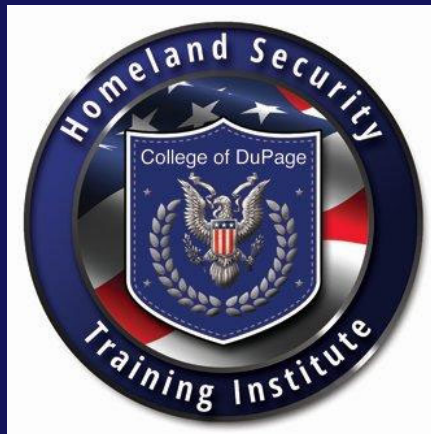


Homeland Security Training Institute

Active Shooter

Awareness, Prevention & De-escalation

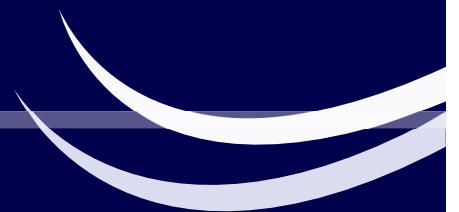


Presented by
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Homeland Security





Overview of Community Engagement in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP)

Overview

Prevention practitioners and community leaders share a common goal: protecting our communities and families from those who wish to commit violent acts, and helping those who might be radicalizing to violence to get the wrap-around support they need before a violent act is committed. Engaging members of your community—including peers, teachers, law enforcement, and community leaders—is critical for empowering bystanders—those who observe concerning behavior—to identify and prevent susceptible individuals from radicalizing and mobilizing to violence *before* it becomes a law enforcement matter. This guide provides practical information for conducting effective community engagement in this realm.

What is a Local Prevention Framework?

A locally-based prevention framework increases the ability of bystanders to identify and refer-for-intervention those who show indicators of radicalizing to violence. The approach brings together violence prevention, community policing, and threat assessment. It is then localized, engaging the broadest set of local stakeholders, to empower bystanders to recognize, react, and refer individuals to the appropriate community resources or authorities in a timely manner.

An effective prevention approach is based on the needs, challenges, and resources within each community, and leverages existing prevention and intervention resources. Key local stakeholders to engage can include those involved in training and building awareness, civic engagement and resilience programming, counternarrative campaigning, threat assessment and management programming, bystander training, and providing interventions. While communities know what is in their best interest and purview, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) can support the development of prevention frameworks by connecting federal field staff and regional partners with local officials, law enforcement, faith-based organizations, schools, and other community-based organizations to help understand *their* concerns, *their* resources, and *their* priorities. Achieving local prevention frameworks requires significant and continued stakeholder engagement at the state and local level to build transparent and trusted relationships among the whole of society. Such relationships reduce risk, enhance resilience, ensure information sharing, and fulfill requests for service. Building and sustaining these relationships is therefore a core goal of all prevention frameworks.

Key Terms

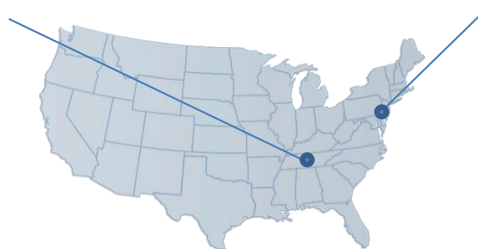
An **indicator** is a behavior that suggests an individual has likely already radicalized and may require more timely intervention.

Radicalization to violence is the process wherein an individual comes to believe, for a variety of reasons, that the threat or use of violence is necessary – or justified – to accomplish a goal.

Notable Examples from the FY16 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grant Program

Community-Led Resilience Building

The Nashville **Proactive Engagement to Achieve Community Empowerment** project increased community resiliency by creating a system that provided engagement opportunities and expanded protective resources in the community to youth. The program's youth engagement focused on building communication and conflict resolution skills, offering opportunities for civic engagement, promoting leadership, and facilitating mentorships by providing opportunities for civic education and community service.



Training for Members of the Public

The **Global Peace Foundation** in New Jersey developed a digital awareness training for a general community audience. The training provides information on ways the internet is used to mobilize and radicalize individuals to violence, as well as general cybersecurity information. Schools, law enforcement organizations, and public messaging campaigns can replicate digital literacy training programs.

