

# ***Threat Assessment & Management***

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## **Threat Assessment & Management**

With the emergence of active shooting events and other such threatening activity, it has become clear that merely responding to and resolving an active threat is not enough to provide for public safety.

Over the past few decades, the concept of threat assessment has emerged. This practice has been refined into an experience and research-based body of knowledge.

This document contains information which was part of a 2012 in-service training program provided to municipal police officers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The information contained herein is evidence-informed and reflects the knowledge base available at the time this course was developed.

Out of respect to the victims, the names of the assailants referenced in this program have been omitted.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Introduction

While police officers possess a great deal of experience and knowledge related to assessing threats, this experience touches a wide variety of risk factors, warning behaviors, and processes.

What is often times lacking is a systematic way to pull this knowledge together in a way that enables officers to more readily recognize developing threats and more effectively articulate their observations.

This course is an attempt to organize this knowledge and experience into categories that will make the behaviors and warning signs easier to articulate.

## Section One Assessing Threats: The Fundamentals

### Essential Principles and Concepts

**What is Threat Assessment?** Threat Assessment is a strategy and process designed for preventing violence through early identification and evaluation of individuals (or groups) that may pose a threat to harm.

This process is designed to identify warning signs and facilitate appropriate interventions before someone engages in behavior that is harmful to themselves or others

Police officers regularly conduct threat assessments in situations in which they encounter a suspect in an on-scene encounter. In these situations, the officer observes the situation and the suspect for indicators of impending violence. Experienced officers become fairly adept in assessing on-scene situations for threats.

A more comprehensive threat assessment process can be applied on a broader scale to a variety of situations involving interpersonal violence, such as domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, school / workplace violence, as well as to Homeland Security.

This course focuses on the threat assessment process as applied to situations involving interpersonal violence.

The recent Colorado movie theater shooting case is an example in which the Threat Assessment process was not pursued effectively.

In another case however, the threat assessment process involving a Maryland man who threatened to shoot employees in his workplace, worked well and resulted in the suspect being detained for psychiatric evaluation.

**Definition of Threat-** While the term 'threat' has been defined in a variety of ways; the concept is generally recognized by most law enforcement officers.

In a study conducted on school shooters, the FBI defined a threat as: *"an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something."* (O'Toole, 2000)

Others have defined threats as an: "expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry it out, and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional, or future." (Randazzo & Plummer (2009)



**Why Threat Assessment?** Conducting a threat assessment provides law enforcement officers, mental health professionals, the court system, and workplace and school officials with tools needed to identify and manage threats.

### Seven Threat Assessment Principles

1. **Not All Threats or Threateners Are Equally Violent-** Most people who make threats are unlikely to carry out their threat. However, all threats must be taken seriously and evaluated. (O'Toole 2000)
2. **Targeted Violence Can Often Be Prevented-** Many incidents of targeted violence are preventable. (Fein & Vossekuil, 1998; Fein et al., 2002.)
3. **Violence is a Dynamic Process-** Threat assessment is not about identifying if someone is a "violent person." Rather it attempts to identify the circumstances or situation in which the individual might pose a threat to themselves or to others. (Randazzo et al., 2006)

The threat assessment process examines a person's behavior, situation, stressors, etc. in order to identify the factors that might change, and what affect that change may have on their likelihood of violence.

This process requires assessors to monitor and re-evaluate the subject and their situation to understand the threat posed and the impact of any interventions.

4. **Threat Assessment is About Behavior, Not Profiles-** There is no specific "type of person" who perpetrates targeted violence. (Vossekuil et al, 2002) Since Threat Assessment is evidence based, it examines behaviors and situations to determine the risk.
5. **Agencies and Disciplines Need To Cooperate -** In order to provide the highest degree of safety for the public, it is vital that there be cooperation between agencies and personnel in law enforcement departments, mental health centers, school and workplace settings and other pertinent stakeholders.
6. **Early Identification and Intervention Helps Everyone-** The best results are achieved with early recognition, proper reporting, and effective intervention. Intervening early can help prevent further escalation of violence.
7. **Multiple Reporting Mechanisms Enhance Early Identification-** Simple and easy reporting options include Anonymous tip lines, Websites, and Email addresses.

