



THREAT ASSESSMENT RESOURCES
INTERNATIONAL



Virginia Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams

Advanced Training Session

Provided by the Virginia Department
of Criminal Justice Services

A training curriculum developed by
Gene Deisinger, Ph.D. & Marisa Randazzo, Ph.D.

Instructor Manual



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Advanced training provided by the
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

A training curriculum developed by:
Gene Deisinger, Ph.D. & Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D.

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Published by:
Threat Assessment Resources Intl, LLC
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INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Commonwealth of Virginia passed legislation requiring all public institutions of higher education in Virginia to develop and operate threat assessment teams. Following the enactment of that law the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services offered basic and advanced campus threat assessment and management training to staff at Virginia institutions of higher education.

In the time since that initial training, developments within the field of campus threat assessment and management have helped to articulate and hone what constitutes current best practices in campus threat assessment. In 2010, a new national standard was approved for higher education institutions, which recommends all college and universities implement campus threat assessment and management teams and which recommends resources for developing and operating a campus threat assessment and management program. In addition to the 2008 legislation requiring Virginia colleges and universities to operate threat assessment teams, this national Standard further articulates the specific components of current best practices in campus threat assessment (through the resources cited) and may serve as a benchmark against which colleges and universities may be evaluated in handling threats of or incidents involving violence.

The training presented in the session is designed to provide information on current best practices, refresher training on campus threat assessment procedures, topics in advanced threat assessment, and tabletop and group exercises to reinforce skills learned. The materials in this Instructor Manual are organized into background materials (including the Introduction and About the Authors sections), training materials (the presentation slides), and resource materials for further reading and reference. In addition to this Instructor Manual, instructors should use the accompanying Resource CD with resources for background reading prior to giving the course, and case facts for the tabletop exercises.

INSTRUCTOR TIPS

Instructor Role

The role of the instructor in this advanced training session is part lecturer – providing new information and a review of previous information – and part facilitator. As a facilitator, the instructor should encourage discussion among participants, solicit their input and experiences, and share his or her own experiences where relevant. The instructor should admit where he or she does not know an answer to a question, ask other participants if they know, and/or offer some suggestions for where to look for the answer. The field of campus threat assessment continues to evolve, and while it is important to try to stay as current as possible with all developments, it is possible you may not be aware of some. Even if you do not know the answer, you can still facilitate discussion among participants around that issue.



Room Set-Up

For this course you will need the following:

- Laptop or other computer
- Projector for the PowerPoint
- Participant manuals for all participants
- Internet connection through the computer; and,
- A way to project sound from the computer.

The training room should be set up in a way that facilitates group discussion at several small tables or around one large table (if group size permits discussion in that room arrangement). A classroom style set up can work but will need some modification for the tabletop exercises.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Gene Deisinger, Ph.D., is a nationally recognized expert on threat assessment and management. Dr. Deisinger was a founding member of the Iowa State University Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), a multidisciplinary team that serves as a pro-active planning group and coordinates institutional responses during crisis situations. As part of this team, Dr. Deisinger developed the threat management program. He has served as the primary threat manager for Iowa State University since the program's inception in 1994. This program has been recognized as a model for threat assessment in college and university settings. He has personally managed and supervised threat cases and protective details for a broad range of governmental dignitaries, public figures, and members of the university community. Dr. Deisinger has provided consultation and training to numerous colleges, universities, law enforcement agencies, and private corporations across the United States; and been an invited speaker for several national organizations. He currently serves as a subject matter expert, consulting to the FBI, Secret Service and U.S. Dept of Education, regarding their joint study of targeted violence in institutions of higher education. As a licensed psychologist, a certified health service provider in psychology, and a certified peace officer, Dr. Deisinger brings a unique perspective to the field of threat assessment. He serves as the Associate Director of Public Safety and Deputy Chief of Police with the Iowa State University Police Division, and also serves as a Special Deputy United States Marshal with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.

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Marisa Reddy Randazzo, Ph.D., is a national expert on threat assessment and targeted violence. Formerly the Chief Research Psychologist for the U.S. Secret Service, Dr. Randazzo has provided threat assessment training to over 10,000 professionals in higher education, secondary schools, corporations, law enforcement agencies, human resources, mental health, and the intelligence community throughout the United States, Canada, and the European Union. In her ten years with the Secret Service, she reviewed hundreds of threat investigations and supervised the agency's research on assassinations, presidential threats, insider threats, school



shootings, security breaches, and stalking incidents. She also served as Co-Director of the Safe School Initiative, the largest federal study of school shootings in the United States, and is co-author of the U.S. Secret Service/U.S. Department of Education model of threat assessment for educational institutions. Dr. Randazzo now heads Threat Assessment Resources International, LLC, providing threat assessment training and case consultation to colleges, schools, corporations, and security professionals. She has testified before Congress, briefed Cabinet Secretaries, and been interviewed by numerous major television, radio, and print news outlets about threat assessment and targeted violence prevention. In 2005, Dr. Randazzo was awarded the Williams College Bicentennial Medal for her work in preventing violence.

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Dr. Deisinger and Dr. Randazzo are the lead authors of The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams (Boston: Applied Risk Management, 2008). This book is a practical guide designed specifically for implementation of threat assessment teams within institutions of higher education. Ordering information is available at www.arm-security.com or www.amazon.com.



TRAINING MATERIALS



THREAT ASSESSMENT RESOURCES
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Virginia Campus Threat Assessment Teams: Advanced Training Session

Training Curriculum developed by
Marisa Randazzo, Ph.D. &
Gene Deisinger, Ph.D.
www.ThreatResources.com

Instructor Notes:

Open the session by welcoming everyone and introducing yourself.

Before going into any course content, be sure to cover logistics – including location of the closest exits and other emergency information, location of restrooms, and when you anticipate taking breaks, lunch, and when you expect to adjourn.

As you move into introducing yourself and the course content, emphasize that you are there in the role of facilitator as well as instructor, and that you encourage participants to help answer each other's questions, as well as share their own experiences in threat assessment.

INSTRUCTOR(S):

- [Insert instructor name(s) here]
 - [Insert information on professional background]

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Instructor Notes:

Start out the session by introducing yourself and telling participants about your background. This self-introduction helps to establish why you have the experience and background to be leading this training session.

If the size of the audience permits, we recommend asking participants to introduce themselves and share some information about themselves, such as their current position, whether they serve on a threat assessment team, and if so how long have they served. This helps participants to get to know each other initially and may facilitate more communication between participants in class discussions as well as during breaks.



TRAINING AGENDA

- Review of Threat Assessment and Management Process
- Other Assessment Considerations
- Integrated Case Management
- Legal Updates
- Common Problems and Solutions in Campus Threat Assessment
- Challenges in Implementing and Maintaining Effective Teams
- Integrating Threat Assessment Team Work into Broader Violence Prevention Programs
- Conclusion & Resources

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Instructor Notes:

Introduce participants to the content that will be covered.

Emphasize that the session will be interactive, with group tabletop exercises so that participants can practice their skills.

Note that while there is time set aside for questions at the end, participants are encouraged to ask questions and share their experiences throughout the session.

Note that participants can learn from each other's experiences, and that they can use each other as resources after the training is over. Encourage participants to share contact information because it can be helpful to talk over ideas or strategies with others, even if confidential information cannot be disclosed.



COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion, participants will:

- Review of current best practices in campus threat assessment and management.
- Gain practice in threat assessment procedures.
- Practice case management planning, implementation.
- Understand recent legal developments.
- Be better able to address challenging team dynamics.

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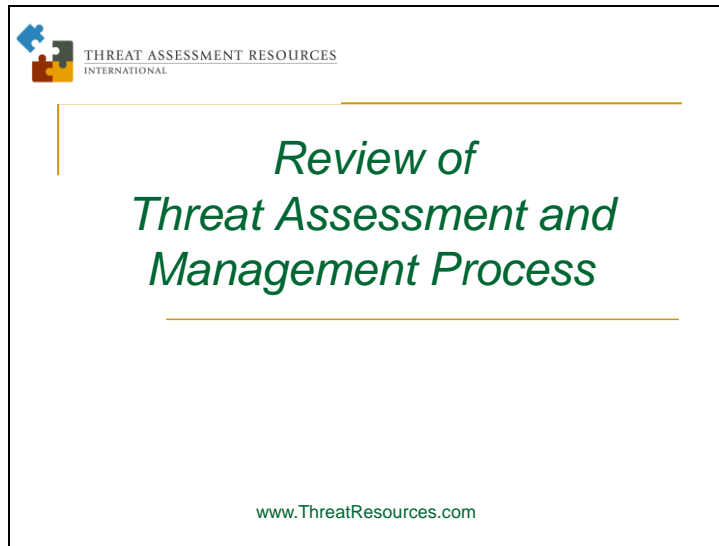


Instructor Notes:

The learning objectives for the course are what participants will better understand and/or do after having taken the course. A major goal in this session is to give participants a chance to discuss updates in the field of campus threat assessment and to practice their skills in threat assessment and case management.

Participants will also gain a better understanding of recent legal issues– including the new national standard for colleges and universities and the standard of care for campus threat assessment teams or processes, which are shaping expectations for how teams handle threats and other disturbing behavior – and which can also be used to help get “buy in” from upper level administrators and prompt people to action when needed.

And, participants will gain a greater understanding of factors that can negatively impact team dynamics and how to remedy them.



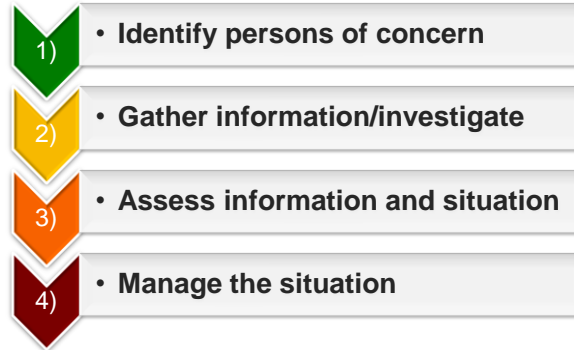
Instructor Notes:

We begin the training with an overview of current best practices in campus threat assessment and management and a review of campus threat assessment procedures.

For this section, instructors should be familiar with details of the threat assessment and management process described in Section 4 of The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams (Deisinger et al., 2008). They should also read the article by Nolan, Randazzo & Deisinger (2011) in the URMIA Journal, available on the Resource CD.

OVERVIEW OF THREAT ASSESSMENT

A systematic process that is designed to:



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Instructor Notes:

For this section, instructors should be familiar with details of the threat assessment and management process described in Section 4 of *The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams* (Deisinger et al., 2008). They should also read the article by Nolan, Randazzo & Deisinger (2011) in the *URMIA Journal*, available on the Resource CD.

While many participants may be familiar with the concept of threat assessment, it is helpful to include here a clear description of the threat assessment process so that everyone is on the same page. Threat assessment and management – also known as behavioral threat assessment – is a four-part process that includes:

- identifying persons and situations that have raised some concern (for example because a person made a threat or is behaving in a way that is troubling or worrying their friends or classmates);
- gathering additional information about that person and situation from multiple sources;
- evaluating or assessing the information gathered to determine whether the person poses a threat of violence or harm to others (or to self, or both others and self); and,
- developing and implementing a plan to manage the situation and reduce risk if the person is believed to pose a threat.



CURRENT BEST PRACTICES

- ❑ Multi-disciplinary team
- ❑ Authority to engage in threat assessment
- ❑ Standard threat assessment processes and procedures
- ❑ Integrated case management strategies where appropriate
- ❑ Active case monitoring
- ❑ Resources and activities that support threat assessment operations

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Instructor Notes:

*For this section, instructors should be familiar with details of the threat assessment and management process described in Section 4 of [*The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams*](#) (Deisinger et al., 2008). They should also read the article by Nolan, Randazzo & Deisinger (2011) in the *URMIA Journal*, available on the Resource CD.*

The following points are adapted from Nolan, Randazzo, & Deisinger (2011):

As mentioned, the national Standard “provides resources for implementing Threat Assessment Teams on campus.” While such resources would not define the standard of care exclusively or conclusively, it is likely that they would be cited as persuasive in the event of litigation related to an institution’s threat assessment efforts, because they are relied upon and recommended in the Standard. Therefore, administrators and risk managers should determine whether their threat assessment teams are in fact following practices similar to those described in the cited resources. In general, threat assessment teams should follow practices that are most responsive to the needs of their particular campuses, but if a team’s practices differ substantially from the general approaches outlined in the resources cited in the Standard, the team should be able to articulate why its following a different approach is more appropriate given the unique needs of its campus.

