

BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Systematic Approach to Identifying, Assessing & Managing Concerning or Threatening Behavior

BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Systematic Approach to Identifying, Assessing & Managing Concerning or Threatening Behavior

GENE DEISINGER, PH.D.
PRESIDENT & FOUNDER


Training Sponsored By:
Virginia Center for School & Campus Safety



1

About the Training

Training Developed as a Collaboration Between:

GENE DEISINGER, PH.D.
PRESIDENT



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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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2

Gene Deisinger, Ph.D.

Deisinger Consulting, LLC

• President & Founder

Education, Training & Certifications:

- Ph.D., Counseling/Clinical Psychology
- Licensed Psychologist (IA)
- Certified Health Service Provider in Psychology (IA)
- Certified Law Enforcement Officer (IA & VA; Retired)

Experience:

- Virginia Center for School & Campus Safety
 - Threat Management Consultant (2015-Present)
- U.S. Department of Justice Critical Incident Review Team
 - SME: Regarding Mass Casualty Incident in Uvalde, TX (2022-2023)
- Virginia State Police / Virginia Fusion Center
 - Threat Management Consultant / Advisory Board Member (2009-Present)
- Virginia Tech
 - Deputy Chief of Police & Director, Threat Management Services (2009-2014)
- Joint Terrorism Task Force / ATAC Southern District of Iowa
 - Special Deputy US Marshal (2001-2009)
- Story County (IA) Mental Health Task Force / CIT Program
 - Founding Member / Leader (1995-2009)
- Iowa State University
 - Deputy Chief of Police & Director, Threat Management (1993-2009)



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Agenda



- Overview of Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management
- Overview of Campus/Workplace Violence
- The Nature and Process of Violence
- Essential Elements of an Effective BTAM Process
- Case Scenarios



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Enhancing Your Experience!

Maximize opportunities to enhance your practice

- Actively engage with the training
 - Contribute to and learn from others
- Build collaborative networks
 - Introduce yourself and connect
- Commit to continual development
 - Identify next steps for enhancing & applying your skills



For further consideration: This icon identifies issues for further consideration to enhance your understanding and application of concepts.

Enhance your understanding: Blue hyperlinks will identify active internet links to resources and reference material.



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Agenda



Overview of Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management



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BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Systematic Approach to Identifying, Assessing & Managing Concerning or Threatening Behavior

Exercise

| Identify whether the following are general risk factors or proximal warning behaviors for targeted violence, or neither: | General Risk Factor | Proximal Warning Behavior | Neither |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| The subject communicates threats directly to the target and the threats contain specific detail about intended harm to the target. | | | |
| The subject has a history of violence. | | | |
| The subject expresses increased desperation and lack of alternatives to violence in dealing with grievances. | | | |
| The subject obsesses over grievances and the need for justice through violence. | | | |

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Exercise

| Identify whether the following are general risk factors or proximal warning behaviors for targeted violence, or neither: | General Risk Factor | Proximal Warning Behavior | Neither |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| The subject regularly plays first-person-shooter video games. | | | |
| The subject expresses aspects of grievances and need for justice through violence to 3rd parties or via social media, but not directly to the target. | | | |
| The subject is living with a serious mental illness. | | | |
| The subject admires and seeks to emulate others who have engaged in acts of violence. | | | |

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Discussion Point



What is Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management?

For further consideration:

- Do all members of your team have a shared understanding of what BTAM is for your campus?
- Do key stakeholders and administrators share that understanding?
- Do various people or groups in the campus community view BTAM differently?
- Who does not understand the roles and functions of the BTAM process as well as you would like?
- Do some have serious concerns about the BTAM process? What are the concerns?
- How do you address any misperceptions/concerns?


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Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management

A **systematic** process that is designed to:

- 1 IDENTIFY subject(s)/situation(s) of concern
- 2 INQUIRE, gather information/investigate
- 3 ASSESS the situation
- 4 MANAGE the situation and mitigate harm



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A Public Health Approach

Why a Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention?

- Emphasis on prevention
- Enhances the health, safety and well-being of the community
- Utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach
- Engages community & key stakeholders for input and action
- Continuously evaluates and improves

Define & Monitor the Problem

→

Identify Risk & Protective Factors

→

Develop and Test Prevention Strategies

→

Assure Widespread Adoption

Centers for Disease Control. "The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention," Jan. 28, 2021. https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/about-the-public-health-approach-to-violence-prevention.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/publichealthapproach.html

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Threat Assessment & Management Process

BTAM facilitates a more objective process:

Behavior, Information, Observations

→

Assessment and Conclusions

→

Strategies

Deisinger, 2017



There are no facts, only interpretations.
— Friedrich Nietzsche

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Concerning or Aberrant Behavior

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.

For further consideration:

- Do all aberrant or atypical behaviors cause concern?
- Do various groups in the community view behaviors differently?

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Concerning/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 |

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What is a "Threat"?

A threat:

- Is a concerning communication or behavior that:
 - Indicates a subject may pose a danger to the safety or well-being of the campus community:
 - through acts of violence or
 - other behavior that would cause harm to self or others.

May be expressed or communicated:

- Behaviorally
- Verbally
- Visually
- In writing
- Electronically
- Through any other means

Is considered a threat regardless of whether:

- Observed by or communicated directly to the:
 - target or
 - a third party or
- Whether the target is aware of the threat

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Threatening Behaviors: Examples

Behaviors that would be perceived by a reasonable person as threatening, harmful, or intimidating, such as:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Directly communicated threats | Leakage | Overt physical or verbal intimidation | Bullying that continues after attempts to stop the behavior |
| Throwing objects or other gestures intended to cause fear | Statements or behaviors indicating intent to harm/kill others | Statements or behaviors indicating intent to harm/kill self | Research or planning related to carrying out violence |
| Stalking or surveillance | Physical violence toward a person or property | Unlawful or inappropriate possession of weapon | |

DEISINGER CONSULTING, LLC [The Concept of Leakage in Threat Assessment](#) © G. DEISINGER (2026)

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Threat Assessment & Management Goal

Support and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of the organization.

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Principles of BTAM

- Behavioral threat assessment & management is about **prevention**, not prediction.
- Behavioral threat assessment & management is a **helping** process, rather than punitive or adversarial.

The best way to predict your future is to create it.

- Abraham Lincoln

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Predatory / Targeted Violence

Targeted Violence:

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



Adapted from: FBI (2017). *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks*
www.fbi.gov/file-repository/making-prevention-a-reality.pdf

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Targeted Violence

Public Mass Violence

Lone Actor Terrorism / Violent Extremism

Grievance-Based Violence impacting:
• Workplaces, IHE, & Schools
• Houses of worship & Faith Communities
• Government agencies
• Public Figures

Domestic / Intimate Partner Violence*

Predatory Sexual Assault / Sexual Misconduct

Stalking

Human Trafficking

Gang Violence*

Bias and Hate Crimes

Harassment / Bullying / Mobbing / Doxing

Suicidal Behaviors in Public Locations*

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Modes of Violence


| Affective Violence: | | Predatory Violence |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Intense emotion & expression | ↔ | Minimal emotion or expression |
| Violence is reactive and immediate | ↔ | Violence is planned and purposeful |
| Violence against perceived threats | ↔ | Violence against specified targets |
| Heightened and diffuse awareness | ↔ | Heightened and focused awareness |
| Goal is threat reduction | ↔ | Violence serves variable goals |
| Primarily emotional and defensive | ↔ | Primarily cognitive and attack-oriented |
| Rapid displacement of target | ↔ | Minimal displacement of target; |
| Reactions are time limited | ↔ | Not time limited; |

Source: Meloy (2000) *Violence Risk & Threat Assessment*

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21

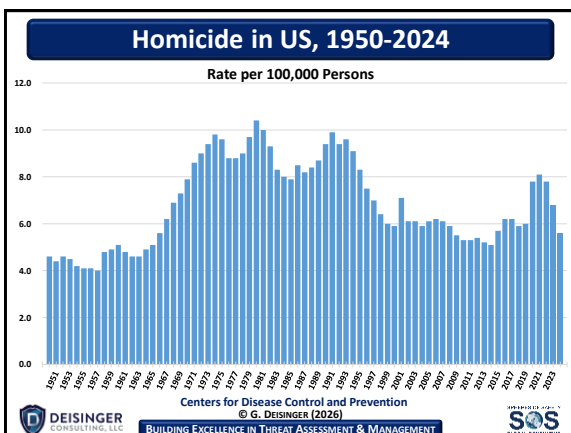
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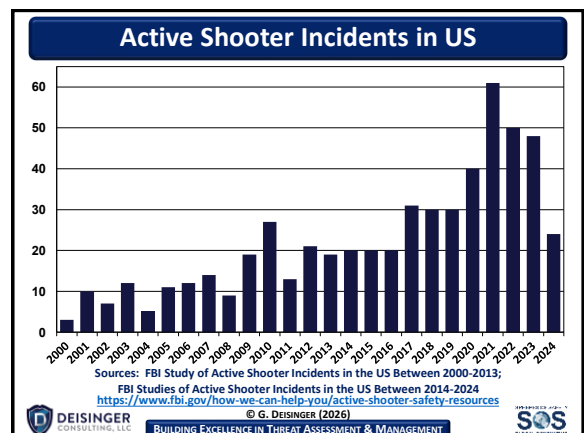
Overview of Campus/ Workplace Violence

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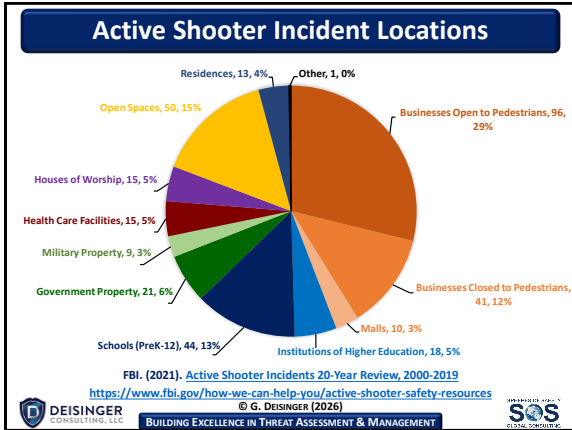


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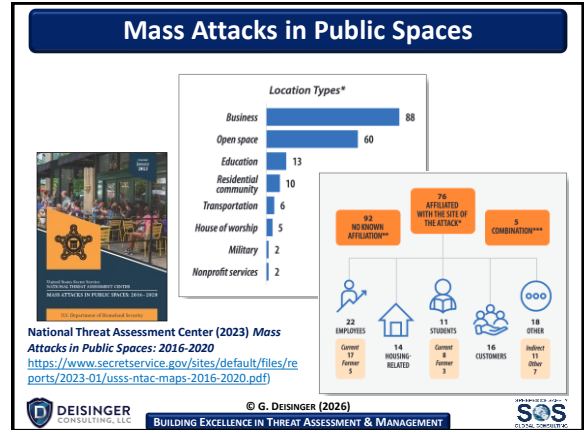


