropriate.
 - Anticipate environmental aspects which may impact the subject. Monitor and support the subject regarding other factors that may impact return such as access to resources, documentation, reactions from other students/staff, social media.
 - Prepare school community members for subject's re-entry. Coach relevant members of the school community about how to support and prepare for the return of the subject. Provide support in dealing with any ongoing concerns. Encourage ongoing engagement in monitoring of the situation. Check in to see how those community members are doing.
 - Consider precipitating events that may impact the subject, target, or the school community.
- Monitor, re-assess and intervene as appropriate.

Target Case Management Strategies

Where targets are identified or identifiable, consider ways to help them reduce their vulnerability to harm where possible and to address needs for support and assistance.

Coaching Targets Regarding Personal Safety Considerations

Consider things the target can do (or be coached or supported in) that increase their safety. Examples include:

- Setting clear limits and boundaries with subjects regarding communications and contacts.
- Monitor communications for changes/escalations by subject.
- Avoid contact with or response to subject – don't reinforce subject attempts to get a response.
 - Document all contacts from/with subject.
 - Maintain a log of contacts/communications from subject noting date/time/means of contact, nature of contact, witnesses, and impact on the target (including any protective actions they have taken). See the following link to an interactive guide for an example of an incident log:
https://www.stalkingawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SPARC_StalkingLogInstructions_2018_FINAL.pdf
- Minimize reactivity to subject actions.
- Feeling unsafe can lead to emotionally reactive responses that can satisfy, inflame, or enrage the subject.
- Minimize public information especially with social media and phone.
- Safety planning: See the following link to an interactive guide for safety planning regarding relational violence: [Personal safety in relationships when dating | love is respect](#)
- Maintain/Enhance situational awareness.
- Vary routine – be careful about consistent habits.
- Develop contingency plans for avoidance or escape (from the subject), shelter, situational awareness, and personal safety.
- Utilize support systems – being/feeling like a target can be stressful. Use support systems/counseling.

School Strategies for Reducing Target Vulnerability

Consider things the school can do that may increase target safety. Examples include:

- Engagement/Liaison with Target – have a team member assigned as a point of contact for support and assistance
- Change work/class hours/location
- Change/enhance security in work location
- Notice to co-workers – Coworkers can help monitor if a subject is present or posing a threat to target
- Security staffing
- Safety escorts
- Fear management
 - Sometimes victims are so debilitated by fear, they feel helpless and unable to take steps to help themselves, they need support, encouragement, and intervention.
 - Sometimes targets are unaware of, or in denial of, the level of danger they are in, and not as concerned for their safety as they should be given the circumstances – provide feedback about concerns to help them understand risks to them and others.
- EAP/Counseling referrals.

What all Targets/Victims Want

Gavin de Becker in his 1997 best seller, “The Gift of Fear”, discussed the 4 “Cs” that all targets/victims/survivors want from BTAM professionals:

- **Care:** That BTAM professionals care about them as human beings, not just because a policy or law directs us to take actions. People want to know that they matter.
- **Certainty:** Certainty for their safety, which we cannot provide. But we can provide clarity about the systems and processes and how we will work with them to support and enhance their safety and well-being.
- **Consistency:** Victimization often results in a sense of betrayal, a disruption of belief in a fair and just world. Any inconsistency on behalf of a BTAM member is likely to trigger that sense of betrayal. Be careful not to over-promise, and under deliver.
- **Communication:** Victims/targets desire regular communication about the status of the situation and next steps. In the absence of reliable and regular information, victims may feel disregard or disrespected. They may also be unduly influenced by their prior experiences, fears or perceptions of risk related to their current situation.

© Gavin de Becker (1997). “The Gift of Fear”

Environmental/Systemic Case Management Strategies

Cases often help threat managers identify environmental or systemic gaps that impacted on situations. As part of building a better and safer community, holistic threat management also considers necessary or desired modification of the environment.

For example, a person may react inappropriately to a poorly developed and burdensome procedure or policy. The person's behavior must be addressed, but if the procedure or policy tends to provoke discord because it is objectively unfair or unreasonable, then that procedure or policy may be reviewed and revised to be more useful and helpful.

The team may have discovered a delay in reporting concerns, which was brought about by witnesses not knowing where or how to report concerns, indicating the need for more/better awareness or training.

Sometimes situations get out of hand due to poor conflict management, not just by the subject, but by the group or subset of the organization. The group may benefit from support/training in dealing effectively with conflict.

Environmental/Systemic factors may not be under the purview or authority of the BTAM Team so addressing these often involves bringing the issue to attention of the school administration or collaborating with other school or community entities.

Considerations in Addressing Environmental/Systemic Concerns

- Address systemic, policy, or procedural problems
- Address reporting gaps/delays
- Intervene with associates that support violent behavior
- Enhance conflict management skills of groups
- Enhance supervisory skills & accountability
- Enhance organizational climate – caring community
 - Emphasize fairness & respect
 - Effective communication
 - People rewarded, supported, and held accountable
 - Prevention & early intervention with inappropriate behaviors
 - Build engagement for mutual safety & well-being

Threat assessment teams work best in schools that have an overall positive or safe climate, where students and employees feel respected and feel that situations are handled fairly, and that bad behavior – like bullying – is addressed quickly. Schools can enhance their overall climate by surveying everyone in school – students, staff, and parents – to see how safe and respectful the school feels to them. The school can then use the findings in making changes to improve how safe, connected, and respectful the school feels.

Connection through human relationships is a central component of a culture of safety and respect. This connection is the critical emotional glue among students, and between students and adults charged with meeting students' educational, social, emotional, and safety needs. Schools strive for a climate that fosters safety and well-being and connection, where students have a positive connection to each other, and at least one adult. That adult provides a safe place where a student can turn for support and advice, and with whom that student can share concerns openly and without fear of shame or reprisal.

Schools in which students feel able to talk to teachers, deans, secretaries, coaches, custodians, counselors, nurses, school safety officers, bus drivers, principals, and other staff support communication between students and adults about concerns and problems. In one simple example, during staff meetings in a school in a California School District, the names of students are posted, and school faculty members are asked to put stars next to the names of those students with whom they have the closest relationships or know best. Staff members then focus on

establishing relationships with those students with few stars next to their names – i.e., those students with the fewest adult connections in the school. This is a small and easy way to help improve connectedness in a school.

Threat assessment is only one component of an overall strategy to reduce school violence and implemented within the larger context of strategies to ensure schools are safe and secure environments. The primary objective of school violence-reduction strategies should be to create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support within the school. Several school safety strategies can support and enhance a positive climate.

Examples include:

- Effective communication among and between school staff, students, and parents/guardians of students
- School climate assessments and intervention with identified issues
- Emphasis on school connectedness
- Strong, but caring, stance against the code of silence
- Bullying/harassment prevention and intervention
- School-law enforcement partnerships including well-trained school resource officers
- Collaborative relationships with mental health, social services, and other community-based resources
- Planning and preparation to deal with, respond to, and recover from potential crises
- Physical security and crime prevention through environmental design

Manage/Monitor Precipitating Events

As the case moves forward, other circumstances in the lives of the subject, targets, and others (including the threat managers) may impact on the case. Not all of these can be anticipated. However, when the threat managers identify potential precipitating events, they should build a plan to prevent or lessen their impact (when possible) or to at least monitor for their impact.

Note that BTAM Teams are not expected to anticipate every potential circumstance but to focus on those on the near horizon that are foreseeable given what is known about the case.

Anticipate & prepare for precipitating events.

- Minimize unnecessary precipitants where possible (look to systemic issues that unnecessarily impact case).
- Consider the impact of timing and location of interventions on the subject, the target, and the environment. Adjust interventions that are having no effect or a sustained negative effect.
- Monitor for when the intervention is no longer necessary.
- Monitor & plan for loss/injustice.
- Monitor & plan for key dates/events in the process of case management, e.g.:
 - Anniversaries
 - Hearings
 - Court dates
 - Administrative/Court actions
 - Service of notice about outcomes.
- Monitor reactions to case management/interventions. Note that any case management intervention/action, no matter how well intended or delivered, can result in any one of the four following outcomes:
 - Make the situation better
 - Make the situation worse
 - Have no demonstrable effect
 - Cause/contribute to an entirely new problem

BTAM team members should monitor for reactions/effect of interventions and be prepared to adapt the case management plan accordingly.

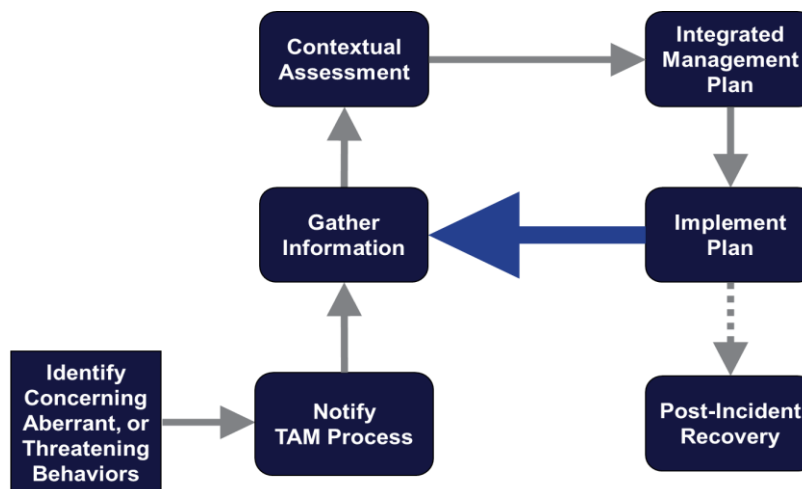
- Monitor for contagion/identification effect of other high profile or locally significant acts of violence. Such incidents can also de-stabilize targets and communities.
- Consider contingency plans and adapt case management plans as needed.

Monitor & Re-Assess the Case on a Longitudinal Basis

Monitoring and Re-Assessing Cases

The process of monitoring and re-assessing cases on a longitudinal basis is a key aspect in which proactive and preventative threat management approaches differ from reactive crisis management or incident-based approaches. BTAM is an on-going problem-solving process, not solely a response to an acute crisis, situation, or incident. The flow chart in Figure 19 summarizes the longitudinal and iterative process of threat assessment and management. That is, the BTAM process continues longitudinally until there are no longer STEP Framework concerns that meet the mission and purview of the BTAM process.

Figure 20. The BTAM Process



Note that Figure 19 is a simplified version of the BTAM case management flowchart we discussed earlier, which is intended to guide BTAM Team members through critical decisions. This simplified chart can be shared with the community to describe the BTAM process. The BTAM team/process:

- Engages with and assists the community in identifying potential threats/concerns.
- Encourages and supports timely reporting to the BTAM Team.
- Gathers relevant information to which it may have lawful and ethical access.
- Uses the totality of that information to develop and initial assessment.
- Uses the assessment to develop an initial case management plan.
- Implements that plan with accountability.

As indicated by the large feedback arrow in the middle, continues the process by which we update assessment of the case, adjust case management plans, implement the updates, and continue to monitor. That cycle continues until there are no longer concerns in any of the STEP domains, which meet the purview of the Team.

Once STEP Framework concerns are resolved or reduced to a level that are being addressed by existing resources, the BTAM team considers what, if any, recovery, resiliency, or support efforts are needed to support those impacted by the case. BTAM makes referrals or recommendations to key partners (e.g., victim advocacy/assistance, family advocacy, counseling, human resources, etc.).

Closing a Case

In determining whether and when to close a case, the BTAM team should consider the following:

- Has the BTAM Team completed necessary interventions and actions regarding this case?
- Is the Level of Concern for the case currently Low or Routine/No Known Concerns?
If the case is at a Low Level of Concern, the BTAM Team should ensure that any remaining issues or tasks are being addressed and monitored by relevant resources within the school or community at this time, and that those are sufficient for the needs of the case at this time.
- Have any relevant referrals been made and are those resources engaged as needed?
Has The BTAM Team reviewed, assessed, and concurred with all the following regarding the STEP Framework for assessment and intervention?
 - Subject of Concern:
At this time, is the subject known to be engaging in any behaviors that would either:
 - Pose a threat of violence, harm, or significant disruption to self or others?
 - May reasonably pose a threat of violence, harm, or significant disruption to self or others, or indicate a need for assistance or intervention?
 - Targets or Others Impacted:
At this time, are Targets or Others Impacted known to:
 - Have any significant ongoing concerns regarding their safety regarding this case?
 - Be engaging in any behaviors that place them at risk regarding this case?
 - Have any significant ongoing or further need for assistance or intervention?
 - Environmental/Systemic Concerns:
Currently, are there any known Environmental/Systemic concerns that are:
 - Currently or significantly impacting the case.
 - Reasonably likely to occur that would significantly impact upon this case.
 - Precipitating Events:
 - Currently are there any known Precipitating Events that are:
 - Currently or significantly impacting this case?
 - Reasonably likely to occur and would significantly impact upon this case?
- Are there any reasons to consider notification to other BTAM, law enforcement agencies, or other community services for continued monitoring or intervention with the subject or target, or if there is such a basis, then the notification/referral has been made.

If the BTAM team determines that the answers to all the questions are “no” or that there are no significant concerns that rise to the level of the mission for the BTAM Team, then the Team may close the case.

Practice in Accordance with Relevant Laws, Policies, and Standards

What Laws, Regulations, Rules May Apply?

