




Virginia Center for School & Campus Safety


K-12 Threat Assessment Webinar





PART II:

Conducting a Threat Assessment and Case Management



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Introductions

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Housekeeping

- Please mute (*6) your phones to minimize outside noise. *Unmute if you would like to speak.*
- If you have a question, please type it into the chat box (choose “everyone”). *Answers will be provided verbally for group benefit.*
- The call will be recorded for future use.
- A follow up email containing a summary will be sent after the call.
- Please utilize the handouts provided in the reminder email.
- ***Thank you for being here!***




Webinar Agenda

- PART I:
 - Threat Assessments in VA Public Schools: How Did We Get Here
 - What is a School Threat Assessment
 - Developing & Operating a TA Team
 - Wrap-Up and Questions
- PART II:
 - **Identifying & Reporting Threats**
 - **Conducting a Threat Assessment**
 - **Case Management**
 - **Legal Issues, Reporting & Record Keeping**
 - **Wrap-Up and Questions**





Summary of Part I

- Legislation from 2013 requires threat assessment teams in Virginia.
- Behavioral threat assessment is a preventative, not punitive process.
- Makes determination whether individual is posing a threat.
- Multidisciplinary teams are critical
- A positive, **authoritative school climate** makes a difference!



K12 Threat Assessment Training:

Using DCJS Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines




What is Threat Assessment?

A systematic process that is designed to:


- 1 • **IDENTIFY** situations / subjects of concern
- 2 • **INQUIRE/INVESTIGATE** & gather information
- 3 • **ASSESS** situation
- 4 • **MANAGE** the situation / mitigate risk





Threat Assessment & Management Process

BTAM facilitates a more objective process:







Identifying & Reporting Threats




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A threat is . . .

A threat...

- is a concerning communication or behavior that indicates that an individual poses a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others.
- may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means;



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A threat is . . .

- is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party;
- and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat.




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Importance of Reporting

- Reporting allows something to be done
- Earlier reporting allows greater range of options
- Everyone can play a critical role in prevention
- Role of threat assessment team is not punitive
- Goals are to maintain safety and connect person with necessary help

"If you see something, say something."
Source: NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority




Who Can Report?

- Require all division personnel, volunteers and contractors to report to designated administrator:
Any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest a subject may intend to commit an act of violence or significantly disruptive behavior.
- Reports can also come from:
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Community members
 - Outside



How to Report?

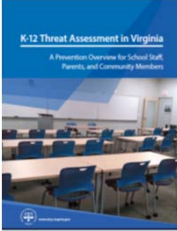
- Team must designate person(s) to whom reports can be made.
- Can include use of anonymous reporting mechanisms
- Reporting enhanced by efforts to promote awareness about team as resource and about reporting requirements
 - Periodic & on-going
 - Audience-specific
 - Multiple platforms to enhance awareness
- Certain threats require immediate notification to law enforcement



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Overview of K12 Threat Assessment

Overview: K12 Threat Assessment in Virginia
Video & Guide

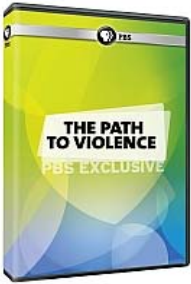


K-12 Threat Assessment in Virginia
A Presentation Overview for School Staff,
Parents, and Community Members

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS7m3RUy9c0




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THE PATH TO VIOLENCE
PBS EXCLUSIVE

<http://video.pbs.org/video/2336803730/>



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How to Conduct a Threat Assessment



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Steps in the Threat Assessment & Management Process


1. Threat assessment team receives report of threat
2. Team gathers additional relevant information
3. Team analyzes information and assesses threat
4. If the team decides that situation poses a threat, the team alerts superintendent, and responds to manage threat and reduce risk
5. Team monitors and re-evaluates plan to ensure safety
6. Team and others follow up as appropriate



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Threat Assessment Steps


1. Threat assessment team receives a report of a threat or threatening behavior.
 - To maximize reporting, school staff, students, volunteers, and other members of the school community need to know:
 - their role and responsibility to report concerns;
 - what to report;
 - where and how to report it;
 - that reports are wanted and will be acted upon appropriately.