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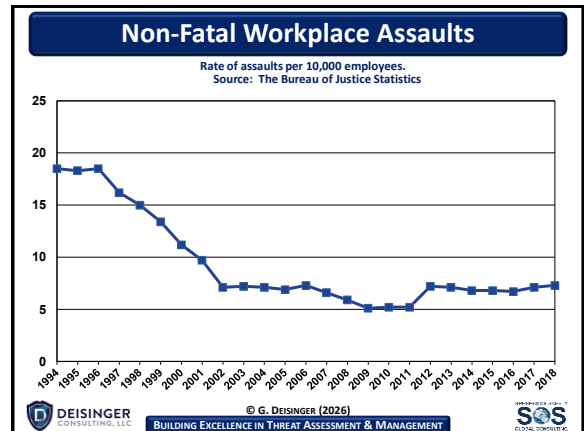
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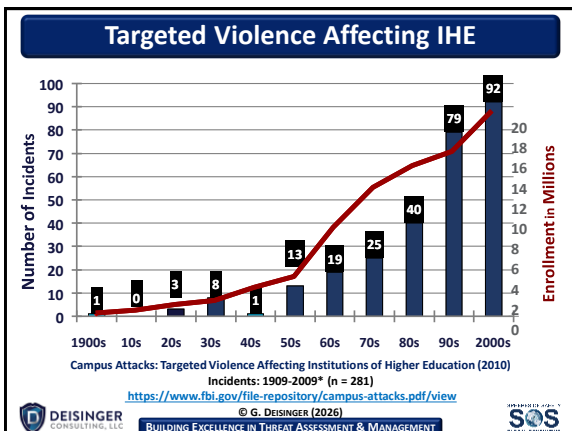
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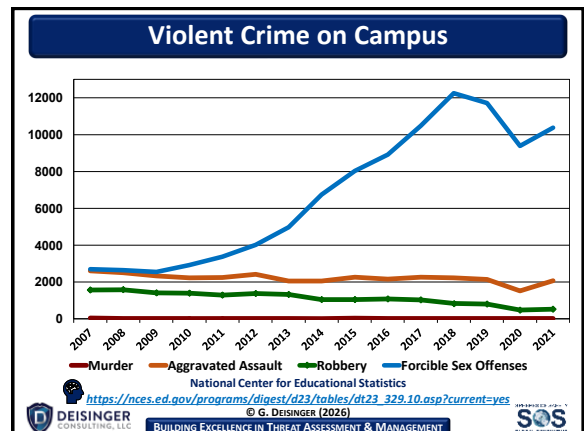
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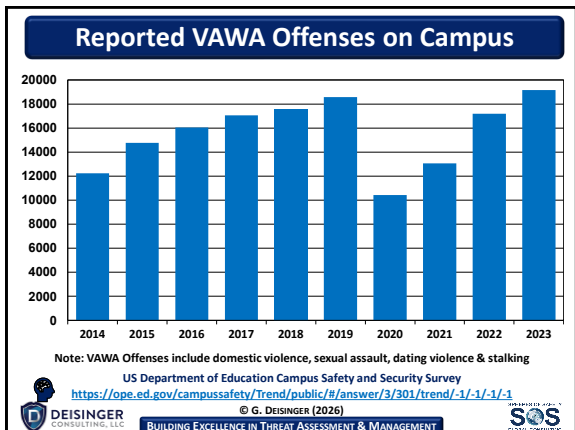


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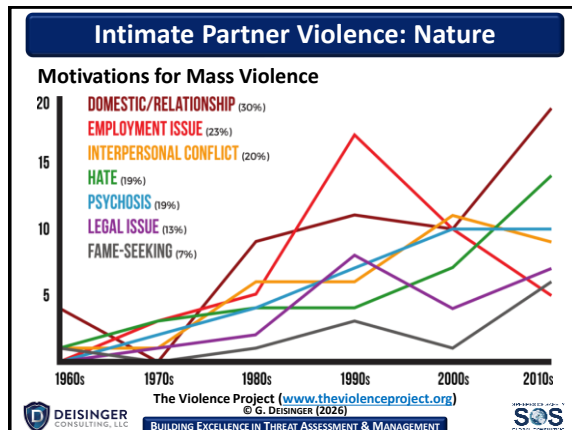


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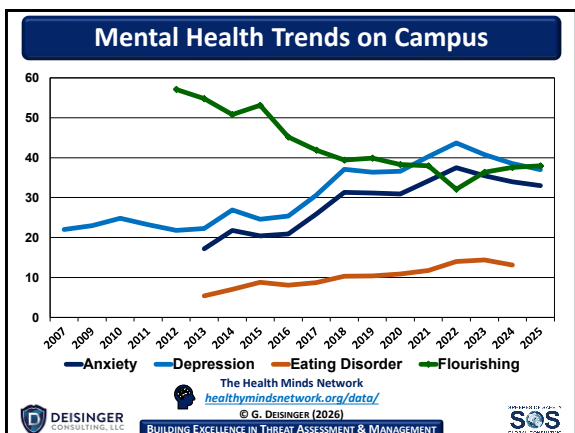
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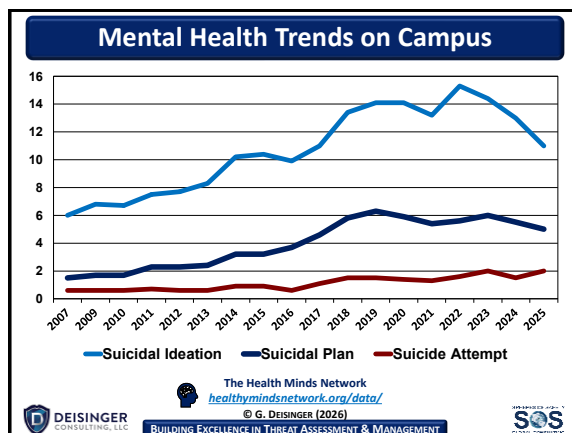
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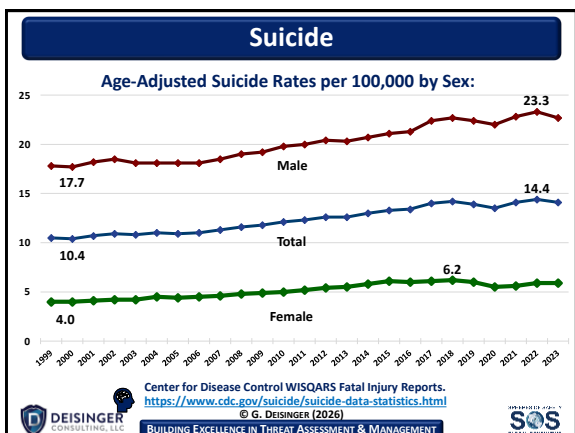
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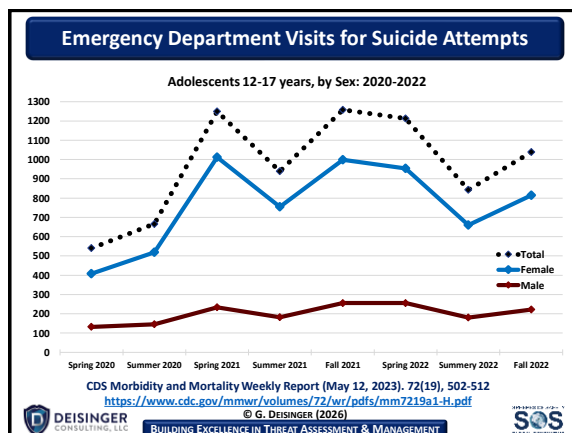
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34



35



36

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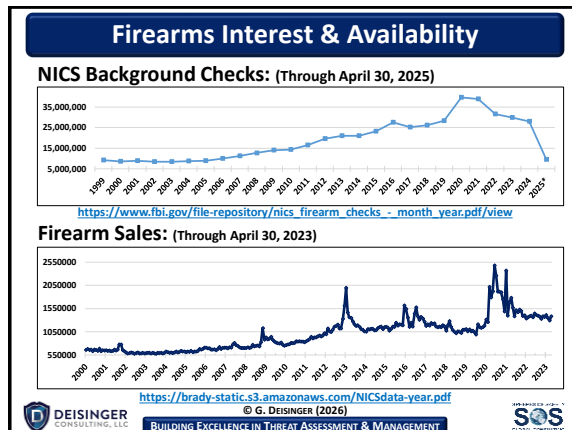
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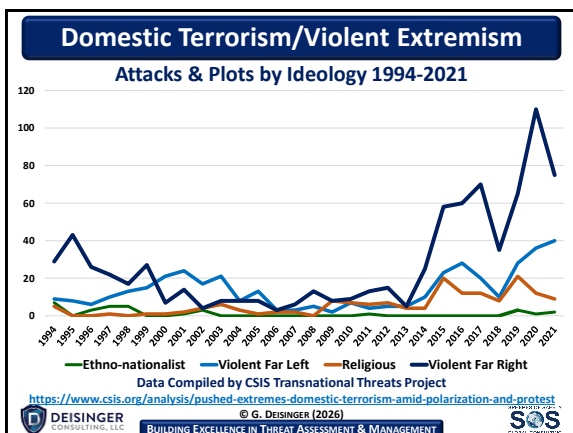
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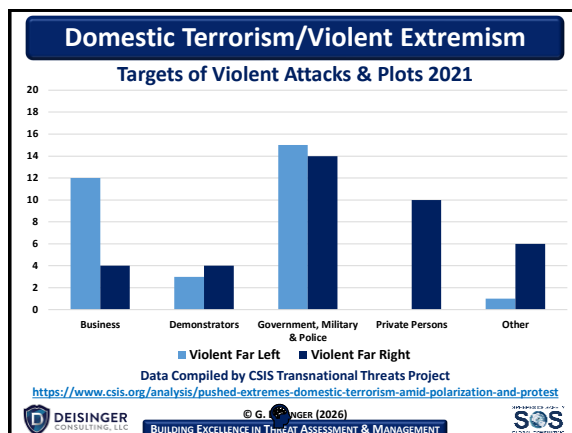
37



38



39



40



41

- ### Understanding Targeted Violence
- There is no demographic profile of a perpetrator of targeted violence.
 - There is no profile for the type of organization or community that has been targeted.
 - A broad range of persons may engage in violence:
 - Staff
 - Clients/customers/patrons
 - Contractors and vendors
 - People in relationships with staff or clients, and
 - People with no connection to the organization/community
- [A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters 2000-2013](#)
[Protecting America's Schools](#)
[Making Prevention a Reality](#)
[Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020](#)
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Understanding Targeted Violence

- Most perpetrators act alone
- But, in many cases, others (e.g., staff, peers, family members, etc.) were involved in some way:
 - Failing to report concerns
 - Failing take other steps to prevent violence
 - Encouraging violence
 - Helping with plans or preparation for violence.
- Most perpetrators of mass casualties used firearms
 - Typically acquired from home
- Over 1/3 of perpetrators used knives

[A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters 2000-2013](#)
[Averted School Violence](#)
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43

Understanding Targeted Violence

- Many perpetrators were preoccupied with violent interests, incidents or perpetrators
- Many perpetrators had a history of violence
- Many perpetrators of mass violence had a history of disciplinary actions
- Many had prior contact with law enforcement
- Many perpetrators were suicidal in addition to their violent thoughts or acts toward others
- Suicidal behaviors are a significant and growing concern across all genders and age groups.

[A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters 2000-2013](#)
[Protecting America's Schools](#)
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Understanding Targeted Violence

- Perpetrators usually had multiple motives
 - Most common: unresolved grievance with a peer
- Many perpetrators had multiple stressors, including significant difficulties with losses or failures
- Many student perpetrators had been victims of (or participated in) prior bullying, often known to others
- Most perpetrators did not threaten their targets directly prior to engaging in violence
- Many perpetrators expressed their grievances and aspects of their thoughts or plans to others
 - Often through social media or online activities

[A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters 2000-2013](#)
[Averted School Violence](#)
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[Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016-2020](#)

45

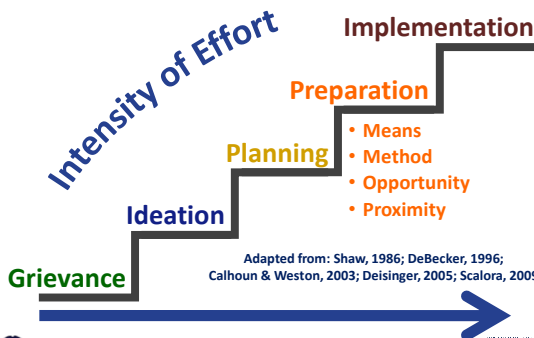
Understanding Targeted Violence

- All perpetrators exhibited concerning behavior.
- Most perpetrators had engaged in multiple behaviors that caused others to have serious concerns about their behavior and/or well-being.
- Many perpetrators had experienced psychological, behavioral, or developmental symptoms, but may not have been diagnosed with a mental health condition or benefited from adequate treatment.
- Incidents of targeted violence are rarely sudden or impulsive acts.

[A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters 2000-2013](#)
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46

Pathway to Violence



47

Understanding Targeted Violence

- Prior to most incidents of targeted violence, other people knew about aspects of the individual's ideas, plans or preparations to cause harm.
- Many bystanders who had knowledge of concerning behaviors did not report them.
- Often, there were concerns about the perpetrator by others outside of the organization, but the concerns were not reported to campus staff.

