

VRA Demonstration: Case Study #1

Feeling Threatened vs. Being Threatened

Overview for facilitated CARE/BIT discussion



InterACTT
— INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE —
FOR CARE AND THREAT TEAMS

Today's frame

- ✓ Validate fear without inflating risk
- ✓ Sort transient from substantive threats
- ✓ Track stalking, grievance, and weapons interest
- ✓ Move from siloed concern to coordinated management

Distress can be real while danger is also rising

The training task is to sort timing, targets, actionability, and role lanes.

Levon Ardis is a 20-year-old sophomore transfer student living in campus housing. Over the semester, he draws concern from faculty, classmates, residence life, counseling, and campus safety. At first, he looks like a student in distress with depression, anxiety, isolation, academic trouble, poor sleep, substance use, and escalating conflict.

As the semester progresses, additional information emerges stalking behavior toward an ex-partner, trolling and hateful online posts, white supremacist and incel content, transient threats that begin to harden into more substantive threats, fascination with weapons, a small act of partner violence, and increasingly organized thinking about “making people finally understand.”

Some reporters are genuinely frightened by his intensity long before the case becomes clearly actionable. Other moments involve high emotion but lower actual threat. The challenge for the team is to sort bark from bite, distress from danger, and support needs from escalating risk of violence.

Timeline at a glance

Overview of the case progression.

Weeks 1–3

1

Transfer adjustment, depression, isolation, sleep disruption, substance use, financial stress.

Weeks 4-6

2

Teasing, online trolling, class conflict, stalking-like contact with Tarin, grievance hardens.

Weeks 7-9

3

Counseling concerns, hopelessness, perceptual disturbance, library outburst, vandalism.

Week 10-12

4

Ambiguous classroom threat, targeted messages, patrol research, maps, knife/legal searches.

Crisis Evening

5

Intoxication, pacing near Tarin's hall, direct messages, named targets, weapons/tools.

After Contact

6

Emergency evaluation, conduct action, safety restrictions, coordinated threat assessment.

The timeline matters because the same behavior can mean different things once it is paired with target focus, weapons interest, leakage, and approach.

Case snapshot

The essential facts in one clean pass.

The student presents with repeated instability across semesters.

1

Early distress

Depression, anxiety, cutting history, grief, poor sleep, substance use, and transfer instability.

2

Target pattern

Repeated unwanted contact with Tarin, possessive messaging, residence-hall presence, and coercion concerns.

3

Ideology and grievance

Trolling, racist and misogynistic content, online reinforcement, and status injury.

4

Actionability shift

Threatening messages, timing, named targets, maps, weapon research, and approach behavior.

Support needs are present, but by the crisis evening they coexist with stalking behavior, extremist reinforcement, weapons interest, leakage, and narrowed targets.

Why this case matters

The trap is treating fear as proof or treating ambiguity as safety.

Early phase

Some behavior is alarming, offensive, disruptive, or symptomatic, but not yet clearly actionable as imminent violence.

Middle Phase

Stalking-like contact, vandalism, hateful content, partner violence concerns, and weapons fascination begin to align.

Crisis Phase

Targeted messages, timing language, maps, weapons, named targets, and approach behavior require safety action.

“Bark & Bite”

Reporter fear should be validated. The team still must gather facts, test hypotheses, and match response to evidence.

The central operating problem

The team must respect fear while assessing the evidence.

FEELING THREATENED

Subjective fear = care

- ✓ Classroom hostility and cold tone
- ✓ Library outburst and property aggression
- ✓ Racist/misogynistic statements
- ✓ Ambiguous “answers back” comment

BEING THREATENED

Objective threat = action

- ✓ Target-specific messages and residence-hall photo
- ✓ Timing: “Friday night” and “Tonight”
- ✓ Named targets in notes
- ✓ Weapons, maps, camera research, approach

Validate first. Verify next. Act on convergence.

The move from fear to actionability is usually not one fact. It is the cluster.

What this case is, and is not

A crucial distinction keeps the team from minimizing or over-escalating.

What this case is

- ✓ A mixed support, conduct, Title IX, and safety
- ✓ A stalking/partner-violence concern
- ✓ A grievance and target-fixation concern
- ✓ A substantive threat and weapons-interest concern
- ✓ A case requiring coordinated threat management

This is not, based on current facts

- ✓ Not only offensive speech or unpopular ideas
- ✓ Not simply depression, grief, or psychosis
- ✓ Not a generic counseling-only referral
- ✓ Not a reason to share full private details with every anxious reporter
- ✓ One office cannot safely own the whole picture

The team can avoid stigma and still act decisively: behavior, evidence, target focus, access, and timing drive the response.

Pathways factor snapshot

The full factor table is in the handout; this slide highlights the pattern.