For more information, please visit:

FY20 TVTP Grant Program: <https://www.dhs.gov/tvtpgrants>

FY16 CVE Grant Program: <https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants>



Overview of Community Engagement in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP)

Aspects of Community Engagement



Implement a whole-of-society approach by involving leaders from all sectors, including:

- Non-governmental organizations (NGO) and nonprofit organizations
- Mental health, social service, and public health providers
- Academia
- Faith-based and community groups
- Tech sector and private businesses
- State, local, territorial, and tribal (SLTT) law enforcement agencies
- Regional federal partners



Work with non-governmental organizations to continue raising awareness of the current threat, to enhance intervention efforts, and to increase bystander reporting. Alongside general bystanders (peers, family members, friends, and colleagues), mental health and social service providers, and law enforcement, NGOs have great ability to engage with individuals on the brink of radicalizing to violence.

How can NGO partners be engaged?

- Incorporating TVTP education into school safety approaches
- Working closely with church youth groups to engage young people and their faith-based mentors to reinforce positive behaviors and raise awareness of recruitment tactics
- Collaborating with mental health practitioners for their support in TVTP efforts



Build trusting relationships to enhance transparency, communication, civil rights protections, and collaboration among federal partners and the community.

- HHS: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- FBI and NCTC: <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices>
- DHS/CISA: <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/cisa-regional-office-fact-sheets>
- DHS/USSS-NTAC: <https://www.secretservice.gov/contact/field-offices/>
- DHS/CRCL: Community Engagement Roundtables <https://www.dhs.gov/community-engagement>



Coordinate between community leaders, law enforcement, and federal partners to bring DHS training to your community:

- The Community Awareness Briefing—learn about violent extremist recruitment tactics, radicalization to violence, and prevention approaches
- Community Resilience Exercise—creating a localized action plan
- A briefing on Targeted Violence in Schools and identifying behavior indicators (USSS-NTAC)



Build upon existing prevention resources and programs to identify what is working and what can be improved. Create lasting and trusting relationships with community partners so that when someone *does* observe drastic changes in an individual’s behavior, they feel empowered to refer or report that individual to the correct authorities or community resources, regardless of their relationship to them.

How do other programs exist in the community?

- Assess the triage assessment for mental health services in your area and what happens when you refer an individual
- Review available law enforcement resources or trainings on violence prevention
- Get to know the community, school resource officers, and school safety networks
- Learn about intervention hotlines



FAQ SHEET: WHAT ARE RISK FACTORS AND INDICATORS?

Key Points

- ✓ Having one or more risk factors does **not** mean an individual will engage in targeted violence or terrorism.
- ✓ Addressing/mitigating risk factors is not always the primary focus of targeted violence and terrorism prevention programs; however, as known risk factors are related to numerous social issues, working to address/mitigate risk factors for violence is sound public policy that may catalyze broader societal benefits.

Overview

“Risk factor” and “indicator” are often used interchangeably; however, these terms refer to different things. We have learned that effective violence prevention looks at a person's risk factors and attempts to put in place effective protective factors to stop violence. We have also learned that certain indicators can alert a bystander to the need for intervention.

A **risk factor** is a characteristic that may make an individual *more susceptible* to recruitment by violent extremist organizations and movements and may be addressed through prevention activities.

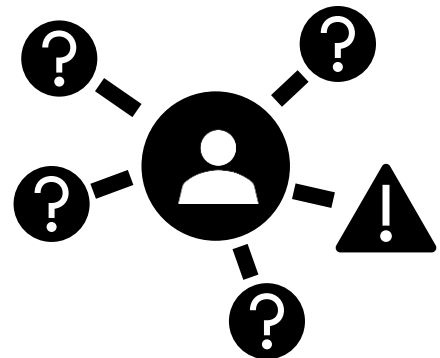


An **indicator** is a behavior that suggests an individual has likely already radicalized to violent extremism and may require more timely intervention (e.g., from law enforcement).

Having one or more risk factors does not mean an individual will use violence.

For example, An individual may **have a criminal history**, be **socially isolated**, or **be distant from one's family** (three identified risk factors for engaging in violent extremism) and never adopt a violent extremist ideology.

On the other hand, if an individual **verbalizes their intent to harm others** to family, friends, or on social media (an identified indicator of violent extremism), that person is likely in need of an immediate intervention.¹



Addressing risk factors among individuals is a key component of prevention programs, but communities should not confuse risk factors with indicators when designing their prevention architecture.

1. Smith, Allison G. (June 2018). [“Risk Factors and Indicators Associated with Radicalization to Terrorism in the United States: What Research Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice Tells Us.”](#) U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. NCJ 251789.