[A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters 2000-2013](#)
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- Considerations:**
- Who may be sources?
 - How can we engage them?

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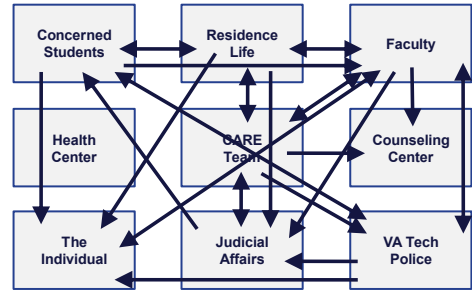
Violence Prevention

- 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 behavior, plans or preparations is likely to be scattered & fragmented.
- Keys for the community are to:
 - Recognize concerns,
 - Act quickly upon report of concerns,
 - Gather relevant information,
 - Enhance understanding of situation,
 - Facilitate intervention.



49

Communication is Key

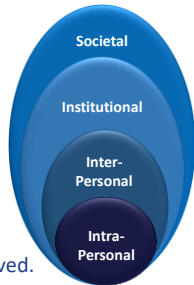


SOURCE: OIG Report #140-07: Investigation of the April 16, 2007 Critical Incident at Virginia Tech. Prepared by: Office of the Inspector General for Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services – Commonwealth of Virginia

50

Effective Prevention Strategies

- Comprehensive;
- Systematic and theory driven;
- Collaborative;
- Socio-culturally relevant;
- Appropriately timed;
- Delivered by well-trained staff;
- Utilize multiple & varied methods;
- Sustained over time;
- Continuously evaluated and improved.



Nation, M., et al (2003). What works in prevention: Principles of Effective Prevention Programs. *American Psychologist*, 58, 449-456.

51

Agenda



Essential Elements of an Effective BTAM Process

52

Essential Elements of an Effective BTAM Process

Organizations must have a systematic process that:

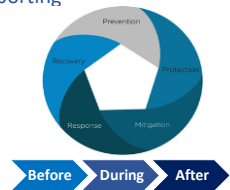
- Utilizes a robust & relevant multi-disciplinary approach to address all threats that may reasonably be posed.
- Promotes coordinated & early awareness of developing concerns through active community engagement.
- Facilitates a thorough & contextual assessment.
- Implements proactive & integrated case management.
- Monitors & re-assesses case on a longitudinal basis.
- Conducts all practices in accordance with relevant laws, policies, and standards of practice.
- Continuously improves and adapts to changes, challenges & needs.

53

BTAM is a Systematic Process

Systematic Process:

- Building & supporting community safety & well-being
- Identification/recognition & reporting
- Intake & Initial Inquiry
- Triage / Screening
- Full Inquiry / Investigation
- Assessment
- Management
- Monitoring & Re-Assessment
- Update/Engagement & Closure
- Continuous improvement of environment/systems



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Essential Elements of Effective BTAM

BTAM is a systematic process that:

Utilizes a robust & relevant multi-disciplinary approach to address all threats

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Robust Multi-Disciplinary BTAM Process



Mission

- Purpose
- Scope
- Functions
- Authority



Membership

- Core Team
- Backups
- SME/Ad-Hoc
- Leadership
- Support



BTAM Process

- Systematic approach
- Member roles & responsibilities
- Reporting mechanism(s)



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TAM Functions

Define Mission, Scope & Authority

- Enhance awareness/recognition of potential threats
- Enhance reporting
- Triage and assessment
- Case management to prevent/mitigate harm
- Guide implementation of strategies
- Re-evaluate, monitor and intervene with situation
- Evaluate needs of community
- Enhance: policy, process, practice and people*

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57

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

- A. Each public college or university shall have in place policies and procedures for the prevention of violence on campus, including assessment and intervention with individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of the campus community.

BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT
IN VIRGINIA INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION:
Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
(DCJS, 2025)



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58

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- B. The governing board of each public institution of higher education shall determine a violence prevention committee structure on campus composed of individuals charged with education on and prevention of violence on campus. Each violence prevention committee shall include representatives from student affairs, law enforcement, human resources, counseling services, residence life, and other constituencies as needed and shall consult with legal counsel as needed. Each violence prevention committee shall develop a clear statement of mission, membership, and leadership. Such statement shall be published and made available to the campus community.

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)



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Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- C. Each violence prevention committee shall
- provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a physical threat to the community;
 - identify members of the campus community to whom threatening behavior should be reported;
 - establish policies and procedures that outline circumstances under which all faculty and staff are required to report behavior that may represent a physical threat to the community, provided that such report is consistent with state and federal law; and
- [§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)



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10

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Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- D. Each violence prevention committee shall
- (iv) establish policies and procedures for
 - (a) the assessment of individuals whose behavior may present a threat,
 - (b) appropriate means of intervention with such individuals,
 - (c) sufficient means of action, including interim suspension, referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment, medical separation to resolve potential physical threats, and notification of family members or guardians, or both, unless such notification would prove harmful to the individual in question, consistent with state and federal law.

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

61

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- D. The governing board of each public institution of higher education shall establish a threat assessment team that includes members from law enforcement, mental health professionals, and representatives of student affairs and human resources. College or university counsel shall be invited to provide legal advice.

Each such threat assessment team may invite other representatives from campus to participate in individual cases, but no such representative shall be considered a member of the threat assessment team.

Each threat assessment team shall implement the assessment, intervention, & action policies set forth by the violence prevention committee pursuant to subsection C.

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

62

Multi-Disciplinary BTAM Team

Goals:

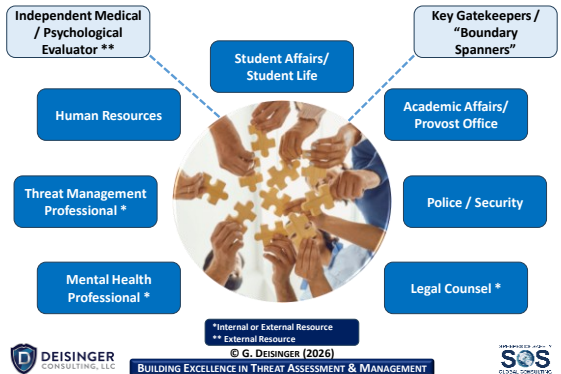
- Enhance and support the health, safety, and well-being of the campus community.
- Increase awareness of developing concerns/threats.
- Maximize skills and resources to address concerns.
- Enhance ability to monitor outcomes.
- Enhance community health, safety, and well-being.
- Enhance:
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Coordination
 - Capitalization

*By far the most valuable prevention strategy identified was the threat assessment and management team
FBI (2017) Making Prevention a Reality*

© G. Deisinger, C. Cychoz, L. Jaeger (1993/1995)

63

Key Campus BTAM Team Membership



64

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- E. Each team shall establish or utilize existing relationships with local and state law-enforcement agencies, as well as mental health agencies, to expedite assessment & intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety.

Upon a preliminary determination that an individual:

- poses a threat of violence to self or others, or
- exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or
- need for assistance,

a threat assessment team may obtain:

- criminal history record information, as provided in [§19.2-389 \(26\)](#) and [§19.2-389.1 \(x\)](#), and
- health records, as provided in [§32.1-127.1:03 \(D.35\)](#).

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

65

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- F. Upon a preliminary determination that an individual poses an articulable and significant threat of violence to others, the threat assessment team shall:

1. Obtain:

- criminal history record information, as provided in [§19.2-389 \(26\)](#) and [§19.2-389.1 \(x\)](#), and

- health records, as provided in [§32.1-127.1:03 \(D.35\)](#).

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

[Report on Best Practices, Model Policies and Procedures, and Legislative Recommendations for Campus Threat Assessment Teams \(Jan. 2024\)](#)

66

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Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

2. Notify in writing within 24 hours upon making such preliminary determination
 - i. the campus police department,
 - ii. local law enforcement for the city or county in which the public institution of higher education is located, local law enforcement for the city or county in which the individual resides, and, if known to the threat assessment team, local law enforcement for the city or county in which the individual is located, and
 - iii. the local attorney for the Commonwealth in any jurisdiction where the threat assessment team has notified local law enforcement; and
3. Disclose any specific threat of violence posed by the individual as part of such notification.

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

67

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- G. The custodians of any criminal history record information or health records shall, upon request from a threat assessment team pursuant to subsections E and F, produce the information or records requested.
- H. No member or invited representative of a threat assessment team shall redisclose any criminal history record information or health information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team.

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

68

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- I. Each threat assessment team member shall complete a minimum of eight hours of initial training within 12 months of appointment to the threat assessment team and shall complete a minimum of two hours of threat assessment training each academic year thereafter. Training shall be conducted by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (the Department) or an independent entity approved by the Department.

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

69

Establishing a BTAM Process (VA)

Mission: Purpose, Scope, Functions & Authority

- J. When otherwise consistent with applicable state and federal law, in the event that a public institution of higher education has knowledge that a student or employee who was determined pursuant to an investigation by the institution's threat assessment team to pose an articulable and significant threat of violence to others is transferring to another institution of higher education or place of employment, the public institution of higher education from which the individual is transferring shall notify the institution of higher education or place of employment to which the individual is transferring of such investigation and determination.

[§ 23.1-805. Violence prevention committee; threat assessment team.](#)

70

Skills of Effective Team Members

- Passionate about the goals of the team
- Communicates effectively
- Relates well with others
- Familiar with threat assessment & management policies, processes and practices
- Actively and effectively participates in team-work
- Demonstrates an inquisitive mindset
- Exercises judgment, objectivity, and diligence
- Demonstrates accountability
- Advocates for necessary resources

Deisinger, et al (2008) *Handbook of Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams*

71

Key Dynamics of Successful Teams

Psychological Safety:

We take risks without feeling insecure or embarrassed.

Dependability:

We can count on each other to do high quality work on time.

Structure & Clarity:

We are clear about our goals, roles, and execution plans.

Meaning of Work:

We are working on something that is personally important for each of us.

Impact of Work:

We fundamentally believe that the work we are doing matters.

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

[The five keys to a successful Google team](#)

72

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Team Size

Optimal Size: 5 – 9 members

- **Fewer than 4**
 - Too much responsibility / stress
 - Minimal diversity of thought
- **Greater than 9**
 - Diminished responsibility & engagement
 - Decreased individual performance
 - Decreased communication
 - Increase of cliques

Mueller, J.S. (2012). Why Individuals in Larger Teams Perform Worse. *Organizational Behavior & Human Decision Processes*, 117(1), 111-124.

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Scope: All Threats

Subject Relationship to Workplace

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Type 1 | Unaffiliated with other criminal intent |
| Type 2 | Customer/Client |
| Type 3 | Employees |
| Type 4 | Personal Relationship |

Source: Occupational Safety & Health Administration, US Dept of Labor

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Type 5 | Unaffiliated with no other criminal intent |
|---------------|---|

Source: G. Deisinger (2005)

? **Considerations:**
 • What challenges do you see in addressing subjects who may have no, or limited, connection to the community?

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Subjects: Address All Threats

| Perpetrator's Affiliation: | | |
|------------------------------|---------|------------|
| Student | | 60% |
| | Current | 45% |
| | Former | 15% |
| Employee | | 11% |
| | Current | 6% |
| | Former | 5% |
| Indirectly Affiliated | | 20% |
| No Known Affiliation | | 9% |

U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Dept. of Education, & Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education.* <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/campus-attacks.pdf/view>

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Sources of Grievances/Targets

Grievance Sources / Targets:

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| People | Places | Programs |
| Processes | Philosophies | Proxies |

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Essential Elements of Effective BTAM

BTAM is a systematic process that:

Enables coordinated & early awareness of developing concerns through active community engagement

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Coordinated & Early Awareness

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Importance of Reporting

Key considerations:

- Reporting allows concerns to be addressed
- Earlier reporting allows greater range of options
- The BTAM process is designed to help
- Goals are to maintain the health, safety and well-being of the campus community

“If you see, hear, or know something, say something and do something.”

Adapted from: NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Considerations:

- What might create barriers to reporting?
- How can we overcome these?