There are a broad range of laws, regulations or policies that may impact upon cases or upon the responsibilities, authorities, or limitations of BTAM teams. It is important for BTAM Team members to understand key aspects of relevant laws, regulations, or policies, but also to know BTAM team members' access to legal or policy consultation and guidance. Following are some bodies of law, regulation or guidance that may apply:

- Constitutional protections regarding free speech, due process, search and seizure, etc.
- Civil rights concerns related to race, ethnicity, sex, disability, etc.
- Federal and State Healthcare Privacy Laws
- Federal and State Education Privacy Laws, e.g., FERPA (Family Educational Rights Privacy Act)
- Federal and State Disability Laws
- Federal and State Employment Laws
- Federal and State Intelligence/Fusion Center Privacy Policies
- State Threat Assessment Laws, Regulations, Standards
- Record-Keeping and Open Records Laws
- Standards of Practice/Tort Law
- School Policies

It would be rare for all of these to apply, and exceedingly rare for none of them to apply.

While none of these interfere with being able to deal with threats impacting the organization, some can be complex, and the guidance of legal counsel is strongly suggested.

Often, misunderstanding of the laws, regulations or policies DOES impact willingness to report or respond effectively to concerns. So, BTAM team members should have a working knowledge of foundational issues, and access to legal counsel (with training and experience in the relevant bodies of law) to provide guidance.

BTAM Required by State Law:

Note that several states have enacted legislation mandating threat assessment and management programs in preK-12 school and/or institutions of higher education. Where a subject of concern, or a target has been involved in threat assessment processes in states with such laws in place, BTAM Teams may have more access to relevant and helpful information to inform their current assessment of the situation.

At the time this *BTAM Practitioner's Guide* is published, the following states are known to have statutory requirements for BTAM processes:

- Virginia:
 - Public Institutions of Higher Education (2008)
 - Public K-12 School Divisions (2013)
- Illinois:
 - All Institutions of Higher Education (2008)
 - Public K-12 Schools (2019)
- Connecticut: All Institutions of Higher Education (2013)
- Florida: Public K-12 Schools (2018)
- Maryland: Public K-12 Schools (2018)
- Kentucky: Public K-12 Schools (2019)
- Oregon: Public K-12 Schools (2019)
- Rhode Island: Public K-12 Schools (2019)

- Tennessee: Public K-12 Schools (2019)
- Texas: Public K-12 Schools (2019)
- Washington: Public K-12 Schools (2019)
- Pennsylvania: Public K-12 Schools (2019)
- New Jersey: Public K-12 Schools (2021)
- Louisiana: Public K-12 Schools (2023)

In addition to these states that have statutory requirements for BTAM, other states have established BTAM as a recognized practice or standard of practice through state education departments or school board associations (e.g., Missouri, Iowa). Therefore, those states may also have relevant information on Louisiana school affiliates who have recently graduated or transferred from those educational settings.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

It is important for BTAM members to have a working understanding of relevant laws related to privacy of student educational records. FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of information in a student's educational records. It prohibits the inappropriate disclosure of student educational information beyond those who have a legitimate educational interest, i.e., a need to know. FERPA also provides the student (or if the student is under 18, their parent or guardian) with an affirmative right to review any information in the student's educational record.

FERPA does not impede the work of a BTAM Team when handling any cases of threats or concern about potential violence or self-harm. However, misunderstanding of FERPA can impede threat management efforts.

Key points about FERPA

- FERPA protects the privacy of educational records; it does not extend to direct knowledge or observations of students. This means that team members are free to ask – and school staff are free to share – their observations about a student, verbal communications with that student, and anything else not written down.
- FERPA provides students (or their parents if student is under age 18) the affirmative right to review the student's educational records upon request.
- FERPA allows sharing of information (within the school) with school officials having a legitimate educational interest. Information from an educational record can be shared with other school staff, who have a need to know. Certainly, a threat assessment team has a need to know! Schools must define who they consider to be a school official in their FERPA statement and should be sure that the roles of BTAM Team members would be defined as school officials.
- FERPA also includes exceptions that allow information sharing in the case of emergency situations and/or situations where public safety is a concern. Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education (which enforces FERPA) following the mass casualty incident at Virginia Tech has made clear that it is up to individual schools to decide whether there is an emergency or public safety concern. The team should articulate and document the nature of the emergency and/or threat to public safety.
- FERPA does not pertain to school law enforcement unit records (i.e., records created and maintained by and primarily for a law enforcement purpose). Records created and maintained under the umbrella of the institution's school resource officer or other designated law enforcement entity would not be educational records, unless shared with school officials.
- FERPA allows for sharing of education records (without a release) when a student applies for enrollment or transfer to another educational setting. This allows for the sharing of BTAM information between schools or schools & colleges, where there is an articulable need to know.

- The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that FERPA does not permit a private right of action, meaning that individuals cannot be sued for violations of FERPA. The law provides that federal funding could be withheld, or fines could be assessed in cases where a pattern or practice of violations is present (as opposed to isolated violations, which are not individually sanctionable). To date, there have been no instances where an educational institution has received such sanctions for violating FERPA. Rather, it is more likely that school would receive a corrective notice, and additional training from the U.S. Department of Education if it were found to have a pattern of sharing information in violation of FERPA.

For more information about FERPA, see www.ed.gov and search for FERPA or the Student Privacy Policy Office, which oversees FERPA. You can contact that office directly with questions.

- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations](#)
34 C.F.R. Part 99 (amended 2022)
- [School Resource Officers, School Law Enforcement Units, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
U.S. Department of Education (2019)
- [A Quick Guide to Information Sharing During Threat Reporting & Assessment](#)
National Center for School Safety (2022)
- [Joint Guidance on the Application of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act And the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 To Student Health Records](#)
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and U.S. Department of Education (2019)

Exercise about FERPA:

Consider the following to test your understanding of FERPA:

A teacher in your school approaches you (knowing you are member of the school's BTAM Team) very concerned about an interaction they just had with a student after a class. During that conversation, the student engaged in behaviors and made statements that led the teacher to believe that the student was a serious threat to the safety of themselves and others at school.

Based on the information shared, you concur there appears to be a significant threat.

When you ask the name of the student and how about their behavior and performance in class, the teacher becomes very cautious and says they are not sure if they can provide that information, that they don't want to violate privacy law (FERPA) and be sued by the student's family.

What mistakes, if any, are being made?

Here are the main mistakes:

1. The teacher's conversation with and observations of the student are not covered by FERPA as they stem from direct knowledge or observations and therefore are not an educational record. However, if the teacher wrote up an incident report that contained information that identified the student (or would reasonably identify them) and that report was maintained by the school, then THAT report would likely be an educational record and subject to FERPA protections. The teacher would still be able to disclose their personal observations.
2. A member of the threat assessment team is generally a school official with a legitimate educational interest. The teacher can share any educational record with a school official that is pertinent to their duties. Note that schools are required to define "educational/school officials" and that definition MAY include School Resource Officers and even other local, state, or federal law enforcement who serve on the Threat Assessment Team. However, certain criteria need to be met for an external law enforcement officer to meet the definition of a school official. If they do, they can receive information from a student's educational record (for threat assessment purposes) without release of the student or their parent, or a subpoena even where no emergency exists.

3. The teacher articulated a serious safety concern (and you concurred) which gives articulable basis through the FERPA "Health or Safety Emergency" exception for sharing of information, including, if needed, to share information outside the school with those that can help prevent harm (e.g., parents, law enforcement, mental health). Note that, per FERPA, for such disclosures, the school must document the disclosure, to whom it was made, and for what purposes.
4. The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that there is no private right to action under FERPA. Neither you nor the teacher can be sued for an individual FERPA violation, even if you have made a mistake. FERPA only contains provisions for the school's accountability when there is a pattern of disregard for student privacy. While the law provides the US Department of Education the authority to remove federal funds from schools found to be engaging in a pattern of violations to student privacy, to date, it has never done so.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

When it comes to accessing information that a health provider may have about a subject, that information is more difficult to access than information protected by FERPA. Federal (e.g., HIPAA) and state laws protect information shared between a licensed health care professional and patient, and limit information that can be lawfully shared with others. Keeping that information confidential helps patients trust their health care providers and disclose more to facilitate more effective treatment. Teams do not want to unduly compromise the safety that confidentiality provides; however, serious safety concerns always take precedence over privacy concerns.

Note that, for school health professionals (e.g., school psychologists, counselors, social workers, nurses) HIPAA likely does not apply. Records of school health services are considered educational services and are covered under FERPA, unless they involve treatment services that are provided by HIPAA entities (e.g., external licensed providers that bill through third party payors, i.e., insurance).

Again, consult with your legal counsel – but following is what legal experts advise about HIPAA and state confidentiality laws:

- HIPAA protects the confidentiality of information in health records. In addition, state laws also protect the confidentiality of mental health information and discussions between a patient and a mental health professional.
- HIPAA and state laws include exceptions where information can be shared in situations where a patient is a threat to themselves or others. In such situations where a mental health professional is aware that his/her patient has threatened harm to themselves or to someone else, the mental health professional may have a duty to warn someone or to do something to protect the victim in question.
- Under HIPAA and state laws, confidentiality is held by the client or patient, not the mental health professional. The threat assessment team can always ask the person in question for their permission to access their mental health records and talk with their mental health professional. If approached with sincerity for their well-being and assurance that the team can best help the person in question with full information, it is quite likely that the person will consent. The team will need to get the person's permission in writing.
- While HIPAA and state laws may prevent a mental health professional from disclosing information to the threat assessment team, it does not prohibit mental health professionals from receiving information about a patient. The team can provide the information it knows to an individual's therapist or counselor. In many cases, a treating mental health professional may only have partial information about a patient/client. Receiving information from the team about an individual may enhance the treatment the mental health professional can provide.
- If the team provides information to a mental health professional, it can then ask the mental health professional whether the new information received from the team elevates their concern about the patient to the point where they now have a duty to warn or a duty to protect. If so, the mental health professional may be able to share information with the team.

- Finally, access to mental health information can be helpful in threat assessment cases, but it may not provide more detail than the team is able to access through others who know or have observed the person in question. It is more important to consider incorporating any treating mental health professional into an individual case management plan.

Record Keeping

There are many issues related to the creation, storage, access, sharing, and destruction of records, so be sure to obtain guidance from school administration, legal counsel, and relevant regulations or policies. As the recipient and screener of all potentially threat-related information, it is helpful for the BTAM team to maintain a centralized database of everyone who has come to the team's attention. It need not be complicated; a simple spreadsheet (one that can be searched for names, terms, etc.) would suffice. However, given the amount of information and the importance of accessing it easily and quickly, it is recommended that a database be used.

This database can be used to store all information gathered throughout the threat assessment and management process. Or the database can be used as more of an incident-tracking system that holds the names and other identifiers of everyone who is reported to the team. This system would enable the team to cross-reference the case file that contains the information relevant to that person and incident. Either way, even if a report does not seem to be a legitimate threat now or the case is closed quickly, the individual's name should still be noted in the database. If, later, the individual's name comes up again, the team will find information from this earlier report in the database after "pinging" the system — that is, searching the database for the name in question — and therefore be more informed about the individual's pattern of behavior.

The database provides a simple and organized way to store, search, and retrieve information so that the threat assessment team can quickly know if a certain individual has come across the radar screen previously.

In addition to the database, other records maintained by the team may include:

- Documentation of the subject's statements and actions, including date, time, behaviors, impact, and witnesses. Encourage BTAM Team members and witnesses to document the subject's exact words when quoting threatening statements.
- Documentation of targets or witness reactions to the subject's behavior, including any protective actions taken.
- Copies of emails, memos, voicemails, videos, and other communications pertaining to the case
- Agenda and minutes of team staffing and consultations.

BTAM Team records should not be stored in counseling/mental health files, disciplinary files, or the centralized education record of a student. Each of those may have related documentation and a school's Central file should reference a threat assessment, but not include full details.

The BTAM record should be stored in a secure, centralized location accessible to team members but that restricts unauthorized persons from access. Typically, that is either on a secure computer server to which only members of the BTAM Team have access or in secure hard copy files in the office area of the school administrator having oversight of the threat assessment team, but not accessible to others.

Good Record-Keeping: Fortify Your Position

Effective threat assessment and management efforts are accompanied by thorough documentation that demonstrates the team's good faith efforts to identify, investigate, assess, and manage threatening situations. The team can remember this with the acronym FORT (© G. Deisinger, 1996). Engage in actions and accompanying documentation that demonstrate that the team was:

Fair – sought to understand situations and give individuals an opportunity to be heard and understood.

Objective – sought information based on facts and observations of the case and not speculation or bias.

Reasonable – engaged in responses that were effective and proportionate to the situation, and,

Timely – quickly and responsively addresses reports of threatening behavior.

By maintaining records and preserving evidence throughout the threat assessment and management process, the team establishes and preserves a legal and behavioral justification for interventions to address potential threats and support the health, safety, and well-being of the school community.

Records Retention and Disposition

Teams are encouraged to retain records of threat assessment and management cases as long as is allowed under relevant laws or regulations regarding retention of such records. Subjects may pose an on-going or recurrent threat years later, even after leaving the school community.

As per Louisiana Administrative Code tit. 28, § CXV-701, each local educational agency/school shall maintain necessary records for the effective operation of the LEA/school. The LEA shall comply with the requirements of R.S. 44:411 regarding schedules for the retention of official records. Those records for which a formal retention schedule has not been executed shall be kept by the LEA for at least three years.