The resources that are referenced in the Standard provide guidance on what the authors consider to be current best practices for campus threat assessment and threat management. These resources cover both the processes and procedures that TAM teams should follow in handling reports of threats or other concerning behavior, as well as the campus and community systems and resources that support and facilitate TAM team operations.

First, current best practices recommends that institutions develop and operate multi-disciplinary threat assessment teams, with authority from the institution to engage in threat assessment and management activities on behalf of the institution. These activities should include standard procedures, which we will describe shortly, to handle day-to-day reports submitted to the team, conduct full inquiries, and implement/monitor case management activities. In addition, institutions can enhance their overall threat assessment capacity through the addition of certain resources and activities that support the threat assessment team’s operations.



ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

- ❑ Administration support (and administrative support)
- ❑ Basic & advanced threat assessment training
- ❑ Case management resources
- ❑ Database and other documentation
- ❑ Campus-wide awareness strategies
- ❑ Reporting mechanisms
- ❑ Community relationships (engagement with gatekeepers)

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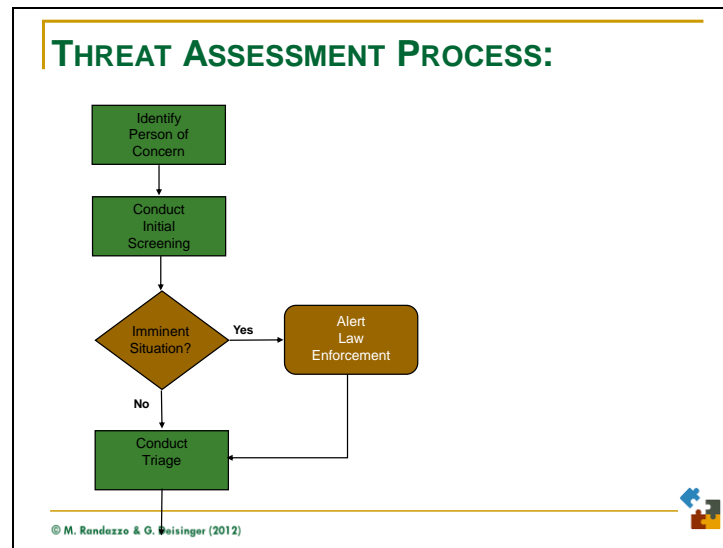
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But to be more fully effective, a threat assessment team needs support from key resources and activities on campus and in the community. These resources and activities include:

- Support/backing from the institution's leadership
- Administrative support if possible
- Formal training for the team in basic threat assessment – and preferably in advanced threat assessment as well
- Access to case management resources such as mental health services, other support services, and law enforcement/security services
- Active outreach and training to the community to promote awareness
- Ways for the campus and community to report concerns to the team
- Engagement with gatekeepers of all types, at all levels

Discussion of these resources and their usefulness for enhancing threat assessment team operations and effectiveness can be found in *The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams* (2008).

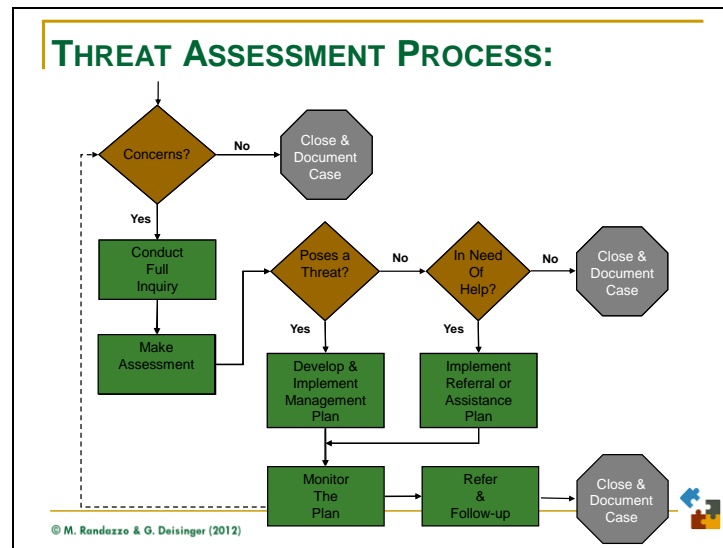


Instructor Notes:

For this section, instructors should be familiar with details of the threat assessment and management process described in Section 4 of [The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams](#) (Deisinger et al., 2008). They should also read the article by Nolan, Randazzo & Deisinger (2011) in the URMIA Journal, available on the Resource CD.

In their book on Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams, Dr. Deisinger and Dr. Randazzo described a process they recommend in conducting a threat assessment. That process is depicted on this slide and the next.

The instructor(s) can quickly review the process depicted in this slide and the next. The elements of this process are detailed in Section 4 of [The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams](#).



Instructor Notes:

For this section, instructors should be familiar with details of the threat assessment and management process described in Section 4 of *The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams* (Deisinger et al., 2008). They should also read the article by Nolan, Randazzo & Deisinger (2011) in the *URMIA Journal*, available on the Resource CD.

This is the second part of the process flowchart. We will review all of these steps in detail.

STEPS IN A THREAT ASSESSMENT INQUIRY

- ❑ Facilitate reporting to team
- ❑ Identify / learn of person at risk
- ❑ Gather information
- ❑ Evaluate person/situation (includes investigative questions)
- ❑ If necessary, develop threat management plan
- ❑ Implement threat management plan
- ❑ Monitor and re-evaluate plan to ensure safety
- ❑ Refer and follow-up as appropriate

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Instructor Notes:

For this section, instructors should be familiar with details of the threat assessment and management process described in Section 4 of The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams (Deisinger et al., 2008). They should also read the article by Nolan, Randazzo & Deisinger (2011) in the URMIA Journal, available on the Resource CD.

As the two slides with the graphic depicted, there are several steps in the threat assessment and management process. Greater detail on these procedures is covered in The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams, but essentially the process starts with the team encouraging people throughout campus and in the community to report threats and other concerning behavior to the team. Then once the team learns of a person of concern, the team gathers more information about the person from various sources. The team will then evaluate the person and their situation to determine whether they pose a threat of violence or self-harm – or if they are otherwise in need of some help. If so, the team will then develop and implement a case management plan, and then monitor the plan to see if it is working as intended. The team will continue to monitor and follow up on the case as needed – gathering more information and re-evaluating whenever necessary.

The next two slides provide a graphic depiction of the threat assessment and management process. I will focus on particular sections of these graphics when we discuss these components in greater detail.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Does the person pose a threat of harm, whether to himself, to others, or both?
 - If YES, develop, implement and monitor a case management plan
 - If NO, move on to Evaluation Question 2
2. Does the person otherwise show a need for help or intervention?

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Instructor Notes:

For this section, instructors should be familiar with details of the threat assessment and management process described in Section 4 of The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams (Deisinger et al., 2008). They should also read the article by Nolan, Randazzo & Deisinger (2011) in the URMIA Journal, available on the Resource CD.

After gathering information from multiple sources and analyzing the information by answering the key investigative questions, the primary question that the team needs to answer is:

Does the person pose a threat of harm, whether to him/herself, to others, or both? That is, does the person's behavior suggest that he or she is on a pathway toward harm? Do they have an idea to do harm, a plan, are they taking steps toward carrying out the plan, do they have – or are trying to acquire – lethal means to do harm? Are they moving toward implementing an attack?

If the answer is “yes,” the team documents its response and rationale, and then proceeds to develop, implement, and continually monitor an individualized threat management plan to reduce the risk that the person poses. The team should document the details of this plan, as well as document steps it takes to implement the plan and/or refer the person for help. The team should also document its efforts to monitor the effectiveness of the plan and modify the plan as needed.

If the answer is “no,” the team documents its response and reasoning and proceeds to Question 2.

If the answer to the primary question is “no,” then the team moves on to the secondary question:

If the person does not pose a threat of harm, does the person otherwise show a need for help or intervention, such as mental health care?



EVALUATION CLASSIFICATION

- ☐ **Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)** – Appears to pose a clear/immediate threat of violence or self-harm and requires immediate containment. Needs law enforcement notification, target protection, and management plan.
- ☐ **Priority 2 (High Risk)** – Appears to pose a threat of violence or self-harm but lacks immediacy or specific plan. Requires threat management plan.
- ☐ **Priority 3 (Moderate Risk)** – Does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, but does exhibit behavior/circumstances that are likely to be disruptive to the community. Requires referral and/or active monitoring plan.
- ☐ **Priority 4 (Low Risk)** – Does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is significant disruption to the community expected. Requires a monitoring plan.
- ☐ **Priority 5 (No Identified Risk)** – Does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is significant disruption to the community expected. Close case after proper documentation.

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Instructor Notes:

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Case prioritization


The answers to Questions A and B will dictate the Priority Level that the threat assessment team assigns to the case. The Priority Level is designed to communicate both the level of threat posed by the person in question, as well as actions that may be necessary on the part of the team to address and reduce that threat level. While the team can choose its own rating scale, we offer the following for consideration.

Sample Priority Levels for Threat Cases

- **Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)** The person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward self or others and requires containment. The team should immediately notify law enforcement to pursue containment options, and/or take actions to protect identified target(s). Once such emergency actions have been taken, the team shall then develop and implement a management plan in anticipation of the person's release or return to campus.
- **Priority 2 (High Risk)** The person/situation appears to pose a threat of self-harm or physical violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacks immediacy and/or a specific plan — or a specified plan of violence does exist but currently lacks a specific target. This requires the team to develop and implement a management plan.
- **Priority 3 (Moderate Risk)** The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, but does exhibit behaviors/circumstances that are likely to be disruptive to the community. This case warrants some intervention, referral and monitoring to minimize risk for significant disruption to the community or escalation in threat. The team should develop a referral and/or active monitoring plan.
- **Priority 4 (Low Risk)** The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is there evidence of significant disruption to the community. This case may warrant some intervention, referral and monitoring to minimize risk for escalation in threat. The team should develop a monitoring plan.

Instructional strategy: Instructor should use the analogy of weather prediction (e.g. storm watch vs. storm warning) to explain the information contained in the prioritization system: i.e., each priority category both describes the level of concern/threat and also prescribes what actions should be taken in response.





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Other Assessment Considerations

www.ThreatResources.com

Instructor Notes:

In addition to the overall threat assessment and management process, there are some aspects of threat assessment that will apply in particular cases. We cover them here.

THREATS

Direct

I'm gonna go home, get my shotgun
and come back here and blow your head off.

Indirect / Veiled

That guy had the right idea about how to handle
people that got in his way.

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Instructor Notes:

Threats may either be very direct in their stated intent, such as the first example, a statement uttered to by an employee who believed that he was about to be terminated by the supervisor he was asked to meet with.

However they may be rather indirect and veiled such as in the second example. This was uttered by a student who was chronically upset about his lack of academic success and his belief that faculty and administrators conspired against him, contributing to his failure.

THREATS

Specific

I am going to kill you.

Conditional

If you don't get me the aid I need,
I am going to kill you;

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Instructor Notes:

Sometimes threats have specific language about intent or time or means.

However, at times they are conditional in that they imply that the threatened action will occur only if other events also occur (or don't occur). These statements tend to be manipulations that attempt to co-opt the target into taking actions desired by the subject.