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Importance of Reporting

| CONCERNING BEHAVIORS | | (Table 1) | |
|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| | Active Shooters | Persons of Concern | |
| Written | 27.0% | 65.1% | |
| Verbal | 95.2% | 82.3% | |
| Online | 15.9% | 39.7% | |
| Physical Actions | 85.7% | 76.2% | |

While active shooters were more likely to present concerning behaviors verbally and physically, high-risk POCs were more likely to present concerning behaviors in written and online forms.

| BYSTANDERS ACTIONS | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| | Active Shooters | Persons of Concern | |
| Discussed directly with subject | 82.5% | 82.5% | |
| Reported to non-law enforcement | 50.8% | 61.9% | |
| Discussed with friends | 49.2% | 41.3% | |
| Other | 1.6% | 11.1% | |
| Did nothing | 54.0% | 14.6% | |

Bystanders of active shooters were more likely to discuss the observed concerning behaviors with friends or do nothing and bystanders of high-risk POCs were more likely to report to non-law enforcement or to do something else (other). Both groups were equally as likely to discuss the concerning behaviors with the subject. This research supports the idea that the prevalence of bystander inaction (i.e., doing nothing in the active shooter population is a stark reminder of the need to increase opportunities for bystanders to report the concerning behavior they observe.

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Facilitate Bystander Engagement

Facilitate engagement:

- Emphasize that it is everyone’s role and responsibility to share and address concerns
- Identify concerning, aberrant, threatening, and prohibited behaviors to be reported
- Establish and promote effective reporting mechanisms
- Establish and identify how and where concerns can be reported
- Respond to reports in timely and effective manner
- Provide regular reminders of issues and process

[USSS and DOE \(2008\) Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence](#)
[Police Foundation \(2019\) A Comparison of Averted and Completed School Attacks from the Police Foundation Averted School Violence Database](#)
[Fraun, Gibson, et al \(2020\). \(In\)action: Variation in Bystander Responses Between Persons of Concern and Active Shooters](#)
[USDHS \(2023\) Improving Safety through Bystander Reporting](#)

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82

Building Awareness

Audience

- Managers
- Supervisors
- Employees
- Students
- Contractors
- Parents

Topics

- BTAM process
- Reporting mechanisms
- Verbal de-escalation
- Incident survival
- Support resources

Mechanisms

- Website
- E-mail updates
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Apps

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Maintaining Awareness

Sustain organizational knowledge about:

- Mission & function of team
 - Early intervention and assistance with situations
- Importance of consulting about concerning behaviors
 - “This may be nothing but . . .”
 - “If in doubt, shout it out!”
- Mechanisms for reporting and consultation
- Community role in maintaining safety and well-being of the community
- GOAL:** Sustain a culture of care, engagement and consultation.

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Facilitating Engagement / Reporting

- Clear and trusted reporting mechanisms
 - Confidential
 - Anonymous
 - Anonymous with reach back
- Acknowledgement of report
- Support engagement

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Documentation

Record keeping

- Consult with legal counsel and agency administration about documentation:
 - Creation
 - Storage
 - Access
 - Sharing
 - Destruction
- Consider:
 - Database of BTAM team cases
 - Documentation of the subject's exact words and actions
 - Documentation of target reactions and protective actions
 - Copies of emails, memos, voicemails, assignments, etc.
 - Agenda and minutes of team staffing and consultations.
 - Data
 - Assessment
 - Plan



86

Process & Record Keeping

FORTify the process:

- Process and documentation should demonstrate that TAM team's decision-making process was:

Fair,
Objective,
Reasonable, and
Timely

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87

Exclusion from Freedom of Information Act

Code of Virginia § 2.2-3705.4:

- Information held by a threat assessment team at a public IHE is excluded from FOIA.
- However, if a subject who has been under assessment:
 - Commits an act or
 - Is prosecuted for the commission of an act that caused the death of, or serious bodily injury, to another person, including felony sexual assault
 - Threat assessment team information shall be made available except for any criminal history, health, or scholastic records
- The school shall remove identifying information of any person who provided information to the threat assessment team under a promise of confidentiality

88

Records Retention

Per § 42.1-82, the Library of Virginia (LVA) issues regulations governing the retention and disposition of state and local public records. LVA has developed records retention and disposition schedules outlining the disposition of public records (see § 42.1-86.1). Campus BTAM Teams should retain and dispose of records in a manner consistent with the relevant LVA schedule.

Library of Virginia: Records Retention and Disposition Schedule:

- Student Threat Assessment Records
 - Retain for three (3) years after closure.
[Schedule GS-111 College Records \(Student Affairs Investigations 101173; page 15\)](#)
- Non-Student Threat Assessment Records
 - Retain for five (5) years after closure.
[Schedule GS-103 Personnel Records \(Incident Reports 100492; page 6\)](#)
- Employee Health Records
 - Retain for thirty (30) years after separation
[Schedule GS-103 Personnel Records \(Employee Health Records 100484; page 4\)](#)

89

Essential Elements of Effective BTAM

BTAM is a systematic process that:

Facilitates a thorough and contextual assessment

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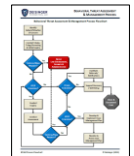


90

Key Steps in the BTAM Process

Threat assessment team:

- Receives report of threat
 - Intake: How you take in reports and being processed
 - Triage: Determining criticality/priority of cases
 - Screening: Determining appropriateness for BTAM
- Gathers additional relevant information
- Analyzes information and assesses threat
- Implements case manage plan
- Conducts appropriate notifications
- Monitors and re-evaluates plan
- Follow up as appropriate



91

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Comprehensive BTAM Process

Violence is the product of interactions of factors within and between multiple domains, including:

- S** The **Subject** of concern;
- T** The **Target** or others impacted;
- E** **Environmental/systemic** factors; &
- P** **Precipitating events**.



STEP FRAMEWORK
© Deisinger (1996);
Deisinger & Nolan (2021)

92

Intake

**Upon receipt of initial report,
the team obtains initial information about the situation:**

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

93

Triage and Screening

Definitions

- Triage:**
Determining nature and priority of cases based on severity, urgency, and/or impact. **TRIAGE**
- Screening:**
Determine if nature of concerns are appropriate for BTAM team mission.



Triage and Screening Process:

- Determines:**
 - The nature and level of concern indicated.
 - If existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns.
 - Whether the BTAM team needs to further inquire, assess and/or manage the case.
- Initiates crisis responses as appropriate.**
- Makes appropriate referrals and/or notifications.**

94

Triage and Screening

Triage / Screening:

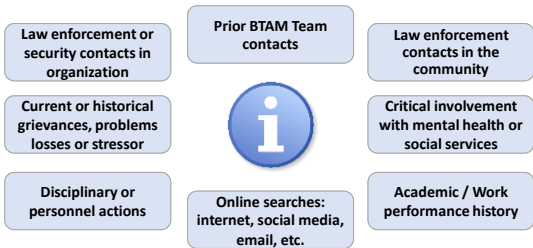
- Timely and systematic review by trained personnel**
- Consider Triage/Screening Team:**
 - Minimum of two (2) members
 - Different roles/departments
- Review initial report(s)**
- Conduct initial inquiry**
 - Records
 - Contacts/sources
 - OSINT
- Conduct initial interviews**



95

Inquire / Gather Information

Review relevant records/sources based on lawful and ethical access to information, such as:



96

Social Media Landscape



National Center for School Safety. (2022). Considerations for Social Media Monitoring & Response
Rand Corporation (2024). Developing Practical Responses to Social Media Threats Against K-12 Schools:
An Overview of Trends, Challenges, and Current Approaches
Safer Schools Together. Behavioral and Digital Threat Assessment

97

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Inquire/Gather Information

Consider interviews:

- **Initial interviews to verify report:**
 - Person(s) reporting threat
 - Person(s) receiving report of threat
 - Target/Recipient(s) of threat
 - Witness(es)
 - Subject of concern
- **Other potential sources:**
 - Peers: Friends/Co-workers
 - Employers, teachers, other staff
 - Parents/guardians
 - Relational Partners
 - Local law or state enforcement
 - Community services

Considerations:

- Corroboration of information across these sources may be critical in helping to assess the level and nature of the threat.
- What may be revealed by significant differences in the information provided by these sources?

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98

Considerations for Interviewing

Considerations for interviews:

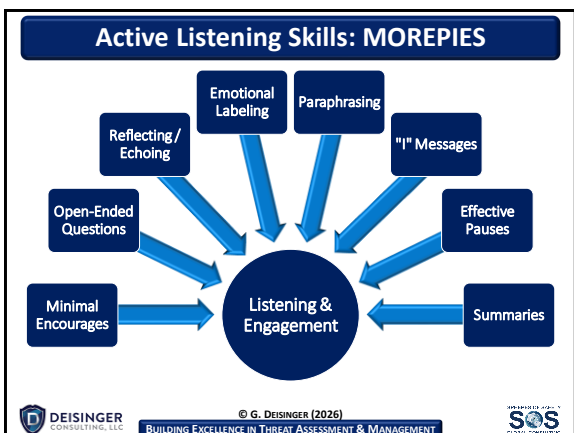
- By whom?
- With what skill set?
- In what setting?
- With what goals in mind?
 - Information gathering and assessment;
 - Redirect from violence/targets;
 - Problem solving/support
 - Set boundaries/limitations
 - Admonishment/confrontation
 - Intervention/support/referral
 - Monitoring
 - Deterrence

Considerations:

- Are TAT members adequately trained and prepared to conduct interviews?
- Who may be best suited to conduct this interview?

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99



100

Triage

Determine if case is Critical/High Level of Concern:

| Critical Priority/Level of Concern | High Priority/Level of Concern |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subject poses a threat as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Intent/high likelihood to cause serious harm to self/others <input type="checkbox"/> Capability to do so <input type="checkbox"/> Is engaged in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> immediate actions or <input type="checkbox"/> imminent actions to cause significant or serious harm to self/others | <input type="checkbox"/> Subject may pose a threat as indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Intent to cause serious harm to self/others, and/or <input type="checkbox"/> Rapidly developing capability to do so, and/or |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target(s) exhibit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerability to serious harm <input type="checkbox"/> Significant support needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Subject exhibits urgent need for crisis intervention/ stabilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Target(s) exhibit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerability/concern for harm <input type="checkbox"/> Elevated support needs |

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101

Triage

If the situation is critical or high priority/level of concern:

- Initiate crisis response / emergency operations plans according to policy
- Involve law enforcement and appropriate security personnel
- Initiate relevant security & crisis communication protocols
- Make appropriate notifications
- When safe to do so, move on to triage, screening, and assessment steps to further resolve any ongoing threat that may be posed

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102

Triage: Not Critical/High, But Urgent

If the situation is not critical/high level of concern:

- Determine if there are any time sensitive or urgent concerns that need to be addressed quickly.
 - Notify appropriate stakeholders
 - Make relevant referrals
 - Provide supportive resources
 - Continue screening process

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Screening

Screening

- Are there concerns in any of the STEP domains?
 - Subject YES NO
 - Target YES NO
 - Environment YES NO
 - Precipitating Events YES NO

A Venn diagram with three overlapping circles. The top circle is red and labeled 'SUBJECT'. The bottom-left circle is blue and labeled 'ENVIRONMENT'. The bottom-right circle is orange and labeled 'TARGET'. The central area where all three circles overlap is green and labeled 'PRECIPITATING EVENTS'.

- Is there a Level of Concern to support need for further inquiry, assessment & management by the BTAM Team?

Is further inquiry indicated?
 YES
 NO

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Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

What behaviors or situations are causing concern?

- Does the situation or circumstance that led to these concerns still exist?
- When and where and do the behaviors tend to occur?
- Is there a pattern to the behaviors or a change in pattern of behavior that is causing concern?
- If the behaviors have occurred previously, how has the subject dealt with the grievances?
- Has 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?

Adapted from: * Meloy, et al. (2012). *The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment*; ** FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; U.S. Secret Service (2000) *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment: Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials*.

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Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

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

- Are there *Directly Communicated Threats**?
- Has there been *Leakage**?
- How and to whom is the subject communicating?
 - What is relationship between subject and target?
 - What means/modes communication have been used?
 - What effect have communications had?
- What is the Subject's *Intensity of Effort*** in communications or attempts to address grievance?
- Do the communications provide insight about motives, grievances, ideation, planning, preparation, targets, etc.?
- Has anyone been alerted or "warned away"?

