CTC CONSORTIUM
TRAINING & CONSULTING

VIOLENCE RISK AND THREAT ASSESSMENT POLICY

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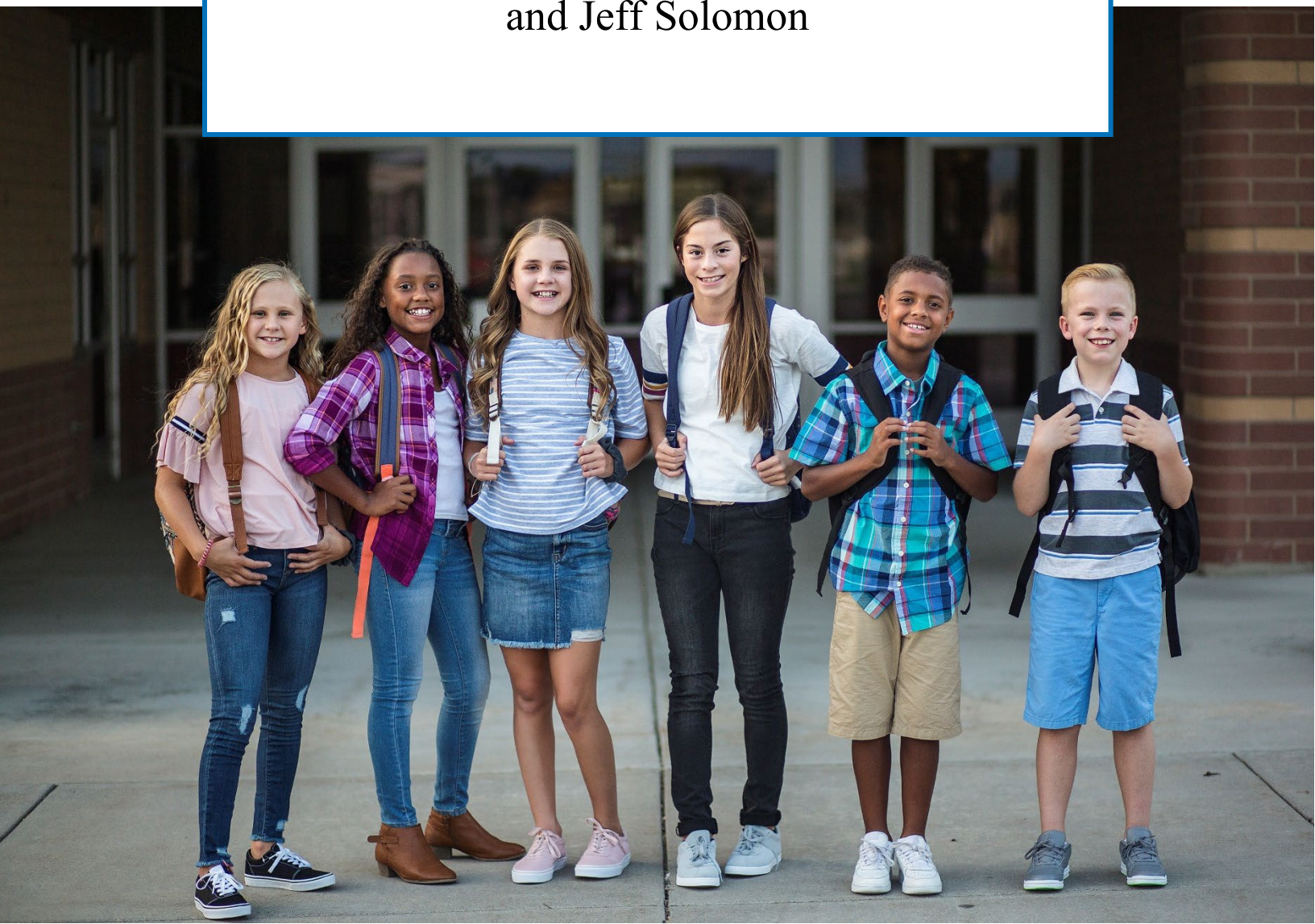

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INTRODUCTION

These policies, procedures, and guidelines have been created by reviewing research-based approaches to identifying, analyzing, and managing threats that occur and pose a risk of violence to self or others. **[School]** contracted with D-Prep Safety to consult on these policies to better protect the **[School]** community.

