Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia K-12 Public Schools

Instructor Information

Education, Training, and Certifications:

Experience:

Attendee Survey

Who is present today?

How long have you served on your school/division threat assessment team?

Training Resources

- **Resource Training Link**

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

- **What Threat Assessment Is and Is Not (NTAC)**

- **Summary of Key BTAM Concepts**

- **Key Areas of Inquiry (Investigative Themes)**

- **USSS – Key Themes to Guide Threat Assessment Investigations**
  (See pages 8-16)

- **Behavioral Threat Assessment Resource Toolkit for K-12 Virginia Schools**

- **Behavioral Threat Assessment Resource Toolkit for K-12 Virginia Parents**

- **Improving School Safety Through Bystander Reporting: A TOOLKIT FOR STRENGTHENING K-12 REPORTING PROGRAMS**

- **Ok2SpeakOut**

What Are We Missing?
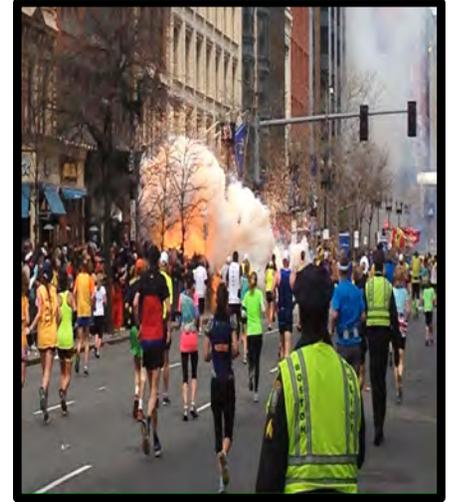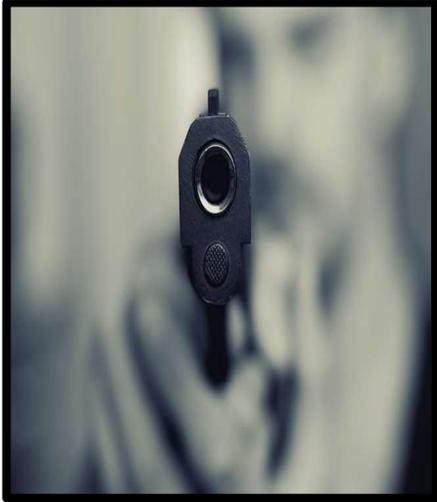
Two handouts referenced in the webinar are attached versus at the link

A Thought to Frame Our Time Today

"The best detectors are not gun detectors;
the best detectors are human detectors."

– Dr. William Pollack,
PBS Documentary,
"The Pathway to Violence"

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

- **Commit to a handful of practical, achievable actions when you get back to work!**

Consider this:
This icon identifies issues for consideration in maximizing your understanding and application of concepts.

Extending your learning:
Watch for the icon and the searchable internet references throughout the training.

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Participant Handout – Action Steps

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT – ACTION STEPS TO ENHANCE THE APPROACH TO THREAT ASSESSMENT

Record your observations and reflections

Throughout the training, it is advised that you note observations and reflections on what you are learning as it applies to your setting. Ideas, innovations, and contacts of your colleagues in the room can also be valuable in helping enhance how threat assessment is implemented in your context.

Use the ✛ side of the sheet to note strengths and immediate opportunities.

Use the ▲ side of the sheet to candidly note gaps or weaknesses in the current approach.

Record your Action Steps – What can you/your Team commit to achieving (without being over-ambitious)?

+	▲

Action Steps

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Section 1 | Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management: Legislative Requirements

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Why Are We Here?

The *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-79.4 requires threat assessment teams for public schools:

- 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
  - ➢ Consistent with the model policies developed by the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, in accordance with the *Code of Virginia* § 9.1-184
  - ➢ New threat assessment team members shall complete an initial threat assessment training, and all threat assessment team members shall be required to complete refresher threat assessment training every three years

Legislative Requirements
True or False?

1. TATs are required to intervene with parents or guardians if their behaviors pose a threat to the school community.

    TRUE

2. TATs are expected to provide guidance to students on recognizing and reporting threatening/aberrant behaviors.

    TRUE

3. TATs must use the Model Policies developed by the DCJS.

    FALSE

4. Each school division is required to create and support a Divisional Oversight Committee.

    FALSE

5. TAT membership is specified in the *Code of Virginia*.

    TRUE

NEW Legislative Requirements
Effective July 1, 2025

D. "…<u>The division superintendent or his designee</u> **shall** provide, either in such initial attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian or through a separate communication to the student's parent or legal guardian made as soon as practicable thereafter, materials on recognition of and strategies for responding to behavior indicating that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others that shall include information on the legal requirements set forth in § 18.2-56.2 **relating to the safe storage of firearms in the presence of minors** and that may include guidance on best practices and strategies for limiting a student's access to lethal means, including firearms and medications<u>. Such materials shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of the criteria set forth in the guidelines required by subsection G."</u>