Risk Factors and Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention

The National Institute for Justice² has identified risk factors and indicators associated with terrorism. Understanding risk factors and indicators in connection with targeted violence has been more complicated, however, as studies have typically focused on violence broadly, not on specific types of targeted violence.

For example, the International Society for Research on Aggression³ has issued a report on risk factors for youth violence. In that report, the authors separate risk factors for school shootings vs. “street” shootings. The U.S. Department of Labor⁴ provides a compilation of studies from other governmental agencies on risk factors for workplace violence. There are also numerous academic and other scholarly articles that examine risk factors and, in some cases, indicators of targeted violence.

In developing a targeted violence and terrorism prevention architecture, communities may find it useful to consider a “**continuum of intervention**” to address both risk factors and indicators. For example:



Address risk factors **prior** to an individual experiencing them



Address individuals **with** risk factors to prevent the development of indicators



Address **indicators** by developing a referral and intervention program

Example of Continuum of Intervention: One identified risk factor for terrorism is “having a sporadic work history.” Developing a Continuum of Intervention could include:

Prior: A community may focus on a variety of skills and training programs that ensure their community members are able to gain—and keep—reliable employment.

With: Individuals with a sporadic work history may benefit from more in-depth counseling to identify the specific factors associated with that sporadic work history and provide counseling or training tailored to that individual.

Indicators: Develop a bystander awareness, referral, and intervention program

While the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention focuses on preventing radicalization to violence, sporadic work history is a risk factor for many other social issues (e.g., sexual harassment,⁵ negative health outcomes,⁶ and early mortality⁷). Consequently, developing a prevention framework that addresses known risk factors for targeted violence and terrorism will likely contribute to addressing other social issues within the community.



The **Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships** works to:

- 1) Raise awareness of the threat and risk factors
- 2) Help states and communities build prevention frameworks
- 3) Propel local efforts that amplify a prevention culture and support for referrals and interventions
- 4) Perform analysis and share information with stakeholders
- 5) Institutionalize coordination



Communities, however, are best positioned to understand:

- 1) Which risk factors are prevalent in their community
- 2) What resources are available to address those risk factors (both governmental and nongovernmental)
- 3) How to organize those resources to address those risk factors

2. Ibid.

3. Bushman, B.J. et. al. (July 2018). “[Risk factors for youth violence: Youth violence commission, International Society For Research On Aggression \(ISRA\).](#)” *Aggressive Behavior* 44(4): 331-336.

4. United States Department of Labor. (n.d.). “[Workplace Violence.](#)”

5. LaMontagne, A.D., Smith, P.M., Louie, A.M., Quinlan, M., Shoveller, J. and A. Ostry. (2009). “[Unwanted Sexual advances at Work: Variations by Employment Arrangement in a Sample of Working Australians.](#)” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.* 33(2):173-179.

6. Waynforth, David. (March 27, 2018). “[Unstable Employment and Health in Middle Age in the Longitudinal 1970 British Birth Cohort Study.](#)” *Evolution, Medicine, and Public Health.* 2018(1): 92-99.

7. Perlman, Francesca and Martin Bobak. (August 30, 2011). “[Assessing the Contribution of Unstable Employment on Mortality in Post-transition Russia: Prospective Individual-Level Analyses from Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey.](#)” *American Journal of Public Health.* 99: 1818-1825.



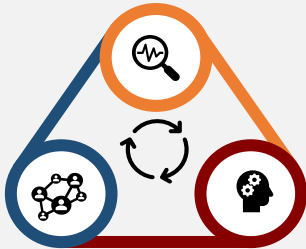
Threat Assessment and Management Teams

Overview

Threat assessment and management teams are effective *proactive* and *protective* measures that are designed to prevent – not predict – potential acts of targeted violence and terrorism. Through identifying and managing potential threats, these teams provide alternatives to investigation and/or prosecution for bystanders who are actively seeking intervention assistance with a known individual at risk of mobilizing to violence.

Effective threat assessment and management teams are multi-disciplinary and may include education administrators, mental health and social service providers, faith leaders, medical personnel, law enforcement, technology experts, and others. While it is important for law enforcement to be involved to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach – and to intervene if the threat escalates – partnerships with multidisciplinary partners are crucial, as the primary goal of this approach is to provide individuals with support services *before* the threat rises to a level requiring law enforcement.