### Types of Threats (O'Toole 2000)

**Direct Threat** – This type of threat identifies a specific act against a specific target and is delivered in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner.

- "I am going to place a bomb in the school's gym."
- "I'm a joker, and I'm gonna load my guns and blow everybody up." **Personal statement of N.P., Maryland 2012.**

**Indirect Threat-** These threats tend to be vague, unclear, and ambiguous. The plan, the intended victim, the motivation, and other aspects of the threat are masked or equivocal: "If I wanted to, I could kill everyone at this school!" While violence is implied, the threat is phrased tentatively.

- "I could kill you and you wouldn't even know it was coming." This type of threat suggests that a violent act COULD occur, not that it WILL occur.

**Veiled Threat-** A threat that strongly implies but does not explicitly threaten violence.

- "We would be better off without you!" This type of threat clearly hints at a possible violent act, but allows the potential victim to interpret the message and give a definite meaning to the threat.

**Conditional Threat-** This type of threat is often seen in extortion cases. It warns that a violent act will happen unless certain demands or terms are met.

- "If you don't pay me one million dollars, I will place a bomb in the school."

**Intimacy Effect-** *The nature of the relationship between the threatener and the person being threatened has an effect on the likelihood of that threat being carried out.*

*The Intimacy Effect asserts that the more intimate the relationship between the threatener and the subject, the more likely that threat will be carried out. (Calhoun & Weston 2003)*

Such threats are frequently carried out in domestic violence incidents; perhaps the most intimate type of relationship known.

However, the Intimacy Effect can also be seen in the school or workplace setting where the intimacy tends to be more social than physical.

Officers must consider the context and circumstances in which the threats are made.

**Making vs. Posing a Threat-** There is a difference between making a threat and posing a threat.

- A person **makes** a threat when they express their intent to harm.
- A person **poses** a threat when they engage in behavior that indicates furthering a plan or building capacity for a violent act (Fein et al., 2002, pg. 33)

### What Threat Assessment Involves

**The "STEP" Principle-** Violence is the result of the interaction between the Subject, the Target of violence; the Environment; and Precipitating Events.

#### Subject

- What is the subject's risk for violence?
- Does the subject pose a threat of violence?
- Is the subject on the pathway to intended violence?
  - If so, at which point on the pathway does the subject appear to be?
  - How quickly is the subject progressing on the pathway?

#### Intended Target

- Who or what is the intended target?
- What is the nature of the relationship between the target and the subject?
- What factors increase the likelihood of the target being attacked?
  - What are the target's vulnerabilities?
  - What factors can be changed to make the target less likely to be attacked?

#### The Environment

- In what environments would the subject and target most likely find themselves?
- What factors in the environment make an attack less likely to occur?
- How can the environment(s) be managed to mitigate the effects of an attack?



## Precipitating Events

A precipitating event (also referred to as a trigger event) is an event or condition that propels a subject to take an aggressive or violent action.

The nature of this event or condition is often highly subjective; that is, it has particular importance or meaning to the subject.

In the subject's mind, the precipitating event or condition represents the so called "last straw" that leaves them with the perception that no other viable alternative exists but to act on their violent or aggressive ideas.

- What trigger events exist that could launch the subject into an attack?
- What has provoked the subject in the past?

## How Threats Develop

**Identifying the Pathway To Violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2003)**- Individuals who commit an act of targeted violence commit their acts after progressing through a specific Pathway to Violence.

This is true of **targeted violence** (violence directed at a specific identified individual or group), as well as **intended violence** (intentional violence committed against a random, or non-specifically identified target).

This pathway has specific discernible junctures through which the perpetrator will pass. The speed at which an actor progresses through this pathway will vary as well as the direction of travel.