G. "The Board (VDOE), in cooperation with the <u>Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Health</u>, **shall develop guidelines** for the provision of (these) materials…"

NEW Legislative Requirements
Effective July 1, 2025

Threats to Bomb, Damage, or Discharge a Firearm

(HB1583) **Threats to discharge a firearm within or at buildings or means of transportation; penalties:** Provides that any person (i) who makes and communicates to another by any means any threat to bomb, burn, destroy, discharge a firearm within or at, or in any manner damage any place of assembly, building or other structure, or means of transportation, or (ii) who communicates to another, by any means, information, knowing the same to be false, as to the existence of any peril of bombing, burning, destruction, discharging of a firearm within or at, or damage to any such place of assembly, building or other structure, or means of transportation, **is guilty of a Class 5 felony**; however if such person is under 18 years of age, he is guilty of a **Class 1 misdemeanor**. Under current law, any person 15 years of age or older (a) who makes and communicates to another by any means any threat to bomb, burn, destroy, or in any manner damage any place of assembly, building or other structure, or means of transportation or (b) who communicates to another, by any means, information, knowing the same to be false, as to the existence of any peril of bombing, burning, destruction, or damage to any such place of assembly, building or other structure, or means of transportation, is guilty of a Class 5 felony. (amends § 18.2-83).

Threats of Death or Bodily Injury

(SB1271) **Threats of death or bodily injury or discharge of a firearm on school property; penalties:** Clarifies that for crimes involving communicating in writing a threat to kill or do bodily injury, regardless of whether the person who is the object of such threat actually receives such threat, an electronically transmitted communication producing a visual or electronic message includes an email, a text message, or a message or post on any social media platform. The bill also clarifies that any person who communicates an oral threat of discharging a firearm within or on school property, at any school-sponsored event, or on a school bus, and the threat would place the person who is the object of the threat, or is included in the threat, in reasonable apprehension of death or bodily harm, is guilty of a Class 6 felony (amends § 18.2-60).

Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, 6th Edition (Virginia DCJS, 2025)

Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia Public Schools:

Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
(Sixth Edition 2025)

Consider other key resources, including:

DCJS: Information Sharing Guide for K12 Public Schools (2020)

VDOE: Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools (2020)

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

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

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

Why Are We Here?

Beyond the law:

- Research and practice tell us that **targeted violence is often detectable and preventable**

- Threat assessment and management has evolved as a standard of practice for proactive approaches to the prevention of violence impacting schools

- Threat assessment and management processes are designed to identify and assist persons in need as early as possible

- **Team members need a solid foundation for understanding violence, as well as principles and practices for effective threat management**

What is a Threat?

- Concerning communication or behavior
- Indicates an individual may **pose** a danger to the school community
- Through acts of violence/behavior to cause harm to self or others (or both)

- Communicated **directly** or **indirectly** to the target
- Still considered a threat either way

Behaviorally
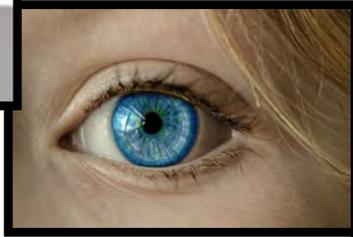
Visually

Orally

Written

Electronically

What is "Threat Assessment and Management"?

Threat assessment and management is a **fact-based**, **systematic** process emphasizing an **appraisal of observed** (or reasonably observable) **behaviors** to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, to assess them, and to manage/address them. (Model Policies)