When case records are no longer needed or must be destroyed, they should be destroyed appropriately. Destruction of confidential or privacy-protected paper records should be done by shredding, pulping, or incineration. Electronic records should be overwritten with meaningless data, or the storage media must be physically destroyed. Commercial software applications are available that electronically shred records from media. Simple deletion of confidential or privacy-protected information in electronic storage media is not acceptable.

Be sure to review school policies and state laws regarding records retention.

Continuously Improves & Adapts

The final element of an effective BTAM process is to support a process of continuous improvement of the program and to modify and adapt to changing challenges and needs.

BTAM Process Development

There are a variety of things that BTAM Teams and team members can do to build and refine their process, to collect the dots, connect the dots, and build competence and confidence in their abilities.

Integrate Multi-Disiplinary Processes

Schools may have a variety of specialized or multi-disciplinary processes to address complex issues. The challenge is that they often operate in silos, without knowledge of what others are doing, and the role they may have in a particular case.

- Threat Assessment Team
- Student Assistance Program
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Suicide Prevention & Intervention Team
- Bullying Prevention Team
- Sexual Harassment/Title IX Team
- Domestic Violence/Dating Violence/Stalking Team
- IT-Based Insider Threat Team

**Communication, Collaboration
and Coordination are Critical!**

-Gene Deisinger, PhD. (1993)

BTAM members should be aware of which of these processes/teams (and any other relevant ones) may exist in their school and understand any nexus with the BTAM process.

Mind the Gap! (Build connection and coordination between processes)

- Clarify mission/roles so all involved understand roles and nexus.
- Shared membership & regular communication. Build overlap through shared membership and/or regular communication.
- Integrated planning. Coordinate and collaborate on cases that overlap.
- Designated authority and responsibility. Clarify which entities are responsible for which functions.

Prepare foundations:

- Establish authority & legitimacy of BTAM processes
- Review & integrate existing mechanisms & resources
- Implement & enhance structure & process
- Basic training for team members & backups
- Enhance community awareness & engagement
- Train key stakeholders in process
- Build collaborative relationships
- Implement systematized process for:
 - Reporting.
 - Intake/Screening/Triage.
 - Operational guidelines for assessment, management, and monitoring of cases.
 - BTAM casework.

Enhance Capabilities

- Advanced/applied training for BTAM members, e.g.:
 - Interviewing
 - Domain specific (e.g., Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Stalking, Extremism, trauma-informed approaches, etc.)
 - Clinical violence risk assessment as a supplement to the BTAM process.
- Tabletop exercises/case study reviews. Practice skills regularly, don't wait for a crisis case to start to learn and build skills.
- Professional organizations
 - Member's state/national professional associations
 - Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP; <http://www.atapworldwide.org>)
 - Note that there are also established associations of threat assessment professionals (e.g., other TAPs) around the world including Canada (CATAP), Europe (AETAP), Asia Pacific (APATAP), Africa (AfATAP) and developing in South America. Members of these associations can be exceptional resources with cases having international connections.
- Ongoing process review and continuous improvement:
 - Review and update BTAM process regularly
 - Review policies, procedures, and process
 - Check for gaps
 - Enhance capability and capacity

BTAM members should regularly consider ways to enhance their professional and personal contributions to the BTAM process and support other team members in doing the same. In the Resources section, see the ***Self & Team Assessment Worksheet***, which is intended to help team members consider their personal and professional strengths and areas for improvement, consider team functioning, and set goals for self and team development.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The following is an overview of Deisinger Consulting, LLC, and the team members who developed this *BTAM Practitioner's Guide*. Both are nationally- recognized subject matter experts within the field of behavioral threat assessment and management, school and campus safety, and violence prevention.

Deisinger Consulting, LLC

DEISINGER CONSULTING, LLC is a professional services firm specializing in operational psychology, behavioral threat assessment and management services, and organizational development, for an international base of clients. Dr. Deisinger, along with a multi-disciplinary network of subject matter experts, helps clients develop, implement, and operate comprehensive approaches to threat management. We help protect organizations through a holistic and collaborative approach to preventing & mitigating harm, sustaining continuity of operations, and enhancing the safety & well-being of the organization and its members.

DEISINGER CONSULTING serves a wide range of clients in business, education, healthcare, government, military, law enforcement, intelligence, non-profit organizations, and security & protective operations across North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

Dr. Deisinger and associates are uniquely qualified and exceptionally suited to advise on contemporary standards of practice in behavioral threat assessment and management. As recognized experts in the field, Dr. Deisinger and associates regularly review and synthesize information and resources regarding contemporary standards of practice.

DEISINGER CONSULTING, LLC is owned and managed by Dr. Gene Deisinger, an internationally recognized expert in behavioral threat assessment and management.

DEISINGER CONSULTING, LLC is Virginia SWaM Certified as both a small business and a micro business through the Virginia Department of Small Business & Supplier Diversity and is a registered vendor in eVA.

Gene Deisinger, Ph.D.

Dr. Gene Deisinger is President of Deisinger Consulting, LLC, specializing in operational psychology, protective intelligence, and behavioral threat assessment & management for an international base of clients in business, education, healthcare, government, military, law enforcement, non-profit organizations, and security & protective operations. Dr. Deisinger helps clients develop, implement, and operate comprehensive, holistic & collaborative programs to prevent & mitigate harm, sustain continuity of operations, and enhance the safety & well-being of the organization and its members.

In June 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice appointed Dr. Deisinger to serve as a subject matter expert on the Critical Incident Review Team regarding the mass casualty incident at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX.

Since 2021, Dr. Deisinger has served as a founding member and subject matter expert for the Mass Violence Advisory Initiative, a joint project of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Since February 2015, Dr. Deisinger has been retained as the Threat Management Consultant for the Virginia Center for School & Campus Safety. Dr. Deisinger provides threat management training and consultation for schools, campuses, and government & law enforcement agencies across Virginia.

Until his retirement in December 2014, Dr. Deisinger served as Deputy Chief of Police & Director of Threat Management Services for Virginia Tech, positions to which he had been recruited following the 2007 mass casualty incident at that campus. As executive officer for the Virginia Tech Police Department, Dr. Deisinger provided leadership for law enforcement operations to support a safe and secure campus environment and directed the university's multi-disciplinary threat management functions across its global facilities.

Dr. Deisinger earned his doctorate in psychology from Iowa State University. He is a licensed psychologist, a certified health service provider in psychology, and, until his retirement, a certified law enforcement officer.

Dr. Deisinger was a founding member of the Iowa State University Critical Incident Response Team, a multi-disciplinary team that conducted pro-active planning and coordinated institutional responses during crisis situations. As part of that initiative, Dr. Deisinger developed and directed the Threat Management Team for Iowa State from the team's inception in 1993, until accepting his position at Virginia Tech in 2009.

Since 1994, Dr. Deisinger has provided threat assessment & management consultation and training to organizations across the United States and abroad, assisting hundreds of organizations in developing, implementing, and refining their threat management processes. He has provided consultation on a broad range of cases, helping organizations to implement integrated case management strategies. Dr. Deisinger has been an invited speaker for numerous national & international professional and government organizations.

In 2008, Dr. Deisinger was the lead author of *The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams*, which is recognized by the American National Standards Institute as exemplifying the standard of practice for implementing and operating campus threat assessment and management teams. Several campuses, corporations and healthcare systems have adopted the Handbook as an operating guide.

Since 2012 he has served as a subject matter expert for the White House, and the US Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Defense, in their efforts to prevent targeted violence and other insider threats. From 2009-2011, Dr. Deisinger served as a subject matter expert and primary trainer for the national Campus Threat Assessment Training initiative, a program offered through the US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. From 2009-2012, Dr. Deisinger was appointed as a Fellow of the US Department of Education's Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention. From 2008 to 2010, Dr. Deisinger was appointed as a subject matter expert for a joint project by the US Department of Education, US Secret Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation that resulted in a monograph entitled *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education*.

In 2009, following the tragedy at Fort Hood, the US Army requested Dr. Deisinger's assistance in enhancing force protection and threat management capabilities. He subsequently served as a subject matter expert for the Defense Science Board, providing briefings to enhance understanding of targeted violence and application of threat management methodologies in military settings. His contributions were included in the Board's 2012 publication entitled *Task Force Report: Predicting Violent Behavior*.

He has been featured in *Nature - International Weekly Journal of Science*, and in the *American Psychological Association Monitor on Psychology*, and the PBS Special, *The Path to Violence*.

W. Payne Marks

Payne Marks began his career in law enforcement in 1994 as a Deputy Sheriff with the Gloucester County Sheriff's Office in eastern Virginia. Moving to the Virginia State Police in 1996, he served as a Trooper, Special Agent, and a variety of leadership positions culminating with his service as the Director of the Virginia Fusion Intelligence Center.

Here, he was responsible for prioritizing and overseeing strategic and tactical intelligence analysis, leading a staff of 40 analysts, supervisors, and support staff. He also oversaw the field operations of the Criminal Intelligence Division, which included 20 special agents of the Field Intelligence Unit and the State Police personnel assigned to the various FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Forces within Virginia.

Based upon research conducted while a graduate student at the Naval Postgraduate School, Center for Domestic and Homeland Security, Marks facilitated the development of new violence prevention capabilities for the Virginia State Police by establishing a behavioral threat assessment and management program within the Virginia Fusion Intelligence Center. This initiative utilized multi-disciplinary, investigative, and analytical tools and processes to help prevent instances of targeted violence within Virginia.

Preceding service as Director of the Virginia Fusion Intelligence Center, Marks served as the Assistant Unit Commander of the Counterterrorism and Criminal Interdiction Unit (CCIU) of the Virginia State Police. Here he was responsible for ensuring the operational readiness of seven CCIU teams deployed throughout Virginia. This included training, exercises, responses and the development of policies and procedures regarding responses to radiological events. He also co-chaired the Virginia Preventive Radiological Nuclear Detection (PRND) Working Group with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

Marks volunteered as a member of the State Police Critical Incident-Stress Management Team as a peer debriefer for incidents which may cause job-related or post-traumatic stress. He also volunteered with the Virginia State Police Death Benefit Fund Association, serving as Association President until his retirement from state service in 2020.

Payne Marks holds a master's degree in security studies from the Naval Postgraduate School, Center for Homeland Defense and Security, graduating in 2016. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Mary Washington (Virginia) in 1992. He completed the National Criminal Justice Command College through the University of Virginia in 2011.

He has presented to regional and national conferences concerning the role of law enforcement and behavioral threat assessment and management to prevent targeted violence in our communities. Marks has also worked as a private contractor supporting the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, delivering trainings, exercises, and evaluations to public safety agencies throughout the United States. Since retirement from state service in September of 2020, Payne Marks has established a consulting practice to continue the work of targeted violence prevention and intelligence-led initiatives to improve public safety. Marks is recognized by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services as a trainer to teach K-12 behavioral threat assessment and management to public schools in Virginia.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Definitions

Bullying: Any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying but does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Direct Threat: Defined under law as one in which a person poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services. A determination that a person with a disability poses a direct threat may not be based on generalizations or stereotypes about the effects of a particular disability and must be based on an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment relying on current medical evidence or on the best available objective evidence, to determine: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.

Distal Risk Factors: A distal risk factor is a characteristic or behavioral pattern that represents an underlying vulnerability for a particular condition or outcome, e.g., violence. Having a distal risk factor does not mean a subject will develop the condition or outcome, only that they may be at risk for developing it at some time in the future. Examples include:

Personal Grievance and Moral Outrage: A combination of personal grievance and moral outrage concerning historical or contemporaneous religious or political events. Personal grievance is a major loss in love and/or work (anger, humiliation, and blame follow). Moral outrage is vicarious identification, i.e., lone terrorist has not personally experienced the suffering of the victimized group.

Framed by an Ideology: The presence of beliefs that justify the subject's intent to act. It can be a religious belief system, a political philosophy, a secular commitment, a one issue conflict, or an idiosyncratic justification. Beliefs are usually superficial and favorite phrases are selected to justify violence.

Failure to Affiliate with an Extremist Group: The experience of rejecting or being rejected by a radical, extremist, or other group with which the subject initially wanted to affiliate. Rejection further isolates and hardens the belief system and intent to be violent. Often, a long pattern of interpersonal difficulties is present. The subject will then turn to the internet in search of like-minded violent true believers.

Dependence on the Virtual Community: Use of social media, chat rooms, emails, listservs, texting, tweeting, posting, searches, etc., for: virtual interaction: e.g., reinforcement of beliefs and virtual learning, planning and preparation.

Thwarting of Occupational Goals: A major setback or failure in a planned academic and/or occupational life course results in subject being disillusioned with the social order and resentful of narcissistic wounding due to history of slights, rejections, failures.

Changes in Thinking and Emotion: Interpersonal communication becomes more strident, humorless, binary, or dogmatic, e.g., "don't think, just believe." Internal fantasies become violent and grandiose, goal to purify the environment by killing the unbelievers; an apocalyptic event which he will help accelerate, often sanctified by God, violence as a righteous act. Emotional change from just anger to contempt and disgust, e.g., equation of outgroup with vermin, or other toxic objects.

Failure of Sexual Pair Bonding: Historical failures to maintain a stable and positive attachment with any sexual intimate. May involve: Renunciation of actual sexuality, Idealization in fantasy, erotic component of martyrdom (sexual fantasy), view that women are distrusted and need to be controlled.

Mental Disorder: Evidence of a major mental disorder by history or in the present. Note that the ideology may provide a rationalization for symptoms of mental disorder, and intellectually buffer and help manage the anxiety of a decompensating mind.