Threat assessment and management, as a process, is most effective when operationalized within a collaborative, multidisciplinary team approach.[1,2,3] Schools that rely only on only a police model for threat assessment and management risk creating a silo effect where "different domains of behavior are never linked together or synthesized to develop a comprehensive picture of the subject of concern, conduct further investigation, identify other warning behaviors, and actively risk-manage the case."[4] This keeps information compartmentalized within various departments and prevents the school from adopting a comprehensive data collection, analysis, and intervention model.

A better approach is using a multidisciplinary behavioral intervention team (BIT) or CARE team that can provide a 360-degree view of at-risk situations and develop better-informed, collaborative strategies for intervention.[5] A team-based approach reduces isolated communication and combines efforts and experience to make the school safer.[6] This is analogous to the development of law enforcement Fusion Centers that combine law enforcement expertise or the creation of the Department of Homeland Security with its focus on collaborative information sharing among various law enforcement entities.

1 Deisinger, G., Randazzo, M., O'Neill, D., and Savage, J. (2008). The handbook for campus threat assessment & management teams. Boston, MA: Applied Risk Management, LLC.

2 National Threat Assessment Center (2018). Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence. U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

3 Van Brunt, B. (2012). Ending campus violence: New approaches to prevention. New York, NY: Routledge.

4 Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldimann, A. & James, D. (2011). The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment: An Exploration and Suggested Typology. Behavioral Sciences and the Law 30(3) 256-279.

5 Van Brunt, B., Schiemann, M., Pescara-Kovach, L., Murphy, A., Halligan-Avery, E. (2018). Standards for Behavioral Intervention Teams. Journal of Campus Behavioral Intervention, (6). National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment.

6 Amman, M., Bowlin, M., Buckles, L., Burton, K.C., Brunnell, K.F., Gibson, K.A., Griffin, S.H., Kennedy, K. & Robins, C.J.(2015). Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

REPORTING THREATS AND RISK OF VIOLENCE

The Importance of Reports

While reporting is a common term, when discussed with the community, it is better to describe the reporting process as "sharing a concern." While this may seem to be an issue of semantics, how we talk about referrals is important as it relates to the marketing and advertising of the team and the likelihood of teachers, administrators, parents, and students being willing to share concerns. Without good data, we are limited in our ability to analyze and act. As mentioned earlier, threat assessment must be done contextually, which means gathering information about the threat from multiple sources.

Building a successful referral network for threat assessment is essential. A threat analysis process will only be effective if it receives frequent information from the **[School]** community. Developing a clear information conduit for students, teachers, parents, SROs, community partners, and staff is essential. These individuals have "eyes on the ground" and help ensure the team has actionable information to assess and analyze.

The best way to prevent violence from occurring is to encourage a culture of reporting concerning behavior on campus. Vossekuil[7] writes, "The U.S. Secret Service found… in 81% of their cases (n=37) at least one person knew the shooter was thinking about or planning the incident, and in 59% of the cases, more than one person knew about the planning. In 93% of the cases, the attackers engaged in some pre-offense 'disturbing' behavior that created concern in those around him."[8]

[School] reaches out to the community and encourages the sharing of concerning behaviors. This community includes faculty and student leaders willing to share their concerns. Kanan writes, "The need to break the code of silence that surrounds potentially dangerous behavior must be reinforced with students: telling keeps people safe." [9]

The Reporting Process

The best way to obtain reports, referrals and information on a potential threat includes a process of sharing a concern through multiple points of entry. On initial review, having an easily controlled single point of entry may seem better. While this works well for categorizing the reports coming in, it does not work as well for obtaining concerns from those who are hesitant to report because of a reluctance to use technology, fear of causing the student to be separated from the school, or concerns over being targeted by the student because of the report. Receiving reports in multiple formats helps ensure the information gets in front of key decision-makers.

7 Vossekuil, B., Reddy, M., Fein, R., Borum, R. & Modzeleski, M. (2000). USSS Safe School Initiative: An Interim Report on the Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools. Washington, DC: US Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center.

8 Meloy , J. R. , Hoffmann , J. , Guldimann , A. & James , D. (2011). The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment: An Exploration and Suggested Typology. Behavioral Sciences and the Law

9 Kanan, L. (2010). When Students Make Threats (pp. 24–9). Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Concerns can be shared through a central web portal **[Link to Reporting Form]**. This allows anonymous reporting, which is considered a best practice by police, BIT, and CARE teams.[10] Concerns may also be shared directly with school officials and team members. Community members may also share a concern by phone at 555-5555.

Who Shares Concerns?