1. How do staff, parents, and students view the process?

2. Who does not understand the role and function of the threat assessment team as well as you would like?

Threat Assessment and Management: An Integrated and Systematic Approach

Threat Assessment and Management Process

IDENTIFY
situations / subjects
of concern

INQUIRE
investigate and gather
other information

ASSESS
situation

MANAGE
the situation /
mitigate risk
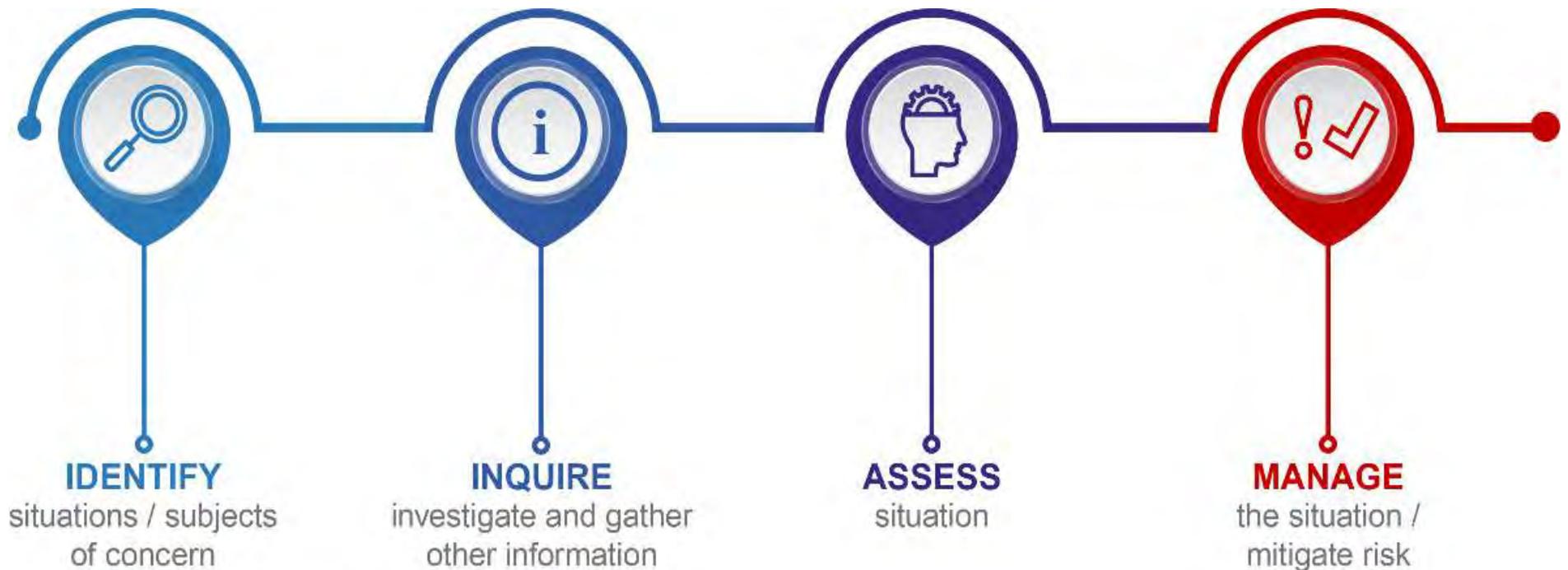
Today's Scenario

Ms. Jones, mother of Fatima Jones, calls the Principal of Winding Trail Elementary, Mr. Bowman, on Monday morning, just before the buses arrive. She reports that her daughter told her she didn't want to go to school and was afraid of Bianca Trainor, a student in her class. Fatima eventually showed her mother social media posts from the night before, where Bianca had posted pictures of Fatima and Michaela Harris (also in her class) with the word "dead" over them. Ms. Jones also has screenshots of Bianca telling Fatima, "You know what you two did and you're going to pay," and that she is going to "cut them at school tomorrow."

What is 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 (for self and others)

Aberrant behavior:

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

> For further consideration:
> 1. Do all aberrant or atypical behaviors cause concern?
> 2. Do various groups in the community view behaviors differently?

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, 5th Edition (DCJS, 2023)

Key Findings Regarding Targeted Violence

Safe School Initiative
(USSS and US DOE, 2002)

Protecting America's Schools
(USSS and DHS, 2019)
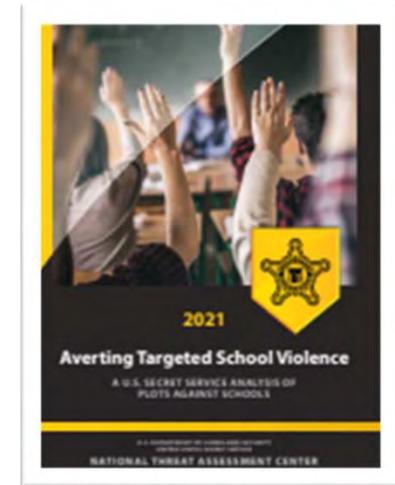
Averting Targeted School Violence
(USSS, 2021)
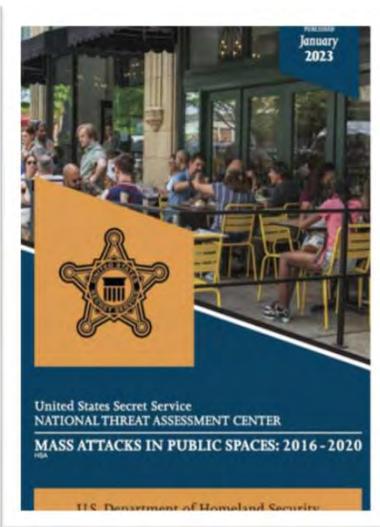
Mass Attacks in Public Spaces
(USSS, 2023)
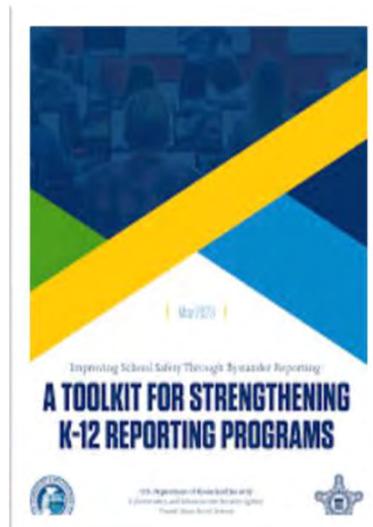
Bystander Reporting Toolkit
(USSS, 2023)
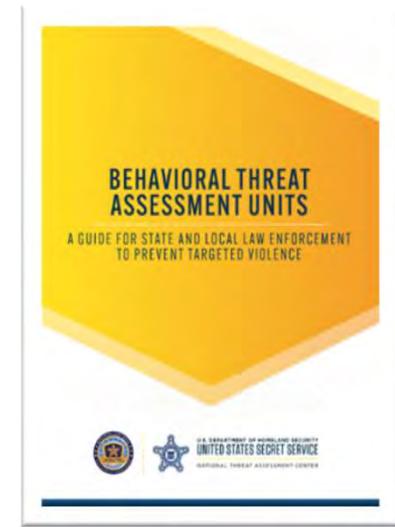
Behavioral Threat Assessment Units
(USSS, 2024)