Greater Creativity and Innovation: Evidence of tactical thinking “outside the box.” The planned act is creative, innovative (a major aspect has not been done before in contemporary times) and/or is imitated by others. There may be an absence of fear of failure.

History of Criminal Violence: Evidence of instrumental criminal violence in the subject's past, demonstrating a capacity and a willingness to engage in predation for a variety of reasons, such as a history of armed robberies or planned assaults on others for material gain.

Duty to Warn/Protect: A legal duty of a mental health professional with knowledge of a potential act of violence by someone in his care, directed at a third party. This knowledge requires him to act reasonably to protect the potential victim from the threat.

Fixation: An extreme preoccupation with another person, an activity, or an idea. In threat assessment and management cases, it is often observed to involve a grievance, personal cause, or a public figure.

Intervention: A strategy or approach that is intended to prevent violence or other harm, and enhance the health, safety, or well-being of the school community.

Intimacy Effect: The closer the interpersonal relationship between a person of concern and a target, the greater the likelihood is of violence. This intimacy can be based upon the person of concern's perception of the relationship, including delusional perceptions.

Monitoring: Checking on the status of the case.

Active Monitoring involves the threat assessment team deliberately and dynamically engaging with persons involved in the case and school/community systems to check-in regarding the status of case, subject/target responses to interventions, needs of the school community, impact of environmental/systemic factors or precipitating events, etc.

Passive Monitoring involves encouraging and supporting persons involved in the case, or other members of the community, to report any further issues or concerns to the threat assessment team, as necessary.

Pathway to Violence: One of several models proposed to describe a progression from grievance to attack. Steps along the pathway include a highly personalized grievance, violent ideation, research and planning, specific preparations for violence, breaches of security or other boundaries, and attack. It is possible that an individual's pathway may differ or not exist at all.

Grievance: A real or perceived sense of loss, mistreatment, or injustice, often fueling a feeling of being wronged, shamed, or humiliated.

Ideation: Expressing thoughts or fantasies regarding the use of violence to address a real or perceived grievance.

Planning: Giving thought and consideration not only to the idea and intent of committing violence, but also to the who, what, when, where and how of doing so. May involve gathering information regarding their grievances, their targets, means of causing harm, equipment, etc., or research other incidents of targeted violence to learn from other perpetrators.

Preparation: Attempts to prepare for the violence and to develop or acquire the capability to cause harm to the intended target(s)/victim(s). They obtain or try to obtain the means, refine methods, facilitate, or take advantage of opportunity and proximity to targets to fulfill their plans.

Implementation: The subject initiates the operationalized plan once it reaches a point where they perceive themselves as capable of doing so. Capability is based on the subject's perceived skill and will to cause harm.

Protective Factor: Characteristics or conditions that may help to decrease a person's risk for violence.

Proximal Warning Behaviors: Dynamic and/or changing patterns of behavior that may be evidence of increasing or accelerating risk.

Directly Communicated Threat: An unambiguously stated or written threat to either a target or to law enforcement expressing intent to commit violence.

Energy Burst: An increase in frequency, duration, or variety of warning behaviors related to a target, even if the behaviors themselves appear relatively innocuous, usually in the days or weeks before an attack.

Fixation Warning Behavior: An extreme preoccupation with another person, an activity, or an idea. In threat assessment and management cases, it is often observed to involve a grievance, personal cause, or a public figure.

Identification Behavior: Actual or virtual behavior demonstrating a psychological desire to be a pseudo-commando, adopt a warrior mentality, identify with military, or law enforcement paraphernalia, identify with past attackers, or to associate with advancing a particular cause or belief.

Last Resort Behavior: Communications or actions indicating increasing desperation or distress, or that the person of concern perceives no alternatives to violence.

Leakage: Communications or expressions, in any form which do not directly threaten but otherwise reveal clues related to a subject's grievances, ideas, intentions, plans or preparations, about committing violence.

Novel Aggression: This is an act of aggression which appears unrelated to any "pathway" behavior, and which is committed for the first time or is atypical. A person of concern may be engaging in this behavior to test their ability to engage in a violent act and it could be thought of as experimental aggression.

Pathway Warning Behavior: Any behavior that is part of research, planning, preparation, or implementation of an attack.

Risk Assessment: A calculation, based upon known variables, of a person's risk for engaging in violence. Risk level is often based upon static factors rather than warning behaviors, and frequently requires in-person evaluations in a clinical setting. BTAM Team members do not commonly use this technique.

Risk Factor: Characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may engage in violence. Violence risk is most often the result of multiple risk factors converging at a moment in time. Risk factors may encompass biological, psychological, and/or social factors in the individual, family, and environment. The risk of violence is highest when multiple factors are present or escalating, when protective factors and healthy coping techniques have diminished, and when the individual has access to lethal means.

Self-Harm/Self-Directed Violence: Behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself. Self-harm behaviors can be either non-suicidal or suicidal.

Stalking: A pattern of behaviors or course of directed at another person with the intent to place, or when he knows or reasonably should know that the conduct places that other person in reasonable fear of death, criminal sexual assault, or bodily injury to that other person or to that other person's family or household member.

Suicide: Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with an intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Suicide Attempt: A self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to die. A suicide attempt may result in death, injuries, or no injuries. A mixture of ambivalent feelings, such as a wish to die and a desire to live, is a common experience with most suicide attempts. Therefore, ambivalence is not a reliable indicator of the seriousness or level of danger of a suicide attempt or the person's overall risk.

Suicidal Behavior: Suicide attempts, injury to oneself associated with at least some level of intent, developing a plan or strategy for suicide, gathering the means for a suicide plan, or any other overt action or thought indicating intent to end one's life.

Suicidal Ideation: Thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behavior that may result in death. A desire to be dead without a plan or the intent to end one's life is still considered suicidal ideation and shall be taken seriously.

Suicide Contagion: The process by which suicidal behavior or death by suicide influences an increase in suicidal behaviors in others who are also at risk. Identification, modeling, and guilt are each thought to play a role in contagion. Suicide contagion can result in a cluster of suicides within a community.

Target: The general definition of a target is a person, thing, or place that is the focus of an attack. In threat assessment and management casework it is a point of fixation for intended violence. This can include people, buildings, organizations, or more general concepts.

Targeted Violence: An incident of violence where a potential assailant chooses a target(s) prior to a violent act.

Threat: A concerning communication or behavior that indicates that an individual may pose a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others. The threat may be expressed or communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party; and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat.

Violent Extremism: Violent action for which the impetus of the attack is born out of an ideological system, usually intended to enact some change or disrupt activities deemed unacceptable by followers of that ideology.

Warning Signs: Characteristics or behaviors that are associated with a current or escalating risk of violence. These tend to be dynamic, acute, and often associated with new stresses, events, losses, or failures.

Select Louisiana Laws Related To Threat Assessment

§ 17:409.2. Definitions

As used in this Subpart, the following terms have the following meanings:

- (1) "Risk is imminent" means that the available facts, when viewed in light of surrounding circumstances, would cause a reasonable person to believe that the event stated in the threat is about to happen.
- (2) "School" shall have the meaning ascribed to it by R.S. 17:236.
- (3) "Student" means any person registered or enrolled at a school.
- (4) "Threat is credible" means that the available facts, when viewed in light of surrounding circumstances, would cause a reasonable person to believe that the person communicating the threat actually intends to carry out the threat.
- (5) "Threat of terrorism" means communication, whether oral, visual, or written, including but not limited to electronic mail, letters, notes, social media posts, text messages, blogs, or posts on any social networking website, of any crime of violence that would reasonably cause any student, teacher, principal, or school employee to be in sustained fear for his safety, cause the evacuation of a building, or cause other serious disruption to the operation of a school.
- (6) "Threat of violence" means communication, whether oral, visual, or written, including but not limited to electronic mail, letters, notes, social media posts, text messages, blogs, or posts on any social networking website, of any intent to kill, maim, or cause great bodily harm to a student, teacher, principal, or school employee on school property or at any school function.

§ 17:409.3. Mandatory reporting

- A. Any administrator, teacher, counselor, bus operator, or other school employee, whether full-time or part-time, who learns of a threat of violence or threat of terrorism, whether through oral communication, written communication, or electronic communication, shall immediately report the threat to a local law enforcement agency and, if the employee is not the school administrator, to the school administrator.
- B. (1) Upon being informed of the threat, the school administrator shall make reasonable efforts to attempt to inform all persons who are targets of the threat and shall take all necessary measures to protect their lives and safety.
 - (2) The school administrator next shall make reasonable efforts to attempt to notify the appropriate personnel within the school district administration.
 - (3) The school administrator and the school district administrator then shall determine if risk is imminent for any other persons because of the threat, and if so, notify them and make reasonable efforts to attempt to take measures to protect their lives and safety.
 - (4) The school administrator and the school district administrator then shall determine whether to notify parents of the students at the school.
- C. No person shall have a cause of action against any person for any action taken or statement made in adherence with the requirement for reporting as provided in this Subpart. However, the immunity from liability provided in this Subsection shall not apply to any action or statement if the action or statement was maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to cause harm to, harass, or otherwise deceive law enforcement or school officials.

§ 17:409.4. Investigation of threats of violence or threats of terrorism

- A. (1) Each public school governing authority shall develop and adopt a policy for the investigation of threats of violence or threats of terrorism that have been reported to a school administrator, which shall include conducting an interview with the person reporting a threat, the person allegedly making a threat, and all witnesses, and securing any evidence, including but not limited to statements, writings, recordings, electronic messages, and photographs.
- (2) If the investigation results in evidence or information that supports that a threat is credible, the school and school district shall implement measures to provide for ongoing protection of the safety and lives of all students and staff at the school.
- B. Any law enforcement agency receiving notification of an alleged threat of violence or threat of terrorism under this Subpart shall:
- (1) Immediately begin an investigation and endeavor to complete the investigation not later than three school days after the report is received.
- (2) Notify the principal of the school that is the target of a threat of violence or threat of terrorism. If the principal is not available or cannot be contacted, the law enforcement agency shall notify any school official authorized to act in an emergency situation.
- C. In addition to the investigation and procedures outlined in this Section, nothing shall prohibit a law enforcement officer with probable cause from detaining or arresting any person for any alleged criminal act.

§ 17:409.5. Restrictions and examination

- A. (1) (a) If a law enforcement agency, based on its investigation as required by R.S. 17:409.4(B)(1), determines that a student's threat is credible, it shall report it to the district attorney, who may file a petition no later than seven days after receiving such report with the appropriate judicial district court for medical, psychological, and psychiatric examination as outlined in this Subsection. Where the district attorney, in his discretion, decides not to file the petition or does not file such petition during the requisite period, the student who is the subject of a complaint and investigation shall be permitted to return to school unless the student is charged with assault on a teacher as provided in R.S. 14:38.2 or battery on a teacher as provided in R.S. 14:34.3. The school administration shall permit a student who is the subject of a complaint and investigation to return to school if at any point prior to a hearing the threat is determined not to be credible after an investigation by the school administration, a law enforcement agency, or the district attorney or by order of the court after a hearing unless the student is charged with assault on a teacher as provided in R.S. 14:38.2 or battery on a teacher as provided in R.S. 14:34.3. The school administrator shall notify any person who was a target of the threat at least two school days prior to the student's return. The school administrator or his designee may conduct a search of the student or his property for weapons upon the student's return.
- (b) The appropriate judicial district court, for purposes of this Section, is either the district court having jurisdiction in the place where the school that is the subject of the threat is located or the district court having jurisdiction in the place where the student resides.
- (2)(a) As soon as practical after the filing of the petition, the court shall review the petition and supporting documents and determine whether there exists probable cause to believe that the student is a danger to himself or others.
- (b) If the court determines that probable cause exists:
- i. The court shall assign a time and place not later than seven calendar days thereafter for a hearing upon the petition and shall cause reasonable notice thereof to be given to the student, his attorney, and the petitioner. The notice shall inform the student that he has the right to be present at the hearing; the right to counsel; if indigent or otherwise qualified, the right to have counsel appointed

to represent him; and the right to cross examine witnesses testifying at any hearing on such application.

- ii. The court may appoint the student's treating physician if available or, if not, then another medical professional, preferably a psychiatrist, or a mental health professional, such as a school psychologist, to examine the student and make a written report to the court and the student's attorney.

(3) An examination order by the court pursuant to this Subsection shall be conducted as soon as practical, and the examining medical or mental health professional shall report to the court any conclusions reached as a result of the examination. The medical or mental health professional shall consider whether:

- a) The student is suffering from serious mental illness which causes him to be a danger to himself or others.
- b) The student's condition is likely to deteriorate unless he is provided appropriate treatment.
- c) The student's condition is likely to improve if he is provided appropriate treatment.

(4) The student or his attorney shall have the right to seek an additional independent medical or mental health opinion.

(5)(a) If the student refuses to be examined by the court-appointed medical or mental health professional or if the judge, after reviewing the petition and affidavit and the report of the treating medical or mental health professional, finds that the student is a danger to himself or others, that he is mentally ill or suffering from substance abuse and in need of immediate hospitalization to protect himself or others from physical harm, or that his condition may be markedly worsened by delay, the court may issue a court order for custody of the student, and a peace officer shall deliver him to a treatment facility designated by the court. The court shall not order custody to the Louisiana Department of Health or placement with a Louisiana Department of Health treatment facility without prior notice given to the department.