Adapted from: * Meloy, et al. (2012). *The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment*; ** FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; U.S. Secret Service (2000) *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment: Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials*.

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Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

What are the subject's grievances, motives, or unmet needs?

- Does the subject have unresolved grievance(s)?
 - Against whom? What is the relationship?
 - Is there legitimacy to the grievance(s)?
- Are there other motives referenced that support the use of violence such as desire for notoriety/fame?
- What does the subject want to achieve?
- What efforts have been made to address or resolve the problems?
- Is the subject exhibiting *Fixation**?
 - Increasing perseverance on person/cause or need for resolution
 - Increasingly strident and negative characterization of target
 - Angry emotional undertone, accompanied by
 - Social or occupational deterioration

Adapted from: * Meloy, et al. (2012). *The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment*; ** FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; U.S. Secret Service (2000) *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment: Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials*.

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Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

The screenshot shows a BTAC Bulletin article. The main heading is 'HUMILIATION' with a sub-heading 'DIGNITY & RESPECT AS MITIGATION'. Below the heading, there is text and a large graphic that says '4x INCREASED RISK'.

<https://www.dcsa.mil/Counterintelligence-Insider-Threat/DITMAC/>

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Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

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 violent media?
 - What is important about it to them?
 - Are they using it to build confidence or capability?
- Is there *Identification**? (strong desire or need to emulate/be like others) with:
 - Perpetrators of targeted violence or powerful figures?
 - Grievances of other perpetrators?
 - Weapons or tactics of other perpetrators?
 - Effect or notoriety of other perpetrators?
 - Ideologies or groups that support and encourage violence?

Adapted from: * Meloy, et al. (2012). *The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment*; ** FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; U.S. Secret Service (2000) *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment: Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials*.

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BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Systematic Approach to Identifying, Assessing & Managing Concerning or Threatening Behavior

Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

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

- Where are they on the Pathway to Targeted Violence?
- Are there **Pathway Warning Behaviors***?
 - Planning or capacity for planning?
 - Preparation?
- Are there changes in patterns of behavior, or **Energy Bursts***?
- How organized is the subject's thinking and behavior?
- Is there a history of violence?
 - Against whom? What context?
- Is there **Novel Aggression****?
 - Against whom? What context?

Adapted from: * Meloy, et al. (2012). *The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment*; ** FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; U.S. Secret Service (2000) *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials*. © G. DEISINGER (2026)

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Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

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

- Has subject experienced perceived loss, failure, or injustice?
- Is the subject experiencing significant or multiple stressors?
- Is the subject having difficulty coping?
- Is subject exhibiting **Last Resort Behaviors****?
 - Desperation, despair, finality or action imperative
 - Violence justified to address perceived grievance
 - Lack of perceived alternatives
 - Lack of concern for, or welcoming consequences
 - Development of **legacy token****

Adapted from: * Meloy, et al. (2012). *The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment*; ** FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; U.S. Secret Service (2000) *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials*. © G. DEISINGER (2026)

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111

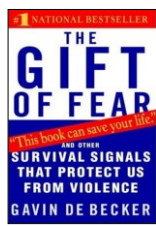
Key Areas for Inquiry

Dangerousness is not a permanent state of being nor solely an attribute of a person.

Dangerousness is situational & based on:

- Justification;
- Alternatives;
- Consequences; and
- Ability.

Source: Gavin de Becker (1997) *The Gift of Fear*



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Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

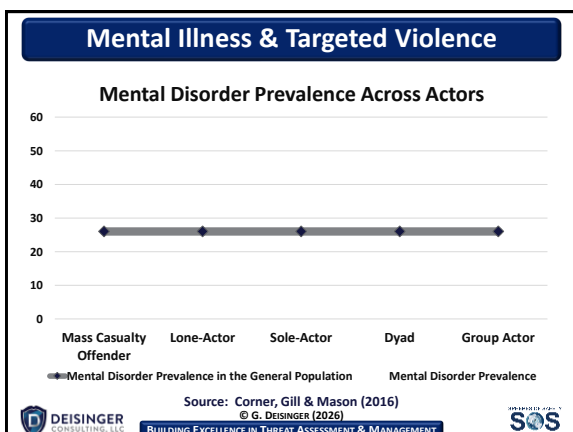
Has the subject's behavior indicated a need for intervention or supportive services?

- Is subject exhibiting significant or sustained:
 - Alcohol/other drug use?
 - Anxiety?
 - Cognitive/affective distortion/difficulties?
 - Depressed mood?
 - Obsessions?
 - Extreme Overvalued Beliefs?
- Are there symptoms of severe, acute, and/or inadequately treated mental illness?
 - Significant lack of contact with reality:
 - Hallucinations (esp. command)
 - Delusions (e.g., paranoid or grandiose)
 - Esp. threat, conspiracy, being spied upon
- Is subject exhibiting:
 - Diminished well-being?
 - Agitation/reactivity?
 - High wariness/distrust
 - Pervasive patterns of maladaptive behavior?
- Do symptoms affect their:
 - Perceptions of grievances or how others respond to them?
 - Ability to cope?
 - Considerations for violence?
- Is subject actively and effectively engaged in treatment or support services?

FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; Meloy, J.R. (2026). *Extremism, Terrorism and Mental Disorder*. *Focus*, 24(1), 53-58 © G. DEISINGER (2026)

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113



114

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 an active role:
 - ☐ Subject expresses ideation or intent to harm others
 - ☐ Subject expresses co-occurring anger or hostility to others
 - ☐ 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 other environmental / systemic issues
 - ☐ Others are, or may reasonably be, significantly impacted or feel endangered by the threat of harm to self

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Threats to Self


The Nexus Between Threat Assessment and Suicide Risk Assessment

- 

If none of the above conditions are met, and there are not other behaviors or concerns that fall within the mission of the BTAM Team the BTAM case can be closed.

 - 

The suicide risk assessment and interventions are completed by the Suicide Crisis Response Team as relevant for the case
- 

Campus or community mental health professionals retain primary responsibility for the direct assessment and mental health interventions with the subject at risk, per campus guidelines
- 

Other team members assist with assessment and intervention actions, and address any other concerns impacting upon the case

116

Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject







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

- 
-  Views violence as unacceptable/immoral
 -  Accepts responsibility for actions
 -  Demonstrates remorse for inappropriate behavior
 -  Respects reasonable limits and expectations
 -  Values life, job, relationships, freedom
 -  Uses socially sanctioned means to address grievances
 -  Maintains and uses effective coping skills
 -  Compliant, engaged and benefiting from treatment
 -  Sustains trusted and valued relationships

117

Key Areas for Inquiry - Subject

Does the subject have a trusting & sustained relationship with at least one responsible person?

- 
-  Is subject emotionally connected to other people?
 -  Does subject have a friend, colleague, family member, or other person that they trust and can rely upon?
 -  Does that other person have skill and willingness to monitor, intervene, support subject?
 -  Is the relationship in jeopardy?
 -  Is there sustained/increased isolation or alienation?

118

Protective Factors

- P** Positive Personal Attachments
- R** Remorse is Genuine for Transgressions
- O** Obeys Limits Set by Employer or Authorities
- T** Takes Sanctioned Actions to Address "Wrongs"/Setbacks
- E** Enjoys Life & Freedom
- C** Coping Skills are Positive
- T** Treatment Compliance

119

Warning Behaviors

Distal Warning Behaviors

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Personal Grievance and Moral Outrage | Framed by an Ideology | Failure to Affiliate with an Extremist or Other Group |
| Dependence on the Virtual Community | Thwarting of Occupational Goals | Changes in Thinking and Emotion |
| Failure of Sexually Intimate Pair Bonding | Mental Disorder | Creativity and Innovation |
| Criminal Violence | | |

Meloy, J. R., Hoffmann, Bibeau, L., & Guldinann, A. (2021). Warning behaviors. In J. R. Meloy & J. Hoffmann (Eds.), *International handbook of threat assessment 2nd Edition*. (pp. 45 – 67). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

120

Warning Behaviors

Proximal Warning Behaviors

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Pathway | Fixation | Identification |
| Novel Aggression | Energy Burst | Leakage |
| Last Resort | | Directly Communicated Threats |

Meloy, J.R., Hoffmann, J., Guldinann, A. & James, D. (2012). The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*. 30(3): 256-79.

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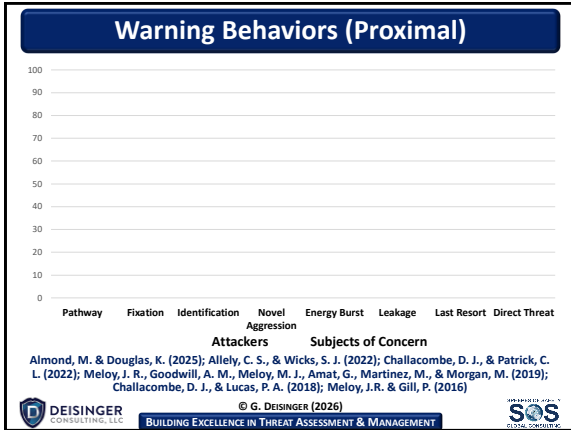
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122

Warning Behaviors (Proximal)

Table 5
Comparison of Violent and Nonviolent Threateners' Warning Behaviors

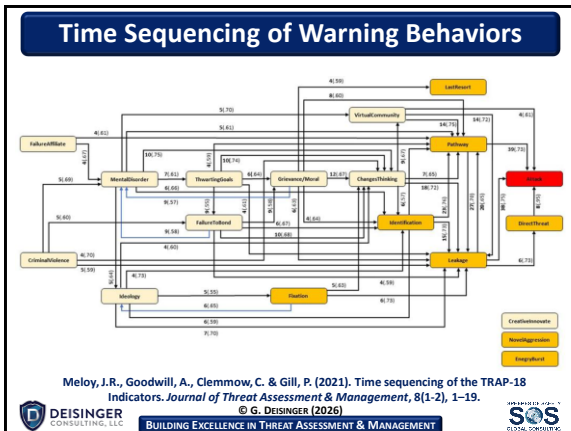
| Warning behavior | Violent | Nonviolent | χ^2 |
|---|-----------|------------|----------|
| | N (%) | N (%) | |
| Warning behavior 1: Planning or preparation | 91 (35.4) | 23 (8.9) | 64.67** |
| Warning behavior 2: Fixation | 89 (34.8) | 38 (14.8) | 33.17** |
| Warning behavior 3: Identification | 82 (32.0) | 20 (7.8) | 56.43** |
| Warning behavior 4: Novel aggression | 83 (32.4) | 19 (7.4) | 58.79** |
| Warning behavior 5: Energy burst | 86 (33.7) | 21 (8.2) | 60.43** |
| Warning behavior 6: Leakage | 81 (31.5) | 17 (6.6) | 60.58** |
| Warning behavior 7: Last resort behavior | 81 (31.5) | 23 (8.9) | 47.78** |

** p < .01.

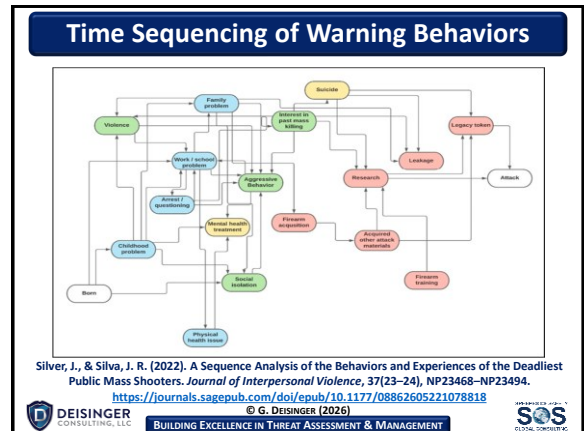
Almond, M.F.E. & Douglas, K.S. (2025). Differentiating Between Harmless and Harmful Threats: What Factors Increase Risk of Violence Following Threats? *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 12(3), 149-168

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123



124



125

Key Areas for Inquiry – Target

What are the vulnerabilities and needs of targets or others impacted by the situation?