All members of the **[School]** community have the ability and duty to share concerns with the school officials. Being part of a community, particularly a unique community such as **[School]**, requires each member to take the safety and security of the community as a personal responsibility. Schools are uniquely positioned to advocate for students while balancing the safety and security of others in the community. Good information sharing with the team allows for a more accurate analysis and intervention steps.

What is Shared?

The easy answer to this question is anything that concerns a community member. School officials will review a concern and decide the risk and intervention plan. Even if the behavior is vague or does not warrant SRO/police intervention, sharing a concern with the officials is still encouraged. In fact, it is important to encourage someone to keep sharing information when they have shared something below the threshold. Having a community member feel they shouldn't have shared something with the team has a negative impact on their future reporting.

In terms of more specific information to be shared, it is helpful to provide some examples. Behaviors are separated into disruptive and dangerous categories and further described as online and in-person.[11] A list of example behaviors to share can be found in Appendix A.

10 www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2020-06/USSS_NTAC_Enhancing_School_Safety_Guide_7.11.18.pdf
www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting_Americas_Schools.pdf

11 Van Brunt & Murphy (2018). A Staff Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior on Campus. Routledge. Van Brunt & Lewis (2014). A Faculty Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior. Routledge.

VIOLENCE RISK AND THREAT ASSESSMENT FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS

Contextualized Risk Analysis

Violence risk and threat assessments are not about predicting school violence or profiling students based on a list of characteristics. Violence risk and threat assessment techniques examine the individual to determine their level of risk to the greater community by asking contextual questions about the nature of the threat and risk. A threat assessment seeks to assess an individual's dangerousness following a vague, conditional, or direct threat. A violence risk assessment can be conducted when no threat is present.

here are five phases of the threat assessment process, as outlined in Appendix B**.** These are 1) General Information, 2) Data Gathering, 3) Analysis of Risk, 4) Determination of Threat Level and 5) Response. These are described in more detail in the Student Threat Assessment Procedures section of this document.

[School] acknowledges it is imperative to avoid the mistake of conflating a mental health assessment (such as those related to inpatient hospitalization) with a violence risk assessment. A mental health assessment focuses on finding a diagnosis, assessing the level of care needed (such as outpatient therapy vs hospitalization), and developing a treatment plan, such as taking medications, continuing therapy, and reducing mental illness symptoms. A violence risk or threat assessment is informed by workplace violence literature and primarily focuses on assessing the likelihood of the subject behaving violently in the future. While a violence risk or threat assessment does not have to be performed by clinical mental health staff, the mental health expertise of this professional could very well be useful in informing the violence risk or threat assessment.

Mistakes are made when only one perspective is considered—when those conducting the threat assessment neglect the contextual information essential to understanding the potentially escalating behavior of a person on the pathway to violence. O'Toole explains it this way, "In general, people do not switch instantly from nonviolence to violence. Nonviolent people do not 'snap' or decide on the spur of the moment to meet a problem by using violence. Instead, the path toward violence is an evolutionary one, with signposts along the way."[12] Preventing violence requires careful questioning and analysis of how the subject behaves in their environment and if there is an action imperative that drives the subject to take personal action to address their frustration, anger, and dissatisfaction.[13]

Modes of Violence

There are two primary types of violence: affective and predatory. Meloy writes,

> "It is generally agreed that violence is either affective or predatory. Affective violence, sometimes referred to as reactive, impulsive, or emotional violence, is preceded by

12 O'Toole, M. E. (2000). The school shooter: A threat assessment perspective. Quantico, VA: National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

13 Turner, J. & Gelles, M. (2003). Threat Assessment: A Risk Management Approach. New York: Routledge.

> autonomic arousal, caused by a reaction to a perceived threat, and accompanied by intense feelings of anger and/or fear. It is a defensive violence, and its evolutionary basis is self-protection to live another day. Predatory violence, sometimes referred to as instrumental or premeditated violence, is characterized by the absence of autonomic arousal and emotion, the absence of an imminent threat, and planning and preparation beforehand. It is offensive violence, and its evolutionary basis is hunting for food to live another day."[14]

Affective violence is the result of a progressive, biologically driven path toward physical violence. It is poorly planned and a reaction to environmental stressors. Affective violence is based upon the primal instinct of fight or flight, fueled by adrenaline, and characterized by someone losing control and ultimately attacking a victim. Howard describes it this way, "A potential aggressor channels his appraisal into some form of coping. The strength of the reaction is a direct function of the validation of the threat and the degree of certainty that the threat will thwart an objective or a goal. It is the emotion of being threatened and the inability to cope with that threat that initiates aggression. The common thread throughout this process is the release of adrenaline." [15]