Implementing an effective Threat Assessment and Management Team involves a constant process of:

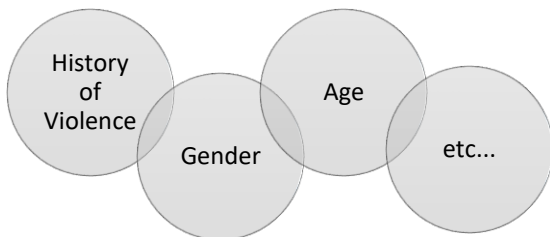


1. **Identifying** any concerning behaviors of the individual and any changes in those behavior.
2. **Assessing** the individual’s behavior to determine the level of concern.
3. **Implementing and managing** intervention strategies for individuals to be directed towards the appropriate support services for case management, before the individual commits an act of violence.

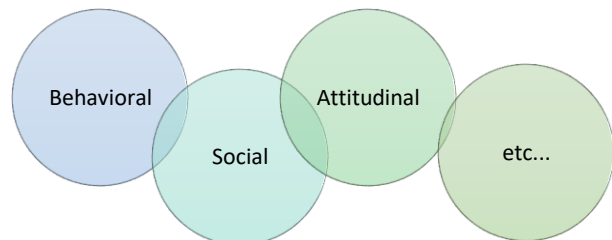
Static vs. Dynamic Factors

Both static and dynamic factors play a role in threat assessment. Because dynamic factors change over time, these may be influenced through intervention. Dynamic factors are used for the short-term assessment of violence, including targeted violence. Dynamic factors are the main focus of threat assessment and management teams, as behavioral changes can be easily identified by bystanders and offer critical insights as to where an individual should be referred. Assessing an individual’s behavior involves accumulating evidence and data over time. As evidence and data change, the overall assessment is changed leading to a flexible approach to case management.

Static factors (historical elements; factors that cannot be changed or change only in one direction) may be more useful in the prediction of long-term risk of general violence.



Dynamic factors are changeable and can fluctuate, and can include behavioral (drug abuse, stockpiling weapons, psychotic symptoms, etc.), social (number of close relationships, types of friends, etc.), and attitudinal (antigovernment sentiment, “us versus them,” etc.).



Recommended partners and issues to consider:

- ✓ Multidisciplinary teams & support networks
- ✓ IT support for analysis of social media behaviors
- ✓ Law enforcement
- ✓ Training on topics like duty to warn, HIPAA, etc
- ✓ Tailoring team to the specific needs of the organization
- ✓ Scientific research on risk/protective factors
- ✓ Recognize limitations and barriers of capacity and resources within an organization



Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships

Resources

Many federal, state, and local governments have resources on threat assessment and management teams. Below are a few of these toolkits and educational materials that may help to provide examples and guidelines for developing such teams in your communities. While many are geared towards schools, they can be adapted for other organizations.