- Are targets/others vulnerable to harm or engaging in behaviors that affect vulnerability?
- Are targets/others concerned for the well-being or safety of the subject, target or others?
- Are targets/others around the subject engaging in protective actions?
- Are targets/others experiencing stress, trauma, or other symptoms that may benefit from assistance or intervention?
- Do targets/others have support needs?

Adapted from: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2021); FBI (2017). *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing and Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*.

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Key Areas for Inquiry – Target

What are the vulnerabilities and needs of targets or others impacted by the situation?

- Are targets engaging in behaviors that increase their:

Desirability:
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, behaviors or coping abilities

Adapted from: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2021); FBI (2017). *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing and Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*.

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Intimate Partner Violence: Lethality Risk

Key Perpetrator Lethality Risk Factors:

- Direct access to firearm(s) [11.13]
- Threatened victim with a weapon [7.36]
- Nonfatal strangulation [7.23]
- Rape/Forced sex [5.44]
- Controlling behaviors [5.60]
- Threatened to harm victim [4.83]
- Abused victim while pregnant [3.93]
- Stalking [3.13]
- Jealousy [2.58]
- Substance Abuse [1.85]



Spencer, C.S., Stith, S.M. (2020). Risk factors for male perpetration and female victimization of intimate partner homicide: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse, 21*(3), 527-540.

128

Intimate Partner Violence: Lethality Risk

Key Victim Lethality Risk Factors:

- Substance abuse [OR = 2.56]
- Less than high school education [OR = 2.45]
- Separated from perpetrator [OR = 2.33]
- Children from previous relationship [OR = 2.29]



Spencer, C.S., Stith, S.M. (2020). Risk factors for male perpetration and female victimization of intimate partner homicide: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse, 21*(3), 527-540.

129

Key Areas for Inquiry - Environment

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



Deisinger (1996); Deisinger & Nolan (2021); FBI (2017). *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks.* © G. DEISINGER (2026)

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Environmental Systemic Factors

Lessons from the Fabrikant File: A Report to the Board of Governors of Concordia University (1994)

John S. Cowan

In the report which follows, I identify a substantial number of actions or omissions which I consider to be mistakes. It is, of course, vastly easier to see mistakes with a retrospectroscope. In many cases the mistakes were exacerbated or caused in their entirety by decisional processes, policies, practices and mechanisms which were never designed or contemplated to carry the burden of a like case. In such a milieu very fine people can make very poor decisions.



Available at:

<https://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/concordia/offices/archives/docs/cowan-report.pdf>

131

Risk Factors for Workplace Violence

Environment / Workplace Factors

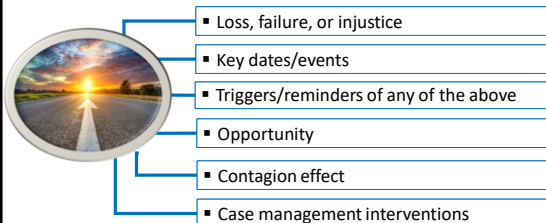
- Understaffing leading to job overload or compulsory overtime
- Frustrations from poorly defined job tasks and responsibilities
- Downsizing or reorganization
- Labor disputes and poor labor-management relations
- Poor management styles (e.g., arbitrary or unexplained orders)
- Corrections or reprimands in front of other employees
- Inconsistent discipline
- Inadequate security
- A lack of employee counseling
- A high injury rate
- Frequent grievances

Federal Bureau of Investigation (2004). *Workplace Violence: Issues in Response.*

132

Key Areas for Inquiry – Precipitating Events

Are there Precipitating events (i.e., changes/stresses) that may impact the Subject, Target, or Environment in the reasonably foreseeable future?



Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2021)

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Precipitating Events

Intervention Outcomes

- Improve situation.
- Worsen situation.
- No discernable change in situation.
- Create new concern / situation

Deisinger (1996)



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Key Areas for Inquiry – Global

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

- Do sources have direct and unique knowledge?
- Are there multiple sources?
- Do collateral sources confirm or repute each other?
- Do sources exhibit bias or ulterior motives?
- Are the source's statements and behaviors consistent?
- What gaps exist in understanding of situation?
- What biases or misperceptions may be present?

Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2021)



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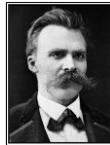


135

Improving Decision-Making

Protecting Against Cognitive Bias

- Confirmation Bias
- Anchoring
- Over-Confidence
- In-group Bias
- Availability Bias
- Probability neglect
- Fundamental attribution error
- Hindsight Bias



Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.
- Friedrich Nietzsche

Daniel Kahneman (2013) *Thinking Fast & Slow*



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Decision-Making

Managing Information to decrease Cognitive Overload:

- Humans do not multi-task well, despite perceptions
- Instead, we shift attention from task to task
 - Decrease level of attention to given task
 - Decrease quality of attention
- Optimal information load is 4 - 6 items
 - Maximum information load is 10 items
 - Irrelevant information still contributes to overload
- Consider how you brief on cases
 - Prepare summary before team discussion
 - Organize case information systematically

Daniel Levitin (2014) *The Organized Mind*



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137

Support Structured Professional Judgment

Systematize data collection and assessment:

General BTAM Tools

- Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21)
- Historical Clinical Risk Management-20, 3rd ed. (HCR 20)
- Cawood Assessment Grid
- MOSAIC (DeBecker)
- Communicated Threat Assessment Protocol (CTAP-25)
- Structured Assessment of Violence Risk for Youth (SAVRY)

Domain Specific Tools

- Communicated Threat Assessment Protocol (CTAP-25)
- Stalking Risk Profile
- Guidelines for Stalking Assessment & Management (SAM)
- Screening Assessment for Stalking & Harassment (SASH)
- Dangerousness Assessment (Campbell)
- Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA)
- Spousal Risk Assessment Guide (SARA)
- Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol (TRAP 18)

Violence Risk Tools

- Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG)
- Psychopathy Checklist Revised (PCLR)
- Classification of Violence Risk (COVR)

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



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138

Using Assessment Tools

Appropriate Use of Assessment Tools:

- Ensure that instrument is reliable and valid;
- Use for purpose for which it was designed.
- Integrate information with structured professional judgment.
- Assessor must avoid sole reliance on any instrument.
- Assessor must be aware of the limitations of any instrument.



- Assessor must be trained and qualified on each relevant instrument.
- Assessor must stay current with new developments and updated versions and associated training updates related to any instrument.

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (2024). *Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence: Considerations For The Threat Assessment Of Future Violent Behavior.*



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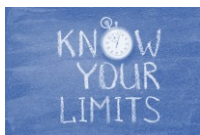


BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Systematic Approach to Identifying, Assessing & Managing Concerning or Threatening Behavior

Ethical Decision-Making

Recognize Limitations

- The assessor must recognize their professional limitations pertinent to any particular threat assessment and:
 - Seek out relevant consultation or expertise when necessary
 - Note the limitations of the assessment (e.g., availability of information, recognize assumptions, potential changes in relevant context, time limited nature of assessment)



- Be aware of the complex contextual, environmental, legal, ethical, cultural differences, and regulatory issues that impact the assessment

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (2024). *Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence: Considerations For The Threat Assessment Of Future Violent Behavior.*



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140

Decision-Making

Facilitating Effective Case Discussions:

- Active participation by all team members
- Keep discussion focused on the case
- Minimize bias in decision-making
 - Consider totality and context of information available
 - Consider information sources, credibility and relevance
 - Corroborate critical information; resolve discrepancies
 - Avoid generalizations or stereotypes, focus on behavior
 - Consider changes in behavior or circumstances
 - Be inquisitive and challenge assumptions
 - Consider the impact of the unknowns
- Focus on active problem-solving



- Staffing Process**

 - Describe
 - Define
 - Deliberate
 - Decide

Deisinger (2015)



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Decision-Making: Cognitive Load

Enhancing Case Decision Making:

- Organize information systematically, e.g.:
 - STEP Framework
 - Pathway model
 - Proximal warning behaviors
 - JACA
 - Timeline
 - Pending Issues/Tasks
- Use tools to support structured professional judgement
- Prepare summary for Team
- Team review case(s) before discussion
- Have a break/sleep between review and discussion



Deisinger (2018)
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Prioritization

Prioritization based on totality of circumstances:

- Severity
- Immediacy
- Impact
- Probability / likelihood / credibility
- Rate of change in situation
- Vulnerability / reactivity of target
- Complexity / number of environmental factors
 - Political / social influences
- Impact (current or impending) of precipitants
- Unknowns



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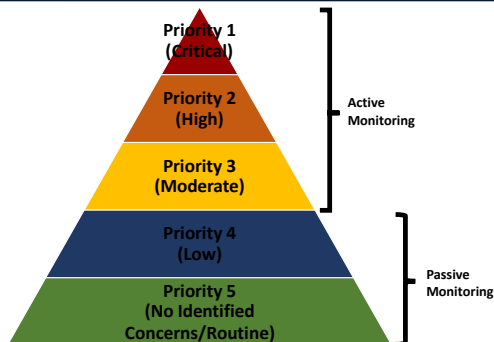


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Priority/Level of Concern



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144

Priority/Level of Concern Classification

| PRIORITY 1 | CRITICAL |
|---|---|
| SUBJECT | Subject exhibits intent/high likelihood, capability and poses immediate or imminent threat of serious harm to self or others. |
| TARGET | Target(s) are vulnerable and typically have high support needs. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL / SYSTEMIC FACTORS | Environmental/systemic factors usually present. |
| PRECIPITATING EVENTS | Precipitating events are usually present |
| ACTION(S) | Requires immediate law enforcement, security, and management notification & action (e.g., subject intervention, mitigation & containment; activation of crisis response & emergency notification protocols; increased security; target notification, protection, and safety & support planning; etc.). Conduct ongoing assessment and case management with active monitoring. |

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| Priority/Level of Concern Classification | |
|--|---|
| PRIORITY 2 | HIGH |
| SUBJECT | Subject poses or may reasonably pose (e.g., is rapidly developing capability) a threat of serious harm to self or others; and/or is in urgent need of intervention/assistance. |
| TARGET | Target(s) are vulnerable and/or have elevated support needs. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL / SYSTEMIC FACTORS | Environmental/Systemic factors are often present |
| PRECIPITATING EVENTS | Precipitating events are often present |
| ACTION(S) | Requires law enforcement, security, and management notification & actions as needed (e.g., subject intervention/mitigation; activation of crisis response protocols; target notification, safety and/or support planning; etc.). Address Environmental/systemic factors and Precipitating events as needed. Make referrals and coordinate with other resources as appropriate. Conduct ongoing assessment and case management with active monitoring. |

146

| Priority/Level of Concern Classification | |
|--|---|
| PRIORITY 3 | MODERATE |
| SUBJECT | Subject not reasonably believed to pose a threat of serious harm to self or others though risk cannot be ruled out. Subject may be developing capability for harm and/or engaging in disruptive or concerning behaviors that indicate need for intervention. |
| TARGET | Target(s) may have vulnerabilities and/or support needs. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL / SYSTEMIC FACTORS | Environmental/Systemic factors may be present. |
| PRECIPITATING EVENTS | Precipitating events may be present. |
| ACTION(S) | Consider law enforcement, security, and management notification & actions as appropriate. Requires Subject support or mitigation plan and Target safety & support planning. Address any Environmental/systemic factors and Precipitating events. Make referrals to other resources as appropriate. Conduct ongoing assessment and case management with active monitoring. |

147

| Priority/Level of Concern Classification | |
|--|---|
| PRIORITY 4 | LOW |
| SUBJECT | Subject does not indicate a threat of harm to self or others; but is exhibiting concerning behaviors that may benefit from intervention and/or assistance. |
| TARGET | Target(s) may have minor vulnerabilities, concerns, and/or needs. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL / SYSTEMIC FACTORS | Environmental/Systemic factors may be present at low levels |
| PRECIPITATING EVENTS | Precipitating events may be present at low levels |
| ACTION(S) | Facilitate Subject intervention or assistance and Target safety & support planning as needed for concerns within BTAM mission. Address Environmental/systemic factors and Precipitating events as needed. Make referrals as appropriate. Conduct ongoing assessment and case management with active monitoring or passive monitoring as appropriate. Close case if no BTAM concerns or actions are indicated. |