EVALUATING THREATS

Threats may increase risk, decrease risk or have no relationship to risk for violence

Some subjects who make threats ultimately act on them

Most subjects never act on threats

Many subjects who commit acts of violence never make threats

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Instructor Notes:

It is important to note that while threatening statements and communications generate a great deal of distress, they are not (by themselves, good indicators of targeted violence.

Research has found that some people who make threats do in fact ultimately act on them. The best example of this is in domestic violence situations, when there are threatening statements made by a person who has been in an intimate relationship. The threats, by themselves are still not reliable predictors, but there are elevated levels of violence in those situations.

However, research has also found that most subjects never act on threat of violence. Indeed, studies have shown false positive rates (that is, a person threatens violence but does not enact violence in 68% - 90% of cases where threats have been documented;

Finally, and perhaps most disturbing, many subjects who commit acts of violence never make any threats to the person(s) they harm. And this is the case in most incidents of targeted violence. The absence of threatening statements or communications does not mean the situation is safe.



DEALING WITH THREATS

Take threats seriously,
but be careful not to over-react.

- ❑ Encourage community to **report** concerns.
- ❑ **Save** all threatening messages;
- ❑ Be sure to **investigate** and **follow-up** on credible threats.
- ❑ Consider threats in the appropriate **context**.
- ❑ **Document** your findings and actions.

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Instructor Notes:

Threats are best viewed as behaviors of possible concern and should be taken seriously, investigated and dealt with in a measured and effective manner.

INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS

- Threats of violence;
- Death, suicide, weapons, destruction, etc;
- Persons who have been attacked;
- Persons who have carried out attacks;
- Knowledge of Security:
 - Guards, access, keys, work practices;
- Stalking:
 - Surveillance, knowledge of activities;
- Unpaid debts or entitlements;

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Instructor Notes:

When talking about “inappropriate” communications, this term can cover a broad range of behavior that may prompt concern. Examples are provided on this slide and the next.

INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATIONS

- Extreme admiration or affection;
- A special, shared history or destiny;
- Admonishments to change lifestyle;
- Religious/historical themes;
- Content that is disjointed, sinister or bizarre;
- The recipient being someone else;
- Mental illness: psychiatric care, medication;

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Instructor Notes:

This is a continuation of the broad list of examples of inappropriate communications. Have you encountered any cases that fit some of these descriptions? Feel free to share your experience with the group.

USING ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Utilize appropriate, objective, instruments:

- ❑ Spousal Risk Assessment Guide (SARA)
- ❑ Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG)
- ❑ Cawood / White Assessment Grid
- ❑ MOSAIC
- ❑ Classification of Violence Risk (COVR)
- ❑ Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21)

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

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Instructor Notes:

There are various instruments the threat assessment team can use to assist in this assessment process. These objective tools can be very helpful when used appropriately. We caution, however, that the team should not rely too heavily on the use of these instruments. The assessment process should always be guided primarily by human judgment.

Utilize appropriate, objective, instruments, e.g.:

- Cawood / White Assessment Grid;
- Classification of Violence Risk (COVR);
- MOSAIC;
- Spousal Assault Risk Assessment Guide (SARA);
- Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG);
- Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21);
- Workplace Violence Risk Assessment Checklist.

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

USING ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Appropriate use of instruments:

- ❑ Avoid reliance on instrument only;
- ❑ Ensure evaluator is properly trained;
- ❑ Ensure that instrument is reliable and valid;
- ❑ Be aware of limitations of the instrument;
- ❑ Stay current with new data and versions;
- ❑ Integrate information with structured professional judgment.

Source: *Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence*.
Association of Threat Assessment Professionals

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Instructor Notes:

Appropriate use of instruments:

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



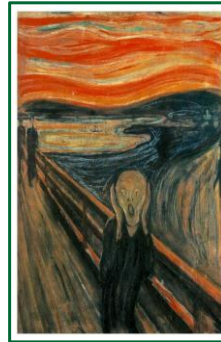
Instructor Notes:

One essential component to the threat assessment process is case management: developing, implementing, and monitoring a strategy to reduce any threat posed. While we cover this topic in the course on basic threat assessment, we provide much more detail here – including elements such as incorporating mandated psychological assessments, case management legal considerations, and particular considerations for stalking and domestic violence situations.

THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR...

Fear Driven Responses:

- Fuel misunderstanding:
 - ❑ “Epidemic of campus violence”
 - ❑ Role of mental illness
- Foster reactive and ineffective strategies:
 - ❑ “Zero Tolerance”
 - ❑ Profiling
 - ❑ Action imperatives
 - ❑ Isolating interventions



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Instructor Notes:

If a team's response to a person who poses a threat is driven by fear – the team's fear or a victim's fear – it can close off effective management options and perpetuate misunderstandings.

The Team can best accomplish its ultimate goal of managing threatening situations by identifying in advance the range of resources that may be available on campus. These can include traditional resources such as counseling at the institution's mental health center; evaluation and treatment through a local mental health professional; and the involvement of law enforcement to contain or control the person in question. However, the Team should also consider less traditional options, such as a reduced course load, medical leave of absence, behavioral contracts, involvement in community service, assignment of a mentor, or any other resources that can help give the person in question something to look forward to or that plays to their strengths. Identifying a wide array of resources in advance will help the Team think broadly and creatively about options that may work when an individual case arises.



***The only real way of preventing school
violence is to get into students' heads and
their hearts***

---Safe School Initiative
Joint study of K-12 school shootings
conducted by the U.S. Secret Service &
U.S. Department of Education

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Instructor Notes:

This quote comes from the Safe School Initiative, which was a review of 37 incidents of targeted violence in the K-12 school setting between 1974 and 2000.

***But we can't understand
what is within our students' hearts
if our hearts are guided by fear.***

--- Gary Pavela (2008)

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Instructor Notes:

And here is a follow-up quote from Gary Pavela, formerly of the University of Maryland and now the editor of the Law & Policy Report. When it comes to campus violence, I suggest that we amend this quote and the previous one to include employees as well as students. As we talk about threat assessment throughout the day, I will be talking about a process that can be used to identify and intervene with faculty and staff – as well as students -- that may raise some concern.

DEVELOP A CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- ❑ Develop an individualized plan based on information gathered in the investigation and other facts known about the person.
 - Case management is more art than science.
 - Plan must be fact-based and person-specific.
 - Engagement is essential, even when dealing with someone who is very angry.
 - Distancing makes monitoring and intervention more difficult.
 - Personalities matter.

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Instructor Notes:

The plan should be based upon the information gathered in the threat assessment inquiry, and tailored to address the problems of the person in question. Threat management is more art than science. It focuses both on addressing what is already working -- or still working -- for the person of concern, and creatively searching for resources — both on- and off-campus — that are available to help move the person away from thoughts and plans of violence/suicide and get assistance to address underlying problems.

An engagement model works well with the majority of cases. Most persons who come to the attention of TAM Teams are persons who are at a crisis point and are looking for assistance. Most have distanced themselves from others or feel alienated from others. They typically respond positively to someone who will hear their concerns, who will not over-react to emotional venting, who will engage in problem-solving, and who demonstrates care for them and their situation. While this model often works well, there are some cases in which such direct engagement might inflame the situation. Therefore, each situation should be evaluated based on its own case facts in order to determine whether such direct follow-up would be appropriate.

A key to establishing an effective working relationship with the person of concern is to identify a responsible person they already trust. One key step to defusing a potentially violent situation involving someone with a grievance is to allow him or her to feel “heard” and validated. Even if they cannot get their way — which oftentimes they cannot — feeling as if someone has understood their position can go a long way toward moving the person away from thoughts and plans of violence. The trusted ally can be a friend, fellow student, colleague, faculty advisor, mentor, coach, supervisor, residential advisor, spouse, or parent. If the Team cannot find someone that the person already trusts, they can use someone in the campus community who relates well with most people.

DEVELOP A CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- ❑ Anticipate what might change in the short- and mid-term, and how the person may react.
- ❑ Monitor using available resources. Who sees the person regularly, inside work/campus, outside, on weekends, online, etc.?
- ❑ Document decision-making, implementation, and progress.

Source: NASA and major airlines

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Instructor Notes:

Anticipate what might change over the coming days, weeks, and months. Are there changes that might help the person of concern (e.g. is there something they are looking forward to)? Are there potential changes that could make things worse? If so, what -- if anything -- can the team do about those potential changes (e.g. help ensure positive changes come about; try to prevent negative changes from occurring)?

CASE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Effective case management incorporates interventions in each of the (relevant) factors:

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

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Instructor Notes:

Incidents of violence typically arise from an intersection of several factors, including:

- The “subject” or individual of concern,
- The “target” of the individual’s animosity or grievances,
- An “environment” where violence may be encouraged or dared – or at least where it is not discouraged, and
- “Precipitating events” or triggers that prompt a violent reaction.

Effective case management explores interventions with each of the (relevant) factors.

CASE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Case management strategies can include the following:

- ❑ No action
- ❑ Monitoring
 - Active
 - Passive

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Instructor Notes:

The following are options the team can consider in crafting an individualized threat management plan. These should not be considered exhaustive of all available options; individual institutions may identify other options available in addition to — or in place of — the following:

Monitoring - Sometimes, the best initial approach is to “wait and see.” Clearly, this approach should only be taken when there are no indications of imminent or high risk. The team may decide to keep an eye on the person and their situation to see how things may evolve over a few days, weeks, or months. In some cases, the team may decide to monitor a person as the only step it takes. In others, the team may use monitoring as one part of an overall plan. Monitoring can take more passive or more active forms. In more active monitoring, the team may solicit the help of those who know the person and see him or her on a regular basis. This can include roommates, friends, family members, significant others, etc., whom the team asks to keep an eye on the person and alert the Team if there is any change in behavior or other concerns. Active monitoring involves the team checking the status of the situation on a proactive basis, until the situation is adequately resolved. Passive monitoring involves asking reporting parties to keep the team informed if there are any significant developments in the case. The team will not actively check the status of the situation unless additional information lead them to do so. For passive monitoring to be most effective, persons who raised initial concerns may need to be trained and coached in regard to indications of problematic changes in the system. If the person(s) expressing concern have not received basic awareness training, this would be a good time to build that relationship and provide such training.

SUBJECT-BASED STRATEGIES

Implement appropriate strategies:

- Utilize less intrusive measures first;
 - Driven by effective case management vs.
 - Documentation & liability management.
- Maintain channel of communication and information gathering (with subject).
- Subject interview;
 - De-escalate, contain, or control subject.
- Subject referral for assistance;
- Subject confrontation or warning;

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Instructor Notes:

When considering case management from the four factors in the STEP model just mentioned (Subject, Target, Environment, Precipitating Events), here are subject-based strategies to consider. These include the strategy of trying less intrusive measures first, to see if those are sufficient, and if not then to move on to more intrusive measures. It is also important to keep in mind that an interview with the person of concern can help to de-escalate the person if approached with respect and a genuine interest in listening to what the person of concern has to say. Giving a person of concern a chance to feel “heard” can help to reduce hostility.

WHEN YOUR ONLY TOOL IS A . . .

Over-Reliance on Control-Based Strategies

- Discipline
- Student conduct
- Criminal prosecution
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Termination



Never equate separation with safety

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Instructor Notes:

It is important to keep in mind that relying solely or primarily on disciplinary measures – including some form of separation from the institution – does not equal enhanced safety. In some cases, that separation could serve as a precipitating event, yielding greater desperation or animosity on the part of the person of concern. In some cases, separation from the institution or some other disciplinary measures may be necessary, but the team should determine how best to continue to monitor the person of concern – or intervene if possible – even with the person no longer part of the campus community.

SUBJECT CONTROL STRATEGIES

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

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

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

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Instructor Notes:

This slide provides more rationale for thinking through a comprehensive case management plan, to include considering the impact that control-based strategies used alone may have on the person of concern.

SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT

Utilize key relationships (with subject, target and witnesses) as channel of communication for:

- Information gathering and assessment;
- Intervention;
- Support;
- Monitoring.

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Instructor Notes:

Another aspect of case management involves what we call relationship management or sustained engagement – that is, using key relationships with the person of concern and others to provide a channel of information, intervention, support, and monitoring.