Resource	Description
National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)'s "Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model"	NTAC's operational guide for preventing targeted school violence provides a comprehensive approach to risk management, threat assessment, suggestion for reporting mechanisms, and prevention and intervention as it relates to bullying in schools. https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2020-06/USSS_NTAC_Enhancing_School_Safety_Guide_7.11.18.pdf
FBI's "Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks"	This report, a practical guide on assessing and managing the threat of targeted violence, contains concrete strategies to help communities prevent these types of incidents. It details the importance of awareness while developing a threat assessment, including significant research as well as potential barriers to successful engagement. The report also emphasizes creating a culture of shared responsibility in threat assessment and management teams. https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/making-prevention-a-reality.pdf/view
Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP)	The ATAP is a nonprofit organization comprised of multidisciplinary professionals from law enforcement to mental health professionals and provides members with extensive resources for best practices, certifications, trainings, and networking opportunities. https://www.atapworldwide.org/
Department of Education's (ED) "Early Warning, Timely Response"	This guide emphasizes an active and inclusive approach to identifying behavioral changes in youth and acknowledges the need for multidisciplinary involvement in identifying and assessing these changes. The report also reminds readers to view these behavioral changes within context and to avoid stigmatizing. https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/172854.pdf
Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS)	The Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center offers live and virtual trainings on school behavioral threat assessments. Audiences will learn about the effective elements of a school threat assessment and how to recognize online risks. The training is encouraged for not only school districts, but for community partners such as law enforcement, youth-serving organizations, and local mental/behavioral health. https://rems.ed.gov/Docs/Threat_Assessment_Website_Marketing_Flyer_508C.pdf
Coast Guard Investigative Service Threat Management Unit	The CGIS Threat management Unit is a prevention based behavioral analysis program. Their flyer provides important definitions of concerning behavior, lists common grievances, and may provide an example of best practices when communicating across organizations. https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Portals/10/DOL/BaseSeattle/HSWL/docs/BehavioralRiskforCommands.pdf
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) and DOE's "Addressing the Risk of Violent Behavior in Youth"	SAMHSA and the Department of Education created a 90-minute presentation to be presented to local communities as a general guide on risk and protective factors, as well as the warning signs that are associated with the risk of violent behavior. https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/addressing-risk-violent-behavior-youth-know-signs-youth-violence-and-how-identify-and-reduce-risk
FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU) , Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC)	The FBI's BTAC provides behaviorally-based investigative and operational support including case consultations, to law enforcement and threat assessment and management teams working on terrorism and targeted violence. BTAC's services can be secured via your local BAU Threat Management Coordinator (TMC). https://www2.fbi.gov/hq/isd/cirg/ncavc.htm#bau
ED and the U.S. Secret Service's "Eleven Questions to Guide Data Collection in a Threat Assessment Inquiry"	This worksheet provides a list of suggested questions to help guide a threat assessment and management team when evaluating an individual of concern. These questions may help direct the team in referring the individual to appropriate services. http://www.pent.ca.gov/thr/elevenquestions.pdf
The Ohio Attorney General's Office's "Threat Assessment Training"	The Ohio School Threat Assessment Training provides best practices in 10 chapters of video trainings, which includes emphasis on establishing a multidisciplinary team, determining an appropriate threshold for law enforcement intervention, and the need for training for all stakeholders involved. https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/threatassessment



Nancy Zarse Psy.D.
Forensic & Clinical Psychologist





Active Shooter: Prevention and Intervention

Dr. Nancy Zarse

Forensic Psychologist

CEO and Founder, Zarse Psychological Services

As we approach the work of Violence Prevention, it is critical that we understand that there is no profile for an active shooter. Let go of stereotypes. Since there is no profile, focus on behavior, notice warning signs and/or threats, and report concerns.

There are two types of violence: affective and predatory. Let's differentiate between the two.

Affective violence is spontaneous and emotional. Affective violence comes in response to a direct threat, which can be real or perceived. Think barroom brawl or road rage. Or threat to ego.

Predatory violence, on the other hand, is planned and purposeful. There is no threat. Rather, predatory violence serves a goal, like power, revenge, money, sex, turf, etc.

The vast majority of extreme violence is premeditated and planned; hence, predatory violence. This applies equally to workplace violence, terrorism, mass casualty violence, and school violence. With this kind of violence, people DO NOT snap; they plan.

By letting go of profiles and instead focusing on behavior, we can intervene *before* the violent act.

Contemporary Threat Management (Calhoun & Weston, 2003) offers a critical framework to guide our Violence Prevention work. For the rest of this session, we'll focus on premeditated and planned acts of violence, in which the perpetrator specifically targets an individual, group, or organization.

Utilizing current data, behavioral evidence, and the relationship between the subject and the target, we can identify those at risk. Then, we need to assess their risk level. Then we need to apply intervention strategies to prevent violence.

This starts with an inappropriate communication and contact, aka, ICC. This is the first indication that the subject has selected a target. Often, however, we do not follow up on ICCs; either the individual does not report, or the organization does not act on the information. We need to train individuals to act on their suspicions. And we need to follow up on what is reported. Most people reveal something to someone, so it is critical that we encourage reporting, provide clear reporting channels, and act on the information.



Remember, people do not snap; they plan. Hence, with predatory violence, people progress through the Pathway to Intended Violence, which consists of stages on the way to the violent act.

The first stage is Grievance, which is a sense of injustice, real or perceived, which must be avenged. All three elements are of equal importance. The grievance serves as the catalyst. As such, it is necessary but not sufficient, as many of us have grievances yet most of us do not engage in violence.

The second stage is Ideation, which is a fixation on the injustice AND the decision that violence is the *only* means by which to avenge the injustice. Without this, there is no movement beyond grievance. Note the significance of the decision to engage in a violent act; the *acceptance* of violence increases the potential *for* violence.

The third stage is Research Planning, which is the gathering of *information* necessary for the violent act. This includes surveillance, suspicious inquiries, and research of the target. This is the most noticeable stage because it involves behavior; it reveals intent and exposes the target. Based on the intimacy between the subject and the target, however, it might be difficult to identify.