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Fact or Fiction?

1. Most attackers were "under the radar," showing no indicators they needed help.
   Fiction

2. Removing students from school eliminates the risk they pose to themselves/others.
   Fiction

3. The academic performance of attackers varied significantly in school.
   Fact

4. The attackers had frequent and severe disciplinary problems at school.
   Fiction

5. While attackers may have multiple motives, the most common involves a grievance with a classmate.
   Fact

6. In 2/3 of averted attacks, plotters had unimpeded access to firearms.
   Fact

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Communication is Key
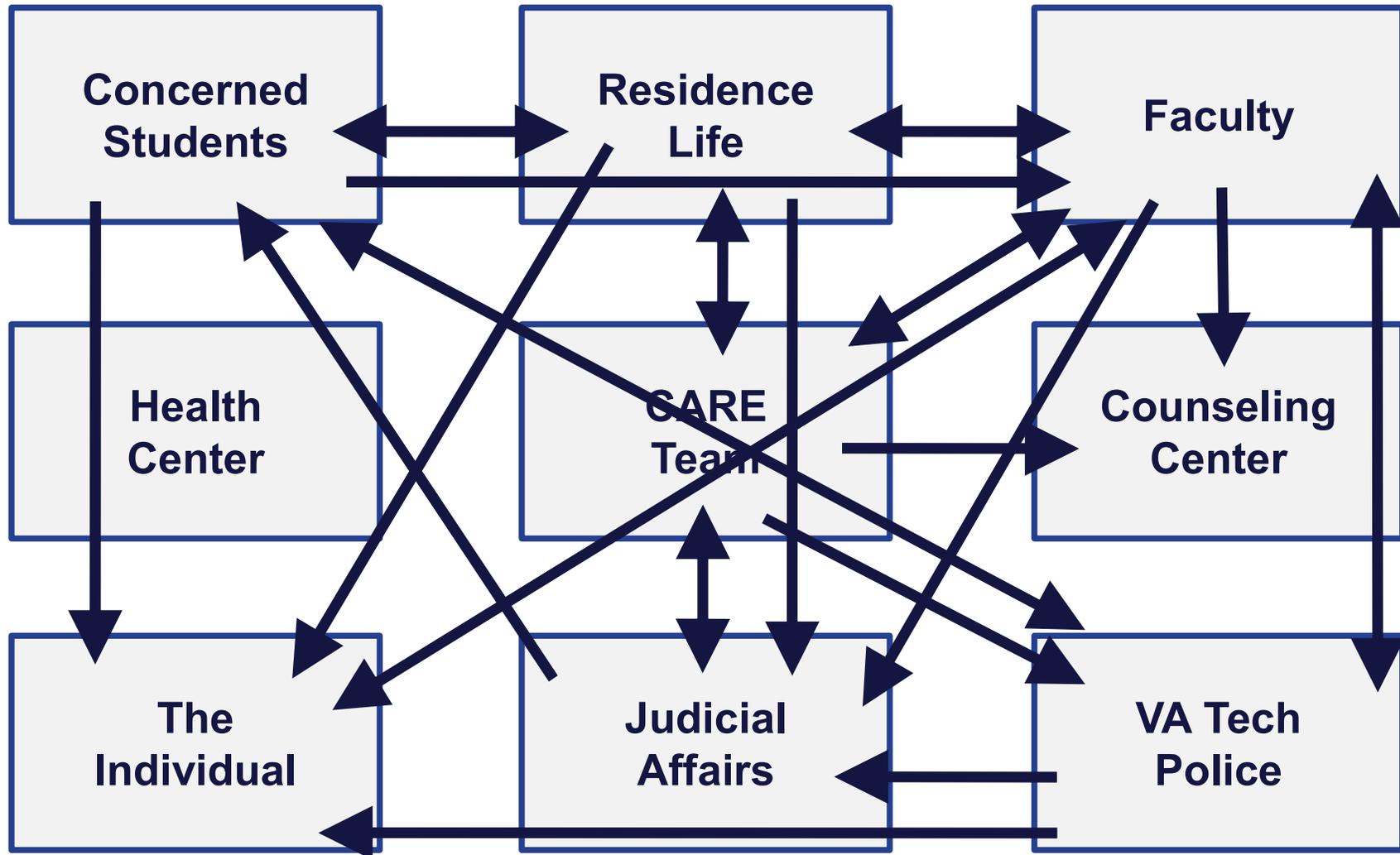
Principles of Threat Assessment

BTAM takes a holistic approach to assessment and management.