TARGET MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Coaching regarding personal safety approaches

- Clear statements to subject:
 - ❑ Relationship/contact is unwanted
 - ❑ Stop all contact and/or communication
- Avoid subsequent contact / response
 - ❑ Document all further contacts
- Minimize public information
- Maintain awareness of surroundings
 - ❑ Vary routine
- Develop contingency plans
 - ❑ Escape / shelter, support
- Utilize support systems

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Instructor Notes:

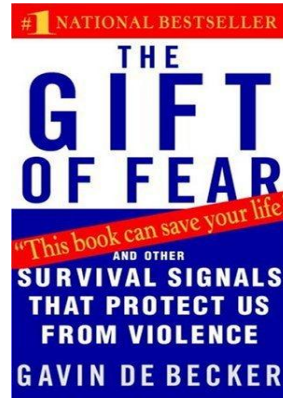
Furthering considering case management from the four factors in the STEP model (Subject, Target, Environment, Precipitating Events), here are target management strategies to consider. Also known as victim management strategies, these strategies center around preventing or minimizing contact between the person of concern and any person(s) who feel threatened, developing and implementing safety plans for victims, and providing connection with support systems.

VICTIMS ARE PEOPLE TOO

What victims want:

- Care;
- Certainty;
- Consistency;
- Communication;

- Gavin de Becker
"The Gift of Fear"



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Instructor Notes:

Gavin de Becker's acclaimed book, *The Gift of Fear*, describes what victims or targets want from a threat assessment professional: care, certainty, consistency, and communication. We can never offer certainty – but victim management strategies can try to address providing care, consistency, and communications to anyone who feels threatened.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Address systemic, policy or procedural problems that may serve as triggering conditions
- Bullying prevention/intervention programs
- Enhance campus climate – caring community
- Intervene with associates that support violent behavior
- Enhance conflict management skills

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Instructor Notes:

Modification of the environment - While there are many ways to consider intervention directly with the subject of concern, some situations will be best resolved by modifications to the system or environment that may be causing or contributing to the concern. For example, a student may react inappropriately to a poorly developed and burdensome procedure or policy. The student's behavior must be addressed, but if the procedure or policy tends to provoke discord because it is objectively unfair or unreasonable, then that procedure or policy may be reviewed and revised to be more useful and helpful.

Victim protective actions - In addition to interventions with the subject (or in cases where it is not possible to intervene effectively with a subject or where the Team is dealing with an anonymous threat), emphasis may be placed on actions that increase the potential victim's safety regardless of the subject's actions. Such protective efforts may include:

- Administrative leave for the potential victim to minimize exposure to the potential danger;
- Moving the potential victim to another housing or work location so they are harder to locate or are in a more secure environment;
- Modifying security and access control of the potential victim's housing or work area (e.g., locking access doors or verifying identity before providing access);
- Coaching potential victims regarding personal safety approaches (e.g., monitoring and being aware of their environment, varying their routes of travel, traveling with friends/colleagues, etc.).

MANAGING POTENTIAL TRIGGER EVENTS

Monitor and manage precipitating events:

- Loss (real, perceived, or anticipated)
 - Job or income;
 - Loss of status;
 - Significant other;
- Perceived rejection;
- Perceived injustice;
- Ostracized by others;
- Health problems;
- Violation of a court order.

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Instructor Notes:

When considering case management from the four factors in the STEP model just mentioned (Subject, Target, Environment, Precipitating Events), we also consider strategies for managing, preventing, or buffering against precipitating events or potential trigger events. These events include anything that would be – or could be perceived as – another loss, loss of status, or humiliation for the person of concern, or anything that could lead to increased stress or overwhelm the person's ability to cope.

TIMES OF INCREASED RISK

Increased risk during “dramatic moments”:

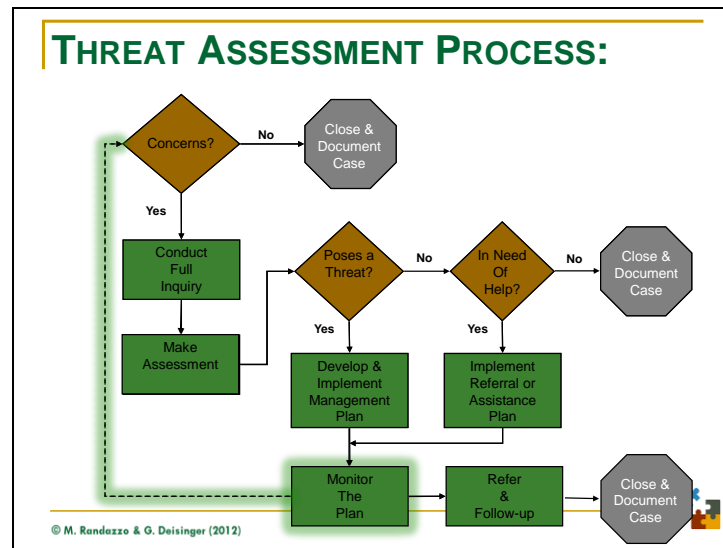
- Changes in relationship or residence status
- Arrests
- Issuance of protective orders
- Court hearings
- Custody hearings
- Anniversary dates
- Family-oriented holidays

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Instructor Notes:

We also take note of times of increased risk during what are known as “dramatic moments,” which can include those important or meaningful dates listed here.



Instructor Notes:

Point out the Monitor the Plan box and the Refer & Follow-up box – AND note the feedback loop back up to the Concerns? box. Note that an important part of monitoring the plan and following-up is to provide new information back into the threat assessment process. If the plan isn't working, or has created some unintended consequences, the team will want to revisit the assessment and case management aspects of the process. On the other hand, if the monitoring shows that the threat has been successfully reduced (and stayed that way for an acceptable period of time) the team can move to close and document the case.



IMPLEMENT, MONITOR, FOLLOW UP

- ❑ Once the plan is developed, it needs to be implemented and monitored.
- ❑ Team should include implementation and monitoring responsibilities as part of the case management plan.
- ❑ Further referrals may be necessary.
- ❑ Team should continue to follow up as necessary.
- ❑ Can close the case once threat level has been reduced for an acceptable period of time.

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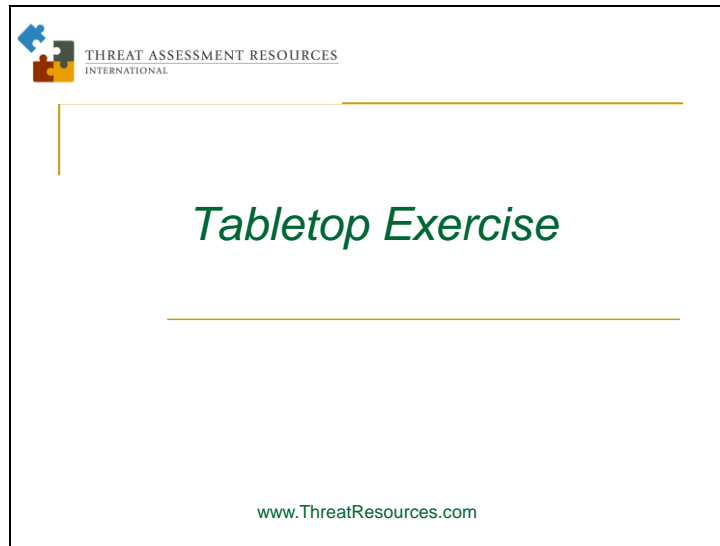


Instructor Notes:

Once a team develops a case management plan, it is critical to make sure that plan is implemented – and monitored to make sure it is having the intended effect. If changes need to be made to the plan, the team should modify the plan and implement accordingly.

Threat management cases generally remain open until the person in question is no longer reasonably assessed to pose a threat. This may be well beyond when criminal cases are closed or mental health services are completed. The Team should continue to monitor the plan, and modify it as needed, for as long as the individual might still pose a threat. A person can continue to pose a threat even after he/she ceases to be a member of the campus community. Take, for example, a case in which a threatening student graduates and then moves off-campus. It is still very easy for this person to come back to campus and cause harm. Therefore, the team should continue to monitor the situation through its relationship with local law enforcement agencies and mental health agencies, as well as in direct cooperation with the person where possible.

In many ways, threat cases are never truly closed. For a long period of time, it may be necessary for the team to make further referrals for the individual and/or take other follow-up steps as needed. The team should be particularly aware of important and meaningful dates or events that may trigger a person to become a threat, such as anniversaries, failing a course, termination of benefits, the ending of relationship, or the occurrence of mass attacks elsewhere. It is important for the team to understand that a person does not simply become a threat and then cease to be a threat. A person's risk level fluctuates over the course of his/her life, since life itself is a dynamic and ever-changing process. This is why it is so vitally important for the team to form strong relationships with other departments and institutions, both on- and off-campus, that can keep the team informed and updated. Maintaining an open line of communication and brainstorming with others is what enables the team to effectively manage a person over the course of time. Finally, as a case is coming to an end, it may be helpful for the Team to request feedback from the individual in question. By giving the person an opportunity to discuss the threat assessment and management process from his/her perspective, the Team can identify those aspects of the process that are working well and those that may need improvement.



Instructor Notes:

Using the Fact Pattern from Tabletop Exercise 3 on the Resource CD (from tabletop exercise 3 in the Basic threat assessment course), have participants work in small groups to assess the threat (if there is time – otherwise you can tell them the team has assessed the person as posing a threat, and classified the case as Priority Level 2) and develop and implement a case management plan. Have participants use the Case Management Planning tabletop worksheet at the back of the participant manual to document the various components of their plan, as well as indicate which individuals will be responsible for implementing which pieces of the plan. Then have the groups present their plans to the entire audience.



Instructor Notes

Start off this section by emphasizing that you are not an attorney and tell participants they should talk with their institution's general counsel about these and other legal issues that may affect the threat assessment team.

*In the basic threat assessment training course, we covered the general areas of law that typically impact the work of threat assessment teams. These included understanding FERPA – and its exceptions, ADA and state disability laws, and HIPAA and similar state laws governing the confidentiality of medical and mental health records. What we will cover here is a brief update on legal development in the Commonwealth of Virginia that affect campus threat assessment teams, as well as other recent legal developments that may affect some case work conducted by threat assessment teams. **We strongly encourage you to work with your institution's general counsel to keep current with ongoing developments and to double-check the information you are providing to participants in your training sessions.** Finally, we urge you to emphasize to your participants – as we do with ours – that you are not an attorney and that teams should be sure to check with their institution's general counsel when facing any of the issues we cover here.*

RECENT LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ❑ Virginia Law
 - Authority for a Team
 - Records Access Issues
 - TAT Records Exclusion from FOIA
- ❑ National Standards:
 - Higher Education
 - Workplace Violence Prevention
- ❑ ADA Title II change to “direct threat”
- ❑ Title IX

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Instructor Notes:

The recent legal developments that may impact a threat assessment team’s case investigation and case management work are:

- Virginia law updates
- The new national standards
- A change to ADA Title II, removing one aspect of the direct threat provision, and
- The new Title IX enforcement guidance from the US Department of Education

AUTHORITY FOR A TEAM

Va. Code § 23-9.2:10.

D. The board of visitors or other governing body of each public institution of higher education shall establish a specific threat assessment team that shall include members from law enforcement, mental health professionals, representatives of student affairs and human resources, and, if available, college or university counsel. Such team shall implement the assessment, intervention and action policies set forth by the committee pursuant to subsection C.

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Instructor Notes:

There are several areas of Virginia law with which threat assessment teams should be familiar. The first is the section of the Virginia Code that give authority to establish and operate campus threat assessment teams.

RECORDS ACCESS

Va. Code § 23-9.2:10.

E. Each threat assessment team shall establish relationships or utilize existing relationships with local and state law-enforcement agencies as well as mental health agencies to expedite assessment and 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 and 19.2-389.1, and health records, as provided in §32.1-127.1:03. No member 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.