Factor	Score	Meaning for the team
Substantive Threats	3	Residence-hall photo, timing language, targets, maps, notes, and planning indicators.
Weapons Interest/Action	3	Knives, box cutter, pepper gel, range visits, legal knife and detection searches
Stalking Others	3	Following Tarin, showing up near her hall, unwanted contact, intimidation
Group Pressure	3	Misogynistic and white nationalist channels reinforce status/revenge framing.
Intense Thoughts/Action	3	Rigid grievance loops, all-night spirals, narrowing explanations around humiliation
White Supremacy/Incel	3	Ideological contempt and misogynistic entitlement blend with target-focused grievance.
Depression/Anxiety/Loss	3	Distress remains central and increases risk when paired with violence indicators.

Snapshot isn't a score chase: rather to sort relevance, timing, severity, convergence, and actionability

PATHWAYS FACTOR MAP



Pathways Factor	Score	Rationale
Suicide	2	Passive suicidal ideation, hopeless statements, no clear plan
Depression	3	Persistent low mood, withdrawal, poor hygiene, hopelessness
Self-injury	2	History of cutting and current urges
Alcohol/THC	2	Ongoing THC use and heavy episodic alcohol use
Serious Drug Use	2	Non-prescribed stimulants, cocaine, pills, mushrooms
Being Teased	2	Perceived ridicule, screenshots of peers mocking him
Social Problems	3	Isolation, poor peer relationships, escalating conflict
Academic Trouble	2	Missed work, class problems, prior academic decline
Financial Insecurity	2	Tuition stress, financial hold, fear of leaving school
Adjusting to Change	2	Transfer stress, difficulty settling into the new campus
Loss or Bereavement	3	Ongoing unresolved grief over brother's suicide
Being Stalked	1	Claims others are tracking or watching him online
Anxiety	3	Panic surges, hypervigilance, significant distress
Intense Thoughts/Action	3	Rigid grievance loops, obsessive rumination, all-night spirals
Hallucinations/Delusions	2	Reports hearing brother's voice and people "speaking in code"
Group Pressure	3	Reinforcement from misogynistic and extremist online groups
Vandalism	2	Scratched slur, kicked displays, damaged property
Being Controlled	1	Feels manipulated/humiliated by others
Harassing Behaviors	3	Repeated unwanted contact, hostile messaging, intimidation

PATHWAYS FACTOR MAP

Pathways Factor	Score	Rationale
Stalking Others	3	Following Tarin, showing up near the residence hall, target-focused contact
Act of Partner Violence	2	Prior wrist-grabbing incident causing bruising
Sexual Violence	2	Reports coercive sexual conduct / ignoring requests to stop
Incel Behavior	3	Misogynistic entitlement, grievance toward women, and online incel content
Eating/Sleeping	3	Severe sleep disruption and poor eating patterns
Affective Violence	3	Reactive rage, wall-punching, impulsive aggression
Trolling Actions	3	Baiting classmates, reposting screenshots, and provocative online behavior
Transient Threats	2	Ambiguous, emotionally charged, threatening statements
Substantive Threats	3	Photo of residence hall, target list, timing language, planning indicators
White Supremacy	3	Explicit racist ideology, replacement rhetoric, symbol use
Weapons Interest/Action	3	Knives, research, range visits, escalating weapons interest

The shift: discomfort to actionability

What changes in the case from concern to immediate safety?

Earlier concerns: concerning but mixed

- ✓ Distress, grief, depression, anxiety
- ✓ Substance use and sleep disruption
- ✓ Trolling and provocative ideology
- ✓ Classroom conflict and vague hostility
- ✓ Conduct issues without clear target/time/method

This is not, based on current facts

- ✓ Tarin, Galen, and Varden named or targeted
- ✓ Dorm hall photo and camera blind-spot language
- ✓ Maps, patrol research, weapons and gear
- ✓ Online encouragement from extremist groups
- ✓ Approach behavior on the indicated night

Offensive speech and distress can produce fear. Actionability rises when threat, target, time, location, means, leakage, and approach start walking in the same direction.

Team strategy: Coordinated threat management

From “whose case is this?” to “what does the team need to do?”



1

Convene the right table

CARE/BIT, conduct, campus safety, counseling, Title IX, residence life, and legal/policy consultation as needed.

2

Build a shared timeline

Merge reports, messages, conduct incidents, counseling-relevant safety facts, and access/means information.

3

Protect targets now

No-contact/stay-away measures, housing/access controls, patrol briefing, and safety planning..

4

Assess actionability

Formal threat assessment focused on target, time, leakage, means, planning, approach, and inhibitors.

5

Manage the pathway

Emergency evaluation, interim restriction, conduct process, treatment linkage, family/collateral where lawful.