- Targeted violence stems from an interaction among:

    Subject(s),

    Target(s),

    Environment, and

    Precipitating events

    STEP© Framework

    © Deisinger (1996);
    Deisinger and Nolan (2021)

Principles of Threat Assessment

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

Pathway to Violence

Adapted from:
Calhoun and Weston (2003)

GRIEVANCE → IDEATION → PLANNING → PREPARATION → IMPLEMENTATION

Principles of Threat Assessment

- **Threat assessment is about prevention, not prediction.**

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

- Information is likely to be scattered and fragmented.
  A collaborative and coordinated approach is required.

- The key is to act quickly upon an initial report of concern, gather other pieces of the puzzle, and then assemble to see what picture emerges.

- The relationship between mental illness and violence is complex but not necessarily correlative.

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

Section 3| Identifying and Reporting Concerning, Aberrant, or Threatening Behaviors

Knowledge is Power...and Work!

Recall from the research that...

- In over 80% of school attacks, plotters communicated with others about the potential attack, and

- In over three-quarters of the attacks, someone knew about the violence ahead of the act!

Questions:

- Is your TAT and/or administration leveraging this knowledge to train all stakeholders to *recognize and report* concerning and/or aberrant behaviors?

- If so, are you ok with the added *workload* due to legitimate and "false positive" reports?

How to Teach Stakeholders to "R&R" – Recognize and Report

Be intentional about educating stakeholders on how to recognize and report concerning and/or aberrant behavior.

- **There's an app for that (or at least a set of instructional videos)!**
  - Elementary Video
  - Middle School Video
  - High School Video
  - Staff Video
  - Parent Video
- **Remember, it's Ok2SpeakOut.**

Taking Action

Consider the following question:
How can you/your team provide guidance to the school community on recognizing and reporting concerns?

Activity:

1. In small groups, select ONE stakeholder group: students, school support staff (office, paraprofessionals, food services, custodial, bus drivers, etc.), parents, or community members.
2. Brainstorm educational activities for the selected stakeholder groups(s). How will the toolkit help you?
3. Select at least one activity you will commit to using within the next 90 days.
4. Use the provided template (in chat box) to detail your specific plan.

BTAM Recognize & Report Guidance Planning Template

School Name:	Date:

PLANNING "STEPS"

Students (Specify school, grade level(s), classes, etc.)

School Staff (Specify school, grade level(s), classes, locations, shifts/work hours, etc.)

- Teachers
- Office Staff
- Paraprofessionals
- Food Services
- Custodial
- Bus Drivers
- Other

Parents

Community Members

PLANNING "STEPS"

Stakeholder Group(s)	Activity Detailed	Responsible Person(s)	Date(s) Planned
Example: Teachers	During faculty meeting, show the staff video provided by DCJS, titled "Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools"	Ms. Ortiz, Principal	Week of January 13, 2025

Importance of Reporting

Consider the following questions:

1. How does your school/division provide ways to report concerns/threats? → Offering the 'path of least resistance'
2. What might create barriers to reporting?
3. How do we overcome these barriers?
4. How do we enlist the support of bystanders and encourage reporting? (Note: see the training resource on slide 4)

In summary... Educate all stakeholders on WHAT to report and TO WHOM.

*"If you know something,
say something and do something."*

Adapted from: NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Protections for Staff Reporting

The *Code of Virginia* § 8.01-47 grants immunity from civil liability to:

- Any person who, in good faith, reports, investigates, or causes an investigation to be made into...
- Any person poses a credible danger of serious bodily injury or death to any other person on school property.

The *Code of Virginia* § 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.

Section 4 | Conducting the Threat Assessment Process

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Steps in the Threat Assessment Process

Threat assessment team:

1. Receives report of threat
   - **Intake:** Obtaining and processing basic information about the situation
   - **Initial triage:** Assigning urgency/priority to cases
   - **Triage and screening:** Determining appropriateness, comprehensive assessment
2. Gathers additional relevant information
3. Analyzes information and assesses the threat