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Instructor Notes:

The next relevant Virginia law has to do with the section of the Virginia Code that allows the team to access criminal history record information and health records for the purpose of threat assessment and case management.



CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION

Va. Code: §19.2-389. Dissemination of criminal history record information.

A. Criminal history record information shall be disseminated, whether directly or through an intermediary, only to:

25. Members of a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to §23-9.2:10, for the purpose of assessing or intervening with an individual whose behavior may present a threat to safety;

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Instructor Notes:

This is the section of code specific to dissemination of criminal history records information.



JUVENILE RECORD INFORMATION

VA Code: 19.2-389.1. Dissemination of juvenile record information.

Record information maintained in the Central Criminal Records Exchange pursuant to the provisions of §16.1-299 shall be disseminated only:

(x) to members of a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23-9.2:10, to aid in the assessment or intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety.

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Instructor Notes:

This section of the Code addresses specifically the dissemination of juvenile records information.

VIRGINIA HEALTH RECORDS PRIVACY ACT

Va. Code: § 32.1-127.1:03. Health records privacy.

D. Health care entities may, and, when required by other provisions of state law, shall, disclose health records:

35. To a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to §23-9.2:10 when such records concern a student at the public institution of higher education, including a student who is a minor.

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Instructor Notes:

This is the section of the Virginia Code that allows health care entities to share information from health records with a threat assessment team when the records have to do with a student at that Virginia college or university (public institutions).

TAT RECORDS EXCLUSION FROM FOIA

VA Code:§2.2-3705.4.

The following records are excluded from the provisions of this chapter but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except where such disclosure is prohibited by law:

8. Records of a threat assessment team established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to§23-9.2:10 relating to the assessment or intervention with a specific individual.

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Instructor Notes:

The Virginia Code also now allows threat assessment team records to be excluded from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.



TAT RECORDS EXCLUSION FROM FOIA

However, in the event an individual who has been under assessment commits an act, or is prosecuted for the commission of an act that has caused the death of, or caused serious bodily injury, including any felony sexual assault, to another person, the records of such threat assessment team concerning the individual under assessment shall be made available as provided by this chapter, with the exception of any criminal history records obtained pursuant to §19.2-389 or 19.2-389.1, health records obtained pursuant to §32.1-127.1:03, or scholastic records as defined in §22.1-289. The public body providing such records shall remove information identifying any person who provided information to the threat assessment team under a promise of confidentiality.

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Instructor Notes:

And here is additional information from the VA Code regarding that exclusion.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

- National Standard for Higher Ed Institutions
 - ANSI-approved
 - May be used as benchmark for litigation
 - Recommends all colleges and universities have threat assessment teams
 - References Deisinger et al (2008) and Randazzo & Plummer (2009) for guidance on team operations
- National Standard for Workplaces
 - Authored by American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) and Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM)
 - May be used as benchmark for litigation
 - Recommends multi-disciplinary team for violence prevention

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Instructor Notes:

For this slide, we recommend instructors read the Nolan, Randazzo, & Deisinger article in the 2011 URMIA Journal on the Resource CD:

There are two new national standards that articulate expectations with respect to violence prevention at colleges and universities, and at workplaces. Both standards are voluntary standard, however their approval by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) makes it likely that they could be referenced as the standard of care in future civil litigation against colleges and universities in the wake of violence incidents. National standards – particularly those approved by ANSI – are one way that a standard of care can be established in litigation contexts.



ADA “DIRECT THREAT”

- ❑ Change in interpretation of ADA Title II, regarding definition of “Direct Threat”
- ❑ Clarifies “threat to self” not included as exception to accommodations requirement under disability law
- ❑ Remaining option: exception based upon “direct threat to others”
- ❑ Ongoing questions, possible changes.
- ❑ Can still remove based upon criterion of “not otherwise qualified.”

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Instructor Notes:

The change to ADA Title II has been the interpretation of the Direct Threat standard, which can be used for separating someone with a disability from an institution instead of having to make accommodations. The Direct Threat standard allows for separation of a person with a disability if that person poses a direct threat to others. It used to be interpreted as including direct threat to self under that standard but is no longer interpreted that way.

Regarding the elimination of the “direct threat to self” standard: The statute never said “threat to self”; the “threat to self” language was always a (helpful) regulatory gloss. Our legal advisors think the elimination of that language will require that institutions rely more heavily on the concept that an individual is not “otherwise qualified” to participate in the academic and/or residential programs of the institution if he or she is suicidal, so anorexic that they can’t function safely, etc.

It is more of a stretch, but this is something that has been used in addition to, and sometimes in the alternative to, a “direct threat” determination, because the “direct threat” standard and its four factors can be difficult to meet in some cases. To best implement this approach, colleges may need to give some thought to what it means to be a student at the college, in terms of essential requirements. When it comes to social/community functioning issues most likely to be relevant to suicidal behaviors, it is going to be more difficult for non-residential campuses to say that their programs require an absence of suicidal behaviors. I have heard an OCR administrator comment that colleges can have general requirements that students not be unduly disruptive (as a suicide attempt on campus would be), and so long as standards are applied equally to students with and without disabilities, it is possible to take action to separate even ADA-covered students. In sum, our legal advisors think that institutions will need to focus on what it means to be a fully functioning member of the academic and (if applicable) residential communities, and where they are not functioning fully because of suicidal behaviors, colleges will have to make calculated decisions about the risks and benefits of separating students or conditioning continued enrollment on treatment, even absent the “direct threat to self” standard.

TITLE IX

- ❑ Responsibilities of Title IX coordinator
- ❑ Handles sexual assault investigations
- ❑ Handles sexual harassment allegations
- ❑ Questions about overlap with threat assessment teams
- ❑ Recommendation is strong liaison relationship, frequent communications

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Instructor Notes:

In April 2011 the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issued a Dear Colleague Letter that explained the responsibilities of colleges and universities (and K-12) schools for addressing campus sexual violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination. The letter articulates compliance requirements and emphasizes an increased commitment to enforcement of Title IX prohibiting discrimination based on sex, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, and discrimination based on gender. Colleges and universities that receive federal funding have Title IX coordinators who are trained in these issues and responsible for overseeing compliance on behalf of the institution, which can include overseeing sexual assault investigations, sexual harassment complaints, and other gender discrimination complaints.

Some have questioned whether this role should be handled by a threat assessment team. Our recommendation is that the threat assessment team should not take on the responsibilities of the Title IX coordinator – however, we do recommend that the threat assessment team establish and maintain a close relationship with the Title IX coordinator, as there may be cases handled by one that overlap with the other. It would even be beneficial to include the Title IX coordinator in any threat assessment training the team undergoes, so that the coordinator is familiar with the responsibilities, resources, and functioning of the threat assessment team. Such information-sharing and liaison can help avoid the creation of another silo where information is housed but not shared.



Instructor Notes:

Ask participants if they have any more questions on the legal updates, and remind them again to talk with their institution's general counsel about the interpretation of these legal issues and what consideration their threat assessment team needs to give them.

Now we will move on to discuss common problems facing threat assessment teams across the U.S., as well as some possible solutions.

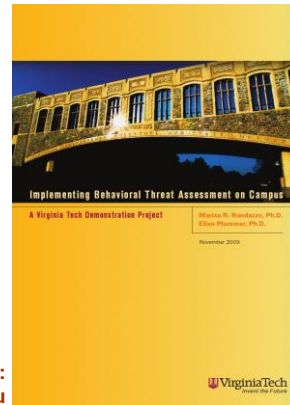
LESSONS LEARNED:

Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus:

A Virginia Tech
Demonstration Project

Grant funded by U.S.
Department of Education

Free download at:
www.threatassessment.vt.edu



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Instructor Notes:

Instructors can read through discussion of many of these issues in the book, Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus” A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project, which is available as a PDF on the instructor Resource CD.

Participants can access a free PDF of this book for detailed discussion about a number of problems common to campus threat assessment teams.

COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

- ❑ Turnover of faculty and staff, as well as students.
 - Systematized training and awareness
- ❑ Information flow.
 - Understanding privacy laws
 - Regular team interaction, not just during crisis
 - Clear direction from university leadership on need/importance of information sharing.
- ❑ Perceived/real lack of authority to make decisions.
 - Clear delineation of leadership within team.

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Instructor Notes:

The first problem is regular turnover in students, as well as in faculty and staff. To counter this turnover and maintain a sufficient level of awareness regarding the threat assessment team throughout campus, we recommend regular and systematized training for various campus constituencies, including multiple mechanisms to enhance awareness (e.g. live training, online training, web-based information, emails, posters, public service announcements, etc.).

Another common problem is ensuring that the team is receiving the information it should be receiving – in terms of reports about threats, other concerning behavior, and answers to questions they ask in specific cases. Ways to enhance information flow include making sure campus personnel understand privacy laws and how much they are permitted to share information in threat cases; having the team interact regularly so they become familiar with each other and with communicating together; and having a clear message from the institution's administration to say that information sharing is encouraged.

A third common problem is confusion within the team over authority to make decisions. Having a clear and designated leader to run the threat assessment team can help minimize this confusion.

COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

- ❑ Lack of awareness on campus about:
 - Existence of Threat Assessment Team
 - Team's mission / focus
 - Importance of reporting concerns, even low level ones
 - Solutions: Training, materials, reminders, FAQs
- ❑ Team name selection
 - Solution: Name that does not discourage reporting, but distinguishes from other teams
- ❑ Team complacency / lack of practice
 - Solution: Regular meeting times, hypothetical scenarios for practice (e.g., COPS guidebook)

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Instructor Notes:

Other problems that teams are facing have to do, in part, with lack of awareness about the team. There are some institutions that operate threat assessment teams without notifying the broader campus community that there is a team, or about the importance of reporting threats and troubling behavior to the team. Solutions include training for the campus and for gatekeepers, materials that describe the team and its work, and that answer frequently asked questions about the threat assessment.

Team name selection is also still a problem for some teams. If an institution does not want to call its team a “threat assessment team”, then we recommend finding a name that does not discourage reporting but that still helps to distinguish it from other teams.

We have also seen that teams that do not handle many cases often face complacency, so that it is easy for those teams to assume no case will be concerning because none have been concerning to date. To help keep a team functioning effectively, we recommend teams with small case loads conduct periodic tabletop exercises to make sure they are still familiar with their other procedures.

COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

- ❑ Lack of training for team:
 - Formal training in threat assessment and management
 - Trainer(s) not qualified / vetted
 - Solutions: Secure training, ensure trainers are qualified and have experience handling real cases
- ❑ Team and / or campus misunderstanding of FERPA, HIPAA, ADA:
 - Solution: Guidance from legal counsel and training for team and campus to ensure correct and current understanding
- ❑ Insufficient investigation, communication
 - Solution: Follow best practices procedures, be sure to also consider victim management and witness follow-up

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Instructor Notes:

We still see lack of training as a problem affecting a lot of threat assessment teams throughout the country. This includes having received training from vendors not qualified to provide the training, with no experience handling actual threat assessment cases.

We also continue to see personnel misunderstand FERPA and show reluctance to share information when in fact they are permitted to do so. Getting assistance from the general counsel to help dispel misconceptions can help remedy this.

And finally, we see some teams that do too little information-gathering in their investigations, or too little follow up with those who report or who may feel threatened. It may be that the team can provide almost no information back to someone who made a report, but even just checking back to let the person know the team is working on the matter can help to allay fears. Providing options for victim safety (e.g. campus police escort, office location change, etc.) can also help victims feel more safe in the interim while the team does its work.

ALL THAT GLITTERS, IS NOT GOLD

Beware:

- Focus on reactive methods
- Sudden “expertise”
- Untested and unsupported approaches

Caveat Emptor!

- Emphasize proactive methods
- Vet vendors carefully
- Integrate tested approaches



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Instructor Notes:

We caution participants to do their due diligence seeking training or consultation expertise for their threat assessment team. Shortly after the shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007, we saw a lot of people suddenly claim to be experts in threat assessment – with no professional basis for making such claims.

