Introductions

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Housekeeping

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

• PART I:
  – Understanding the “Why” behind Threat Assessments
  – Background/Legislation
  – Data
  – Building Blocks for Successful Teams
  – Wrap-Up and Questions

• PART II:
  – Identifying & Reporting Threats
  – Conducting Threat Assessments
  – Threat Management
  – Wrap-Up and Questions

What is a Threat?

• Threat – concerning communication or behavior that indicates that an individual poses a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others

What is a Behavioral Threat Assessment?

• Please use the chat box to respond
Behavioral Threat Assessment

- Fact-based process emphasizing an appraisal of observed (or reasonably observable) behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, to assess them, and to manage/address them.

Threat Assessment

- Threat Assessment is a preventative system, not punitive, meant to intervene with individuals posing a risk of harm to self or others and get them off of a pathway to violence.
- Emphasis on “posing” a threat versus “making a threat”
- Objective, behavior driven

Bad things can happen...

- Violence is a process
- School shooters do not just snap
- They undergo a process that is observable (like water coming to a boil)
- If you are in a position to observe/know what to look for an attack is preventable
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

- 132 public school superintendents
- 2,200 school administrators
- 4,500 assistant school administrators
- 120,000 teachers and school staff
- 69 colleges and universities
- 42 campus law enforcement agencies
- 367 law enforcement agencies
- 23,000 law enforcement officers
- 780 school resource officers
- 1,200 school security officers
- 600 campus security officers

Legislation Center was created in 2000 and is responsible for:

K–12
- Providing training for all school personnel
- Serving as a resource and referral center and providing technical assistance for Virginia school divisions
- Facilitating the annual school safety audit pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-279.8
- Maintaining and disseminating information to local school divisions on effective school safety initiatives in Virginia and across the nation
- Encouraging development of partnerships to promote school safety in Virginia

Legislation

- 2004 - School Safety Audits
- 2004, 2006 – School and Campus Security Officer Training and Certification
- 2007 – Virginia Tech
- 2008 - Higher Education Threat Assessment Teams
- 2012 – Sandy Hook
Legislation

2013 – School and Campus Safety Task Force
• Plethora of other changes to include:
  • Renamed the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
  • K-12 Threat Assessment Teams
  • Critical Incident Response Curriculum
  • Emergency Managers
  • Model Policies and Procedures
  • Lockdown Drills

2015 – Center for Public Integrity - Governor's Children's Cabinet
• School- Law Enforcement Partnership
  Guide and Model MOU

What about “Threat Assessment” in Virginia Public Schools?

Legislation
Virginia law (§ 22.1-79.4) requires school boards to adopt policies for:
• Establishment of school Threat Assessment Teams (TAT), for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students
• consistent with the model policies developed by the Center
• include procedures for referrals to CSBs and health providers
Legislation

• Each team shall include persons with expertise in:
  • Counseling
  • Instruction
  • School administration
  • Law enforcement
• Threat assessment teams may serve more than one school (as determined by the superintendent)

Legislation

• Provide guidance on recognizing threatening/aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self
• Identify members of the school community to whom threats should be reported
• Implement policies adopted by the school board for threat assessment
• Report data to the Center

Legislation

Upon a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, TAT shall:
• Immediately report its determination to the division superintendent or designee
• Attempt to notify the student’s parent or legal guardian
Legislation

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exemptions in place:

- Information concerning security plans and specific assessment components of school safety audits, as provided in § 22.1-279.8
- Records received by the Department of Criminal Justice Services pursuant to §§ 9.1-184, 22.1-79.4, and 22.1-279.8 or for purposes of evaluating threat assessment teams.

Legislation

Access to health records and adult and juvenile criminal records

Central Criminal Records Exchange
- Only to members of a threat assessment team to aid in the assessment or intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety or in need of assistance.

Legislation

Access to health records and adult and juvenile criminal records

Exceptions to health records privacy:
- Health care entities may, and, when required by other provisions of state law, shall, disclose health records:
Data Collection
Annual Safety Audit Process

Data Collection
Safety Audit
- Center is to collect, analyze, and disseminate various Virginia school safety data, including school safety audit information submitted to it pursuant to § 22.1-279.8, collected by the Department;
- § 22.1-79.4. Threat assessment teams and oversight committees.
  - E. Each threat assessment team established pursuant to this section shall report quantitative data on its activities according to guidance developed by the Department of Criminal Justice Services

Data Collection
Safety Audit – Climate Survey
What is the purpose of the survey?
- Provide schools with information on school climate and safety conditions in order to maintain a safe and orderly school environment conducive to learning
- Measures student and teacher/staff perceptions of school rules and discipline, teacher-student relationships, student engagement in school
Data Collection

- Virginia School Safety Survey (completed online annually)
- Division Level Survey
- Virginia School Crisis Management Plan Review and Certification (annually by August 31)
- Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey
- School Safety Inspection Checklist (every 3 years)

Threat Assessment Data

2018 Data
School Year 2017-18

- Collected annually via the Virginia School Safety Survey conducted by VCSVS at DCJS
- 2004-2005 through 2017-2018
Threat Assessment Data

Types of threat assessment (TA) data collected:

• TA teams (membership, frequency of meetings, training etc)
• TA records (storage of TA records)
• Threat reporting methods
• TA training/information for school staff
• Number/types of TAs conducted
• Case data

Threat Assessment Data

Team Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elem</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No SRO in school</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No LE on TAT</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 6: Threat Assessment Team Membership and Training

[Graph showing number of team members and number trained]
Threat Assessment Data

Storage of Threat Records

During 2017-2018, threat assessment case records were most frequently stored with:

- school administration (49%)
- school counselors (36%)

Table 24: Storage of Threat Assessment Case Records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where TA records were stored</th>
<th>Number of schools</th>
<th>Percentage of schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With the school administration</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the school counselor</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the student’s general education file</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the school division’s central office</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the student’s discipline file</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable (no cases in 2016-2017)</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the threat assessment team</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the student’s special education file</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With law enforcement records</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the student’s health file</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In an electronic file</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Threat Assessment Data

Number of threats (2017-2018)

- 1,563 schools (80%) reported conducting one or more threat assessments for a total of 14,869 threat assessments conducted in 2017-2018
Threat Assessment Data

• Data shows an increase in the number of schools reporting threats and the number of threats reported when compared to the previous school year.