148

| Priority/Level of Concern Classification | |
|--|--|
| PRIORITY 5 | NO IDENTIFIED NEEDS / ROUTINE |
| SUBJECT | Subject does not pose threat of harm to self or others or indicate need for BTAM assistance or intervention. |
| TARGET | There are no known targets indicating vulnerabilities or needs. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL / SYSTEMIC FACTORS | No Environmental/Systemic factors that need BTAM intervention |
| PRECIPITATING EVENTS | No Precipitating Events that need BTAM intervention |
| ACTION(S) | Close case |


149

Essential Elements of Effective BTAM

BTAM is a systematic process that:

Implements proactive & integrated case management plans

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150

Develop a Case Management Plan

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

- Plan is contextually relevant and situationally specific
- Accountability is critical
 - Assign tasks/interventions to specific person
 - Set deadline
 - Set monitoring plan
- Consider the STEP Domains
- Rapport and engagement matter
 - Consider personalities, backgrounds and skills
 - Consider use of trusted sources



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

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Subject-Based Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- No further action
- Monitor/Watch & wait;
- Third party monitoring
- Third party intervention
- Direct intervention: Support, assist, referral, confrontation
- Administrative actions
 - No contact/communication notice, probation, suspension, expulsion/termination, no trespass/ban from premises
- Civil actions
- Mental Health interventions (voluntary or involuntary)
- Criminal justice interventions

Adapted from: Calhoun & Weston (2003) *Contemporary Threat Management*

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Subject-Based Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- 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
 - Provide guidance / support
 - Enlist aid to monitor

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Subject-Based Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- Assistance / support services:
 - Trauma informed approaches
 - Work mentoring / academic tutoring
 - Alternative work / school placement
 - Accommodations for work / school
 - Social / emotional learning
 - Positive behavioral intervention & support (PBIS) programs
 - Behavioral management plans
- Involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Modification of work schedule or assignments
- Performance improvement plans
- Peer coaching / mentoring
- Recognition / positive engagement

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Subject-Based Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- Counseling/mental health services
 - Check-in/check-out with mental health staff
 - CIT/ MH Co-responder engagement
 - Disability / mental health assessment
 - Suicide prevention / intervention
 - Violence risk assessment
 - Outpatient counseling
 - Psychiatric / medication consult
 - Inpatient behavioral health services
 - Emergency psychiatric evaluation & care

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Subject-Based Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- Disciplinary measures
 - Subject confrontation or warning / boundaries
 - Documented expectations
 - Administrative orders for no contact of communication
 - Parental involvement (students)
 - In school detention / after-school detention
 - Suspension
 - Termination / expulsion

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Subject Control Strategies

Leave, suspension, or termination options that focus solely on removing/controlling the subject 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);
- Mitigating organizational/systemic factors;
- Monitoring subject when they are no longer connected to organization.

Use with intentionality, awareness of limitations, and anticipation of consequences.

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

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Re-Entry Planning and Preparation

Prepare for Re-integration of Subject:

- **Re-Entry Plan**
 - Establish conditions for return
 - Evaluate subject readiness to safely and effectively return to participate in school or work experience
 - Develop proactive case management plan
 - Align ongoing interventions
 - Coach subject about re-entry
 - Anticipate environmental aspects which may impact subject / others
 - Prepare community for subject's re-entry
 - Consider precipitating events
 - Monitor, re-assess and intervene as appropriate



Source: Deisinger (2011); Deisinger and Nolan (2021)
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Subject-Based Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- **Criminal Justice Services**
 - Crime prevention services
 - Law enforcement / juvenile justice involvement
 - Probation monitoring
 - Court issued protective orders
 - Emergency risk protection ("Red flag") orders
 - Diversion programs
 - Mandated mental health services
 - Victim advocacy / assistance



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Target Management Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- **Reduce Target Vulnerability**
 - Coaching regarding personal safety approaches
 - Set & maintain clear limits and boundaries
 - Monitor communications for changes/escalations
 - Avoid contact/response
 - Document all contacts from/with subject
 - Minimize reactivity to subject actions
- Minimize public information
- Maintain/enhance situational awareness
- Vary routine
- Develop contingency plans: Escape, shelter, defense



Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2021)

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Target Management Strategies

Implement appropriate strategies:

- **Provide Support for Target**
 - Utilize trauma-informed approaches
 - Encourage self care
 - Encourage to utilize support systems
 - Support access to counseling / mental services
 - Support access to victim advocacy / support services
 - Manage fear



Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2021)

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Target Management Strategies

Organizational roles in reducing target vulnerability

- Engagement with target
- Support for target
- Change work / school hours
- Change work location
- Notice to co-workers / classmates
- Enhance physical security
- Security staffing
- Safety escorts
- Fear management
- EAP/Counseling referrals



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

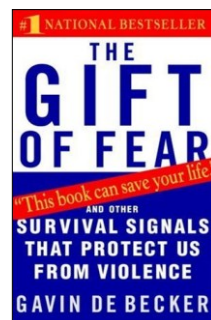
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Remembering Who We Serve

What targets/victims want:

- Care
 - Certainty
 - Consistency
 - Communication
- Gavin de Becker
"The Gift of Fear"



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What Laws, Regulations, Rules May Apply?

- Constitutional issues,
- Civil Rights
- Federal & State Healthcare Privacy Laws
- Federal & State Disability Laws
- Federal & State Employment Laws
- Federal & State Employee Privacy Laws
- Federal/State Intelligence / Fusion Center Privacy Policies



- State Threat Assessment Laws, Regulations, Standards
- Record-Keeping & Open Records Laws
- Professional Standards of Practice
- Case Law
- Organizational Policies



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Campus BTAM Legal Issues


**Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams:
What Risk Managers Need to Know Now**

Jeffrey J. Nolan, J.D.,
Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D., &
Gene Deisinger, Ph.D.


University Risk Managers
& Insurance Association
(URMIA) Journal, 2011



Free download:
https://www.higheredcompliance.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/NolanRandazzoDeisinger_CampusThreatAssessmentTeams_FINAL_20110802.pdf



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EXERCISE: Information Sharing & FERPA

A professor approaches you (as a member of TAT) 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 lead the professor to believe that the student was a serious threat to the safety of themselves and others on campus.


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

When you ask the name of the student and about their behavior and performance in the class, the professor 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.

What mistakes, if any, are being made?




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Information Sharing: FERPA

- Is not an impediment to effective threat assessment and management.
- Protects educational records, not observations, verbal communications, direct personal knowledge, etc.
- Allows sharing with:
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest
 - Other educational settings for enrollment or transfer
 - Outside of campus to protect health or safety
- Does not govern law enforcement unit records.
- If created and maintained by law enforcement, for law enforcement purposes.
- Does not permit a private right of action.



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FERPA: Health & Safety Emergency

- If the school determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individuals and that a third party needs personally identifiable information (PII) from education records to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals, it may disclose that information to appropriate parties without consent.
- An appropriate party ... is a party whose knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

studentprivacy.ed.gov/



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FERPA: Health & Safety Emergency

- ... these disclosures must be related to an actual, impending, or imminent emergency.
- This exception ... is limited to the period of the emergency and generally does not allow for a blanket release of PII from a student's education records.
- [The school] must record in the student's education records the articulable and significant threat that formed the basis for the disclosure, and the parties to whom the information was disclosed.

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Applicable law

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- **Federal Law –**
 - Statute: 20 USC § 1232(g)
 - Regulations: 34 C.F.R. Part 99
 - **Applies to K12 & IHE**
 - **Protect the rights and privacy interests of students (and parents) in regard to student’s education records**
- Code of Virginia § 23.1-405. Student records and personal information; social media**
- **IHE**

176

Key FERPA Resources

- [Information Sharing Guide for K12 Public Schools](#)
 - Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (2020)
- [Information Sharing Guide for Institutions of Higher Education](#)
 - Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (2021)
- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations](#)
 - 34 C.F.R. Part 99 (amended 2022)
- [Addressing Emergencies on Campus](#)
 - U.S. Department of Education (June 2011)
- [FERPA: A Guide for First Responders and Law Enforcement](#)
 - U.S. Department of Education and FBI
- [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

177

Disclosures Allowed Under HIPAA

Disclosure of “protected health information” is allowed if provider makes good faith determination that disclosure:

- “Is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health and safety of a person or the public” and disclosure
- “Is made to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat”

[HIPAA: A Guide for Law Enforcement Sharing Behavioral Health Information: Tips & Strategies for Police-Mental Health Collaborations](#)
[Information Sharing in Criminal Justice-Mental Health Collaborations](#)

178

Understanding Confidentiality

Confidentiality is right held by client, not the mental health provider.

- **In cases where privacy laws apply, consider these strategies:**
 - Ask subject for authorization to disclose.
 - No legal prohibition against providing information to health professionals.
 - Ask medical provider about Tarasoff - type duty to warn/protect.
 - Request and document name of provider.

[HIPAA: A Guide for Law Enforcement Sharing Behavioral Health Information: Tips & Strategies for Police-Mental Health Collaborations](#)
[Information Sharing in Criminal Justice-Mental Health Collaborations](#)

179

Dispelling ADA Myths

Restrictions & sanctions may be imposed for misconduct, even if caused by disability IF appropriate due process is provided.

TAM teams should:

- **work with conduct/judicial affairs, student affairs, human resources and counsel regarding processes;**
- **work with counsel on “direct threat” and “otherwise qualified” standards;**

Community should understand: ADA protections should not conflict with safety of the community or individuals

180

Disability Law Considerations

Cautions:

- **Ensure due process**
- **Do not assume every threat assessment case involves mental illness**
 - Caution against automatic referrals to counseling
- **Understand “Direct threat: provisions**
 - Elimination of “threat to self” element of definition
 - Consider whether “otherwise qualified”
- **Use mental health violence risk evaluations appropriately**
 - Understand limitations of forensic evaluations

Source: Deisinger & Nolan (2019)

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"Direct Threat"

Direct Threat



- A significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by the organization's modification of its policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services.



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182

"Direct Threat"

- Based on a reasonable belief that a disability would pose a significant risk of substantial harm,
 - Risk must be identified & current, not speculative or remote.
- Organization may require:
 - An individualized assessment of the individual's present ability to safely perform essential functions of the job.
 - Assessment shall be based on a reasonable medical judgment that relies on the most current medical knowledge and/or on the best available objective evidence.



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"Direct Threat"

- In determining whether an individual would pose a direct threat, the factors to be considered include:
 - Duration of the risk;
 - Nature and severity of the potential harm;
 - Likelihood that the potential harm will occur;
 - Imminence of the potential harm.

Even if a genuine significant risk of substantial harm exists, the employer must consider whether the risk can be eliminated or reduced below the level of a "direct threat" by reasonable accommodation.



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Defining "True Threats"

Counterman v. Colorado



- True threats of violence are outside the bounds of First Amendment protection.
- True Threat: *The defendant had some subjective understanding of his statements' threatening nature, but the First Amendment requires no more demanding a showing than recklessness.*
 - **Recklessness Test:** Speaker was aware that others could regard speech as threatening violence but made statements anyway.

Supreme Court of the United States (June 27, 2023). *Counterman v. Colorado*
https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/22-138_4317.pdf

Howe, A. (June 27, 2023). Justices throw out Colorado man's stalking conviction in First Amendment dispute. *SCOTUSblog*.
<https://www.scotusblog.com/2023/06/justices-throw-out-colorado-mans-stalking-conviction-in-first-amendment-dispute/>



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185

Acts of Sexual Violence & BTAM

§ 23.1-806. Reporting of Acts of Sexual Violence

- D. Public & Private IHE shall establish a Review Committee to review information related to acts of sexual violence. Review Committee shall consist of three or more persons and shall include:
- Title IX coordinator or designee,
 - Campus law enforcement
 - Campus security representative if no campus police
 - Student affairs representative.



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Sexual Violence Review Committee

- D. The Review Committee may be the threat assessment team established under § 23.1-805, or a separate body. The review committee may obtain:
- law-enforcement records
 - criminal history record information
 - health records
 - available institutional conduct or personnel records, and
 - known facts and circumstances of the information reported
 - Information or evidence known to the institution or to law enforcement.