Grossman and Siddle have conducted landmark studies looking into how aggression can induce the influence of adrenaline (or epinephrine) on the heart rate, body language, behavior, and communication.[16] Hart has also studied the adrenaline rushing through a subject's system.[17] He illustrates that when an individual cannot cope with their anxiety, their mind perceives this anxiety as a threat. As the individual starts to produce adrenaline, this triggers the affective violence response.[18]

Predatory violence, in its extreme form, is described as an intent-driven, planned attack. This aggression occurs when a subject becomes isolated, disconnected, lacks trust, and feels threatened and frustrated by a perceived attack. A student plots and plans their revenge and often executes their plans with militaristic, tactical precision.[19] This violence is a result of a planned, intent-driven action that is more commonly exhibited by a subject engaging in mission-oriented, instrumental violence such as a mass shooting.[20] Predatory violence involves a more strategic, focused attack and a desire to complete a mission.

Pathway to Violence

Meloy et al. published an article outlining eight warning behaviors for targeted violence, described as "factors which constitute change, and which are evidence of increasing or accelerating risk."[21]

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14 Meloy, J. R., Hart, S., & Hoffmann, J. (2014). Threat assessment and management. In J. R. Meloy & J. Hoffmann (Eds.), The international handbook of threat assessment (p. 5). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

15 Howard, P. (1999). The Owner's Manual for the Brain: Everyday applications from Mind-Brain Research (2nd Ed.). Austin, TX: Bard Press.

16 Grossman, D. (1996). On Killing, the Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society. New York: Back Bay Books.

17 Grossman, D. & Siddle, B. (2000). Psychological effects of combat, in Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict.UK: Academic Press.

18 Hart, A. (1995). Adrenaline and Stress, the Exciting New Breakthrough that Helps You Overcome Stress Damage. Nashville, TN: Nelson Press.

19 McEllistrem, J. (2004). Affective and predatory violence: A bimodal classification systems of human aggression and violence. Journal of Aggression and Violent Behavior, 10, 1–30.

20 Van Brunt, B. (2012). Ending campus violence: New approaches to prevention. New York, NY: Routledge.

21 Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldimann, A., & James, D. (2011). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. Behav Sci Law. 30, 256–279.

DEFINING RISK LEVELS FOR HARM TO OTHERS

Threat Assessment of Risk

Risk levels are assigned as low, moderate, and high. Each level has corresponding interventions that are suggested.

If an individual has threatened violence or has acted on a threat within the last year, they could still be at low risk if they received treatment for this and currently possess few risk factors along with strong protective factors. Likewise, a community member or student who has acted out, hurt someone, or made a detailed threat in the past year that has increasing risk factors for harming others and few protective factors would move beyond the low-risk category to moderate or high-risk. Risk levels should be understood contextually against the backdrop of current risk and protective factors and not categorized based on a single event apart from context.

Low Risk

This category highlights someone who comes to the attention of the police or school officials, and the idea of harming someone else comes up but does not present a current set of behaviors that would indicate an immediate risk of violence. At this lower level of risk, it is unlikely the Dar system would need to be used at this time.

- They may experience minor risk factors, such as frustrations at school, family conflict, worry about finances, difficulty expressing feelings to others, and concerns about a positive future outcome.
- They possess strong protective factors, such as family support, peer groups and friends, organizations, activities, and spiritual or religious beliefs that give them solace.
- While they may have thoughts of hurting or killing others, the thoughts are occasional and fleeting with no plan, no intent, and no behaviors. They clearly share they do not want to act on these thoughts.
- While they may report thoughts of killing others that occur infrequently, they view these thoughts as intrusive and unwanted. They dislike these thoughts and share things like, “I would never actually hurt anyone, but these thoughts just happen.”

Students and community members with low risk will continue to be assessed and connected with campus counseling, case management, or similar services. They should be regularly screened to ensure violence risk factors do not develop or return. This could be accomplished as part of the overall BIT/CARE process on campus.

Moderate Risk

The individual has a combination of factors that, when considered together, create a moderate risk/level of concern. There needs to be a determinization of the requirement of the police or school officials to warn a third party of a specific and direct threat to an identified target. At the moderate risk level, where there is a potential for violence to a third party, a full violence risk assessment should be considered.

STUDENT THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Step 1: Identify and Report Potential Threats

Threats can come in several different varieties and in a few different formats. Threats can be direct or indirect/vague and can be transient or more substantive. There can be a conditional ultimatum in the threat that if a behavior continues (or stops), there will be a consequence. These items should be identified in the general information section of the threat assessment documentation (Appendix B, Part I).