The fourth stage is Preparation, which is the gathering of *items* for the violent act. This might entail buying weapons and/or ammunition, target practice, selecting the date, etc. Pay particular attention to change: buying more guns, increasing target practice, etc.

The fifth stage is Breach, which is the physical movement towards the target. Perhaps the subject confronts security or moves into a strategic position from which to attack. By this stage, there is limited opportunity to intervene and an extremely high potential for violence.

The six and final stage is the Attack. The attack might not go off as planned due to lack of courage or poor aim or logistical problems.

As we ponder the Pathway to Intended Violence, remember people do not snap; they plan. Most subjects reveal something to someone. A study by the Secret Service reveals that in 82% of violent acts, at least one person knew something. In 59% of cases, two or more knew something.

Pre-incident Indicators, aka Leakage, are early signs of a developing problem. These are the clues that reveal the subject's feelings or intentions about an impending attack. These can be revealed intentionally or accidentally. These clues provide an opportunity for us to intervene.

The federal government has a saying: if you see something, say something. My saying goes like this: if you're concerned, we're concerned. But we need to educate people about behaviors of concern, so they know what to report.



Behaviors of concern typically include a negative change in behavior: a sudden change in appearance or attitude or performance. Maybe someone used to go to the firing range a couple times a year but now is going a couple times a month. Maybe someone used to have one gun and now is buying multiple high-lethality weapons. Maybe someone had a good attitude at work but now is angry and hostile and talks a lot about physical aggression. Pay attention to change.

Behaviors of concern include inappropriate communication such as making threats, inappropriate behavior such as angry outbursts or aggressive acts. What we find is that often, people are concerned about this individual. Either they worry *for* the person, or they are fearful *of* the person. If you're concerned, we're concerned.

We can also look at warning signs. Some things to watch for, though this is not a comprehensive list by any means, include: a deeply felt grievance, angry or aggressive outbursts, threats, weapons, serious mental illness (like hallucinations or paranoia or delusions), obsessions, stalking, noticeable change, and homicidal or suicidal comments or threats.

We also want to take note of triggers, which increase the likelihood of a violent act and/or strengthen the subject's commitment to the violent plan. Triggers include, but are not limited to, recent failure (as defined by the subject), feelings of rejection or abandonment, worsening mental health symptoms, anger management issues, drug or alcohol problems, financial problems, and lack of support system.

At this point, we've reviewed the Pathway to Intended Violence and Leakage such as behaviors of concern and warning signs. If we've educated people and created convenient reporting pathways, concerns may be growing, and information may be flowing. However, this information may be widespread and contained with certain people who are not communicating with each other.

It is critical that we establish a Threat Assessment Team (TAT), to serve as a central clearing house to gather information and to assess the totality of the information. The importance of a TAT cannot be overstated. It is a key component of an effective violence prevention program. The team needs to be deliberately multi-disciplinary in nature, and include as core members an administrator, a forensic psychologist, an attorney, and law enforcement. You want to widely advertise the members of the team, so people know to whom to communicate their concerns. The TAT needs to meet monthly *and* as needed.

One of the biggest mistakes that organizations make, after perhaps not having a TAT, is not ensuring a thorough, unbiased Violence Risk Assessment by a qualified professional. Another concern is about the risk itself: is danger imminent, in which case call 911, or is there time to develop and implement intervention strategies?