• In 2016-2017, 1,285 schools (66%) reported conducting one or more threat assessments, for a total of 9,238 threat assessments conducted.

Threat Assessment Data

Number of Threats – By School Type

![Bar chart showing the number of threat assessments conducted by school type.]

Summary:

Relative to the types of schools, middle and high schools conduct more threat assessments when compared to the numbers of elementary schools and other types of schools.
Threat Assessment Data

Subject of threat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject of Assessment</th>
<th>Number of TAs Conducted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student from your school</td>
<td>14,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student not from your school</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student formerly from your school</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff currently employed by your school</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff formerly employed by your school</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/guardian of a student</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Threat Assessment Data

Type of threat

1. Threat against other(s)
2. Threat against self
3. Threat against other(s) and self

Threat Assessment Data

Type of threat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of threat</th>
<th>Threats by current students</th>
<th>Threats by others (not current students)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threatened self only</td>
<td>8,260</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened other(s) only</td>
<td>5,538</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>5,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened other(s) and self</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,568</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>14,869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Threat Assessment Data

- 14,568 threat assessment cases involving current students in 2017–2018
- 1,472 (10%) were classified as a highest level threat by 514 schools,
- 42 (3%) resulted in an act being carried out at 28 schools
- Overall, 0.3% (less than 1%) of threats made by current students resulted in a highest level threat being carried out at 1.4% of the schools

Threat Assessment Data

Case outcomes of highest level threats

- The 28 schools that reported HLT events were asked to describe those events.
- Of the 42 case descriptions, 31% were provided by elementary schools, 33% by middle schools, 36% by high schools, and none by other schools.

Threat Assessment Data

Division Level Challenges

- Q. What are the biggest challenges to setting up teams or conducting threat assessments?
  - The biggest challenges reported by divisions in setting up TA teams or conducting threat assessments were staffing the teams (53%) and coordinating schedules (45%), closely followed by training for new staff/team members (44%).
### Threat Assessment Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other challenges</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the function of threat assessments vs. discipline</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of instruction time, competing priorities, conducting thorough TA/review/debrief in a timely manner</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of threat (when does an act become a threat, how to determine threat level, what constitutes a threat)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency in division-wide practices</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat assessment training resources</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of the form</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting reviews and updates</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy issues (FERPA, outside team members maintaining student confidentiality requirements)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Building Blocks for Successful Threat Assessment Programs

Successful Threat Assessment Programs Include:

1. Multi-disciplinary team
2. Strong partnerships between schools, law enforcement, and the community
3. Reporting school threats
“School climate is a broad, multifaceted concept that involves many aspects of the student’s educational experience. A positive school climate is the product of a school’s attention to fostering safety; promoting a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community no matter the setting—from Pre-K/Elementary School to higher education.”

- National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
- https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/safe-and-healthy-students/school-climate

VIrginia careS for SchoolS & camPuSeS
C.A.R.E.S. involves communities working together to build:
- Caring & Connection
- Awareness
- Recognition
- Engagement
- Support
Why School Climate Matters

Climate Survey – Student Results

- 79% reported that they feel safe in their school.
- 43% of students reported that bullying is a problem at their school
- 4% were physically attacked, pushed, or hit them
- 34% were threatened to be hurt
- Fewer than half (42%) of students who reported being teased or bullied at school told a teacher or other adult what happened
- 14% of students reported being bullied at least once in the past year by a teacher or other adult at school

Why School Climate Matters

Climate Survey – Student Results

- 94% endorsed the view that most teachers want all students to do well
- 89% reported teachers care about all students
- 94% reported that there was at least one teacher at their school who really wants them to do well
- 75% said there was an adult at school they could talk with if they had a personal problem.

Building Block #2
Who should be included on a Threat Assessment Team (TAT)?

- Please use the chat box to respond

Threat Assessment Team

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Nurse
- Social Worker
- Police/Source Officer
- Counselor
- Psychologist

Building Block #3

- Strive partnerships between schools, law enforcement, and the community
A Strong School – Law Enforcement Partnership
School Resource Officers (SROs) & School Security Officers (SSOs) in Virginia

Memorandum of Understanding

Law Enforcement

• SROs are a vital link between the schools and community and can provide valuable resources to assist the family and connect them to services
• LEOs/SRO's are intimately familiar with the ECO process as well as CPS and can facilitate those connections as appropriate
Law Enforcement

- LEOs/SROs are experienced in dealing with youth in crisis and can be a stabilizing influence
- Some students may find SROs safer to open up with than MHPs in schools or school administrators

What challenges do you foresee or have faced setting up your Threat Assessment team?

- Please use the chat box to respond

Other Questions or Comments

- Please use the chat box to respond
Threat Assessment

Higher Education Threat Assessment Teams

K12 Threat Assessment Teams
- http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3705.2/
- http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3705.4/
- http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3705.6/

Current Research

- National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Grants with the University of Virginia focusing on School Climate and Threat Assessment
- NIJ Grants with Virginia Tech focusing on the School to Prison Pipeline and SROs.
- BJA Grant to expand threat assessment training and data collection.

Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
We are here to help!
www.dcjs.virginia.gov

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