More important than any element of the threat assessment process is having the ability to ensure the **[School]** community shares threatening and concerning behavior forward with the police or school officials. While there are times when a dozen individuals report the threat to multiple sources, other times, the threat is not shared and may be handled by an instructor directly or siloed within a certain department. Ensuring a straightforward, easy process that allows for anonymous reporting is key to getting the threat information in front of the right people to assess the dangerousness and manage the behavior.

Step 2: Information Gathering & Assessment of Threat Via a Team Approach

The next step is gathering the needed information to assess risk in each case. The data gathering section of the threat assessment documentation (Appendix B, Part I) offers some questions that should be asked to gather the information needed to better assess the actionability and lethality of the risk. It is acknowledged that there is a balance between taking several hours to fact gather and interview and the acute need to assess the immediate risk to the subject, target, and community. The analysis of risk section of the threat assessment documentation (Appendix B, Part III) offers guidance to determine the level of risk (low, moderate, high).

Step 3: Determination of Threat Level

Based on data gathering and risk analysis, the next step is determining the threat level. Caution should be taken to ensure the earlier stages were not completed too quickly or without attention to detail, as this will directly impact the accuracy of the threat level. For example, if only a single witness statement is gathered due to time considerations, we may miss critical details about the case. If all the threat questions outlined in the data gathering section for third-party reports of the threat assessment documentation (Appendix B, Part I) are not answered, the resulting risk analysis may lead to a faulty determination of a threat level.

Step 4: Response

The response flows from the gathering of data to the analysis of risk to the establishment of the threat level. Threat levels consist of low, moderate, and high. Interventions are unique for each threat level, ensuring a response tied to the level of risk. Response levels are outlined specifically for low, moderate, and high risk in the response section of the threat assessment documentation (Appendix B, Part V). The following responses in this section outline considerations that should be in place for each threat level.

THE PROCESS OF THREAT AND VIOLENCE MITIGATION

Threat and Violence Mitigation Through Case Management

Case management is essential in mitigating threat and violence risk after the assessment is complete. Case management can be described as wrapping resources around the student, faculty, or staff member to ensure they have the best chance at success moving forward. Following the intake appointment, case management works with the student to develop an intervention plan and partners with the student to meet their academic goals.

Case management differs from clinical counseling and psychotherapy, which is more focused on determining a diagnosis, developing a clinical treatment plan, and providing mental health treatment to the student. This involves a higher level of confidentiality and privacy than is required of those working in the case management process. The benefit to this is an easier path within case management (compared to the counseling center) to work collaboratively with the police and school officials and share information more freely.

Case managers use a solution-focused approach, identifying what can be done rather than what has held the student back in the past. Case managers have a wide range of job duties. These include completing intakes and risk assessments, assisting students in being able to connect to relevant supports, developing plans for academic success, and fostering resiliency, grit, and self-reliance.

In a joint paper published by the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA) and the American College Counseling Association (ACCA), they wrote,

> "Case management, at its very core, is about helping students to overcome the obstacles they encounter in their lives. This is central to the educational mission of most institutions of higher education, which seek to retain students and provide them with an environment conducive to academic success. Case management can serve as a keystone mechanism through which universities support and keep students safe."[38]

Case management exists within each team member's work with students and, in a more formalized manner, as a part of the police and school officials with the focus on helping individuals reduce risk factors for violence while simultaneously increasing protective and anchor factors. Case managers help to improve communication among those involved in the student's success and identify solutions to overcome barriers or obstacles in the way of allowing the student to follow through with their existing goals.

Working with Student Discipline/Conduct

Police and SROs work closely with student discipline/conduct. While it may seem important to separate police and discipline work, the overlap between these areas is historically very high. Dr. Brian Van Brunt and NABITA have conducted surveys on teams for ten years, exploring how school officials interact with each other during threat cases, where referrals come from, and the

38 Van Brunt, B. (2012). Case Management in Higher Education. A joint publication of the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association and the American College Counseling Association.