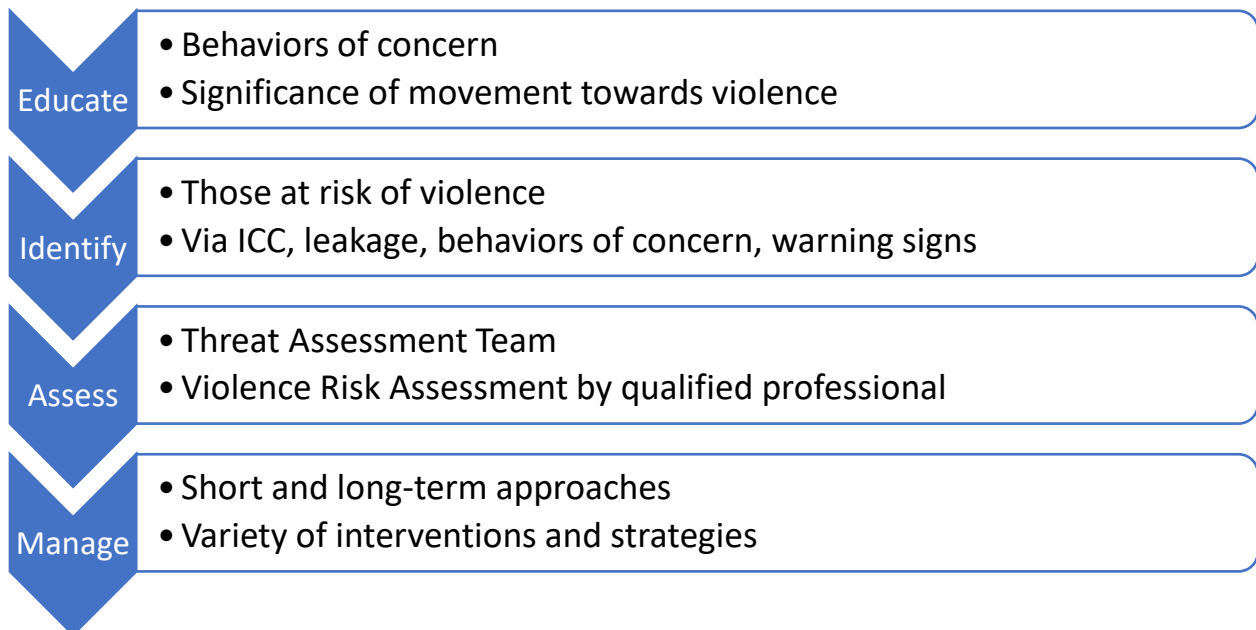


If you have the time, the intervention strategies are only limited by your resources and imagination. Think in terms of both short and long-term strategies, and layering intervention strategies. Perhaps the subject has both anger and substance abuse issues, in which case an anger management program might be combined with substance abuse treatment. If the setting is a school, perhaps involve the school social worker, whereas if a workplace, refer to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Psychiatric hospitalization and police involvement fall at the more extreme end of intervention strategies, but both require substantial justification.

In summary, ask yourself: Is there movement from thought to action? If so, the person of concern is moving up the Pathway to Intended Violence.

Remember my motto: If you're concerned, we're concerned.

Violence Prevention Program
by Dr. Nancy Zarse
CEO and Founder, Zarse Psychological Services



- If you or your team are interested in learning more about the services provided by Zarse Psychological Services, including Speaking Engagements and Assessing Risk of Violence, please contact Dr. Nancy Zarse at drnancyzarse@zarsepsychservices.com

Active Shooter: Prevention and Intervention

By Dr. Nancy Zarse

Resources

Calhoun, F.S., & Weston, S.W. (2015). Perspectives on threat management. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 2(3-4), 258. Publicly available at:
<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/tam0000056.pdf>

Calhoun, F. S., & Weston, S. W. (2003). *Contemporary threat management: A practical guide for identifying, assessing and managing individuals of violent intent*. Specialized Training Services. Available for purchase at: <https://www.specializedtraining.com>

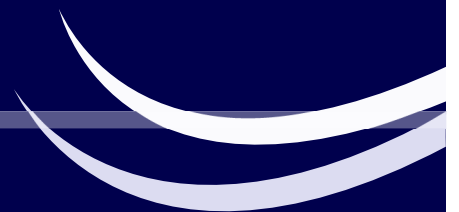
Interagency Security Committee. (2019). *Violence in the federal workplace: A guide for prevention and response*. Publicly available at:
https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/isc_workplace_violence_guide_-_2019_o.pdf

Meloy, J. Reid. (200). *Violence Risk and Threat Assessment*. San Diego, CA: Specialized Training Service. Publicly available for purchase at: <https://www.specializedtraining.com>

National Threat Assessment Center. (2020). *Mass attacks in public spaces, 2019*. U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.
<https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2020-09/MAPS2019.pdf>



Lieutenant
Scott Tillema



Powerful verbal influence

Engaging in conversations with people in crisis can bring you face to face with an aggressive, emotional counterpart, which means a stressful and challenging interaction lies ahead. Particularly, when there are signs of violence, the dialogue must be framed just right to ensure we move away from a dangerous moment and into a successful de-escalation of the situation through bonding and verbal influence.