   *If the team decides the subject poses a threat:
   - Alerts the superintendent
   - Responds to manage the threat
4. Monitors and re-evaluate the plan
5. Follows up as appropriate
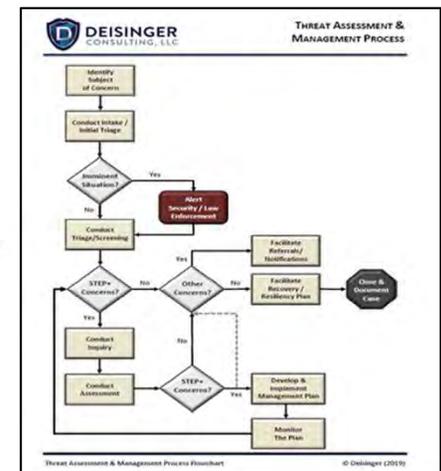
Threat Assessment and Management Flowchart

Threat Assessment and Management Forms

THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT FORM

Forms available:

Fillable PDF:
K-12 Threat Assessment Form – Fillable pdf (dcjs.virginia.gov)

Word:
K-12 Threat Assessment Form – Fillable MSWord (dcjs.virginia.gov)

Guidance:
DCJS Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

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www.dcjs.virginia.gov

Imminent Situation?

Determine if the situation is imminent

- Subject intends imminent and/or serious harm to self/others, e.g.:
  - Has a **weapon on school grounds**, on a school bus, at a school activity, or en route to/from any of these
  - **Imminent intent to use weapon(s)** OR cause serious injury
  - Attempting to breach security and/or to gain access to targets

- **Lack of inhibitions for using violence**, indicated by:
  - Feels justified in using violence to address grievances
  - **Has no perceived alternatives to the use of violence**
  - Lack of concern for or desire of consequences
  - Has the capability and willingness to cause harm

Imminent Situation

If the situation is imminent:

- Initiate crisis response procedures according to school policy, e.g.:
  - ➤ Involve law enforcement and appropriate security personnel
  - ➤ Initiate relevant security protocols
  - ➤ Notify key school administrators (See the *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-79.4)
  - ➤ When safe to do so, move on to triage and assessment steps to further resolve any ongoing threat posed

If the situation is NOT imminent:

- Continue with the triage/screening or assessment process

Triage and Screening

Timely and systematic review by trained personnel:
- Consider triage/screening team:
  - ➢ Minimum of two (2) members
  - ➢ Different roles/departments
- Review initial report(s)
- Consult relevant records/sources

Triage process shall:
- Consider the nature and level of concern indicated
- Determine if existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns
- **Determine whether the entire team needs to assess and manage the situation further**
- Initiate any crisis responses as appropriate

Inquire/Gather Information

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

- **Prior threat assessment team contacts**
- Work or school performance history
- Special education or disability accommodations
- Disciplinary or personnel actions
- **Law enforcement or security contacts: school and community**
- Critical involvement with mental health/social services
- Current or historical stressors, grievances, or losses
- Written materials/communications
- **Online searches: internet, social media, email, etc.**

Additional Information Gathering Considerations

Upon a preliminary determination by the threat assessment team that an individual:

- Poses a threat of violence to self or others, **or**
- Exhibits significantly disruptive behavior **or** a need for assistance

Then a threat assessment team may obtain:

- Criminal history record information, per the *Code of Virginia* § 19.2-389 or § 19.2-389.1, and
- Health records per the *Code of Virginia* § 32.1-127.1:03
- No Threat Assessment Team (TAT) member shall:
  - ➢ Redisclose any such criminal history or health information, or
  - ➢ Use any such record beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the team

Inquire/Gather Information

Consider interviews:

- Initial interviews to verify the 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, and other staff
  - ➤ Parents/Guardians
  - ➤ Relational partners
  - ➤ Local or state law enforcement
  - ➤ Community services

Corroboration of information across these sources will be powerful in helping to assess the level and nature of the threat…

What might significant differences in the information provided by these sources reveal?

Documentation

Record keeping

- Consult with school administration and school board legal counsel regarding:
  - ➤ Record creation, storage, access, information sharing, and destruction
- Consider:
  - ➤ **Electronic database** of threat assessment 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

Key Areas for Inquiry

- National Threat Assessment Center's (NTAC) "Investigative Themes"

- **Key Areas of Inquiry (Investigative Themes)**
  - ➤ DCJS Threat Assessment and Management Form, Part III
  - ➤ **STEP**

- These are the **OUTCOMES** the team is seeking

- Determines the case priority level

- Guides the development of the **case management plan**

Helpful Document

Adapted from: * Meloy, et al. (2011). *The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment;* **FBI (2017) *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing and Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*; USSS NTAC (2018). *Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence*

Key Areas for Inquiry

S T

P E

STEP

SUBJECT

TARGET

ENVIRONMENT

PRECIPITATING EVENTS
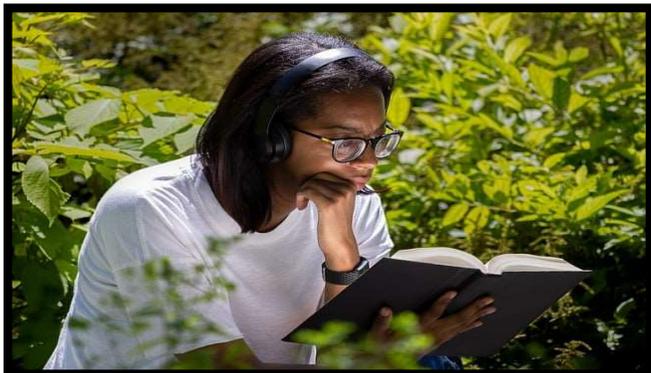
Key Areas for Inquiry – Subject

