

**VIRTUAL TOWN HALL**

**Effective Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management: Critical Information for School Safety Teams**

We'll Begin Shortly

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

NASP NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF School Psychologists

NASSP National Association of Secondary School Principals

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## Research on Targeted School Violence

U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)

**Analysis of 35 Attackers**

- Law enforcement contact
- Psychological, behavioral & developmental health
- Substance use/abuse
- Stressors
- Bullying
- Concerning behaviors/communications
- Disciplinary history
- Observable planning behaviors
- History of weapons use & violence
- Home life factors

**Analysis of 43 Plotters**

- Law enforcement contact
- Psychological, behavioral & developmental health
- Substance use/abuse
- Stressors
- Bullying
- Concerning behaviors/communications
- Disciplinary history
- Interest in violence
- Observable planning behaviors

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## Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model

U.S. Department of Justice  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
National Threat Assessment Center  
JULY 2018

- Step 1:** Establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team
- Step 2:** Define prohibited and concerning behaviors
- Step 3:** Establish and provide training on a central reporting system
- Step 4:** Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention
- Step 5:** Establish assessment procedures
- Step 6:** Develop risk management options
- Step 7:** Create and promote a safe school climate
- Step 8:** Provide training for all stakeholders

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## Best Practices Guidelines

Melissa Reeves, National Association of School Psychologists

- BTAM = an intervention process, NOT a disciplinary process
- Protocols and procedures follow Secret Service/NTAC/US Dept of Ed Guidelines
- Multi-method, multi-source – verify data
- Parent engagement and partnership
- Focus on supports
- Punishment alone does not change behavior
- Exclusionary measures can increase risk
- High-quality training by experts who have worked K-12 cases in schools

*Consequences With Care*

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## Upholding Civil Rights & Addressing Disproportionality

- Training and processes must address:
  - context of threat
  - historical and acute trauma
  - biases
  - cultural identity and experiences
  - equity, equality, privilege
  - history with systems & trust in process
  - impact of disAbility
- Does not replace child study or behavioral intervention teams
- Complements special education procedures, does not replace
- Must study fidelity of implementation and outcome data to better identify and address disproportionality

*Failure to Intervene = Negligence  
YET ....  
"Wrong" Decision = Criminal  
Liability???*

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## Key Factors of the Threat Assessment Process

Elizabeth Brown, PRN Charter Member through the NASSP

- Proactive and reactive
- Form a diverse team with many voices
- Open, transparent communication with the parent/guardian
- Follow the steps in order
- No assumptions
- Leave personal agendas/history out of the process
- Student well being is the first priority
- Err on the side of caution
- Listen

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## The School Counselor’s Role in Risk Assessments

Carolyn Stone, University of North Florida/American School Counselor Association

- Collaborator
- Team Player
- Member of the Assessment Team
- Constant at the School
- Honed Observational Skills
- Contact with Students in Need

Minor Role in Threat Assessments – Team Member: Survey Results from 1/22						
Q5 - Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements about threat assessments.						
Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure	Total
School counselors should not be involved in threat assessments in any way.	2.4%	4.0%	50.2%	36.5%	6.8%	249
School counselors should be involved in threat assessments but only in collaboration with other professionals specifically trained in violence assessment.	50.2%	41.4%	4.4%	0.4%	3.6%	249
School counselors should lead the threat assessment team for their school.	2.4%	8.4%	45.0%	37.8%	6.4%	249

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## Minor Role in Threat Assessments but a Major Role in Suicidal Ideation

### **ROLE: Information Gathering**

The School Counseling Profession's Truths Regarding Student Risk:

- Confidentiality is superseded.
- Err on the side of caution.
  - Quantifying risks is random guessing.
  - Making a judgment call about "no risk" or "low risk" is dangerous.
- Parents are in the best position to exercise custody and control over their child and must be contacted
  - and provided with resources.
- Neglect is a Child Protective Services report.
- School counselors have very limited authority.
- Protocol must be rooted in reality. If written into a protocol, it must be done with integrity every time.