(b) If the judge, after reviewing the petition and affidavit or the report of the treating medical or mental health professional, finds that the student is not a danger to himself or others and is not in need of immediate hospitalization to protect himself or others from physical harm, the court may require that the student continue outpatient mental health treatment as a condition of the order. Such condition of outpatient mental health treatment shall be for a finite time that shall not exceed six months.

- B. If the person who is reported to a local law enforcement agency pursuant to R.S. 17:409.3(A) is not a student, the person shall not be permitted to be within five hundred feet of any school until the person has undergone a formal medical or mental health evaluation and has been deemed by a healthcare professional to not be dangerous to himself or others. After such a determination, the person shall not be permitted in a school unless the person has notified the school administrator of his intent to visit the school and the person is notified that the administrator has provided at least two school days' notice regarding the visit to anyone in the school who was directly threatened by the person. The school administrator may deny such person the right to visit the school.
- C. No person shall have a cause of action against any person for an action taken or statement made in adherence with this Section unless based on conduct that is maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to cause harm or harass.

§ 17:410. Safety education; recognition and reporting of potential threats to safety

- A. Each public school governing authority, in consultation with local law enforcement agencies, shall develop and distribute age and grade appropriate information to each student regarding internet and cell phone safety and online content that is a potential threat to school safety. The information shall include how to recognize and report potential threats to school safety that are posted on the internet, including but not limited to posts on social media. The information shall either be distributed to or explained to students and school personnel at the beginning of each school year and shall be posted on an easily accessible page of each school's website and the website of the school's governing authority.
- B. The information shall include the following:
 - (1) Instruction on how to detect potential threats to school safety exhibited online, including on any social media platform.
 - (2) Visual examples of possible threats.
 - (3) The reporting process, as provided in Subsection C of this Section.
- C. Each public school governing authority shall develop procedures for reporting potential threats to school safety. The reporting procedures, at a minimum, shall include:
 - (1) A standardized form to be used by students and school personnel to report potential threats which requests, at a minimum, the following information:
 - (a) Name of school, person, or group being threatened.
 - (b) Name of student, individual, or group threatening violence.
 - (c) Date and time the threat was made.
 - (d) Method by which the threat was made, including the social media outlet or website where the threat was posted, a screenshot or recording of the threat, if available, and any printed evidence of the threat.
 - (2) A process for allowing school personnel to assist students in completing the standardized form.
 - (3) A process for allowing reporting by an automated voice system.
 - (4) A process for allowing anonymous reporting and for safeguarding the identity of a person who reports a threat.
 - (5) For every threat reported, a school administrator shall record, on the form provided for by this Subsection, the action taken by the school.
- D. If information reported to a school pursuant to Subsection C of this Section is deemed a potential threat to school safety, the school shall present the form and evidence to local law enforcement agencies. If the information poses an immediate threat, school administrators shall follow procedures provided in R.S. 17:416.16.

§ 17:416.9. Schools' duty as to safety; imminent danger to teachers; inspection; restraining order; other relief

- A. Each city or parish school board shall furnish to each teacher a place of employment free from recognized dangers or hazards that are causing or likely to cause serious injury or death to its teachers.
- B. (1) Any teacher or representative of a teacher who reasonably and in good faith believes that an imminent danger to such teacher exists may request the principal of his school to investigate and resolve the situation. If the teacher remains unsatisfied with the response to his request, he may request the superintendent of the system where the teacher is employed to cause an inspection of such teacher's school to occur. The superintendent shall notify the school board and shall undertake to resolve the situation within six months from the request.
 - (2) If the situation has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the teacher requesting the inspection, the teacher may request the state superintendent of education to cause an inspection of such teacher's school to occur. Such request shall be directed to the superintendent or his authorized representative

and shall provide notice of any perceived danger. Any such request shall be reduced to writing, shall set forth with reasonable particularity the grounds for the request, and shall be signed by the teacher or his representative. A copy of the request shall be provided to the principal of the school not later than the time of inspection as ordered by the state superintendent. Upon the request of the person making request for inspection, any copies of the request shall delete his name and the names of any individual teachers referred to therein.

- C. If upon receipt of such request the state superintendent or his authorized representative determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an inspection is warranted, he shall make an inspection of such school as soon as practicable, to determine if danger exists. If the superintendent or his authorized representative determines there are no reasonable grounds to believe that danger exists, he shall notify the principal of the school and the teacher or his representative in writing of such determination.
- D. If upon inspection, the state superintendent or his authorized representative determines that an imminent danger exists from which there is a reasonable probability that serious injury or death could result to any teacher, the superintendent or his authorized representative may issue an order to the city or parish school board immediately restraining any such condition, practice, method, process, or means in the school. Any order issued under this Subsection may require the city or parish school board to take such steps as may be necessary to avoid, correct or remove such danger and prohibit the employment or presence of any teacher in locations or under conditions where such danger exists.
- E. Whenever the state superintendent or his authorized representative determines that a condition, practice, method, process, or means described in Subsection D of this Section exists in any school, he shall promptly inform the requesting teacher and the principal of the danger.
- F. At any time that an order restraining any condition, practice, method, process, or means described in Subsection D of this Section is issued by the state superintendent or his authorized representative, he may in addition request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to make an application to the district court of the parish wherein such condition, practice, method, process, or means exists for a temporary restraining order or such other relief as appears to be appropriate under the circumstances.
- G. In addition to and after having invoked the powers of restraint vested in the state superintendent as provided in Subsection D of this Section, the district courts of this state shall have jurisdiction upon petition of the superintendent and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to enjoin any condition, practice, method, process, or means in any school from which there is a reasonable probability that serious injury or death could result to any teacher. Any order issued under this Subsection may require such steps to be taken as may be necessary to avoid, correct or remove such danger and prohibit the employment or presence of any teacher in locations or under conditions where such danger exists.
- H. For purposes of this Section, "teacher" means any teacher or instructor, administrator, staff person, or employee of any public elementary or secondary school.

§ 17:416.16. School crisis management and response plans

- A. (1) For the purposes of this Section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:
- (a) "Crisis management and response plan" shall mean a plan to address school safety and the incidence of a shooting or other violence at schools, on school buses, and at school-related activities; to respond effectively to any incidents; and to ensure that every student, teacher, and school employee has access to a safe, secure, and orderly school that is conducive to learning. The plan shall also address the management of any other emergency situation.
 - (b) "District threat assessment team" shall mean a team established by each governing authority of public elementary and secondary schools. The team shall include the local school superintendent; the principal of each school; a person with responsibility over the school facilities; a mental health professional employed by the governing authority, or, if the governing authority has no such employee, a mental health professional selected by the local school superintendent; any school resource officer employed by the governing authority; any Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor employed by the governing authority; and the emergency preparedness and recovery point of contact.
 - (c) "Emergency preparedness and recovery point of contact" shall mean a person selected by the local school superintendent to serve as a point of contact with local and state officials and the media in the event of an emergency.
 - (d) "Local superintendent" shall mean the chief executive officer of the school or other employee holding an equivalent position.
- (2)(a) A school crisis management and response plan shall be prepared by each public school principal jointly with local law enforcement, fire, public safety, and emergency preparedness officials. The plan shall seek to utilize resources and information available through the Louisiana Commission on School and Nonprofit Security, R.S. 29:726.5 et seq.
- (b) In preparing or revising the plan, the principal shall consult with the district threat assessment team. The principal and the threat assessment team shall determine whether to consider input from students enrolled in the school and their parents, teachers at the school, other school employees, and community leaders.
- (3) The plan, which shall focus on preventing the loss of life and the injury of students and teachers and other school employees, shall detail the roles and responsibilities of each school employee and of each local and state public safety and emergency preparedness office. The plan shall include the relevant coordination agreements, services, and security measures of a school.
- (4) The plan shall provide for an all-hazards approach response plan for emergency events including any event with a hostage, an active shooter, or a building lockdown.
- (5) The plan shall provide for the notification of parents, faculty, staff, and local public safety officials in the event of a shooting or other violent incident or emergency situation.
- (6) The plan shall provide for the counseling of students by mental health professionals in the event of a shooting or other violent incident or emergency situation, encouraging peer helper programs, and identifying students who may have experienced rejection or other traumatic life events.
- B. (1) Each public school principal, jointly with local law enforcement, fire, public safety, and emergency preparedness officials, shall review the plan at least once annually and shall revise the plan as necessary. Each principal shall submit the plan in writing to the local school superintendent for approval at least once annually, including upon each revision.

- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection, when conducting the annual review of the crisis management and response plan for a high school, the school principal shall seek and consider input from the students enrolled in the school who shall be represented by either the president of the senior class or the president of the student council and at least one other responsible student selected by the principal.
- (3) The local school superintendent shall make an annual report to the public school governing authority on the status of the plan of each school under the governing authority's jurisdiction and shall submit a copy of the report to the state Department of Education and the Center for Safe Schools provided for in R.S. 29:276.5.1.
- C. (1) Within the first thirty days of each school year, each public school principal shall conduct a safety drill to rehearse the components of the plan, including an active shooter scenario. In addition, each school year, each principal shall conduct at least one additional drill during high traffic or transition points in the school day. Not later than seven days after each drill, the principal shall submit a written report summarizing the details of the drill to the local school superintendent. The superintendent shall comment on the drill to the principal, who shall consider the comments in revising the plan.
- (2) Each public school principal shall notify all teachers and other school employees regarding revisions made to the plan.
- D. Each plan shall provide that:
- (1) Classroom doors with locks shall be in compliance with all fire safety standards promulgated by the office of state fire marshal code enforcement and building safety of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and shall remain locked during instructional time. Each plan shall provide that a locked door shall not obstruct egress.
- (2) (a) Bleeding control kits shall be placed in easily accessible locations in each school.
- (b) The principal shall designate employees to be trained in the proper use of a bleeding control kit and in traumatic injury response.
- (c) The provisions of this Paragraph shall be subject to the appropriation of funds by the legislature.
- E. A person acting in good faith who administers aid for a traumatic injury, including through the use of a bleeding control kit, shall be immune from criminal and civil liability for the administration, unless personal injury results from gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct in the administration of aid.
- F. Each school year, each public school principal shall be responsible for providing in-service training, which may be incorporated into a meeting or training session held for another purpose, for all teachers and school employees pertaining to the plan and shall involve local law enforcement, fire, public safety, and emergency preparedness officials in the preparation and presentation of the training. The training shall include an active shooter exercise. The training shall be reported to the local school superintendent and the state Department of Education.
- G. Each public school principal shall keep a copy of the approved plan in his office and shall provide a copy to the following individuals, each of whom shall be responsible for keeping in his respective office a copy of the plan that is readily accessible in the event of a school shooting or other violent incident or emergency situation:
- (1) The president of the local school board.
- (2) The local school superintendent.
- (3) The chief of police of the municipality or the sheriff of the parish where the school is located, as applicable, as well as the local fire chief whose office is in closest geographic proximity to the school.
- (4) The state Department of Education.
- (5) The Center for Safe Schools within the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

- H. (1) The governing authority of each public elementary and secondary school may adopt rules and regulations as it deems necessary to provide for the implementation of the provisions of this Section.
(2) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with the Nonpublic School Commission, shall adopt rules and regulations requiring the governing authorities of nonpublic schools to address school safety. These rules and regulations shall address management and response in the event of a shooting or other violent incident on school campuses, school buses, and at school-related activities and shall provide for a safe, secure, and orderly school that is conducive to learning for every student, teacher, and school employee. These rules and regulations may also address management and response in the event of any other emergency situation.
- I. (1) The state Department of Education shall review national awareness campaigns relative to the response to traumatic injuries and develop and offer annual training, or provide updated links to training, on the response to traumatic injuries and the proper use of a bleeding control kit.
(2) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall develop rules relative to bleeding control kits that specify the minimum items to be included in a kit, when a kit shall be inspected and restocked, and how often designated employees shall be trained.
- J. In accordance with R.S. 44:3.1, school crisis management and response plans shall not be subject to the Public Records Law.