- What behaviors are causing concern about the subject?
- **Are there concerning, aberrant, threatening, or violent communications?**
- **What are the subject's motives/goals?**
- Any demonstrated identification or inappropriate interests with other incidents and/or perpetrators?
- **Does the subject have the capacity, or developing the capacity to engage in targeted violence?**
- Is the subject experiencing hopelessness and/or despair?
- **Does the subject have *protective factors*, stabilizers, or buffers that inhibit the use of violence?**

➢ **Leakage, grievances, and warning others**

➢ **To address the grievance, desired outcome, what would they like to see happen?**

➢ **History of violence, pathway behaviors – preparation?**

➢ **Views violence as unacceptable/immoral, values life, job, relationships**

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Key Areas for Inquiry – *Target*

Are targets (or others) indicating vulnerability or concern about the subject's potential for violence? *(See Page 51 of the Model Policies)*

- Are others concerned that the subject may take action?

- Are others concerned for the well-being of the subject?

- Are targets engaging in protective actions? Or behaviors that may increase their risk?

- Do targets have adequate support resources?

- Notification to the target and family
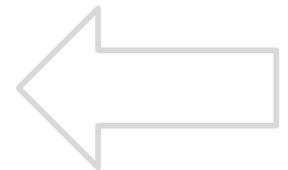
Adapted from: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2020); FBI (2017). *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing and Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks*.

Key Areas for Inquiry – *Environment*

Are there environmental/systemic factors that are impacting the situation?

- Systemic policy or procedural problems

- Silos, gaps, or delays in reporting of concerns

- Poor supervisory skills or oversight in key areas

- School climate concerns

- Lack of support resources in the community

- Home, work
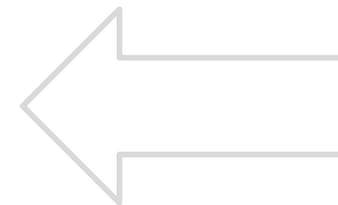
Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2020); FBI (2017). *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing and Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks.*

Key Areas for Inquiry – *Precipitating Events*

Are there precipitating events that may impact the situation currently and in the foreseeable future?

- Loss, failure, or real/perceived injustice

- Key dates/events

- Triggers and reminders of any of the above

- Views intervention(s) as injustice
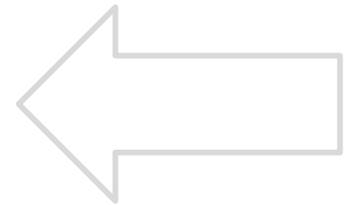
Source: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2020)

Additional Key Areas for Inquiry "Process Integrity"

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

- **Is the subject's conversation and "story" consistent?**
- Do collateral sources confirm or dispute each other?
- **What gaps exist in the understanding of the situation?**
- What biases or misperceptions may be present?

Source: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2020)

Section 5 | Assessing and Classifying Cases

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Facilitating Case Discussions

Fostering effective case discussions:

- **Seek active participation by all team members**
- Keep the discussion focused on the case
- **Minimize bias** in decision-making
  - ➢ Consider the totality and context of information available
  - ➢ Consider information sources, **credibility,** and relevance
  - ➢ Corroborate critical information; resolve discrepancies
  - ➢ Avoid generalizations or stereotypes; **focus on behaviors**
  - ➢ Consider the impact of the unknowns
- Focus on active problem-solving
- Consider the **STEP** Domains

Classifying/Prioritizing Cases

Priority 1: Critical Level of Concern/Imminent	Priority 2: High Level of Concern
Subject poses an **imminent** threat of serious violence or harm to self/others. Has or may reasonably have a significant impact on others. ***Requires immediate law enforcement and school administration notification, subject containment, target protection, and safety planning.*** Implementation of crisis response and notification protocols. Ongoing assessment and management plan, and active monitoring.	Subject poses, or is **rapidly developing** capability for, a threat of serious violence or harm to self or others; or is in urgent need of hospitalization or treatment. Targets/others are impacted. Typically involves environmental factors and consideration for precipitating events. ***Requires immediate notification of school administration and law enforcement, subject containment, target protection, and safety plan.*** Activation of crisis response protocols, ongoing assessment and management plan, active monitoring, and referrals.