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Threat Assessment Steps


2. Team gathers more information about the situation of concern.
 - Review of relevant records based on lawful and ethical access to information.
 - Prior threat assessment team contacts
 - Work or school performance history
 - Disciplinary or personnel actions
 - Law enforcement or security contacts at school and in the community
 - Prior critical involvement with mental health or social services
 - Presence of known problems, grievances, or losses
 - Current or historical grievances that may be related to the behavior of concern
 - Online searches: internet, social media, email, etc.




Threat Assessment Steps

2. Team gathers more information about the situation of concern.

- Initial interviews to verify report:
 - Person(s) reporting threat
 - Person(s) receiving report of threat
 - Recipient(s) of threat
 - Witness(es)
 - Subject who made the threat
- Other potential sources:
 - Peers: Friends / Classmates / Co-workers
 - Employer, teachers, coaches
 - Parents
 - Local law enforcement /Community services




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Threat Assessment Steps

3. Team analyzes information gathered by answering key questions.




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Key Areas of Inquiry

1. What are the subject's motive(s) and goals? / What first brought him/her to someone's attention?
2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?
3. Has the subject shown any inappropriate interest in targeted attacks/attackers, weapons, incidents of mass violence?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates* (2002).




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Key Areas of Inquiry

4. Has the subject engaged in attack-related behaviors or are they developing the subject has the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?
5. Is the subject experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates* (2002).







Key Areas of Inquiry

6. Does the subject have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?
7. Does the subject see violence as an acceptable, desirable – or the only – way to solve a problem?
8. Are the subject’s conversation and “story” consistent with his or her actions?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates* (2002).







Key Areas of Inquiry

9. Are other people concerned about the subject’s potential for violence?
10. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of violence?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates* (2002).





Assessing the Threat

4. Make the assessment / evaluation


Does the situation pose a threat to self or others? Is there a need for intervention?


Consider:

- Subject
- Target
- Environment
- Precipitating Events

STEP Model:
© Deisinger; Deisinger et all


Are there actions the TAT can facilitate to reduce risk, beyond that already being done?






Tips for Discussing Assessment

- Focus on facts of specific case.
- Focus on the subject's behavior rather than the subject's traits.
- Focus on understanding of context of behavior.
- Examine progression of behavior over time.
- Corroborate critical information.






Classifying the Threat


Low Risk: Subject/situation does not appear to pose a threat and any exhibited issues/concerns can be resolved easily.

Moderate Risk: Subject/situation does not appear to pose a threat but exhibits behaviors that indicate a continuing intent or potential for future violence; and/or exhibits other concerning behavior that requires intervention.


High Risk: Subject/situation appears to pose a threat, exhibiting behaviors that indicate a continuing intent to harm and efforts to prepare to carry out the plan; and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that require intervention.

Imminent: Subject/situation appears to pose a significant and immediate threat of serious violence toward others that requires containment and action to protect target(s).






Threat Management



Managing the Threat


5. Develop and implement relevant interventions
 If the subject poses a threat of violence, the threat assessment team will develop, implement, and monitor an individualized plan to intervene and reduce the threat. The plan will help:

- De-escalate, contain, or control the **subject** who may take violent action;
- Decrease vulnerabilities of the **target**;
- Modify **environment** and systems to discourage escalation; and,
- Prepare for & mitigate against **precipitating events** that may trigger adverse reactions.



Managing Threats

- Successful management will require substantial, on-going time and effort; and may involve interventions in one or more domains:
 - **Subject, e.g.:**
 - Control, contain, de-escalate, redirect behavior
 - Provide support/guidance for dealing with concerns
 - Referrals for assistance
 - **Target, e.g.:**
 - Increase situational awareness
 - Take protective actions
 - Minimize contact with subject
 - Provide support for dealing with stress/fear
 - **Environment, e.g.:**
 - Address school/climate bullying
 - Modify ineffectual practices
 - **Precipitating events**
 - Monitor for impact
 - Build contingencies



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Case Management Resources

- Check-in / Checkout
- Academic/work accommodations
- Mentoring relationship
- Alternative schooling/home schooling
- Involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Parental involvement
- Social skills training
- Behavioral contract
- Outpatient counseling/mental health care
- Emergency psychiatric evaluation
- Disciplinary measures
- Suspension/expulsion
- Law enforcement involvement
- Diversion programs
- Others?