APPENDIX A: BEHAVIORS OF CONCERN

Examples of In-Person Disruption

- Misuse of technology in the classroom, such as watching loud videos on a laptop or a cell phone ringing repeatedly
- Poor personal hygiene that makes it difficult to continue a conversation
- Suspected use of alcohol or other substances
- Frequent interruption of the teacher while talking and asking non-relevant, off-topic questions after being told directly to stop
- Repeated crosstalk or carrying on side conversations while the teacher is speaking
- Raising voice at schoolmate, teacher, SRO or administrator
- Emotional outbursts or other extreme communications in common spaces that significantly affect others
- Lack of focus or paying attention to conversation; excessive sighs or eye rolls
- Entitled or disrespectful talk to teachers or other students
- Arguing points of contention or asking for special treatment after the staff, SRO, or teachers requests the student to stop
- Reading magazines, newspapers, or books, or studying for other classes/doing other homework during a conversation with you

Examples of Online Disruption

- Posting non-relevant spam or unrelated personal advertising material in email or on a website or social media page for the department
- Frequent interruption of the teacher with questions, non-relevant comments, or off-topic personal details over Zoom
- Inappropriate or overly revealing pictures shared with members of the online community (e.g., Zoom pause video profile pictures or items in chat)
- Choosing a screen name or profile name that is offensive to others, such as Smokingthedope420 or buttman69.
- Emailing or making comments while drunk or intoxicated; conducting phone calls while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- Arrogant, entitled, rude, or disrespectful emails or messages to teachers or other students
- Arguing points of contention or asking for special treatment after the teacher requests the student to stop

APPENDIX B: TREAT ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

The threat assessment documentation is divided into five parts.

Part I: General Information collects demographic information on the student making the threat and general information about the threat itself.

Part II: Data Gathering is divided into five categories. These include a 1) student interview, 2) witness interview, 3) interview with the target of the threat, 4) teacher/staff interview, and 5) third-party information gathering. The appropriate form should be filled out for each person in that category.

Part III: Analysis of Risk describes the different levels used when rating the nature of the threat, the lethality of the threat, and the suicide risk.

Part IV: Determination of Threat Level details the three categories of risk: low, moderate, and high.

Part V: Response explains the appropriate responses based on the level of risk determined.

Part I: General Information

Form Completed By: _____ Position: _____

School: _____ Date form completed: _____

Information on the student making a threat: Name of student: _____

Date of birth: _____ Grade: _____ Gender: _____ Race: _____

Siblings: _____

Pets: _____

Parent/guardian name(s): _____

Parent/guardian employment: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Is there a history of aggressive or violent behavior in school? Yes ____ No ____ Unknown ____

Is there a history of aggressive or violent behavior away from school? Yes ____ No ____ Unknown ____

Is there a history of discipline referrals? Yes ____ No ____ Unknown ____

Additional family information from SRO: _____

Club/sports: _____

IEP: _____ 504 plan: _____

Mental health diagnosis: _____

Other information: _____

_____

Information about the threat:

Date threat occurred: _____ Date administrator learned of threat: _____

Who reported the threat: _____

Where the threat was made: _____

What was reported (use quotation marks to identify direct quotes): _____

_____

Information on target(s) of threat:

Has the intended target/victim(s) been identified? Yes ____ No ____

Name(s) & grade of victim(s): _____

Target(s) of the threat (check all that apply): Student____ Teacher____ Parent____ Administrator____ Other____

Number of targets of threat: one____ two____ three____ four____ five or more____

Part III: Analysis Of Risk

Any analysis of risk involves the balancing of risk and protective factors. In other words, what elements in the case escalate the overall level of risk and which protective or anchor factors help lower that overall level of risk?

Level	Nature of Threat	Lethality of Threat	Suicide Risk
1	The threat is vague and indirect. It is poorly defined, transient and has a fight/flight/freeze quality.	Even if the threat is carried out, it would be unlikely physical or serious emotional harm would occur.	There is no clear suicide plan and limited access to lethal means.
2	The threat is vague but has a focus on a person, place or system OR the threat is direct but lacks a fixation or focus.	The risk of harm is limited to shaming or embarrassing the target, creating inconvenience, or damage to target's property.	There is a vague suicide plan that lacks lethality. There may be self-injury with no life threat and/or increasing hopelessness.
3	The threat is concrete and direct. It is narrowed to a person, place or system. The threat does not specificity where and when the attack would occur.	There is a high likelihood of death to the target or target's family/support if the threat is carried out.	There is a specific plan, lethality risk, access to means, but a lack of commitment to putting plan into practice; further increasing hopelessness and desperation.
4	The threat is concrete and direct (defined threat, narrowed to person), with a time and place mentioned.	The threat involves a likely mass casualty impact (school, movie theater, public space) with high lethality.	There is a specific plan with desire to die, commitment to action, and high lethality risk; overwhelming sense of hopelessness and desperation.

