

Enlisting Stakeholder Support in Behavioral Threat Assessment



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Education, Training & Certifications:

- M.Ed, Counselor Education
- Licensed School Counselor
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 - School Counselor
 - Admin & Supervision Pre-K-12 Central office
- School Threat Assessment Training (DCJS) – Dr. Gene Deisinger

Experience:

- Public School Teacher, Coach -- 14 years
- School Counselor/Director – 13 years
- Coordinator of SC Services – 9 years CCPS
- Conducted 100's of TA, trained Division staff
- Deisinger Consulting, LLC BTAM Trainer

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Education, Training & Certifications:

- ED.D., Counseling & School Psychology
- Postgraduate Professional License (VADOE)
 - School Psychologist
 - Admin & Supervision Pre-K-12 Central office
- Licensed Restorative Practices IIRP Trainer
- School Threat Assessment Training (DCJS) – Dr. Gene Deisinger

Experience:

- School Psychologist – 30 years in schools, 26 in CCPS
- School/Clinical Psychology private practice – 11 years
- Adjunct Instructor – Mary Baldwin College Richmond – 10 years
- Coordinator of Psychological Services – 7 years CCPS
- Conducted 100's of TA, trained Division staff
- Deisinger Consulting, LLC BTAM Trainer

Enhancing Your Experience!

Maximize opportunities to enhance practice

- Contribute to and learn from others
- Build collaborative networks across Virginia
 - Introduce yourself and share contact information
- **Action Steps Participant Handout**
- Commit to a handful of practically achievable actions when you get back to work!

Attendee Survey

Who is present today?

Introduction to Behavioral Threat Assessment for School Support Personnel



A Thought to Frame Our Time Today



***“The best
detectors are not
gun detectors;
the best detectors
are human
detectors.”***

—PBS Documentary,
“The Pathway to Violence”

Goals of the Session

- **Understand key concepts related to the practice of Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM)**
- **To be able to recognize concerning and/or unusual behavior in individuals**
- **Understand the whole school approach to recognizing and reporting concerning and unusual behaviors**
- **Understand why violence prevention is possible.**
- **Understand the basic legal issues and protections afforded all school personnel in creating a safe and supportive learning environment.**

School Safety Survey

Jot down your responses to the following questions:

- 1. Does your school have a Threat Assessment Team?**
IF so...
- 2. Name one or more individuals (by position) on this team.**
- 3. Identify one or more responsibilities of this team.**
- 4. How often have you been trained by and/or received helpful information from this group?**

Why Are We Here?

Virginia law (§ 22.1-79.4) requires the establishment of threat assessment teams in public schools since 2013:

- **Each local school board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams**
 - Including the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students
- **Research and practice tell us that targeted violence in schools is rare and in most cases detectable and preventable.**

Why Are We Here?

The superintendent of each school division shall establish a threat assessment team for each school

- Each team **shall** include persons with expertise in:
 - Counseling
 - Instruction
 - School administration
 - Law enforcement
- Team **may** include or consult with persons with other expertise

Why Are We Here?

Among the responsibilities of school TAT are the following:

Each threat assessment team shall:

- Provide **guidance** to students, faculty, and staff on recognizing threatening/aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self
- Identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported.

All school division employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to report any expressed threat(s) or behavior(s) that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self.

Threat Assessment and Management Goal

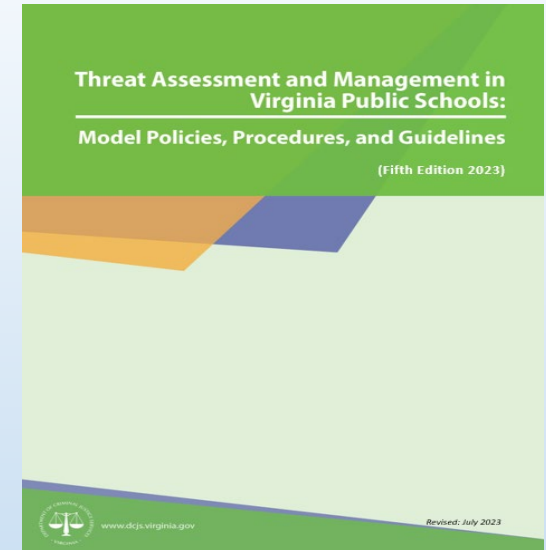
The primary goal of the threat assessment and management process is to support and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of the school community.

Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia K-12 Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, 5^h Edition (DCJS, 2023).

NOTE: At its core, the Threat Assessment Process is a HELPING process!

Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

[Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, 5th Edition \(Virginia DCJS, 2023\)](#)

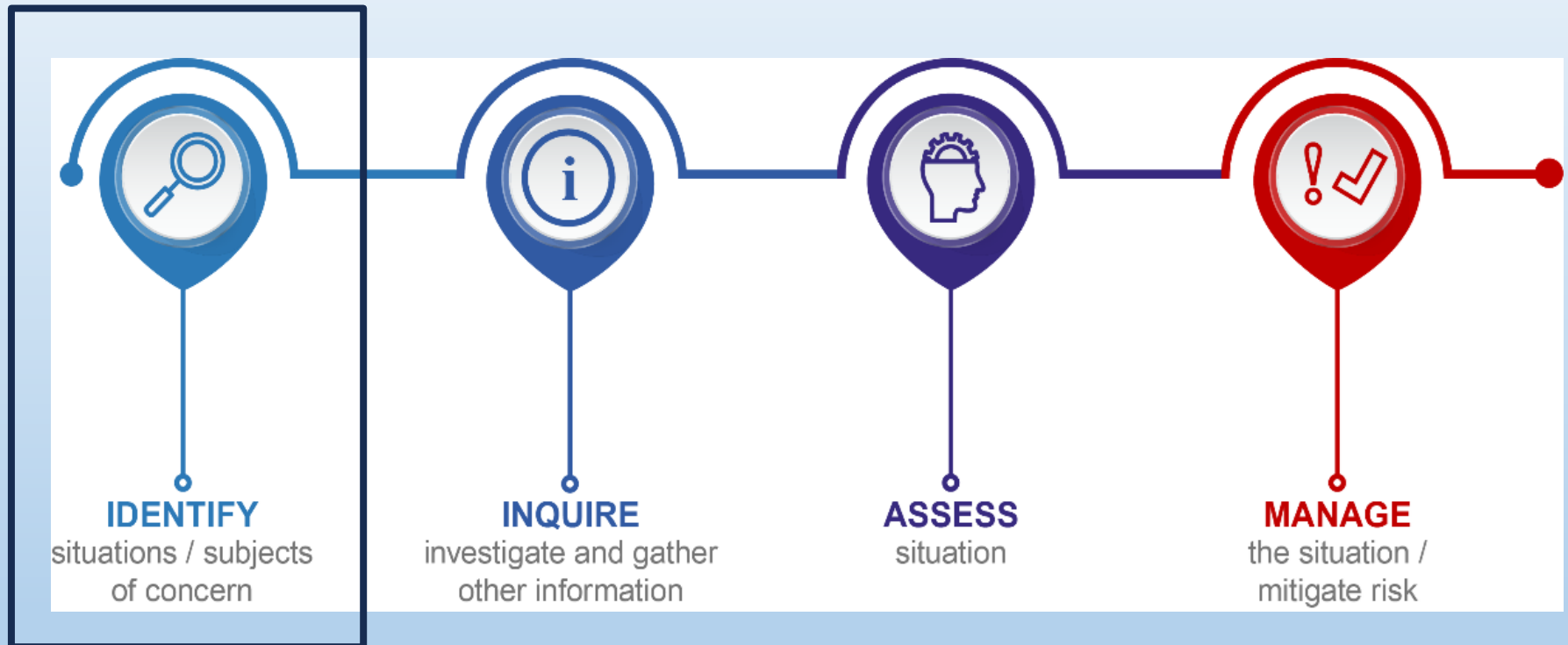


Consider other key resources including:

- [Behavioral Threat Assessment Resource Toolkit for K-12 Virginia Parents](#)
- [Behavioral Threat Assessment Resource Toolkit for K-12 Virginia Schools](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) About K-12 Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management](#)
- [Sandy Hook Promise Say Something program](#)

Threat Assessment and Management: An Integrated and Systematic Approach

Threat Assessment and Management Process



The Role of Student Support Personnel

Goal - to be able to recognize and report concerning and/or unusual behavior of individuals in the school community.



What is Concerning or Unusual 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!

Unusual Behavior:

- Behaviors or communications that are **not typical** for the person or situation, and that *cause concern* for the health, safety or well-being of the subject, others, or both.

What's a Professional to Do?

Robert is a young man whom you regularly interact with in your workplace setting. He is normally upbeat and engaging, saying 'hello' to you regularly and sharing news about his performance in school and his family life. Robert appears to be a good student, but you don't see him interacting with many peers. In the last two weeks, however, Robert has not been around or when he does come by, he seems sad and withdrawn. He's not willing to share much about his feelings but does mutter stuff about 'getting even' with those boys in PE class. When you ask what he means, Robert replies, 'just wait and see.'

What's a professional to do?

How are these behaviors communicated?

Concerning and/or unusual behaviors may be expressed or communicated in a variety of ways:

• behaviorally	• in writing
• orally	• electronically
• visually	• other: e.g., possession of a weapon

What do these behaviors look like?

Turn to a neighbor and offer an example of how a concerning/unusual behavior in each of these categories may be expressed in your workplace setting.

Importance of Reporting

Consider the Following Question:

To whom do you report knowledge of concerning/unusual behavior(s)?

- The individual(s) to receive information?
- What to share?
- When?
- How?

Educate all Stakeholders on HOW to report and TO WHOM

*“If you know something,
say something.”*

Adapted from: NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Importance of Reporting

Consider the Following Questions:

1. What might cause you NOT to report knowledge of concerning/unusual behavior(s)?
2. What might cause you NOT to be able to report key information in a timely manner?
3. How do we overcome these barriers?

*“If you know something,
say something.”*

Adapted from: NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority

But...Am I Protected?