Key References & Resources

References

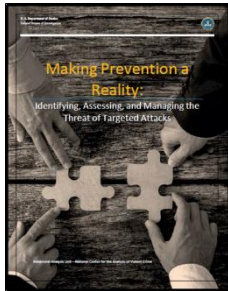
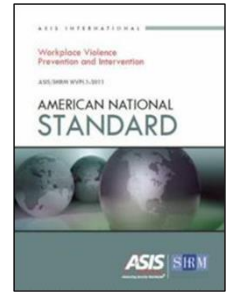
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Key Resources

Workplace Violence and Active Assailant-Prevention, Intervention, and Response Standard: American National Standard (2011)

Available for purchase at:
www.asisonline.org/publications/sg-asis-shrm-workplace-violence-prevention-and-intervention-standard

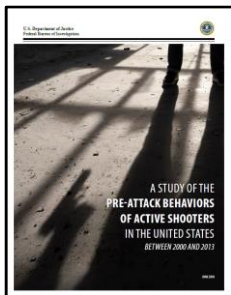
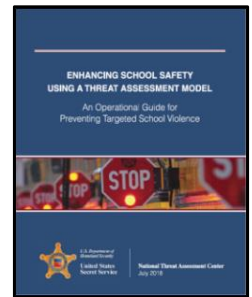


Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks (2017)

www.fbi.gov/file-repository/making-prevention-a-reality.pdf

Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence (2018)

www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/USSS_NTAC_Enhancing_School_Safety_Guide_7.11.18.pdf

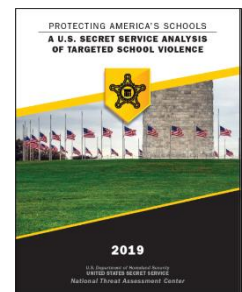


A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States

www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf

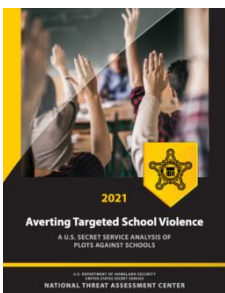
Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence (2019)

www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/uss-analysis-of-targeted-school-violence.pdf



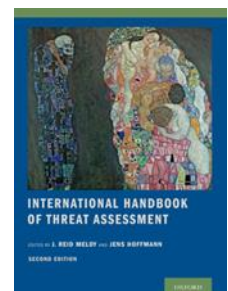
Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools (2021)

www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2021-03/USSS%20Averting%20Targeted%20School%20Violence.2021.03.pdf



International Handbook of Threat Assessment Second Edition (2021)

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/international-handbook-of-threat-assessment-9780190940164?q=Meloy&lang=en&cc=us>



Professional Associations & Online Resources

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals

www.atapworldwide.org

The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) is a non-profit organization comprised of law enforcement, prosecutors, mental health professionals, corporate security experts, probation and parole personnel, and others involved in threat & management, and violence risk assessment. The purpose of ATAP is to afford its members a professional and educational environment to exchange ideas and strategies to address such issues as stalking, threats, and homeland security. The Association's website includes a Resource Library, Conference presentation materials, and information about membership and events.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Adverse Childhood Experiences: How ACEs Affect Our Lives and Society

Interactive graphics: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/phl/resource_center_infographic.html

Downloadable report: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/phl/images/ACES_Infographic_Accessible.pdf

Connecting the Dots: Overview of Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence

https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/sites/vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps.connecting-the-dots/themes/ctd_bootstrap/asset/connecting_the_dots.pdf

Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships

Toolkit: <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/dating-matters-toolkit/explore-component#/>

FERPA, US Department of Education

<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/ferpa>

[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations \(34 C.F.R. Part 99; amended 2022\)](#)

[Addressing Emergencies on Campus](#)

[School Resource Officers, School Law Enforcement Units, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

National Alliance on Mental Illness

www.nami.org

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. The website has many resources about mental health concerns.

National Center for School Safety

www.nc2s.org

The National Center for School Safety (NCSS) is housed at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. The Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded center launched in October of 2019. Its mission is to bring together a multi-disciplinary team of researchers and practitioners to develop a comprehensive and accessible training and technical assistance resource for the school safety community nationwide.

[A Quick Guide to Information Sharing During Threat Reporting & Assessment](#)

National Policing Institute Averted School Violence Database

www.avertedschoolviolence.org

The Averted School Violence Data Collection Platform, developed with support from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) of the U.S. Department of Justice, gathers data on incidents of averted school and campus violence for comparison with incidents of completed acts of violence. They invite submissions regarding cases of averted violence and provide summary analyses of their findings.

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

www.nrcdv.org

The Center is an independent, non-profit organization that serves as a comprehensive source of information for those wanting to educate themselves and help others on the many issues related to domestic violence.

National Resource Center on Workplace Responses

www.workplacesrespond.org

Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, the Center offers resources for those interested in providing effective workplace responses to victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. The site contains a workplace policy creation tool offering choices of model language.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)

www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac

A resource of the U.S. Secret Service, NTAC provides resources and training regarding research and practice regarding threat assessment in K-12 schools, building positive school climates, and bystander intervention.

Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC)

www.stalkingawareness.org

The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC) ensures first responders and other allied professionals have the specialized knowledge to identify and respond to the crime of stalking. As a comprehensive national resource center, SPARC provides a multi-faceted approach to programming. SPARC assists multi-disciplinary professionals with information, resources, and policy and protocol development through our technical assistance endeavors. SPARC also provides local, regional, statewide, and national training.

U.S. Department of Education – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (34 CFR Part 99)

<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/node/548>

School Resource Officers, School Law Enforcement Units, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is available at:

https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/SRO_FAQs.pdf

Workplaces Respond to Domestic Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center

www.workplacesrespond.org

Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, the Center offers internet-based information for those interested in providing effective workplace responses to victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. The site contains a workplace policy creation tool offering choices of model language.

RESOURCES REGARDING SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY

ONLINE SAFETY AND CYBERBULLYING

NetSmartz Workshop Online Program, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

www.netsmartz.org/Parents

This program provides online resources for parents and guardians, educators, law enforcement, teens, tweens, and kids. Information is provided on specific topics, such as cell phones, cyberbullying, and sexting, with accompanying tips and pointers on how to discuss these topics with children.

OnGuardOnline Web Page, Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0038-onguardonline

OnGuardOnline is the FTC's web page for providing free online security tips and resources. The home page provides a link for educators and parents, videos and games, and ways to share the information. Resources for educators are broken down by audience, which includes elementary, middle school, and high school teachers, community educators, and IT professionals.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND BULLYING

Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation's Classrooms Online Toolkit

ED and the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/creating-safe-and-respectful-environment-our-nations-classrooms-training-toolkit>

This toolkit is designed for trainers to assist teachers in creating a positive school environment and meaningful relationships with students. Two modules of instruction are provided with accompanying resources such as a trainer's guide, PowerPoint presentation, and handouts.

ED School Climate Surveys Web Page, ED and NCSSLE

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>

This page provides the adaptable ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) and associated web-based platform. EDSCLS allows states, local districts, and schools to collect and act on school climate data. Information is provided on measures, administration, data reports, data interpretation, and a national benchmark study.

Stop Bullying Website, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying

The section on cyberbullying, which is part of a larger website on bullying, describes what cyberbullying is, how to prevent it, and how to report incidents. Included within the section on preventing cyberbullying is a segment on understanding school rules. Here, staff and teachers can find sample policies and rules on use by social media students.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center, ED

www.pbis.org

The PBIS TA Center provides information to states, districts, and schools on how to establish, scale up and sustain the PBIS framework. Resources are categorized into those for schools, families, community, evaluation, research, and training.

School Climate and Emergencies Web Page, REMS TA Center

<http://rems.ed.gov/K12PPStep02.aspx>

On this web page, factors that contribute to a positive school climate are discussed. In addition, suggestions are given on how to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, use multi-tiered interventions and support, and promote social and emotional competencies. Additional related resources are also provided.

INFORMATION SHARING AND PRIVACY

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A Guide for First Responders and Law Enforcement, FBI, and ED

www.fbi.gov/file-repository/ferpa-guide.pdf/view

This two-page document describes what FERPA is, information that schools can provide to law enforcement, and the conditions under which schools can non-consensually disclose information.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule: A Guide for Law Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and FBI

www.fbi.gov/file-repository/hipaa-guide.pdf/view

This short guide details what the HIPAA Privacy Rule is, who must comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule, and who is not required to comply with this rule. The resource also discusses the circumstances under which a HIPAA-covered entity may disclose protected health information (PHI) to law enforcement.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS

Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans, Federal Government

<http://rems.ed.gov/K12GuideForDevelHQSchool.aspx>

This guide is for the K-12 community and describes principles of emergency management planning, and a process for developing, implementing, and continually refining an EOP.

The Role of Districts in Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans: A Companion to the School Guide (the District Guide)

https://rems.ed.gov/docs/District_Guide_508C.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2019).

DATA ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE, CRIME, AND SAFETY

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) School Associated Violent Death Study

www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/savd.html

CDC reports that track school-associated violent deaths annually, from 1992.

Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings from the School Survey on Crime and Safety 2021-22

[Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools \(ed.gov\)](http://Crime_Violence_Discipline_and_Safety_in_U.S._Public_Schools_(ed.gov))

A supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey that collects information on a national level related to incidents of criminal victimization of students aged 12–18.

Federal Bureau of Investigation: Active Shooter Safety Resources

<https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/safety-resources/active-shooter-safety-resources>

Several resources, including studies regarding active shooter incidents.

Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2022

<https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/iscs22.pdf>

Annual report from U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education that provides data on crime and violence in schools from a variety of sources.

National Alliance on Mental Illness

www.nami.org/Press-Media/Media-Gallery/image

Mental Health Facts: Children & Teens Fact Sheet

U.S. Department of Education: Gun-Free Schools Act

<https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/07/Guidance.Gun-Free-Schools-Act.pdf>

Guidance by the U.S. Department of Education

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/StateRptImplGFSA-2019-20-508_2022.03.07.pdf

State Report on the Implementation of the Gun Free School Act (2022)

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

2021 Report

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/su/pdfs/su7201-H.pdf>

Youth Risk Behaviors Survey: Trends Report for 2011–2021

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/YRBS_Data-Summary-Trends_Report2023_508.pdf

Comparison of Safe School Initiative (2002) and Protecting America's Schools (2019)

	Safe School Initiative (2002)	Protecting America's Schools (2019)
INCIDENTS		
	n = 37	n = 41
Years studied	1974–2000	2008–2017
Multiple attackers	8%	0%
Weapons	97% firearm; 3% bladed; 8% had additional weapons	61% firearms; 39% bladed; 7% had additional weapons
Handguns	67% of 36 firearms attacks	72% of 25 firearms attacks
Long Guns	50% of 36 firearms attacks	36% of 25 firearms attacks
Firearm from a residence	73% of 36 firearms attacks	76% of 25 firearms attacks
Victims specifically targeted	46%	56%
Subject committed suicide	13%	17%
ATTACKERS		
	n = 41	n = 35 (of 41)
Gender	100% male	83% male
Age	11-21	12-18
Status	95% current students	90% current students
History of any arrest	27%	31%
Violent crime	17%	17%
Subject abuse/neglected	27%	23%
Mental health diagnosis before	17%	40%
Mental health symptoms		
Depression	61%	63%
Suicidal thoughts/gestures	78%	63%
Suicide attempts	10%	11%
Substance use/abuse	49%	49%
Perceived as loners	34%	26%
History of Violence	31%	51%
Stressors	98%	100%
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE		
Academic performance		
Positive	27%	51%
Neutral	37%	14%
Negative	5%	31%
Unknown	17%	20%
Suspended (at least once)	27%	51%
Expelled (at least once)	10%	17%
Bullied by other students	71%	80%
Subject bullied other students	34%	37%
BEHAVIORS		
At least one person knew	83%	77%
A peer	83%	77%
An adult	7%	14%
Concerning behaviors observed	93%	100%