Environmental Protective/Anchor Factors

☐ Family support ☐ Hobbies ☐ Pets ☐ Access to Care ☐ Positive grades ☐ Financial stability

Cognitive Protective/Anchor Factors

☐ Awareness of consequences ☐ Emotional stability ☐ Perspective taking ☐ Sense of identity
☐ Problem solving ☐ School/Future engagement

Social Protective/Anchor Factors

☐ Positive friendships ☐ Positive family interactions ☐ Classmates ☐ Clubs ☐ Sports ☐ Religion

To the best of my knowledge, all the information on this form is true and accurate.

Information gathered by: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C: RESPONSE CHECKLISTS & GUIDANCE

The checklists on the following pages can be used when responding to a threat. Suggestions are based on the level of threat assessed and provide guidance for the steps to take. These are designed to ensure steps are not missed when coordinating the threat assessment documentation's response phase (Part V).

The following checklists guide response planning and risk mitigation.

- The **Threat Response Checklist** summarizes system-level interventions at the low, moderate, and high levels of threat. These offer a set of progressive action steps to be taken during low, moderate, and high-risk threats.
- The **Safety Risk Mitigation Checklist** looks at the general steps to mitigate low, moderate, and high-risk threats. It should be used to support response planning outlined in Part V of the threat documentation process. These interventions are focused on systemic interventions commonly applied at low, moderate, and high levels of threat. These interventions should be clearly defined, and a staff member should be assigned to ensure they are implemented to mitigate further escalation.
- The **Student Support Plan** lists a range of problem behaviors, direct interventions, and system-level interventions for addressing the issues. It offers guidance to address level one classroom or school behaviors (distracting or disruptive but lacking a dangerous quality) and level two behaviors that are more concerning and move beyond simple disruptive toward dangerous. The interventions are provided progressively from least to most intrusive to the student and the classroom community. These interventions focus on specific classroom management techniques that are commonly applied at low, moderate, and high levels of threat. These interventions should be clearly defined and have a staff member assigned to ensure they are put into place to mitigate further escalation.

Threat Response Checklist

	Low-Level Threat	Staff Assigned	Completed	Date
1	Mental illness level of care check			
2	Physical health level of care check			
3	Supervision of student(s) who made threat			
4	Notification to the parents of the student who made threat			
5	Notification to those who have been threatened			
6	Protective steps for those who have been threatened			
7	Notify the superintendent or designee			
8	Interim suspension consideration			
10	Review for Title IX involvement			
11	Review discipline/conduct actions			
12	Development of a safety plan			
13	Referral to community-based agencies			
14	Communication to the school community, parents, PTA			
15	Future check-ins for the student who made the threat			
16	Future check-ins for students who were threatened			
	Moderate/High-Level Threat[44]			
17	Consideration of a more detailed social media search			
18	Consideration of full Violence Risk Assessment			
19	Consideration of a No-contact / no-trespass order			
20	Consideration of third-party consult/SRO/Police			
	High-Level Threat[45]			
21	Requirement of a more detailed social media search			
22	Requirement of a full Violence Risk Assessment			
23	Discussion of additional protective measures			
24	Consultation of a third-party consult/SRO/Police			

[44] In addition to the above
[45] In addition to the above

APPENDIX E: RISK MANAGEMENT AND REFERRAL GUIDANCE

These secondary rubrics offer further suggestions and supports for the student involved in making the threat as well as for the target of the threat. These are general supportive documents to offer further guidance and support around threat mitigation planning

Subject

Presenting Problem	Management Intervention
Feeling alone and isolated	• Counseling connection to build skills and brainstorm new friends • Activities fair to find new hobbies, clubs, or organizations • Positive internet support/chat groups • Find activities they are interested in (music, club sports, book club) • Social outings around campus, trivia nights, dating apps
Makes threats when frustrated and angry	• Counseling connection to increase frustration tolerance • Role playing and group work to increase impulsive control • Anger management classes, meditation, yoga, tai-chi • Exploring alternatives to threats and violence when upset and angry • Identifying anger triggers when first upset and choosing alternative actions
Lack of empathy	• Counseling connection to build empathy and listening skills • Skill training workbooks and/or workshops on active listening skills • Work in a program like Big Brother/Big Sister • Volunteer at a homeless shelter, nursing home, or animal shelter
Social Connection Problems	• Counseling services related to role-playing and building social skills • Involvement in house of worship or religious group, choir, study programs, art/music lessons • Intermural sports or athletic activities such as pick-up basketball games, skateboarding, rollerblading, swimming, martial arts • Online gaming groups, fantasy game role-playing groups • Social justice group, food bank or homeless shelter work, big brother/sister
Lack of Family Support	• Discussion of difficulties within family and strategize ways to overcome communication challenges. Identify triggers and hotspots, look for commonalities • Explore alternative family connections beyond family of origin; “chosen” family • Explore religious or spiritual groups that often can serve a similar support role as families can offer
Obstacles to care	• Therapy cost: referral to sliding scale, local business support through donations, access to groups as alternative • Transportation: rideshare credits, friend, or a school emergency funds • Stigma to care: help them understand we all need help at different times in our lives, make comparison to therapy being for the mind as the gym is for the body

