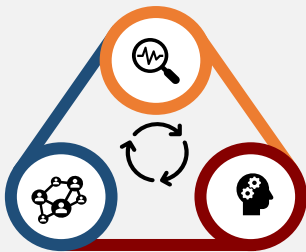# Threat Assessment and Management Teams

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:
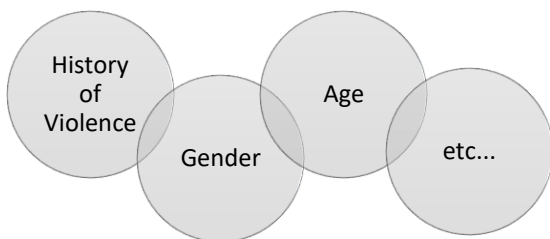
1. **Identifying** any concerning behaviors of the individual and any changes in those behavior.

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.
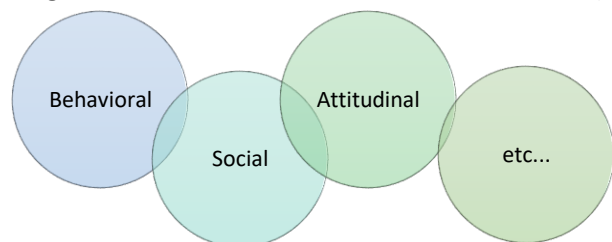
Static vs. Dynamic Factors

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.

History of Violence — Gender — Age — etc...

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.).

Behavioral — Social — Attitudinal — 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

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 aw 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. https://health.esc2.net/sites/Health/files/u134/Eleven-Questions-to-Guide-Data-Collection-in-a-Threat-Assessment-Inquiry.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