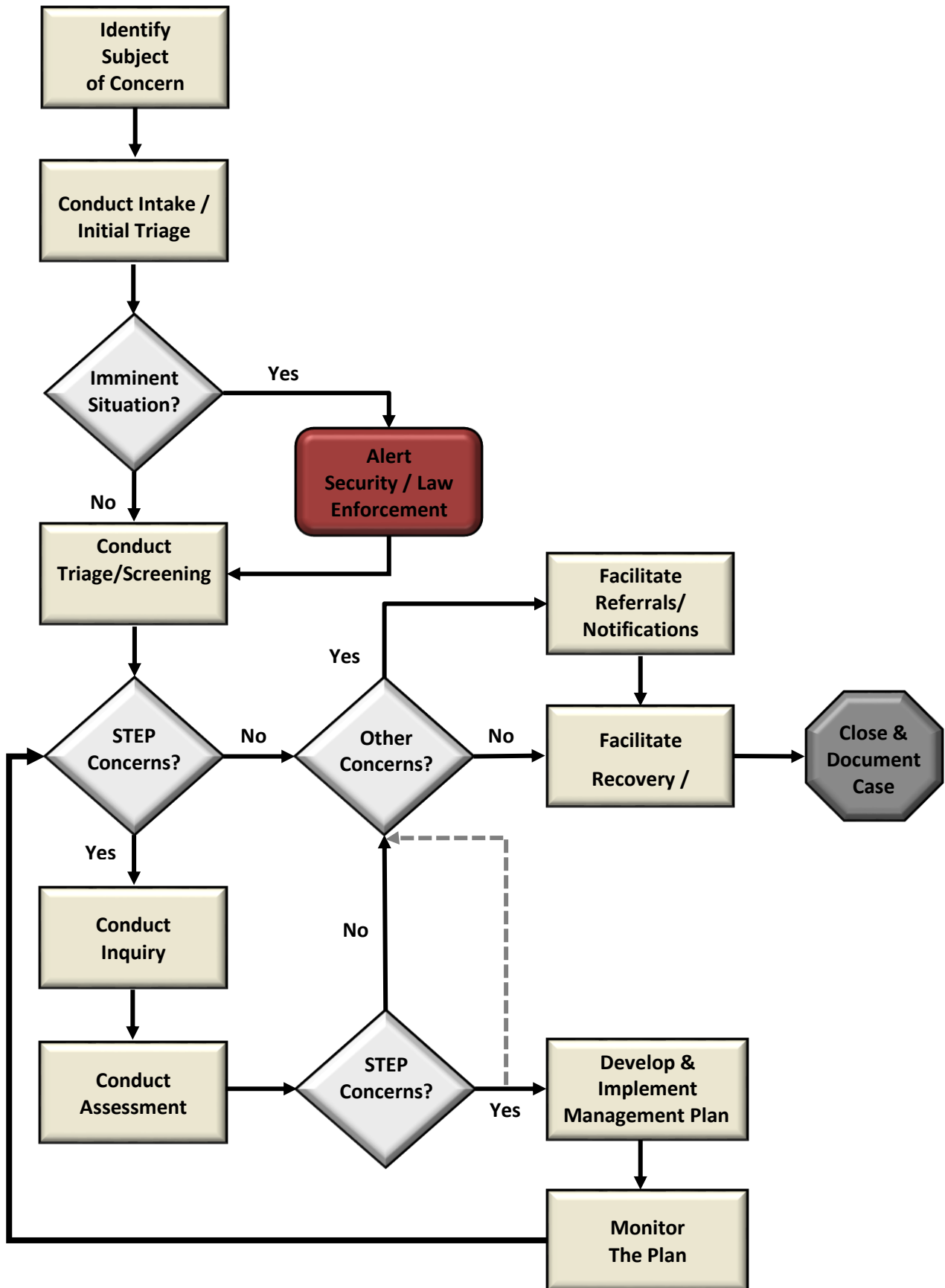
School BTAM Implementation Checklist

- School district/division establishes a policy for school & other professionals to develop, implement and operate a behavioral threat assessment & management process, that:
 - Authorizes the mission and scope of the process and team.
 - Process designed to address all identified threats, not just by students.
 - Establishes and operates a multi-disciplinary, team-based approach.
 - Authorizes team members to implement policy in addressing situations of concern, through:
 - Active engagement with school & community to facilitate recognition of, response to, and reporting of, concerns to the BTAM team.
 - Facilitating centralized awareness & identification of developing threats & concerns
 - Conducting a thorough and contextual triage & assessment of concerns
 - Implementing proactive & integrated cases management
 - Monitoring and re-assessing cases on a longitudinal basis
 - Conducting practices in accordance with relevant laws, regulations, policies, and contemporary standards of practice
 - Provides for ongoing-review and continuous development of process to adapt to challenges and changing needs.
- School district establishes threat assessment team(s) to serve all schools within the district. School districts/divisions should structure their overall behavioral threat assessment processes to meet the district/division's needs.
 - Districts may establish:
 - One team for the whole district/division; or,
 - One team per school or set of schools (e.g., one per high school & middle school and another to serve a group of elementary schools; or one team per geographic area within the district, etc.), or
 - One district-wide oversight team AND school-based teams, and/or,
 - Regional team(s) to serve multiple school districts.
 - Must include a District Threat Assessment Team which shall include:
 - the local school superintendent
 - the principal of each school
 - a person with responsibility over the school facilities
 - a mental health professional employed by the governing authority, or, if the governing authority has no such employee, a mental health professional selected by the local school superintendent
 - any school resource officer employed by the governing authority
 - any Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor employed by the governing authority
 - the emergency preparedness and recovery point of contact

- Each threat assessment team shall be multi-disciplinary, including persons with expertise in:
 - School administration
 - Human resources
 - Instruction
 - Counseling/mental health
 - Law enforcement/security
 - Other areas of expertise as necessary
- Where possible, each primary team member has at least one back-up
- Each team will have a designated Team Leader.
- The Team should identify resources to support Team efforts, including:
 - Threat Assessment & Management Consultant
 - Independent Medical/Psychological Evaluators
- All BTAM Team members (and backups) are trained in behavioral threat assessment and management practices & procedures.
- Each threat assessment team develops operating guidelines or procedures.
- Each threat assessment teams maintains active lists and works to establish liaison relationships with relevant & available support services including (but not limited to):
 - Crisis Services
 - Counseling/Mental health services
 - Social Services
 - Child protective services
 - Domestic violence support and advocacy programs
 - Law enforcement
 - Youth services including juvenile justice programs.
 - Other support resources, whether in the community, in the region, state
- School administrators and staff work to build and maintain a positive climate for the safety and well-being of the school and its members, through such approaches as:
 - Assessing school climate regarding safety and well-being
 - Addressing concerns about school climate
 - Effective communication among and between school staff, students, and parents/guardians of students
 - Emphasis on school connectedness
 - Engaging all school community members in building and sustaining a climate of respect, support, care and concern for the safety and well-being of others.
 - Encourages early identification and intervention with concerning behavior with a focus on assisting and supporting all persons impacted and maintaining the safety of those involved.

- Encouraging active community engagement in sharing concerns to help other members of the school community.
 - Implementing effective programs to address bullying, bias, or harassment.
 - Implementing school and law enforcement partnerships including well-trained school resource officers
 - Planning and preparation to deal with, respond to, and recover from potential crises.
 - Sustaining physical security and crime prevention through environmental design
- Superintendent may also choose to establish an Oversight Team to coordinate and standardize efforts of threat assessment teams within district/division. Oversight teams can facilitate access of threat assessment teams to training, community resources, expert consultation, standardized procedures, and additional resources. This may be the same as the district wide BTAM Team.

Threat Assessment & Management Process – Flowchart



Case Prioritization/Level of Concern

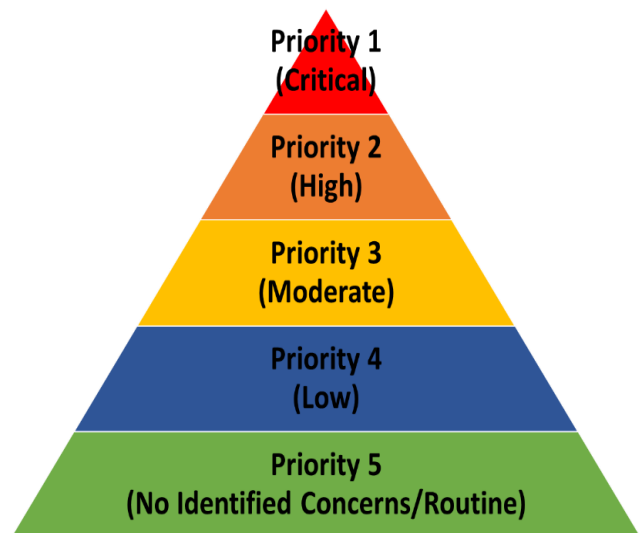
Priority 1 (Critical) – Subject exhibits intent and capability and poses immediate or imminent threat to cause serious violence or harm to self or others. Target/others vulnerable and/or have support needs. Environmental/Systemic factors & Precipitating Events typically present. Requires immediate law enforcement and administration notification, subject mitigation & containment, activation of crisis response and emergency notification protocols, target protection & safety planning, ongoing assessment and case management, active monitoring, and target/community support.

Priority 2 (High) – Subject poses, or is rapidly developing capability for, a threat of serious harm to self/others; or is in urgent need of intervention/assistance. Target/others vulnerable and/or have support needs. Environmental/Systemic factors & Precipitating Events typically present. Requires law enforcement & administration notification, subject mitigation, activation of crisis response protocols as needed, target protection and safety plan, ongoing assessment and case management, active monitoring, and target/community support.

Priority 3 (Moderate) – Subject not known to pose a threat of serious harm. Subject may be developing capability for harm and/or engaging in disruptive or concerning behaviors that indicate need for intervention. Targets/others likely concerned and impacted. Environmental/Systemic & precipitating factors may be present. Consider law enforcement, security & administrative notification as appropriate. Requires ongoing assessment and case management, active monitoring, and target/community support as necessary. Referrals as appropriate.

Priority 4 (Low) – Subject does not indicate a threat of violence or harm to self/others; but would/may benefit from intervention/assistance. Target vulnerabilities and needs may be present at a low level. Environmental/Systemic concerns or Precipitating Events may be present at low levels. May involve ongoing assessment and case management with periodic active monitoring or passive monitoring. Referrals as appropriate. Close case if no BTAM interventions or monitoring indicated.

Priority 5 (No Identified Concerns) – Subject does not pose threat of harm to self or others or need for assistance or intervention. No target needs, environmental factors, or precipitants that need BTAM intervention. Close case.



Self & Team Assessment Worksheet

Name: _____ Position: _____

Personal Assessment

What skills & experience do you bring to the team?

What do you need (skills, training, support, resources, etc.) to enhance your contributions to the team?

Role Assessment

What informational resources does your position bring to the team?

What case management resources can your position facilitate?

How could your role on the team be strengthened?

Team Assessment

1. What is working well on your team?
2. Who are the major contributors to the team's effectiveness? Why?
3. What are the gaps for obtaining or receiving referrals?
4. What are the key challenges facing the team in the coming year?
5. How well does the mission reflect the needs of the community?
6. What skill sets or roles are missing and how could they be better incorporated?
7. How could the process (used by the team) be improved for effectiveness?
8. What is working well about community awareness of TAM & how to access/utilize services?
9. What policies / procedures need to be developed and/or improved?
10. What does the team need (skills, training, support, resources, etc.) to enhance its contributions?
11. How well does the team collaborate with other violence prevention initiatives?
12. What does the team do to celebrate and learn from its successes?

Assessment of Personal and Team Dynamics:

Please Rate the Following Regarding YOUR work on the team:

I, regularly:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
Feel safe to take risks & be vulnerable in front of other team members					
Get things done on time and meet the team's standards of quality.					
Have clear roles, plans and goals in my work on the team.					
Feel the team's work is <u>personally</u> important (to me!).					
Believe my work on the team matters and creates positive change.					

Please Rate the Following Regarding the Team as a Whole:

Team members regularly:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
Feel safe to take risks & be vulnerable in front of each other.					
Get things done on time and meet the team's standards of quality.					
Have clear roles, plans and goals.					
Feel the team's work is personally important to them.					
Believe their work matters and creates positive change.					

Note: These Assessments based on work of Julia Rozovsky (2015), *The five keys to a successful Google team*.

Next Steps

What will be your immediate action items?

	Goal / Task	Priority	Indicators for Success?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

What are your goals for the next six months?

	Goal / Task	Priority	Indicators for Success?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

What are the key goals for the next year?

	Goal / Task	Priority	Indicators for Success?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Threat Assessment & Management Case Forms

The following pages provide sample forms to help schools document information related to all aspects of threat cases, from initial report/intake, triage, assessment, initial case management, case updates and case closure. These are provided as a resource to support schools in their efforts to identify, assess and manage potential threats to the school and its members.

School threat assessment teams are encouraged to edit the forms to meet their policies and procedures and use the forms as best meets their needs.

For each stage in the process, at least two members should review and sign the documentation.

Overview of Threat Assessment and Management Forms

Part I: Intake for Initial Report Concerned

This form is to document initial reports. The first page is to document the incident/concern that occurred. The items about the incident are intended to gain a full understanding of what occurred and if there are any obligations for further notifications.

The next two pages are to document the persons involved in the potential case, i.e., the subject(s), target(s)/others impacted, and witnesses. If necessary, use additional copies to document information about additional people involved.

Part II: Triage

This form has three pages. The first is for documenting standard record checks. Note these items should be updated to reflect the record sources and access of the school's threat assessment team. The second page is a summary checklist of key issues for consideration of the need for further assessment or intervention. The purpose of the triage is to determine if there is need for further review and action by the full team or if the concern can be reasonably resolved at triage or by referral to existing resources. The third page is for documentation of any required notifications, additional information, and the findings of the triage process.

Part III: Threat Assessment

There are two pages for this form which provide key areas for inquiry regarding each of the STEP domains, and a checklist of key factors that will inform assessment and case management considerations. The key areas and items reflect the content of the Guidelines for Threat Assessment in this Guide. This form may also be used to update key areas/information during ongoing case reviews.

Part IV: Initial Case Management Plan

This form uses the STEP framework to outline the case management plan. The teams should identify tasks, team members responsible for overseeing completion of the tasks, and a date/time the task is due for update to the team.

Part V: Case Update

This form uses the STEP framework for modification to the case management plan, including updates such as new information or outcomes of prior action items, and new or ongoing tasks for each domain. The teams should identify tasks, team members responsible for overseeing completion of the tasks, and a date/time the task is due for update to the team. This form can be used to document each review of the case.

Part V: Case Closure

Teams may use this form to document a thorough, diligent, and deliberate review of the case to ensure that any concerns using the STEP framework have been sufficiently addressed to the point that the case is stable at a Routine/No Known Concern or Low Level of Concern.

THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT CASE FORMS

PART I: INTAKE for INITIAL REPORT OF CONCERN			
Date Reported:		Day of Week: <input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday	Time: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM
Taken by:		School:	Position:

REPORTING PARTY:

Name:		<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ID #:	
Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None/Unknown		Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective Grade: _____ (if student)
School:			Building/Program:	
Home Address:			Phone:	

INCIDENT:

Date Occurred:		Day of Week: <input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday	Time: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM
Location:	<input type="checkbox"/> School Property [<input type="radio"/> In School Building <input type="radio"/> School Grounds] <input type="checkbox"/> School Bus <input type="checkbox"/> School Sponsored Activity <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
School:			Building/Program:
Address:			City: _____ State: _____
Concern Types:	<input type="checkbox"/> Harm to Others <input type="checkbox"/> Abduction <input type="checkbox"/> Stalking <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal/Self-Harm <input type="checkbox"/> Aberrant Communication/Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Assault [<input type="radio"/> Physical <input type="radio"/> Sexual] <input type="checkbox"/> Bomb/Arson <input type="checkbox"/> Weapon <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Disruptive / Suspicious Behavior		
Nature:	<input type="checkbox"/> Act <input type="checkbox"/> Threat <input type="checkbox"/> Concern	Modes: <input type="checkbox"/> In Person <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Internet <input type="checkbox"/> Other :	
Persons(s) injured: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	Persons(s) require medical attention? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown		
Weapon involved: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	Type of Weapon: <input type="checkbox"/> Firearm[<input type="radio"/> Rifle/Shotgun <input type="radio"/> Pistol] <input type="checkbox"/> Edged <input type="checkbox"/> Explosive <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Weapon referenced: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	Type of Weapon: <input type="checkbox"/> Firearm[<input type="radio"/> Rifle/Shotgun <input type="radio"/> Pistol] <input type="checkbox"/> Edged <input type="checkbox"/> Explosive <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		
Law Enforcement Involved: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	Agency:		Arrest/Custody of Subject: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown

Details of the incident/nature of concerns. Note what occurred, who was involved, where and when, if others were impacted or harmed, etc.
 If threats/concerning statements were communicated, provide direct quotes where possible, using quotation marks to indicate direct quotes. Attach original communications if available.

PART I: INTAKE for INITIAL REPORT OF CONCERN – PERSONS INVOLVED

SUBJECT (1) Engaging in concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior:

Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ID #:	
Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None/Unknown	Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective Grade: _____ (if student)
School:		Relationship to Target:	
Emergency Contact:		Relationship:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Other: _____
Home Address:		Phone:	

SUBJECT (2) Engaging in concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior:

Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ID #:	
Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None/Unknown	Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective Grade: _____ (if student)
School:		Relationship to Target:	
Emergency Contact:		Relationship:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Other: _____
Home Address:		Phone:	

Note: If more than two subjects of concern in this incident, attach additional copies of this page with target's information.

TARGET (1):

Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ID #:	
Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None/Unknown	Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective Grade: _____ (if student)
School:		Relationship to Subject:	
Emergency Contact:		Relationship:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Other: _____
Home Address:		Phone:	

TARGET (2):

Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ID #:	
Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None/Unknown	Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective Grade: _____ (if student)
School:		Relationship to Subject:	
Emergency Contact:		Relationship:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Other: _____
Home Address:		Phone:	

Note: If there are more than two targets in this incident, attach additional copies of this page with the target's information.

PART I: INTAKE for INITIAL REPORT OF CONCERN – PERSONS INVOLVED

Witness (1):

Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ID #:	
Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None/Unknown	Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective Grade: _____ (if student)
School:		Relationship to Subject:	
Emergency Contact:		Relationship:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Other:
Home Address:		Phone:	

Witness Interview

Witness (2):

Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	ID #:	
Affiliation:	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> None/Unknown	Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Former <input type="checkbox"/> Prospective Grade: _____ (if student)
School:		Relationship to Subject:	
Emergency Contact:		Relationship:	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse/Partner <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian Other:
Home Address:		Phone:	

Witness Interview

Note: If there are more than two targets in this incident, attach additional copies of this page with target's information.

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PART II: TRIAGE/SCREENING – INQUIRY / RECORDS CHECKS

Regarding:	Case:
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RECORDS CHECKS (ALL):	Checked	Notes about Significant findings:
Photo	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Threat Assessment Team history	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Criminal history	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Driver license information	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Vehicle / Parking information	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Campus Police/Security Contacts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Local Law Enforcement contacts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Other Law Enforcement contacts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Protective / No Contact Orders	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
No Trespass Notice	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Concealed weapons permit	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Weapons purchase permit	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Social media	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Online Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	

RECORDS CHECKS: Staff NS=Not Significant; NA=Not Applicable

Disciplinary actions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Performance evaluations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Grievances filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Title IX actions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	

RECORDS CHECKS: Students

Class schedule	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Academic standing / progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Accommodations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Admissions/Transfer records	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Conduct / Discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Title IX actions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NS/NA	

OTHER RECORDS CHECKS:

Note: Complete a records check form for each subject and target.

PART II: TRIAGE INQUIRY SUMMARY SHEET

Subject:		Case:
SUBJECT		Notes:
Behavior(s) causing concern/impacting others	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Concerning or Aberrant Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Directly communicated threats	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Leakage: grievances, ideation/intent, planning, preparations, targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Identified grievances/motives for violence	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Fixation on grievances, targets, violent resolution, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Interest or Identification with perpetrators, grievances, or violent acts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
History of violence or novel aggression	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Last resort behaviors: Desperation, imperative, diminished alternatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Pathway behaviors – Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Pathway behaviors – Preparing: means, methods, opportunity, proximity	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Stalking/unwanted contact, communication, or pursuit	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Energy bursts/changes in pattern(s) of disruptive/concerning behavior(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Last Resort behaviors/JACA	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Despondency, despair, isolation, and/or suicidality	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Significant cognitive, emotional, or psychological concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Significant or multiple stressors/difficulty coping	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Lack of inhibitors/stabilizers to prevent violence	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Comments:		
TARGET / OTHERS		Notes
Identified targets (person/proxy, place, program, process, philosophy)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Fearful of harm	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Protective actions/responding as if subject poses a safety concern	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Vulnerability: e.g., consistent routine, low situational awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Need for assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Comments:		
ENVIRONMENT		Notes
Organizational climate concerns: e.g., bullying, bias, poor conflict mgmt.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Systemic/procedural	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Report latency/failure	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Bullying/bias	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Lack of support, guidance, or resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Adverse social influences	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
High rates of violence, harassment, disruption, stress	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Disproportionate rate/severity of concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Comments:		
PRECIPITATING EVENTS		Notes
Impending loss, failure	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Key dates/events	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Triggers/reminders	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Views intervention negatively	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Contagion influence	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Return from separation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Other:		
Comments:		

PART II: TRIAGE INQUIRY SUMMARY SHEET

Subject:		Case:
NOTIFICATIONS	Reason	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent/Designee	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical or High threat to self/others <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Principal	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical or High threat <input type="checkbox"/> Crime <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical or High threat <input type="checkbox"/> Crime <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> Student poses Critical or High threat to self/others <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

NOTES:

CASE PRIORITY LEVEL:

<input type="checkbox"/> Critical	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Routine/None
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TRIAGE/SCREENING RECOMMENDATION: **BTAM CASE #**

<input type="checkbox"/> No identified Concerns: Close BTAM Case	<input type="checkbox"/> No BTAM Concerns: Referral(s) / Close BTAM Case	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown/On-going Threat: Initiate BTAM Case	
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REFERRALS:

TRIAGE/SCREENING COMPLETED BY:

Name	Position	Signature	Date

PART III: THREAT ASSESSMENT KEY AREAS FOR INQUIRY	
Subject:	Case:
SUBJECT Key Areas for Inquiry	Key Factors
<p>Is subject engaging in behaviors causing concern? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Concerns about nature, pattern, context, or change in frequency or intensity? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Others significantly impacted <input type="checkbox"/> Patterned occurrence continues <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in behavior/pattern</p>
<p>Is subject engaging in concerning, aberrant & threatening communications? Indicating grievances, ideation, intent, planning, preparation, or targets? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Directly Communicated Threats <input type="checkbox"/> Leakage <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple communication modes <input type="checkbox"/> Intent to engage in violence <input type="checkbox"/> Warning others</p>
<p>Subject expressed motives and/or grievances with intended violence/harm? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Immersion Fixation? <input type="checkbox"/> Grievances <input type="checkbox"/> Targets/sources <input type="checkbox"/> Violence</p>
<p>Has the subject shown inappropriate interest in violence? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p>Identification? <input type="checkbox"/> Incidents or perpetrators <input type="checkbox"/> Grievances of perpetrators <input type="checkbox"/> Weapons/tactics <input type="checkbox"/> Notoriety or fame <input type="checkbox"/> Violent Ideology</p>
<p>Does subject have (or developing) the capacity to engage in violence? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Violence Hx <input type="checkbox"/> Novel Aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Pathway behaviors? <input type="checkbox"/> Planning & research <input type="checkbox"/> Preparations <input type="checkbox"/> Surveillance, stalking, rehearsal <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Burst behaviors <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid Escalation/Imminence</p>
<p>Subject experiencing/expressing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Last resort behaviors <input type="checkbox"/> JACA behaviors? <input type="checkbox"/> Justification <input type="checkbox"/> Alternatives (lack of) <input type="checkbox"/> Consequences <input type="checkbox"/> Martyrdom <input type="checkbox"/> Ability <input type="checkbox"/> Legacy token</p>
<p>Subject's behavior indicates need for intervention/support services? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Depressed mood <input type="checkbox"/> Hallucinations <input type="checkbox"/> Delusions <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme wariness/distrust <input type="checkbox"/> Martyrdom <input type="checkbox"/> Pervasive maladaptive behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Untreated symptoms of MI <input type="checkbox"/> Poor treatment compliance</p>
<p>Does subject have protective factors or stabilizers that inhibit violence? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Subject has positive, trusting, sustained relationship with positive figure? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Views violence as unacceptable, immoral: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Accepts responsibility for actions: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Demonstrates remorse for inappropriate behavior: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Respects reasonable limits & expectations: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Uses socially sanctioned means of addressing grievances: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Values life, job, relationships, freedom: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Fears loss of reputation, job, freedom, life: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Maintains, uses, and builds effective coping skills: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Treatment access, compliance, engagement: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Few/no protective factors <input type="checkbox"/> Protective failures diminishing <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of key support</p>

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PART III: THREAT ASSESSMENT KEY AREAS FOR INQUIRY

Subject:	Case:
TARGET Key Areas for Inquiry	Key Factors
Are targets vulnerable, concerned, or impacted by subject's behavior? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant impact/fear <input type="checkbox"/> Significant impart/fear <input type="checkbox"/> Availability, access, proximity <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerability <input type="checkbox"/> Few protective/coping skills <input type="checkbox"/> Need for assistance
ENVIRONMENTAL/SYSTEMIC Key Areas for Inquiry	
Are there Environmental/Systemic factors that are impacting the situation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> School climate: bullying, bias <input type="checkbox"/> Systemic/procedural <input type="checkbox"/> Report latency/failure <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Conflict management <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate resources <input type="checkbox"/> Adverse influences
PRECIPITATING EVENTS Key Areas for Inquiry	
Are there Precipitating Events that may impact situation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Impending loss, failure, injustice <input type="checkbox"/> Key dates/events <input type="checkbox"/> Triggers/reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Views intervention as injustice <input type="checkbox"/> Contagion influence <input type="checkbox"/> Return from separation
PROCESS INTEGRITY Key Areas for Inquiry	
Are there concerns with consistency, credibility, or bias in information? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor credibility of subject <input type="checkbox"/> Poor credibility of sources <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistency between sources <input type="checkbox"/> Significant gaps/unknowns
Other Relevant Information:	

CURRENT CASE PRIORITY LEVEL:

<input type="checkbox"/> Critical	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Routine / None
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CASE STATUS: **Date for Next Review:**

<input type="checkbox"/> No identified Concerns: Close case	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-TAT Concerns: Referral(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> On-going Threat: Sustain TAT Case	
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REFERRALS:

REVIEWED AND AUTHORIZED BY THE BTAM TEAM:

Name	Position	Signature	Date

PART V: CASE UPDATE (to be updated regularly while case is active)		
Subject:	Case:	
INTERVENTION/TASK		
Subject		
Updates:	Source	
Interventions	Responsible Person	DUE
Target Interventions		
Updates:	Source	
Interventions	Responsible Person	Due
Environment Interventions		
Updates:	Source	
Interventions	Responsible Person	Due

PART V: CASE UPDATE (to be updated regularly while case is active)		
Subject:	Case:	
Precipitating Events (Monitoring/Interventions)		
Updates:	Source	
Interventions	Responsible Person	Due
Comments		

CURRENT CASE PRIORITY LEVEL:

<input type="checkbox"/> Critical/Imminent	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Routine / None
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Case Status: **Date for Next Review:**

<input type="checkbox"/> No identified Concerns: Close case	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-TAT Concerns: Referral(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> On-going Threat: Sustain TAT Case	
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REFERRALS:

BTAM TEAM LEADER:

Name	Position	Signature	Date

PART VI: CASE CLOSURE

Subject:	Case:
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- The BTAM Team has completed interventions and actions regarding this case.
- The Level of Concern for this case is currently Low or Routine/None.
 - If at a Low Level of Concern, remaining issues or tasks are being adequately addressed and monitored by relevant resources within the campus or community at this time, and / or.
 - Any relevant referrals have been made and those resources are engaged as needed.
- The BTAM Team has reviewed and concurred with all the following regarding the domains of assessment and intervention:
 - SUBJECT: At this time, the subject is not known to be engaging in any behaviors that:**
 - Are posing a threat of violence, harm, or significant disruption to self or others, or
 - May reasonably pose a threat of violence, harm, or significant disruption to self or others, or
 - Indicate a need for further assistance or intervention from the BTAM Team.
 - TARGET/Others: At this time, targets or others are not known to:**
 - Have any significant ongoing concerns regarding their safety regarding this case, or
 - Be engaging in any behaviors that place them at risk regarding this case, or
 - Have any significant ongoing or further need for assistance or intervention from the BTAM Team.
 - ENVIRONMENT/SYSTEMIC CONCERNS: At this time, there are no known:**
 - Environmental / systemic concerns that are significantly impacting this case, or
 - Environmental / systemic concerns that are reasonably likely to occur that would significantly impact upon this case.
 - PRECIPITATING EVENTS: At this time, there are no known:**
 - Precipitating Events that are significantly impacting this case or
 - Precipitating Events that are reasonably likely to occur and would significantly impact upon this case.
- There is no articulable basis to consider notification to other BTAM Team, law enforcement agencies, or other community services for continued monitoring or intervention with the subject or target, or.
- If there is such a basis, the notification/referral has been made.

THERE ARE NO FURTHER IDENTIFIABLE ACTION STEPS. THIS CASE HAS BEEN RESOLVED AND IS CLOSED

BTAM TEAM LEADER:

Name	Position	Signature	Date

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