COUNSELING CENTER INVOLVEMENT

- Insure that the nature of psychological difficulties is understood, i.e., individuals with a mental illness are far more likely to be victims than perpetrators.
- Utilize knowledge about human behavior to inform the TAT
- Make suggestions as to when mental health evaluations would prove useful
- Interpret findings of mental health assessments

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Instructor Notes:

There are still concerns about the involvement of counseling center personnel on a threat assessment team. The concerns center largely around the confidentiality of information they may receive from a patient at the counseling center that becomes the subject of a threat assessment inquiry by the threat assessment team. It is important for teams and institutions to recognize that counseling center staff can provide critical expertise to threat assessment teams even in situations where they cannot provide specific information about someone who is being treated at the counseling center. For example, they can help members of the threat assessment team and key administrators to better understand the nature of certain psychological problems or difficulties, and the impact that certain treatments can have. They can help the team better understand various aspects of human behavior more generally, as well as interpret the findings of mental health evaluations conducted by other mental health professionals.

CONSULTATION WITH ADMINISTRATION

- Advocate for the TA process – including resources for training
- Advocate for management decisions made by the TAT
- Maintain the confidentiality of clients
- Strongly suggest dual referral of individuals of concern (counseling & administrative)

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Instructor Notes:

Counseling center staff can also serve in the role of team advocate, helping to educate key administrators about the threat assessment process, recommend access to certain intervention resources, and encourage dual referrals to the administration or the threat assessment team for situations also referred to the counseling center (and that meet criteria for the threat assessment team).



THREAT ASSESSMENT RESOURCES
INTERNATIONAL

Challenges in Implementing and Maintaining Effective Teams

www.ThreatResources.com

Instructor Notes:

Ask if there are any questions on the section on Common Problems.

Now we will move on to understanding and managing difficult team dynamics on threat assessment teams.

TEAM DYNAMICS

Threat assessment teams can be impacted by difficult team dynamics arising from several factors:

- Styles of individual team members
- Confusion over team expectations, team member responsibilities
- Stage of team development or evolution

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Instructor Notes:

Threat assessment teams can be affected by the dynamics and personality clashes that can affect any group of people working together. In this segment we will review some of the knowledge about team dynamics and the stages of team development that can be helpful to know in working with a threat assessment team to overcome these hurdles and stay effective in their threat assessment work.

TEAM EVOLUTION

■ There are natural stages in the evolution of a team as relationships develop and it gets organized:

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing

■ Teams often encounter obstacles at the Forming, Storming, and/or Norming stages that can be remedied.

■ From Scholtes, P., Joiner, B., & Streibel, B. (2003). *The Team Handbook (3d Edition)*. Madison, WI: Oriol Inc.

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Instructor Notes:

When teams encounter difficulties working together, it may be a function of the team's developmental stage. When teams are formed, they undergo a form of development or evolution as they start work together, encounter obstacles, and learn how to work around them to becoming a high functioning team. The stages are forming, storming, norming, and performing.

STAGE 1: FORMING

- Members get to know group, explore boundaries of group behavior.
- Members may test the leader's guidance and power.
- Team may be distracted, productivity limited
- ACTION STEPS (from Forming to Storming):
 1. Build a shared purpose/mission and clarify team outcomes.
 - Define tasks
 - Define the who and how it will be done
 2. Create a sense of importance and rationale for the mission.
 3. Get to know member's skills, experience, personal goals.
 4. Bring individuals together to work on common tasks.

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Instructor Notes:

When a team is first created, it is in the “forming” stage – where team members are just starting to get to know the other team members, and they may test the team chair's authority or leadership. Because there is so much else going on, the productivity of the team can be limited at this point. Some remedies to help move the team on to the next level of development is to have the team work together to develop a mission statement or work scope so the threat assessment team is clear on what cases and situations they will handle and the work they are expected to do together. It can also help the team to get a sense of each individual team members' strengths and personal interests. And working together on common goals (like the mission statement, developing standard procedures, developing some general awareness training) can help move the team forward as well.

STAGE 2: STORMING

- Members may realize the task is different, more difficult than imagined, become testy, blameful.
- May become impatient about lack of progress, argue about just what actions the team should take.
- May rely on their personal, professional experience, and resist collaboration with team members.

■ ACTION STEPS (from Storming to Norming):

1. Periodically review the team's purpose/mission.
2. Openly discuss times when the team is struggling.
3. Set out to achieve a few performance goals and tasks.
4. Encourage members to express their differing opinions.
5. Build operating agreements (rules for team behavior).

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Instructor Notes:

The next stage in team development is referred to as the “storming” stage. This is probably the most difficult stage for the team. It where teams typically encounter the most difficulty, because the expectations of team members may be very different from what members initially thought, or they may be frustrated over lack of progress in the team's work. At this point some team members to fall back on their original professional skills rather than on the training and responsibilities they learned for their work on team. Some remedies include having standard procedures that the team uses in each case (like the ones we used in this training) , to prevent falling back on other skill sets. Another remedy is to talk about the team's struggles and recognize that the team is in a difficult stage. Setting out some clear, achievable goals – and then marking when the team achieves those goals – can all help the team move forward to greater effectiveness working together.

STAGE 3: NORMING

- Members reconcile competing loyalties and responsibilities.
- They accept the team, ground rules.
- They stop competing and start cooperating.
- **ACTION STEPS (from Norming to Performing):**
 1. Develop shared leadership.
 2. Build consensus on overarching goals and approaches.
 3. Translate common purpose and team expectations into performance goals that are specified and measurable.
 4. Formally give and solicit feedback within the team.
 5. Celebrate successes, share rewards.

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Instructor Notes:

The third stage of team development is known as “norming”, and it marks the time when team members start to work together to achieve common goals, including relying on each other instead of relying just on their own previous experience. This is also a time when team members can work together to develop shared leadership and consensus over the work the team should be doing and how. Doing so can help the team move to the last stage, where they function together as a highly effective group.

STAGE 4: PERFORMING

- The team has settled its relationships and expectations.
- They can begin performing – diagnosing and solving problems, and choosing and implementing changes.
- Team members have discovered and accepted each other's strengths and weaknesses and learned what their roles are.

■ ACTION STEPS (for Performing):

1. Develop strategic plan.
2. Review performance annually, measure against strategic plan.
3. Involve external perspectives on ongoing performance, goals.

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Instructor Notes:

This last stage of team development – “performing” is characterizes by the team working together toward common goals and using shared procedures, following the same ground rules. Keeping the team operating at this effective level can be achieved through some periodic review of how the team is doing – both through discussions among team members about situations that were handled well and those that could have been handled better – and by soliciting feedback from other people at the institution about how the team is perceived and how situations have been handled. The periodic review or annual strategic planning should include consideration of the team's mission statement and whether that needs to be revised in any way. And of how the campus is aware of the threat assessment team, what awareness-promotion efforts are needed in the coming year, and whether the awareness message needs to be updated at all.



TEAM DYNAMICS RESOURCES


- *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization*
Katzenbach and Smith (1994)
- *The Handbook of High-Performance Virtual Teams: A Toolkit for Collaborating Across Boundaries.* Nemiro, Beyerlein, Bradley, & Beyerlein (2008)
- *Team Players and Teamwork: New Strategies for Developing Successful Collaboration*
Parker(2008)
- *The Team Handbook*
Scholtes, Joiner, & Streibel (2003).

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Instructor Notes:

Listed here are several resources for further reading. These resources discuss team dynamics and team development generally, and may be helpful for threat assessment teams that are facing challenges in working together as a group.



THREAT ASSESSMENT RESOURCES
INTERNATIONAL

Integrating Threat Assessment Team Work into Broader Violence Prevention Programs

www.ThreatResources.com

Instructor Notes:

Ask if there are any remaining questions on the section on team dynamics.

Next we will move on integrating the work of campus threat assessment teams into the broader violence prevention programs on Virginia campuses.

INTEGRATING TEAM WORK

- Student Assistance / CARE Teams
- Faculty / Staff Assistance Teams
- Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART)
- Domestic Assault Response Teams (DART)
- Violence Prevention Committees
- Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT)
- Suicide Prevention Programs
- Diversity and Climate Programs

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Instructor Notes:

One final area of consideration is how threat assessment teams work with the broader violence prevention committee and programs in an integrated manner. We know that campus threat assessment teams work well when they are part of larger efforts on campus to prepare for, prevent, and be able to respond to a whole array of harmful or violent incidents. And as we discussed in the beginning of this training session, best practices in campus threat assessment include not only a threat assessment team but also an array of services and resources – such as policies, awareness training, etc. – that help to support and promote the team’s work on behalf of the institution.

In addition, the threat assessment team may need to interact with other specific teams and programs on campus – like the ones listed here -- for particular cases – or more generally to promote better cross-program understanding and information-sharing.



OVERCOMING THE SILO EFFECT


- ❑ Outreach / Awareness Presentations
 - Administration, students, employees, parents
 - Other institutions
- ❑ Training Sessions
 - Reporting & case management process
 - Verbal de-escalation
 - Incident survival
- ❑ Information: Available and sustained
 - Websites
 - Regular messages

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Instructor Notes:

There are some specific strategies that threat assessment teams can employ to foster this cross-program awareness and information-sharing – and to generally try to overcome silos on campus and off. These strategies include periodic outreach efforts like awareness presentations to continually remind the campus community about the team; more specific skill-building training such as how to de-escalate potentially volatile situations, and regular messages through multiple media (e.g. websites, PSAs, et.) about the team, the threat assessment process, and answers to frequently asked questions.



THREAT ASSESSMENT RESOURCES
INTERNATIONAL

Table-Top Exercise: Describing the Process

Exercise Designed by:
Emily Reineke, M.A.

www.ThreatResources.com

Instructor Notes:

Ask participants if they have any questions on integrating threat assessment team work into the broader violence prevention committee efforts.

Now we will move on to another group tabletop exercise before we wrap up for the day.



CASE STUDY

Your RA comes to you with this problem:

- ❑ Kim and Beth are roommates
- ❑ Beth has taped garbage bags over the windows and doesn't clean her area of the room
- ❑ Kim has tried talking to her and Beth refuses to take the garbage bags down or clean her area
- ❑ Kim saw an IM conversation of Beth's about *"how phony and stuck up her professors are and how the university would be better off without them."*
- ❑ Beth recently received a Conduct Referral for underage possession of alcohol

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Instructor Notes:

Use this slide to set the stage for the case study: this is the problem that presents itself, and initially there is very little information shared with the residence life. In this scenario, ask participants to play the role of a Hall Director and an Resident Assistant (RA) comes to them with the following problem. Even though Kim has tried talking to Beth, Kim refused to change her behavior.

Other useful information to have in case participants ask:

This scenario is playing out early in the Fall semester and both students are freshmen

The students have not been close friends, but they haven't been fighting with each other either.

The RA has made a few observations about each student– see next slide.



RESIDENT INFORMATION:

Beth

- Freshman majoring in Psychology
- Both parents and brother graduated from the college
- Still dating her high school boyfriend
- Has not made many friends at college

Kim

- Freshman with an undecided major
- Joined a few clubs on campus
- Seems to have many friends in the hall



Instructor Notes:

This information is what the RA has observed about the two students; she doesn't know much more.



DISCUSSION:

- Are you concerned?
- What would you do next?

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Instructor Notes:

Ask the audience: “Are you concerned”

Generally, people will state that they are, and ask participants to share what has made them concerned.

Next, ask the audience “What would you do next?”

You will likely get a varied response from the group. Some people may not feel that although this information is concerning, it isn’t enough to act upon. Other people will want to share this information with the threat assessment and management team right away. If you feel comfortable, you can bring up the topic of the threshold of when your threat assessment and management team is informed about cases and if this case would be appropriate to be referred to your team.

For this scenario, inform participants that the Hall Director has chosen to share the information with the threat assessment and management team. They are also planning to write a Conduct Referral to address the fire hazard of having the bags taped too close to the ceiling.



WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW...

- Beth turned in an assignment with a cartoon drawn on it. The cartoon depicted a person shooting a firearm at another person. The faculty member called the Dean of Students Office
- Last week, town police arrested Beth for being intoxicated in public
- Beth is a work study student employed with the financial aid office. She has stopped going to work. None of the office staff have spoken to her.

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Instructor Notes:

Remind people that they are supposed to be thinking like a Residence Life Hall Director– and as Hall Director, this is the information that they don't have. This slide shows the importance of a team approach to a problem and that one office doesn't have all of the information. Different offices have noticed a problem with Beth, but none of them knew the entire picture.

Re-ask the question “Are you concerned?” and see if the responses in the room change.

WHAT WOULD THE TEAM DO?

- How does this information fit together?
- What additional information do you want?
 - Who would you like to talk to?
- Any upcoming triggering events?
- Do you have safety concerns?
 - Beth
 - Kim
 - Other residents
 - Faculty members

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Instructor Notes:

Use the questions on this slide to facilitate a discussion about what the team would do next based on the information known at this time. These questions will help create a management plan.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Is Kim comfortable in her room?
 - Considerations for victims – move?
- Work supervisor asks Beth to meet with her
- Dean of Students sets up a meeting with Beth
 - Most appropriate person to connect with her?
- Pending Student Conduct hearing
 - Underage possession of alcohol
 - Intoxicated in public
- Recommendation of mental health evaluation or reflection assignment

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Instructor Notes:

The management plan for this scenario will require a multifaceted approach. Residence Life needs to address the roommate issue, her supervisor needs to address the attendance issue, the Dean of Students needs to talk about the drawing on her assignment, and Student Conduct has pending hearings for her.

In the scenario, the team decides to:

- Talk with Kim and see if she wants to stay in her room (she is willing to stay for a few more weeks to see if things get better because she has lots of friends on the floor)
- Ask the supervisor to meet with her to determine the reason for her tardiness
- Ask the Dean of Students to facilitate a meeting with her about the drawing. In this case, no other office has an existing relationship with Beth, so the Dean of Students will facilitate the meeting. If another office (maybe the Office for Students with Disabilities, or the Graduate School Ombudsperson, etc) had an existing relationship with Beth, it might be more beneficial for them to facilitate this conversation.
- Student Conduct is informed of the totality of the situation and asks them to proceed with their normal process.



PARTNERS IN THE PROCESS

- Residence Life
 - Monitor the roommate situation
- Student Conduct
 - Pending Student Conduct referral
- Dean of Students Office
 - Establish a connection with Beth
- Work location on campus (Financial Aid)
 - Attendance at work
- Faculty members
 - Attention to drawings on assignments

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Instructor Notes:

As the management plan is put in place, this is a summary of the offices involved and the role they are playing in the process. Emphasize that the strength of a threat assessment team is that all of these offices/people are working together towards a common solution— understanding the situation and determining what should be done in the best interest of Beth and those around her.



FOLLOWING WEEK- UPDATES

- Meeting with supervisor in Financial Aid
 - Beth has difficulty falling asleep (usually falls asleep between 4-5 am) and can not wake up for work at 8 am
 - Beth doesn't want to work in Financial Aid, but she is financing her education so she needs the position

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Instructor Notes:

At the next threat assessment and management team meeting, this update is shared with the team.

FOLLOWING WEEK- UPDATES

- Meeting with Dean of Students Office
 - Beth viewed the website collegehumor.com and saw a cartoon drawing of a person with a firearm and doodled it on her assignment
 - She doesn't like her professors or her major
 - Her parents both wanted her to attend VT, but she wanted to go to a smaller school closer to home.
 - Her boyfriend (also at college) doesn't understand why she's unhappy, and she is planning to break up with him. She says he has hit her before.

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Instructor Notes:

At the next threat assessment and management team meeting, this update is shared with the team.



FOLLOWING WEEK- UPDATES

- Student Conduct hearing results
 - Beth has been asked to complete an alcohol education class and write a reflection paper.
 - She is on deferred suspension for the remainder of the academic year

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Instructor Notes:

At the next threat assessment and management team meeting, this update is shared with the team.

DISCUSSION:

- Is Beth a threat?
- Does Beth need assistance?

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Instructor Notes:

Ask the room these two questions. Some people will say she is a threat. Most all people will say that she needs assistance. Facilitate a discussion about why she is perceived as a threat and why she should need assistance.

Based on the information known at this time, Beth is not a threat, but she does need assistance. A case management plan needs to be created so that she can get the help she needs.



CONTINUED CASE MANAGEMENT

- Referral to the Women's Center and/or Student Counseling
- Dean of Students- check with other faculty members and advisor
 - FERPA issues/concerns?
- Supervisor- provide her with HR information about finding another work study position
- Contact parents?

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Instructor Notes:

Creating a case management plan for Beth requires collaboration between multiple offices. Due to the concerns about her boyfriend hitting her, she should be referred to appropriate resource offices. The Dean of Students Office should check to see if other faculty members have concerns. This would be a good time to talk about FERPA and remind participants that student observations can be shared without violating FERPA. The supervisor will serve as a resource to find a job that is a better fit for her. Lastly, the team should decide if they want to contact her parents about the situation.

FOLLOW-UP

- Weekly follow-up until immediate concerns are resolved
- Create partnership with involved parties and ask them to inform team of new information
- One month follow-up (active monitoring)
 - How is the plan working
 - Is there any additional information that would change the plan?
 - Does a threat nexus still exist?
 - Can case be effectively managed by one office?

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Instructor Notes:

Beth's case is staffed at the threat assessment and management team level until the immediate concerns are resolved. Ongoing partnerships are built between the necessary offices to ensure that Beth is receiving the appropriate level of assistance. One month after the immediate concerns are addressed, the team should follow-up on the case (active monitoring) and see how the plan is working and if any changes need to be made. The team should also ask the question, "Is a threat nexus still present?" If not, then the case should be referred to a specific office for monitoring and the threat case can be closed. If a threat nexus is still present, then the case should remain open until it is resolved.

DISCUSSION:

- What worked well?
- What did you learn about the process?
- What gaps do you see?

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Instructor Notes:

Open a dialog with participants and ask what they learned about the process, what worked well, and what the challenges were. Allow this discussion to go where the group takes it; reflect on the process outlined in this case and discuss how your institution might handle it differently.



Instructor Notes:

Ask if there are any remaining questions on the tabletop exercise.

As we wrap up this training session, we wanted to leave you with some concluding thoughts and resources for further reading.

CONCLUSION

- Current best practices recommend standard procedures and supporting resources, in addition to a team.
- Threat assessment procedures involve seeking out information, answering standard investigative questions, and making an informed assessment.
- Effective case management requires implementation and monitoring, as well as planning and creative use of resources.
- Ongoing legal developments can impact teams. Stay current.
- Team development stage can impact a team's operations.
- Consult with peers whenever possible.

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Instructor Notes:

One goal in this session was to provide an overview on current issues and best practices in campus threat assessment and a review of best practice procedures for threat assessment teams to follow in their case work. The session also provided updates on legal developments and common problems facing teams, as well as facilitate discussion of possible solutions.

Another goal of the session was to create some opportunities for practicing how to conduct threat assessment inquiries and how to develop and implement case management plans.

Going forward, you can continue this type of practice with your team with a couple of resources: the COPS Office (US Department of Justice) will soon be releasing a free workbook with tabletop exercises that teams can use in a self-guided format. And be sure to call upon each other to talk over case inquiries and think through options for case management. We regularly consult with colleagues on cases and process issues, and encourage you to do the same.



FOR FURTHER READING

Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project

www.ThreatAssessment.vt.edu

Threat Assessment and Management Teams: What Risk Managers Need to Know (Published by URMIA)

www.HigherEdCompliance.org

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals

www.atapworldwide.org



Instructor Notes:

For further reading on campus threat assessment, as well as professional resources, we recommend the following references and ATAP, the professional association for those in the field of threat assessment. ATAP is a highly-respected association and offers helpful resources and collegueship with others in the field.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams

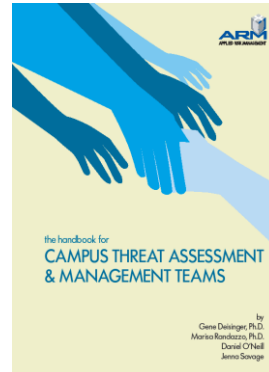
www.TSGinc.com
www.amazon.com

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Instructor Notes:

For more information about threat assessment, and more details on what we have discussed today, please refer to The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams. It is available at www.tsginc.com or amazon.com.

You should also feel free to contact Dr. Deisinger and Dr. Randazzo, who designed this course, with any questions. They encourage you to reach out to them at any time.

Instructor Note:

Thank the participants and review and concluding information, instructions, requests, etc.



TABLETOP EXERCISES



CASE INVESTIGATION WORKSHEET

PERSON OF CONCERN: _____

INITIAL REPORT: _____

SCREENING QUESTION: Emergency or imminent situation? YES (call 911) NO

FULL INQUIRY

Information Gathered (Student Case) – Fill in information next to each source checked
<input type="checkbox"/> Dean of Students:
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Organizations:
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Conduct:
<input type="checkbox"/> Professors/Instructors:
<input type="checkbox"/> Campus public safety:
<input type="checkbox"/> Local law enforcement:
<input type="checkbox"/> Disability services:
<input type="checkbox"/> Veterans services:



<input type="checkbox"/> Legal counsel:
<input type="checkbox"/> Friends:
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet searches (list sites searched):
<input type="checkbox"/> Previous school(s):
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify source(s)):
<input type="checkbox"/> Person of concern:

Information Gathered (Employee Case) – Fill in information next to each source checked

<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources:
<input type="checkbox"/> Department Chair / Supervisor:
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-worker(s):
<input type="checkbox"/> Previous employer(s):
<input type="checkbox"/> Previous school(s):
<input type="checkbox"/> Campus public safety:



<input type="checkbox"/> Local law enforcement:
<input type="checkbox"/> Grievance/conduct board:
<input type="checkbox"/> EEO/Diversity offices:
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal counsel:
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet searches (list sites searched):
<input type="checkbox"/> Health/counseling provider or EAP (typically requires release from person):
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify source(s)):
<input type="checkbox"/> Person of concern:



FERPA Exception for Health/Safety Emergency or Public Safety Concern?

Please indicate whether the Team feels there is a concern for public safety or a health/safety emergency in this situation – and if so, why:

Investigative Questions

1. What are the person's motive(s) and goals? What first brought them to the Team's attention?

The purpose of this question is to understand the overall context of the behavior that first brought the person to the attention of the Team, and also to understand whether those conditions or situation still exist. If those conditions still exist, the Team can use that information in crafting a management or referral/monitoring plan if necessary.

Answer:

2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?

If the Team finds that the person in question has communicated an idea or plan to do harm — and that the source of that information is credible — this is a strong indication that the person may be on a pathway toward violence and therefore poses a threat. The Team should try to confirm or corroborate this information through another source, or through other information.

Answer:



3. Has the person shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?

- Workplace, school or campus attacks or attackers;
- Weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon);
- Incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murderers);
- Obsessive pursuit, stalking or monitoring others.

A “yes” to this question alone does not necessarily indicate that the person in question poses a threat or is otherwise in need of some assistance. Many people are interested in these topics but never pose any threat. However, if a person shows some fascination or fixation on any of these topics and has raised concern in another way, such as by expressing an idea to do harm to others or to himself/herself, recently purchasing a weapon, or showing helplessness or despair, the combination of these facts should increase the Team’s concern about the person in question.

Answer:

4. Has the person engaged in attack-related behaviors (i.e., any behavior that moves an idea of harm forward toward actual harm)?

If the Team determines that the person has engaged in any attack-related behavior, this is an indication that the person is on a pathway toward violence and has taken a step(s) forward toward carrying out an idea to do harm. Any of these behaviors should prompt the Team to try to corroborate or confirm these behaviors through other sources (or confirm the reliability of the source reporting these behaviors). Any attack-related behaviors should be seen as a serious indication of potential violence.

Answer:



5. Does the person have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?

It is important for the Team to recognize that in some areas of the country, it is quite common to own weapons and to have experience using weapons from a young age. Therefore, what the Team should focus on is the combination of the person owning or having access to weapons AND some indication that the person has an idea or plan to do harm. Similarly, the Team should be concerned if the person develops an idea to do harm and THEN starts showing an interest in weapons. Either combination should raise the Team's concern, and move the Team toward determining that the person poses a threat.

Answer:

6. Is the person experiencing hopelessness, desperation and/or despair?

If the Team determines that the person in question is experiencing — or has recently experienced — desperation, hopelessness, and/or thoughts of suicide and there is NO other information indicating the person has thoughts or plans to harm other people, the Team should develop a plan to refer the person to necessary mental health care or emergency psychiatric intervention, possibly involving the institution's counseling center and/or police or local law enforcement if necessary. If the Team determines that the person in question is experiencing — or has recently experienced — desperation, hopelessness, and/or thoughts of suicide and there IS information that the person also has thoughts or plans to harm other people, the Team should determine that the person poses a threat and move to develop and implement a management plan to intervene with the person. The management plan should include resources to evaluate and treat the person's desperation and/or suicidal thoughts/plans.

Answer:



7. Does the person have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible person (e.g., a friend, significant other, roommate, colleague, faculty advisor, coach, parent, etc.)?

If the Team decides that the person in question poses a threat of harm, the Team can solicit the help of this responsible person. The responsible person can also be encouraged to take a more active role in discouraging the person from engaging in any harm — whether to himself/herself, others, or both.

Answer:

8. Does the person see violence as an acceptable, desirable, or only way to solve problems?

A “yes” to this question should increase the Team’s concern about the person in question. But it should also lead the Team to consider what options they may have for helping the person solve their problems or improve their situation so that the person no longer looks toward violence to solve the problem.

Answer:

9. Is the person’s conversation and “story” consistent with his or her actions?

If the Team decides to interview the person of concern, the interview can be used as an opportunity to determine how forthcoming or truthful the person is being with the Team. The less forthcoming the person is, the more work the Team may have to do to develop an alliance if a management plan is needed.

Answer:



10. Are other people concerned about the person's potential for violence?

As people are often reluctant to see violence as a possibility, if the Team learns that someone in the person's life does think the person is capable of violence, this should raise the Team's concern considerably. However, the Team should recognize that those in close relationships with the person may be too close to the person/situation to admit violence is possible or even likely.

Answer:

11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of violence?

All of us are capable of violence under the right (or wrong) circumstances. By asking this question, the Team can identify what factors in the person's life might change in the near- to mid-term, and whether those changes could make things better or worse for the person in question. If things look like they might improve for the person, the Team could monitor the person and situation for a while and re-assess after some time has passed. If things look like they might deteriorate, the Team can develop a management plan (if they believe the person poses a threat of harm or self-harm) or a referral plan (if the person does not pose a threat but appears in need of help) to help counteract the downturn in the person's circumstances.

Answer:

12. Where does the person exist along the pathway to violence?

- Have they developed an idea to do harm?
- Have they developed a plan?
- Have they taken any steps toward implementing the plan?
- Have they developed the capacity or means to carry out the plan?
- How fast are they moving toward engaging in harm?
- Where can the Team intervene to move the person off that pathway toward harm?

Answer:



EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

EVALUATION QUESTION A. *Does the person pose a threat of harm, whether to him/herself, to others, or both? That is, does the person's behavior suggest that he or she is on a pathway toward harm?*

Answer:

If the answer is "no," the Team documents its response and reasoning and proceeds to Question B. If the answer is "yes," the Team documents its response and rationale, and then proceeds to develop, implement, and continually monitor an individualized threat management plan to reduce the risk that the person poses. The Team should document the details of this plan, as well as document steps it takes to implement the plan and/or refer the person for help. The Team does not need to answer Question B.

EVALUATION QUESTION B. *If the person does not pose a threat of harm, does the person otherwise show a need for help or intervention, such as mental health care?*

Answer:

If the answer is "no," the Team documents its response, records the person and incident in the Team's incident database, and closes the inquiry. If the answer is "yes," the Team documents its response and rationale, and then develops, implements, and re-evaluates a plan to monitor the person and situation and/or connect the person with resources in order to assist him/her with solving problems or addressing needs. The Team should document the details of this plan, as well as document steps taken to implement the plan and/or refer the person for help.



Priority Level	Comments
<p>○ Priority 1 (Imminent Risk)</p> <p>The person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward self or others and requires containment. The Team should immediately notify law enforcement to pursue containment options, and/or take actions to protect identified target(s). Once such emergency actions have been taken, the Team shall then develop and implement a management plan in anticipation of the person's release or return to campus.</p>	
<p>○ Priority 2 (High Risk)</p> <p>The person/situation appears to pose a threat of self-harm or physical violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacks immediacy and/or a specific plan — or a specified plan of violence does exist but currently lacks a specific target. This requires the Team to develop and implement a management plan.</p>	
<p>○ Priority 3 (Moderate Risk)</p> <p>The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, but does exhibit behaviors/circumstances that are likely to be disruptive to the community. This case warrants some intervention, referral and monitoring to minimize risk for significant disruption to the community or escalation in threat. The Team should develop a referral and/or active monitoring plan.</p>	
<p>○ Priority 4 (Low Risk)</p> <p>The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is their evidence of significant disruption to the community. This case may warrant some intervention, referral and monitoring to minimize risk for escalation in threat. The Team should develop a monitoring plan.</p>	
<p>○ Priority 5 (No Identified Risk)</p> <p>The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is their evidence of significant disruption to the community. The Team can close the case without a management or monitoring plan, following appropriate documentation.</p>	
<p>○ Insufficient Information / No Priority Level Selected</p>	



CASE MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

PERSON OF CONCERN: _____

OVERVIEW OF PREDOMINANT CONCERNS AND CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Please indicate the predominant concerns in the case, the current priority level (as of the date of review above), and the overview of the case management plan:

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING ELEMENTS OF CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

☐ Student Dean:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

☐ Student Organizations:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

☐ Student Conduct:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

☐ Professors/Instructors:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

☐ Campus public safety:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

☐ Local law enforcement:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

☐ Disability services:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

☐ Veterans services:

IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____



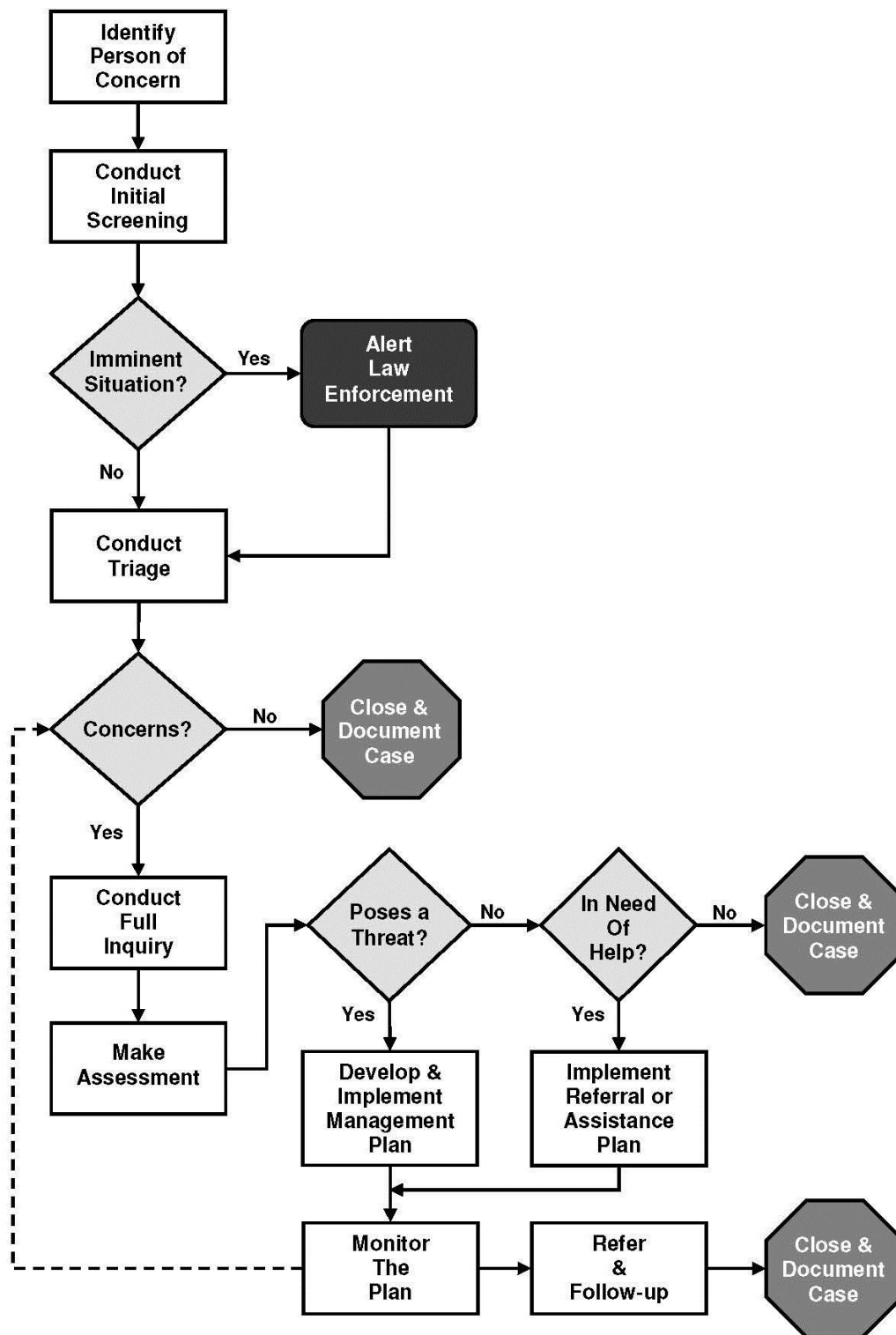
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal counsel:	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Friends:	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Internet searches (list sites to be checked):	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Previous school(s):	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources:	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Department Chair / Supervisor:	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-worker(s):	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Previous employer(s):	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Grievance/conduct board:	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> EEO/Diversity offices:	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health/counseling provider or EAP:	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify source(s)):	IMPLEMENTATION DUE DATE: _____

Case Status: ☐ CLOSED ☐ ACTIVE / OPEN ☐ TO BE REVIEWED ON _____



REFERENCE MATERIALS

Threat Assessment and Management Process



Source: Deisinger, G., Randazzo M.R., O'Neill, D., & Savage, J. (2008).
The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams.
 Available through: www.arm-security.com



For further reading on campus threat assessment and management, and on current best practices, we recommend the following reference materials:

A Risk Analysis Standard for Natural and Man-Made Hazards to Higher Education Institutions

ASME Innovative Technologies Institute LLC (2010). Washington, D.C.: Author

http://www.asme-iti.org/Initiatives/Higher_Education.cfm

Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education

D. Drysdale, W. Modzeleski & A. Simons (2010). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Education, and Federal Bureau of Investigation

<http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/CampusAttacks041610.pdf>

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

J. Nolan, M. Randazzo & G. Deisinger (2011). *URMIA Journal*, 105-122.

http://www.sigmatma.com/images/NolanRandazzoDeisinger_CampusThreatAssessmentTeams_FINAL_20110802.pdf

Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project

M. Randazzo & E. Plummer (2009). Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech University Press.

http://www.threatassessment.vt.edu/Implementing_Behavioral_Threat_Assessment.pdf

The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams

G. Deisinger, M. Randazzo, D. O'Neill, & J. Savage (2008). Stonington, MA: Applied Risk Management

http://www.tsgsinc.com/products_campus_security_handbook.html

Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention: American National Standard

ASIS International and Society for Human Resource Management (2011). Alexandria, VA: Authors.

<http://www.shrm.org/HRStandards/PublishedStandards/Pages/ASISSHRMWPV11-2011.aspx>