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Legal Issues, Reporting & Record Keeping



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Information Sharing: FERPA

A teacher approaches you (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 teacher to believe that the student was a serious threat to the safety of themselves and others at school.

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


When you ask the name of the student, the teacher becomes very cautious and says they are not sure if they can provide that information, that they don't want to violate privacy law and be sued by the student's family.

What mistakes, if any, are being made?




Information Sharing: FERPA

- Teams should consult with legal counsel early on, as well as on specific cases as needed.
- FERPA is not an impediment to effective threat assessment and case management.
- FERPA governs records only, not observations, communications, etc.
- FERPA does not govern police records (for police/investigative purpose).
- Guidance from US Dept of ED encourages information sharing where health or safety is a concern.
- FERPA does not permit a private right of action.



Reporting & Record Keeping

- Teams must report to superintendent or designee any case where student poses a threat
- Teams must report quantitative data on threat assessment cases
- Teams should document assessments, safety plans, monitoring progress and re-assessments
 - Document exact words and actions - include date, time, behaviors, witnesses
 - Document protective actions taken or offered
- Consult with legal counsel about documentation
- Can use Threat Assessment and Response Report form as model





In Summary

- Virginia law requires threat assessment teams, policy, and reporting
- Threat assessment is an established standard of practice to support school violence prevention
- DCJS model policies, procedures, guidelines offer resources consistent with Virginia law and current standards of practice
- Alternatives can be used – make sure are consistent with all aspects of Virginia law.
- Consult with DCJS/VCSCS, colleagues & threat assessment experts on situations of concern

Q and A

- Resources
- Trainings
- Next Steps

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Resources

Threat Management Consultant



Dr. Gene Deisinger
Deisinger Consulting, LLC

- Internationally recognized expert
- Helped developed model protocols and policies
- TAM Instructor for VA schools, campuses & law enforcement.




Resources


The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States (2002)

Joint Project of the:

- US Secret Service
- US Department of Education



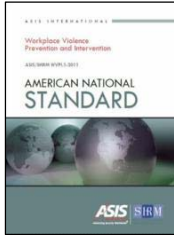
Available at:
www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/ssi_final_report.pdf




Resources

Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention American National Standard (2011)

Source:
Society for Human Resource Management & ASIS International



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



Resources






Available at:
rems.ed.gov/RemsPublications.aspx
Released: 6/18/13




Resources


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

Source:
US Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Behavioral Analysis Unit



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

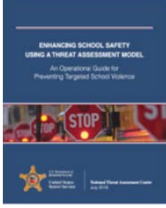




Resources

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

US Department of Homeland Security
US Secret Service
National Threat Assessment Center



Available at:
www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/USSS_NTAC_Enhancing_School_Safety_Guide_7.11.18.pdf



Resources



ASV AVERTED SCHOOL VIOLENCE
LESSONS LEARNED BECOME LESSONS APPLIED

Share Your Averted School Violence Incident to Improve School Safety

Our Mission

We encourage school personnel, law enforcement officers, and mental health professionals to share their averted school violence stories and lessons learned, in order to improve school safety and help prevent future tragedies.

Sharing your story is an anonymous, secure, non-punitive, and confidential process.



www.ASVnearmiss.org



Trainings

Upcoming Opportunities:

- 2019 National Threat Assessment Conference for Educational Institutions
- Basic K12 Threat Management
- Advanced K12 Threat Management
- Threat Assessment Train the Trainer

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	<p>We are here to help! www.dcps.virginia.gov</p> <p>Donna Michaelis ~ 804-371-6506 donna.michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov</p> <p>James Christian ~ 804-357-0967 james.christian@dcjs.Virginia.gov</p> <p>Betsy Bell ~ 804-418-4629 elizabeth.bell@dcjs.Virginia.gov</p> <p>Shellie Evers ~ 804-629-7042 shellie.evers@dcjs.virginia.gov</p> <p>Brad Stang ~ 804-786-3973 brad.stang@dcjs.virginia.gov</p>