[§ 23.1-806. Reporting of Acts of Sexual Violence](#)



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Sexual Violence Review Committee

- D. Review Committee shall be considered a threat assessment team established pursuant to [§ 23.1-805](#) for purposes of:
- (i) obtaining criminal history record information and health records and
 - (ii) the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
- Shall conduct review in compliance with federal privacy law.
- E. Upon receipt of information of an alleged act of sexual violence reported pursuant to subsection C, the review committee shall meet within 72 hours to review the information and shall meet again as necessary as new information becomes available.

[§ 23.1-806. Reporting of Acts of Sexual Violence](#)

188

Sexual Violence Review Committee

- F. If the review committee (or if the committee cannot reach a consensus, the law enforcement representative on the committee) determines that the disclosure of the information, including personally identifiable information, is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals, the law enforcement representative shall immediately disclose such information to the law-enforcement agency that would be responsible for investigating the alleged act of sexual violence.

[§ 23.1-806. Reporting of Acts of Sexual Violence](#)

189

Policies to Support the Process

Policies with TAM-related implications:

- Workplace violence prevention
- Threat assessment & management
- Harassment & discrimination
- Crisis management
- Employee discipline
- Interim suspension
- Fitness for duty
- Direct threat evaluations
- Weapons
- Bomb threat
- Pandemic



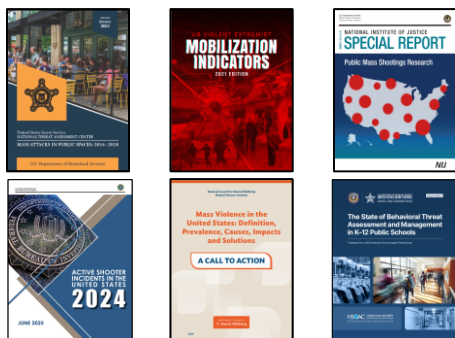
190

Informed by Research



191

Informed by Research



192

Informed by Standards of Practice



193

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Informed by Standards of Practice

Prevention Practitioners Network Practitioner's Guides

<https://eradicatehatesummit.org/prevention-practitioners-network/practice-guides/>

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FBI: Prevent Mass Violence

U.S. Department of Justice
PREVENT MASS VIOLENCE

Active shooters do not strike—they consider their plans and prepare for their attacks. Because of this, many active shooters display concerning behaviors prior to their attacks that others may be able to observe and identify in that person's life.

No single behavior means a person is on a path to committing targeted violence, but multiple concerning behaviors may indicate cause for concern. Common concerning behaviors are:

- Significantly reduced ability to cope with stress or setbacks
- Expressions of hopelessness, helplessness
- Persistent fantasies about violence
- Lack of non-violent options for solving problems
- Creation of a manifesto, video, or suicide note for an upcoming act of violence
- Disclosure of violent plans or upcoming alarming events
- Increasingly troublesome or concerning interactions with others
- Increasingly troublesome or concerning interactions with others
- Reduced interest in hobbies or activities
- Worsening performance at school or work
- Taking boundaries or security at a possible target
- Obsessive or troubling interest in obtaining weapons, tactical gear, and/or military paraphernalia
- Obsessive or troubling interest in prior attacks or attacks

If you are concerned, talk about your concerns with someone you respect. Share what you know and discuss your options. If you choose to report your concerns, contact your local police department or the FBI by visiting www.fbi.gov or calling 1-800-GO-FBI.

Learn more about the FBI's efforts to prevent mass violence, including research on active shooters, at www.fbi.gov/prevent

<https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/how-we-investigate/prevent-mass-violence/infographics>

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196

Resources

Federal Bureau of Investigation

- Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC)
- Active Shooter Resources

Department of Homeland Security

- National Threat Evaluation & Reporting (NTER) Office
 - NTER Master Trainer Program
- Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3)
 - Regional Prevention Coordinators
 - Community Awareness Briefing
- US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)
 - Research, guidance, training & consultation

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197

Duty of Care: The Taft Union Case

Threat management team breached duty of care as the:

- Assessment was not carried out by the team collectively
 - Confirmation bias of team leader making independent decisions
- School resource officer should have been involved, being a core member of the team
- Team failed to communicate among themselves about the subject
- Team failed to adequately communicate with subject's parent
- Team failed to recommend counseling to subject's parent as an intervention technique and
- Team did not continue to collectively monitor the subject and reassess the safety plan

Meloy, R. & Amman, M. (2022). *Threat Assessment Team Negligence: The Taft Union Case*
<https://www.wtsglobal.com/threat-assessment-team-negligence-cleveland-vs-taft-union/>

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198

Training

| | |
|---|--|
| ATAP WINTER CONFERENCE Feb. 3-6, 2026 Orlando, FL www.atapworldwide.org | AETAP CONFERENCE Apr. 13-16, 2026 San Sebastian, Spain www.aetap.eu |
| ATAP TMC Aug. 11-14, 2026 Anaheim, CA www.atapworldwide.org | CATAP CONFERENCE Oct. 25-29, 2026 Whistler, BC www.catap.ca |
| APATAP CONFERENCE Nov. 19-20, 2026 Melbourne, Australia www.apatap.org.au | AFATAP CONFERENCE Nov., 2026 TBA www.afatap.africa |
| ALATAP MAR. 25, 2026 Virtual www.joinalatap.com | |

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BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Systematic Approach to Identifying, Assessing & Managing Concerning or Threatening Behavior

Essential Elements of Effective BTAM

BTAM is a systematic process that:

Continuously improves
& adapts to
challenges & needs

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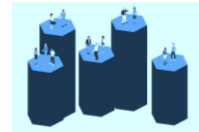


200

Overcoming the Silo Effect

Communication and Coordination are Critical!

- Multiple processes that manage cases:
 - BTAM Team
 - Student Assistance / CARE Team / BIT Team
 - Sexual Harassment / Title IX
 - Suicide Intervention
 - Domestic Violence / Dating Violence / Stalking
 - Insider Threat
 - Dignitary Protection



- Mind the Gap!
 - Clarify mission/roles
 - Shared membership
 - Regular communication
 - Integrated planning
 - Designated authority and responsibility

Source: Deisinger (2015); Deisinger & Nolan (2021)
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201

Building Collaboration

Support Collaboration

- Make it **ok** to ask for help, to be vulnerable
- Lead by example
- Build bridges
- Reinforce efforts to collaborate
- Support choirs



202

Build Community Connections

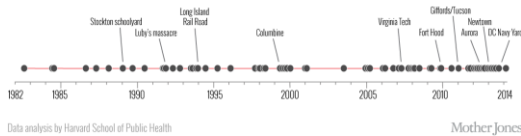


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203

Contagion Effect

Time Between Mass Shootings, 1982-2014



Data analysis by Harvard School of Public Health

MotherJones

204

Considerations For Community BTAM

Challenges:

- Subjects: Paths cross roles and jurisdictions
- Targets: Paths cross roles and jurisdictions
- Organizations:
 - Don't understand each other's roles and resources
 - Don't communicate, collaborate or coordinate
 - Under-resourced
 - Don't understand threat
 - Don't share investment

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205

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BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT: A Systematic Approach to Identifying, Assessing & Managing Concerning or Threatening Behavior

Continuous Improvement

Training and Process Development

- Basic training for new team members & backups
- Advanced training
 - Interviewing
 - Trauma-informed approaches
 - Intimate partner violence
 - De-escalation



3 PRINCIPLES OF DELIBERATE PRACTICE



- Tabletop exercises / case study reviews
- Professional organization / affiliation
 - ATAP
 - Discipline specific
- Review of process
 - Deisinger Consulting, LLC
 - SOS Global Consulting, Inc



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Common Challenges


Use of Consultants with Questionable Expertise



- Consultants have no, minimal, or irrelevant:
 - Education
 - Training
 - Experience
- Fail to conduct background on consultants
- Fail to evaluate validity of methods
 - Are sources cited for methods and materials?
 - Are they relevant to your situation?



Source: Deisinger (2007); Deisinger & Nolan (2021)



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Growing/Future Challenges

Increased Complexity due to:


- Strategic partnerships / collaborations
- Remote business
- Globalization

Challenges:

- Identifying threats
 - Distance
 - Limited contact/engagement
- Capacity and authority to address concerns
- Duty to warn/protect
- Monitoring



Source: Deisinger (2010); Deisinger & Nolan (2021)



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Violent Extremism: Domestic Trends

Violent extremism: Broad base

- Racial / Ethnic supremacy (R/EMVE)
- Anti-Government / Authority (AG/AAVE)
 - Militia
 - Anarchist
 - Sovereign Citizen
- Nihilistic (NVE)
- Misogynistic (including Incel)
- Single Issues: (e.g., abortion [ARVE], animal rights [AREV])
- Composite Violent Extremism (CoVE)

Redefining Extremist "Groups"

- Individuals/Networks/Affinity vs. Groups / organizations
 - Activity driven more by shared goals than ideology
 - Cross over between ideology






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Violent Extremism: Global Threat

Growth of Global Interconnectedness

- Crowdsourcing funds online
- Sharing tactics, techniques & procedures for action
- Inspiration through sharing manifestos and livestreams
- Recruitment for direct action / combat
- Recruitment through youth scenes
 - Online
 - Social media
 - Encrypted communication
 - Gaming
 - Music festivals
 - Combat sports





Miller-Iddress, C. (2020). *Hate in the Homeland*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

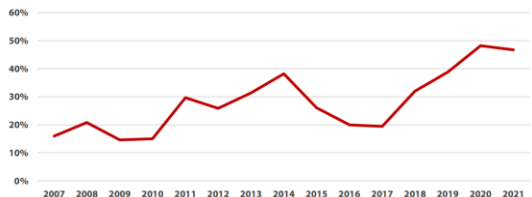


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Radicalization to Mobilization


in Less than 1 Year



National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
https://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/publications/local_attachments/PIRUS%20March%202023%20Update.pdf



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Weaponization of Information

Pathways:

- Disinformation / Misinformation
- Doxing
- Conspiracy
- Voice cloning
- AI generation
- Deep fakes



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Technological Threats

Memes:

- Information that propagates, impacts & persists
 - Words, symbols, images, icons
- Memetic warfare: Using memes for disinformation

[ADL Hate on Display™ Hate Symbols Database](#)
[A Guide to Insider References Used by School Shooters and Other Attackers](#)



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Violent Extremism: Domestic Trends

TACTICS:

- Sextortion and Child Sex Abuse Material (CSAM)
- Self-harm and other forms of abuse
- Intimidation, doxing, and swatting



FBI (March, 2025). [Violent Online Networks Target Vulnerable and Underage Populations Across the United States and Around the Globe](#)

ISO (2025). [Networks of Harm: A Victim-Centric Information Resource on the 764 Sextortion Network](#)



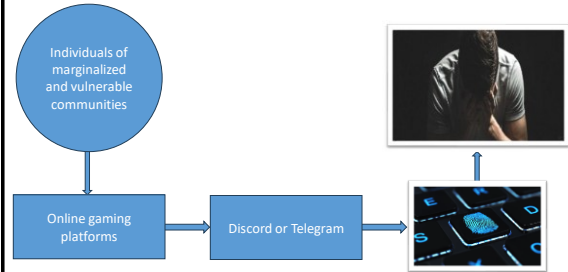
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764 Recruitment/Victimization Process



ADL (June, 2025). <https://www.adl.org/resources/background/764>



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Technological Threats & Law

Challenges:

- Imagery: Intent and Interpretation
 - Emojis, emoticons, symbols, memes, pictures
 - First court case involving emojis: 2014
 - 2023: 225 cases involving emoji interpretation
blog.ericgoldman.org/

Friday! Tictok mfs 🙌👉🔫

- Emoji's render differently on different devices



[Interpreting and Translating Emojis](#) (Safer Schools Together, 2025)
cyberbullying.org/emoji-as-threats



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Technological Threats, Law & Risk

Challenges:

- Generative AI Systems (Chatbots)
 - Weaponization to create threatening content
 - Who is responsible for threatening content?
 - Impact on subject risk to self/others?



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