Code of Virginia:

- [§ 8.01-47](#): Grants immunity from civil liability to:
 - Any person, who in good faith
 - Reports, investigates, or causes an investigation
 - That any person poses a credible danger of serious bodily injury or death to any other person on school property
- [§ 8.01-220.1:2](#): Grants immunity from civil liability for:
 - Any teacher
 - Regarding acts or omissions resulting from the supervision, care or discipline of students, or
 - Reporting of alleged bullying or crimes against others
 - When such acts were within the teacher's scope of employment and done in good faith

Key Take Aways

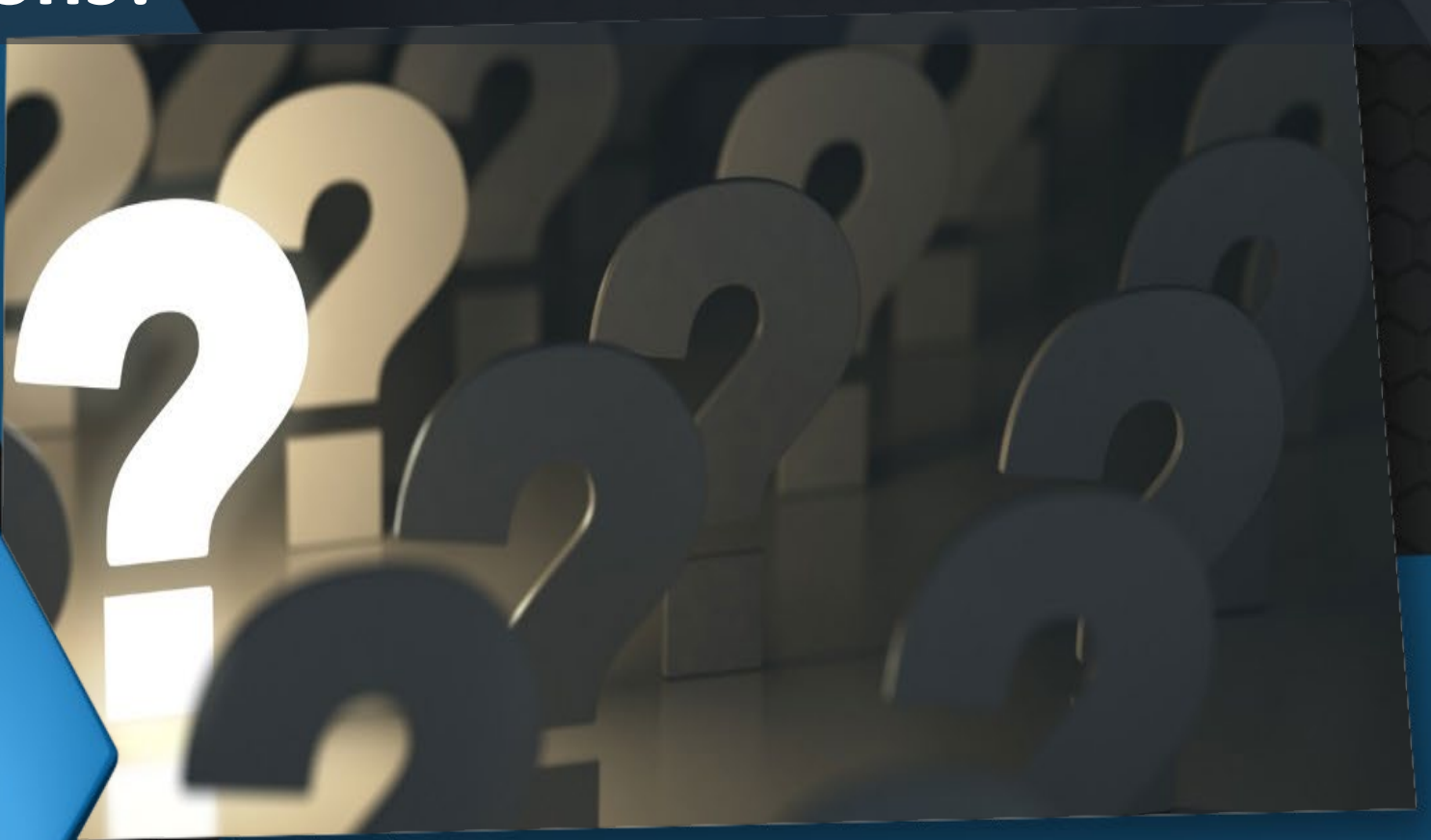
- Threat assessment teams are required to provide guidance to all school community stakeholders on recognizing and reporting concerning/unusual (threatening/aberrant) behavior
- School personnel are afforded basic legal protections in reporting when acting in good faith
- While targeted school violence, especially school shootings, are rare occurrences, and are preventable. You are part of the solution.

Review of Participant Handout: Action Steps

Given the information discussed, share one or more practically achievable actions steps you and/or your team members could implement to enlist school support personnel in Behavioral Threat Assessment.



Questions?



Resources and Contact Information

DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety K-12 Behavioral Threat Assessment Resources

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