APPENDIX F: RISK FACTORS FOR TARGETED VIOLENCE

Aggrieved:[47] Here, the student blames others for most of their problems and difficulties in life. They carry resentments and escalate to make those they see as responsible pay for their actions. These actions can be perceived or actual; most commonly, they are based on some general truth.

Alone:[48] Refers to isolation and the inability to form social connections despite the desire and attempts. This escalates to feelings of hopelessness, irritability, and anger at being separated from what seems to come so easily for others. The outsider status and extreme isolation coincide with teasing and thoughts of suicide or extreme action.

Approach:[49] This term describes the movement toward a target, beginning with fantasizing about harming them and obtaining small items needed for an attack (extended magazines, research material, chains/locks). As they progress, they overcome their hesitancy and talk with others about their plan. Risk-taking behavior increases as they continue to escalate without considering their well-being. In the late stages of approach, they conduct test runs, engage in physical violence/threats, and solidify details for their full attack.

Blaze:[50] The "blaze of glory" describes a desire on the part of an attacker to end their life in a public, extreme manner that will, in their mind, justify the pain they have experienced or in the service of some perceived larger cause. There is increasing talk or posting on social media about their growing frustrations or dedication to a cause. As this reaches extremes, they are overwhelmed and trapped by pain or express a fanatical dedication to a cause. There is a detailed plan and commitment to a final action to send a message to others.

Catalyst:[51] These negative events occur and act like the catalyst in a chemical reaction, speeding up the escalation, like the loss of status, opportunity (playing on a sports team or going on a field trip), relationship, or finances can act to further an attack plan. Unlike free fall, catalyst events occur more suddenly.

Checklist:[52] A checklist becomes the physical manifestation of fantasy rehearsal and brainstorming what would be needed to punish or harm a person, place, or system. Checklists become increasingly informed by research and specificity around the timing and location of an attack and the materials needed. There may also be a shutting down of bank accounts, phones or

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APPENDIX G: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The world of threat assessment and behavioral intervention has unique language and terminology that is important to understand when communicating between departments. If a large part of the threat assessment process is building connections among departments and various stakeholders, using a common language related to threat, law enforcement, mental illness, and college and university structures is essential.

- **Actionability:** The likelihood that an individual can access the means and materials to carry out an attack.
- **Action/Time Imperative:** The time, location, and movement toward an attack location.
- **Affective Violence:** Violence driven by emotions in an impulsive and emotional response to an environmental stressor or perceived threat.
- **Americans with Disability Act:** The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 established comprehensive legislation covering civil rights for people with disabilities. It is published in the United States Code and is often referred to by the titles and chapters of the code that contain the law. More information about the ADA is available at http://www.ada.gov.
- **Anchors:** Supportive measures that help prevent the escalation in violence. Also called protector or stabilizing factors.
- **Anchor Bias:** Having a set way of thinking that "locks in" on certain topics.
- **Approach Behavior:** The type, frequency, and intensity an attacker engages in to become physically close to the target.
- **Availability Bias:** the tendency to use readily available data to make decisions.
- **Breach:** A gap or break in security that is often exploited or circumvented in an attack.
- **Blind Spot Bias:** Having knowledge gaps in your process.
- **BIT:** Behavioral intervention team.
- **CARE:** Campus assessment, resources, and evaluation.
- **Catalyst/Domino Effect:** Refers to a series of events that set off an escalating cascade moving forward and leading to a collapse of supportive and/or anchor factors.
- **Confirmation Bias:** Deciding first and then finding facts to support it.
- **Credible threat:** A threat that is deemed actionable and substantive. A threat that is likely to occur without intervention.
- **DEI:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **DOS:** Dean of students.

APPENDIX H: THREAT PROCESS MAP