Classifying/Prioritizing Threats

Priority 3: Moderate Level of Concern	Priority 4: Low Level of Concern	Priority 5: Routine/No Known Concerns
Subject does not pose a threat of serious violence or harm though risk cannot be ruled-out. Subject may be developing capability for harm and is engaging in aberrant or concerning behaviors that indicate need for assistance/intervention. Targets/others likely concerned and impacted. Environmental or precipitating factors may be present. Requires ongoing assessment and management plan, active monitoring, and referrals as appropriate.	**Subject does not indicate a threat of violence or harm to self or others;** would or may **benefit from intervention or assistance** with concerns, target, environmental, or precipitating events may be present at low levels. May involve some ongoing assessment management with passive monitoring and/or periodic active monitoring, Referrals as appropriate. Close case if no team interventions or monitoring indicated.	Subject **does not indicate a threat of violence or harm to self or others;** or need for assistance or intervention. No impact on others, environmental factors, or precipitants that need team intervention. Close case.

Case Scenario: Bianca

*Read the **Initial Report and Inquiry and Review of Records,** which provides details regarding the situation of concern.*

Consider the following:

- **Is a threat posed?**
- **Is there evidence of aberrant or concerning behavior?**
- **Does the situation appear imminent?**
- **What are the team's next steps?**

Case Scenario: Bianca

*Read the **Immediate Response,** which reveals the team's initial steps.*

Based on all the information so far, consider the following:

- **What are the STEP (Subject, Target, Environment, Precipitating Events) Domain Concerns?**

- **Where is Bianca on the Pathway to Violence?**

- **What are the team's next steps?**

Case Scenario – Inquiry

Read the inquiry which details the additional interviews and other information gathered in the "Threat Assessment Inquiry."

Given the previously reviewed, consider the following:

- **What are the STEP (Subject, Target, Environment, Precipitating Events) Domain Concerns? (New information?)**

- **What level of priority would you assign to the case at this time?**

- **Initial case management thoughts?**

Section 6 | Managing Threats

Develop a Case Management Plan

Subject(s) Strategies – De-escalate, contain, or control the individual(s) who may take violent action. Provide support to address identified needs**.**

Target(s) Strategies – Decrease vulnerabilities and support the target.

Environment Strategies – Address environment and systems to minimize impact, escalation, or recurrence.

Precipitating event(s) Strategies – Prepare for and mitigate against precipitating events that may trigger adverse reactions.

These four domains are also used to organize and implement a Case Management Plan.

Considerations Regarding Subject Removal

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

- Moving the subject away from thoughts and plans of, and capacity for, violence and/or disruption
- Connecting the subject to resources (where needed)
- Mitigating environmental/systemic factors
- Monitoring the subject when they are no longer connected to the organization

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

Source: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger and Nolan (2020)

Re-Entry Planning and Preparation

Prepare for re-integration of the subject to the school environment:

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

Source: Deisinger (2011); Deisinger and Nolan (2020)

Review of Participant Handout: Action Steps

Given the information discussed, **share one or more practical, achievable action steps** you and your team members could implement related to BTAM!

Summary

- Virginia law requires school-based threat assessment teams that are governed by local school board policy and made up of professionals with specific roles and backgrounds.

- DCJS model policies, procedures, and guidelines offer resources to divisions and teams consistent with Virginia and federal law, peer-reviewed research, and standards of practice.

- Threat assessment teams are charged with providing guidance to key stakeholders on how to recognize and report concerning or aberrant behavior.

- Remember: School violence is preventable, and YOU are part of the solution! Thank you for your diligence!

Request for Service Form: Technical Assistance for Threat Assessment and Management Teams for Virginia Schools

Questions?

Resources and Contact Information

DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
[K-12 Behavioral Threat Assessment Resources](#)

Vcscs@dcjs.virginia.gov

Reference Slides Only

Threat Assessment Team (TAT): Membership

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* (A *Code of Virginia* change from 2022)

- The team **may** include or consult with persons with other expertise

- Threat assessment teams may serve more than one school (as determined by the superintendent)

❓ | Who else could be included either as a core member of a TAT or as someone consulted when specialized expertise would be of value?

Divisional Oversight Committee

Divisional oversight committee

- The superintendent **may** establish a committee:
  - ➢ Charged with oversight of the threat assessment team(s)
  - ➢ Can be an existing committee

- If established, the committee **shall** include individuals with expertise in:
  - ➢ Human resources,
  - ➢ Education,
  - ➢ School administration,
  - ➢ Mental health, and
  - ➢ Law enforcement.

Threat Assessment Team: Scope

Threat Assessment Teams (TATs) assess and intervene with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the school.

Individuals who may pose a threat:

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

What challenges do you see in addressing individuals who may have no, or limited, connection to the school community?

Threat Assessment Team: Responsibilities

Each threat assessment team **shall**:

- Provide [guidance] to students, faculty, and staff **on recognizing threatening or aberrant behavior** that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self.

- **Identify members of the school community** to whom threats should be reported.

- Upon a preliminary determination that a **student** poses a threat of violence or physical harm to **self or others**, the team **shall**:
  - ➤ **Immediately report** its determination to the division superintendent or designee.
  - ➤ The division superintendent or designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian.