A Community Approach to Recognizing & Intervening with Threatening Behaviors

**ALL TOGETHER NOW:**
A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO RECOGNIZING & INTERVENING WITH THREATENING BEHAVIORS

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Provided for:
University of Arizona & Greater Community

**SIGMA Threat Management Associates**

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Virginia Tech
- Deputy Chief of Police
- Director, Threat Management Services

**Training & Experience**
- Ph.D., Counseling Psychology
- Licensed Psychologist;
- Certified Health Service Provider in Psychology;
- Certified Law Enforcement Officer

**Iowa State University**
- Crisis Management & Threat Management Teams
- Primary Threat Manager 1994-2009

**Lead Author:** The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams (2008)

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Sigma Threat Management Associates
- Senior Consultant
- Arizona State University Police Department
- Assistant Chief of Police
- Precinct Commander
- Community Outreach and Engagement
- Crisis Negotiation Team Leader

**ASU Threat Management Team**
- Founding member
- Association of Threat Assessment Professionals
- National Board of Directors
- President, Arizona Chapter

**American Society of Industrial Security**
- Board of Directors, Phoenix Chapter
- Certified Protection Professional (CPP)

**SIGMA Threat Management Associates**

**Mission**
We provide training and consulting services that enhance the safety and well-being of organizations and individuals around the world.

Built on a foundation of research and honed by decades of proven experience, our services define, reflect, and extend the best practices in the profession.

**ON-CAMPUS VIOLENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible Sex Offense</td>
<td>2722</td>
<td>2717</td>
<td>2738</td>
<td>2676</td>
<td>2605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>2053</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>2906</td>
<td>3034</td>
<td>2784</td>
<td>2719</td>
<td>2631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>1024</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injurious Hate Crime</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Weapon Arrest</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>1438</td>
<td>1432</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>1183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Dept. of Education Office of Post-Secondary Education
Available at: www.ope.ed.gov/security/

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**MENTAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counseling Center Clients Reporting:</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-suicidal self-injury</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously considered suicide</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior suicide attempt</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously considered harming others</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid of losing control &amp; acting violently</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionally harmed another person</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Includes prior to and after starting college.

Source: Center for the Study of Collegiate Mental Health (CSCMH): 2009 Pilot Study

**MENTAL HEALTH ON CAMPUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Students Reporting:</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt depressed, difficult to function</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed with depression</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously considered suicide</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Includes 1 or more times in the last school year.

**Targeted Violence On Campus**

Joint Project of the:
- US Secret Service
- US Department of Education
- Federal Bureau of Investigation

Attacks: 1900 – Present
- 272 incidents


**Targeted Violence On Campus**

**Incidents: 1909-2009* (N = 281)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of incidents</th>
<th>Enrollment in Millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900s</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910s</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data collected through 2008, projected for 2009 based on average per year for decade.

**Targeted Violence On Campus**

About the Incidents
- Occur on and off-campus
  - 80% on-campus (residence, grounds, class/admin)
  - 20% off-campus (residence, public area)
- Precipitating events present: 83%
- Targeted one or more specific persons: 73%
- Pre-incident threat/aggression to target: 29%
- Pre-incident concerns reported by others: 31%


**Targeted Violence On Campus**

About the Perpetrators:
- Age: 16 – 64
- Gender: Male (80%); Female (20%)
- Status:
  - Current / Former Student: 60%
  - Current / Former Employee: 11%
  - Indirectly Affiliated: 20%
  - No known Affiliation: 9%

Facts about Targeted Attacks

Perpetrators of serious violence don’t “just snap.”

These incidents are not impulsive or random.

- Most (over 75%) consider, plan, and prepare before engaging in violent behavior;
- Most (over 75%) discuss their plans with others before the attack.


Pathway to Violence

ImPLICATIONS

- Many targeted attacks can be prevented.
- Information about a subject’s ideas and plans for violence can be observed or discovered before harm can occur.
- Information available is likely to be scattered and fragmented.
- Key is to act quickly upon an initial report of concern, see who else has a piece of the puzzle, then pull all the information together to see what picture emerges.

Where to Report?

Prospective Profiling

Gather data on offense characteristics

Identify common characteristics to generate composite

Compare the person in question with the composite

Closer the match, the greater the cause for concern
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Campus and workplace violence offender profiles that are based on demographic or static variables are remarkably accurate, and utterly worthless.

PROFILING – TWO MAJOR FAILINGS
- It identifies far more people that match a profile but do not pose a threat
- It fails to identify a person whose behavior suggests real concern but whose traits or characteristics do not match the profile

THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESS
A systematic process that is designed to:
1. Identify persons of concern
2. Gather information/investigate
3. Assess information and situation
4. Manage the situation

THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESS
Threat assessment is an objective process:
- Facts
- Conclusions
- Strategies

WHY THREAT ASSESSMENT?
- Evidence-based and derived from:
  - U.S. Secret Service protective intelligence research
  - Safe School Initiative
  - FBI research regarding workplace violence
  - Student development (Ursula Delworth, 1989)
- Used successfully to prevent campus, school, and workplace shootings
- Broadly applicable for identifying people in need
- Low-cost and effective
- Legally defensible approach
- Involves the community

WHY THREAT ASSESSMENT?
Recommended by:
- Virginia Tech Review Panel (governor’s panel)
- Report to President from U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, Health & Human Services;
- Numerous professional associations:
  - AASCU, ASJA, IACLEA, MHEC, NAAG, NASPA
- Several state task forces on campus safety:
  - CA, FL, IA, IL, KY, MA, MO, NC, NJ, NM, OK, PA, WI, VA
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**WHY THREAT ASSESSMENT?**

Required by legislation:
- Commonwealth of Virginia – public institutions
- State of Illinois – All institutions

**“DUE CARE” IN THE TAM CONTEXT**

- ASME Innovative Technologies Institute
- Approved by American National Standards Institute
- Recommends: “that Threat Assessment Teams be put into place on campus to help identify potential persons of concern and gather and analyze information regarding the potential threat posed by an individual(s)”
- Courts have allowed testimony that ANSI standards inform standard of care.
- Available at: www.asme.org/products/books/a-risk-analysis-standard-for-natural-and-man-made-

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**STANDARD OF CARE**

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.
- Michelangelo

**THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

Identify Potential Risk → Notify Threat Manager → Implement Plan → Incident Management Plan → Post-Incident Recovery

Incident Management Plan → Gather Information → Implement Plan → Post-Incident Recovery

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**Facilitate Consultation**

*For effective reporting, people need to know:*

- Their role and responsibility
  - **Goal:** Consult about concerns
- What to consult about
- Where (and with whom) to consult
- Reports/Consultations are wanted
- Something will be done
- Regular reminders of issues and process

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

**Where to Report?**

**Indicators of Concern: Subject**

- Unexplained increases in absenteeism
- Decreased performance in work or academics
- Resistance to change or reasonable limits
- Over-reaction to changes in policies/procedures
- Extreme or sudden changes in behaviors
- Displays paranoia or distrust
- Numerous conflicts with others
- Difficulty learning from past experiences

**Indicators of Concern: Target**

- Ease of access
- Consistency of travel/movements
- Engages in behaviors that escalate
- Passive orientation to personal safety
- Reactivity to perceived threats
- Denial in face of clear threat posed
- Unclear or inconsistent expectations

**Recognizing Concerning Behaviors**

*Note: The following slides present examples of behaviors that may cause concern for the safety or well-being of a situation. These are not, in themselves, predictors of violence and the list is not inclusive of all potential examples of behaviors that may cause concern.*
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**INDICATORS OF CONCERN: ENVIRONMENT**
- Chronic unresolved conflict
- High perceived levels of stress
- Toleration of aggressive / hostile interactions
- Existence of pecking order / cliques
- Bullying
- Persistent distrust / devaluing

**INDICATORS OF CONCERN: PRECIPITANTS**
- 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

**KEY POINTS ABOUT VIOLENCE**
*Dangerousness is not a permanent state of being nor solely an attribute of a person.*

Dangerousness is situational & based on:
- Justification;
- Alternatives;
- Consequences; and
- Ability.

*Source: Gavin de Becker*

*The Gift of Fear*

**EVALUATING THREATS**

Threats may increase, decrease or have no relationship to 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.

**GOAL OF THREAT MANAGEMENT**
The primary goal of threat assessment & management is the safety of all persons involved.

Counseling, support, confrontation, termination, arrest, prosecution, etc., are tools to reach that goal.

**INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT**
Effective case management integrates interventions across the (relevant) domains:
- **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.

*Source: G. Deisinger & M. Randazzo*
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**When Your Only Tool is a . . .**

Over-Reliance on Control-Based Strategies
- Discipline
- Criminal prosecution
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Termination

Never equate separation with safety

**Never Equate Separation with Safety**

Leave, suspension, or termination options that focus solely on controlling the person do not address the long-term challenges 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 & influencing person when they are no longer connected to organization.

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

**Remembering Who We Serve**

What targets/victims want:
- Care
- Certainty
- Consistency
- Communication

- Gavin de Becker
  “The Gift of Fear”

**In the end,**

we will remember
not the words of our enemies,
but the silence of our friends.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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