This flexible framework, which I've titled The SECRETS Model of Negotiation, can help us all effectively work through even the most frustrating interactions. The four principles we will discuss, Understanding, Timing, Delivery and Respect -and their relationship to each other- are what I have identified, through my work as a crisis negotiator, as the most valuable pieces of the bonding process. I am hopeful with a deeper understanding of each, they will serve to benefit your own success in all your challenging conversations.



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I view these four principles working in a circular manner, creating a bond with the person we are speaking with, and we must always continue to revisit each principle. New information is going to be revealed that we must understand, the timing is always changing as information and options evolve.

Powerful verbal influence

1. **Always seek to understand:** In times of crisis, you may be called upon to exert verbal influence with someone who may be on the edge of engaging in a dangerous act. I trust you want to help the individual in crisis; however, we can't fix a problem if we don't know what it is! This initial step begins with compassionate curiosity and continues throughout the conversation. Powerful negotiators are able to develop a large amount of useful information and create multiple options for resolution. During the conversation, employ eight skills of active listening, read body language, study expressions, and use all sources of information to gain an understanding and an advantage. Appreciate and acknowledge cultural and social differences as well.

The FBI active listening skills

- *Minimal encouragers: yeah, uh huh, mm - mmm*
- *Open ended questions*
- *Reflecting or mirroring back the actual words*
- *Emotion labeling*
- *Paraphrasing*
- *I-messages. I feel ___ when you ___ because ___*
- *Effective pauses*
- *Summaries*



Powerful verbal influence

2. **Know when to deliver your message:** This principle is about timing and strategy. We begin with listening, trying not to interrupt, and being thoughtful of when we ask good questions. Telling someone to take action, or asking for their cooperation before demonstrating the spirit of partnership may work against us by building a strong commitment to opposition from the other person. Particularly when someone is in crisis and emotions are high, the process here is important. We need our counterpart to be in a position where they are able to effectively receive our message- and we deliver it only once the timing is right.

How about yourself? Have you taken the opportunity to calm yourself down and ensure that you are projecting a sense of calm authority over a person in crisis? All too often, we blame others for a poor outcome when there are a number of factors fully in our control to help nudge a situation toward a positive outcome.

Timing

- Tense conversations = **high emotions**
- Whether we are in an argument, or being chased by a bear, **we react the same way**
- When not prepared for conflict, our bodies react by triggering our sympathetic nervous system. Also known as our “fight or flight” reaction*.
- **We must control ourselves!**



* Amygdala Hijack and the Flight or Fight Response, Arlin Cuncic

Powerful verbal influence

3. **It's not what you say, it's how you say it:** We are always preparing the content of what we are going to say, but do we give proper consideration to our delivery? Yes, words are very powerful; framing the conversation with our language is critical. Just as importantly here, we must consider our presentation by focusing on our rate, rhythm, pressure, volume and tone, to ensure the proper delivery. Use a coach to gather focused feedback and ensure how you intend to present your message is actually how it's being received. Also analyze your negotiation partner's delivery to learn unspoken truths about their mindset.

Delivery

- The gold star presentation:

- Rate
- Rhythm
- Pressure
- Volume
- Tone



Powerful verbal influence

4. **Know the power of respect:** Respect begins by being respectful, which most of us get. However respect goes much deeper into the controls of our emotion and decision making. When dealing with people in crisis, we need to understand decision making is based on emotion much more than logic. To offer full respect, let's focus on three areas of importance.
- First, fairness. People will take significantly irrational positions and actions when we feel we're being treated unfairly.
 - Second, autonomy. Ultimately, we must acknowledge we are not fully in control of a crisis situation. We are going to allow them to come to their own decision or conclusion, and be their trusted guide in that process.
 - Finally, Empathy and perspective. Is it possible other people don't share our views of how we perceive a situation? Not only possible, but it's quite likely. Take the time to see the situation from someone else's point of view and unleash a terrific opportunity for creative resolution.

RESPECT

• Where do emotional triggers come from?

1. **Fairness**

- When people feel like they are being treated unfairly, expect negative emotion to take over.

2. **Autonomy**

- Especially in this pandemic, a huge trigger, perhaps the largest factor in emotional drive right now.

3. **Empathy & perspective**

- We expect people to see things the way we do.

- Respect is acknowledging we might be wrong or see things differently.



Additional Resources

Run-Hide-Fight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0>

https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf

If you or your team are interested in learning more about verbal influence and negotiation, please connect our presenter on LinkedIn, or email at stillema@negotiationscollective.com.

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