Plain-language

This is not a single-office problem. The risk lives in the seams between offices, so the management plan has to stitch those seams shut.

Support the reporters and targets

Be reassuring, privacy-conscious, and specific.

Tarin

Prioritize safety planning, supportive measures, no-contact/stay-away options, Title IX information, and control over how much she participates.

Faculty/classmates

Acknowledge fear, collect details, document observable facts, explain reporting pathways, and avoid sharing private clinical history.

Roommate/RA

Thank them for reporting, clarify urgent escalation steps, reduce lone-responder burden, and avoid asking them to monitor him informally

Useful Message

“Your report was taken seriously, the team is actively reviewing the concern, and you should continue to share any new contact, threats, weapons information, or safety changes.”

Avoid

Do not minimize fear, promise outcomes, disclose private treatment details, or turn reporters into case managers. Support is not the same as rumor-sharing.

Escalation screening

Reassess when the pattern changes. Score with evidence.

Continue CARE/response when...

- ✓ Distress is high but no imminent plan
- ✓ Threat language is vague, reactive, or transient
- ✓ Conduct can be managed with clear limits
- ✓ Targets, means, timing, approach not aligned
- ✓ Student remains reachable with stabilizers

Escalate immediate safety review when...

- ✓ Named targets, timing, place, or method appear
- ✓ Weapon acquisition, access, or activity increases
- ✓ Maps, patrol/camera, or counter-surveillance
- ✓ New contact with Tarin or other targets occurs
- ✓ Approach behavior follows leakage or threats

Operational mantra: concern rises when distress narrows options, grievance names targets, preparation increases, and distance to action shrinks.

DARKFOX FACTOR MAP

DarkFox Factor	Score	Rationale
Violence Risk Assessment		
Alone	3	Levon is socially isolated, unable to form stable peer connections, sees himself as rejected/mockd, and moves toward suicide/revenge language.
Catalyst	2	Breakup with Tarin, financial hold/tuition stress, prior academic/conduct problems, campus job uncertainty, and brother’s suicide all accelerate his decline.
Free Fall	3	Multiple chronic problems intersect: depression, sleep disruption, eating disruption, substance use, academic decline, social isolation, financial stress, and impaired functioning.
Hopeless	3	Passive suicidal ideation, cutting urges, “disappearing sounds efficient,” “nobody comes unless you force meaning,” and no clear sense that things will improve.
Aggrieved	3	He blames Tarin, classmates, women, campus politics, “fake people,” and institutions for his humiliation; his thinking is grievance-driven and externalized.
Vengeance	3	Messages and notes show punishment/payback: “Friday night is when people stop laughing,” “Tonight you’ll stop rewriting what happened,” and “if pushed far enough, don’t threaten, promise.”
Incel	3	Misogynistic grievance, coercive/possessive behavior toward Tarin, online incel content, anger at women, and punishment themes after rejection.
Costuming	1	White supremacist sticker/symbol affiliation is present, and he has “gear,” but there is limited evidence of tactical clothing, persona, armor, holsters, or mission-specific costume.
Sadist	2	He shows dehumanization and intimidation, and appears to value others’ fear. No clear pleasure in physical suffering or animal cruelty.
Research	3	Searches for patrol patterns, legal knife length, 3D-printed detectability, extremist forums, prior attackers, security gaps, and camera coverage.
Checklist	2	Handwritten notes, named targets, maps, weapons, and “face them where cameras suck” function like an emerging attack checklist. No known manifesto/final-arrangements package or explicit attack sequence.



DarkFox Factor	Score	Rationale
Objectification	3	“Cattle,” racist and misogynistic statements, slur vandalism, “degenerate classmates,” white supremacist/replacement narratives, and contempt for targets.
Consumed	3	His grievances become defining and increasingly dominate school, relationships, online activity, conduct, and safety encounters.
Irrational	2	Suspicion, “groups coordinating,” strangers speaking in code,” hearing brother’s voice when falling asleep, possible paranoia/psychosis/substance/sleep-related impairment. Command hallucinations or complete loss of reality testing are not established.
Encouragers	3	Private misogynistic and white nationalist channels praise and reinforce his targeting, grievance, and fear-inducing behavior.
Teased	2	He perceives ridicule and humiliation, collects screenshots, and feels mocked. Perceived social humiliation more than confirmed bullying
Defiant	3	Repeated authority conflict, conduct incidents, vandalism, threats, menacing behavior, and escalating hostile responses to limits.
Impulsive	2	Knocking over a chair, punching a bin, vandalism, intoxication, pacing/hitting a wall, and reactive escalation. But the later conduct is also planned, not purely impulsive.
Weapons Interest	3	Searches about weapons, legal knife length, 3D-printed parts, range visits, “something more decisive than knives,” and weapon fascination.
Weapons Acquisition	2	Box cutter, hunting knife, pepper gel, weighted flashlight, range visits, and inquiry about obtaining something more decisive. I would score No known firearms/ammunition or mission-specific secondary weapons beyond what is described.

Threat Assessment		
Direct	3	Direct written threats with time and target implications: "Friday night," residence hall photo, "Tonight," messages to Tarin and Galen, and named targets in notes.
Lethality	2	He has edged weapons, pepper gel, tactical/location knowledge, range experience, and attempted access to more lethal weapons. No firearm on him at contact.
Time	3	"Friday night," "Tonight," and presence outside Tarin's residence hall establish an imminent hours-level timeline.
Leakage	3	"I'm done being the warning no one heard," "front-row seat," and named targets.
Location	3	Residence hall entrance photo, maps of residence halls and library loading dock, camera blind-spot language, and pacing outside Tarin's residence hall.
Organization	3	The case moves from broad hostility to narrowed targets: Tarin, Galen, and Varden. Planning is increasingly logical, plausible, and target-linked.
Tone	3	Angry, blaming, intimidating, demeaning, and punishment-focused language is repeated and escalating.
Rhetoric	2	He uses political/ideological rhetoric as cover for hostility and intimidation. Less about fiction/satire and more about direct threat, grievance, and ideology.
Planning	3	Maps, chosen locations, and time references.
Penetration	3	Weapons, patrol/camera research, target names, and counter-surveillance thinking.
Approach	3	He physically moves toward the target location on the indicated night while armed and intoxicated, after threats and planning.
Blaze	2	"I'm done being the warning no one heard," "force meaning," and martyr-like grievance suggest final-action thinking. No clear suicide-by-cop, manifesto, or explicit death/final-message commitment.



Suicide Assessment

Statement	2	Passive suicidal statements, cutting history/urges, hopelessness, and “disappearing” language. Denies a suicide plan, though risk rises sharply when paired with violence indicators.
Treatment	1	He has at least some counseling contact and referral, but the case suggests unstable presentation and likely need for emergency evaluation.
Eat	2	Eating one meal some days, bingeing other days, thin appearance, and impaired self-care.
Sleep	3	Severe sleep disruption, roaming at 3 a.m., sometimes three nights with almost no sleep, energized/restless presentation, and functional impairment.
Attempts	1	Levon has suicidal ideation and “disappearing” language, but the case does not describe a confirmed prior suicide attempt. His brother’s suicide increases contextual concern, but that is not the same as Levon having attempted.
Self-Injury	2	RA Niva observes shallow healing cuts on Levon’s forearm, and Levon later reports recurring urges to cut. This supports active/recent nonsuicidal self-injury concern.
Self-Concept	3	Levon’s self-concept is intensely negative and grievance-based: he sees himself as humiliated, mocked, weak, a “loser,” rejected, and only meaningful if he forces others to notice. His notes — “nobody comes unless you force meaning” — show identity collapse into grievance and violent significance-seeking.
Substances	3	Heavy and varied substance use is present: alcohol, THC, non-prescribed stimulants, cocaine, mushrooms, random pills, and acute intoxication at the crisis point. His substance use worsens sleep, mood instability, impulsivity, paranoia/suspiciousness, and imminent approach behavior.

Threat convergence map

Concern as separate streams begin pointing at the same targets.

Target focus

Tarin, Galen, and Prof. Varden become named or implied targets.

Leakage

Texts, Discord posts, online activity, and handwritten notes preview grievance and action.

Means and research

Studies previous attacks and researches security gaps. Obtains tools and weapons.

Online reinforcement

Private channels praise fear, grievance, misogyny, replacement rhetoric, and action orientation.

Approach behavior

On the indicated evening, he is intoxicated, armed with tools, and pacing outside Tarin's hall.

Convergence principle

Any one stream can be ambiguous. Together they form a pattern: grievance narrows, targets emerge, preparation increases, and distance to action shrinks

Key takeaways

Core concepts to highlight in the case

1

Do not flatten the case.

This is distress, conduct, identity-based harm, stalking, partner violence, and threat assessment.

2

Fear is data, not a verdict.

Validate reporters, then test context, specificity, target focus, means, timing, and approach.

3

The shift is convergence.

The case changes when messages, weapons, maps, targets, online reinforcement, and approach align.

4

Generic referral is not enough.

Counseling may be essential, but it cannot replace conduct, safety planning, and threat management.

5

Keep asking better questions.

What are we assuming? What is missing? What would change our formulation tomorrow.

6

Document the pathway.

Write observable facts, offers, refusals, threat evidence, protective factors, and reassessment triggers.

Red-team question

Are we assuming he is “just trolling,” too disorganized to act, or that fear alone proves threat? Each assumption can bend the case in a dangerous direction?