While all perpetrators of intended or targeted violence will pass through this pathway, not all individuals who begin to pass into the pathway will necessarily complete the journey by committing an act of violence.

Threat teams have the opportunity to gather information quickly and identify "at-risk" individuals as they escalate on the path to violence. Threat teams attempt to mitigate risk while remembering that violence is a dynamic process, rather than a static event or state of being. The threat assessment process notes changes of circumstances in a person's life that might be a catalyst to move a person to harm self or others.

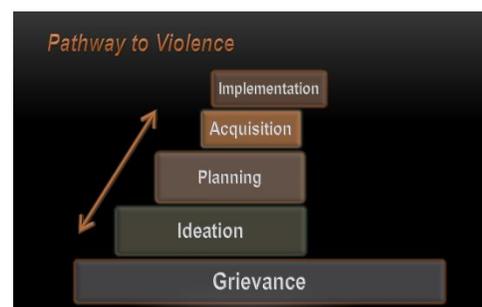
Teams attempt to identify potential threats by looking forward over the coming days, weeks, and months to see what factors in a person's life might change and if these changes might increase or decrease the likelihood of violence.

Teams also must remember that offenders may plan their attacks over years while moving through stages of violence.

**Grievance: A Prerequisite to the Pathway-** *Prior to its development, each Pathway begins with a real or imagined grievance.*

*This grievance does not need to have any basis in reality, nor does it need to be objectively egregious. (Ibid)*

**Signs of Grievance include:** *A sense of injustice, mission, loss, and destiny along with a desire for revenge and recognition or fame. (Ibid)*



**Case Examples**

- A Colorado man shot and killed two people at a Colorado Youth With A Mission center sometime after he was removed from a training program for inappropriate behavior. The shooter expressed his hatred for Christians and the Church.
- A terrorist built and detonated a bomb in Oslo Norway, then went to a small island where he killed several individuals attending a political youth camp. He indicated that the reasons for his attack stemmed from his grievance regarding his government's failure to address the Islamization of Europe.

*Whether the grievance is objectively valid is not important. What matters, is that the individual feels unjustly treated or wronged, and that injustice spawns a justification to move into the next step; Violent Ideation.*

Various models illustrate The Pathway to Violence by using three to six steps or stages. **Fein, et al., 2002; Calhoun and Weston, (2003) and (June 2006); and NCIS (2012).**

**The Stages-** The stages discussed here will include: Ideation; Planning; Acquisition; and Implementation.

**Ideation-** *Ideation is the step at which a person decides to commit some type of violent act as a response to or reaffirmation of their grievance.*

People who commit violent acts appear to be incapable of accepting injustices. *Being unable to move past an actual or perceived injustice, such individuals allow their grievance to become a spring-board to violent ideas by concluding that violence is an acceptable and necessary way to respond. Violence thus becomes an intentional, conscious choice. (Ibid)*

**Signs of Ideation include:** Discussing the ideation with others (**Leakage**); Identifying with Other Assailants; Deciding that Violence is the Only Alternative; Fascination with Weapons; and a Fixation on Anniversaries. **(Ibid)** All of the above signs will **not** appear in every threat assessment case, and in some instances very few signs may be observed.

**Planning-** After the violent ideation takes hold, the individual must conduct at least some research into the intended target in order to devise and facilitate an attack.

Whether we refer to a targeted attack (one in which a specified target is identified) or an act of intended violence (the subject intends to commit a violent act without identifying a specific target), at least some information must be gathered to facilitate the attack. **(Ibid)** The extent of research and planning activities conducted can vary greatly from an almost incidental discovery, to a simple plan, to extensive and elaborate research and planning activities.

*Research and planning activities usually involve gaining insight into the intended targets' routines, habits, activities, and schedules. On a deeper level, the research phase will often seek to identify and exploit the wide range of victim vulnerabilities.*

**Signs of Planning Include:** Information Gathering; Surveillance Activity; Stalking; Suspicious Inquires; and Target Research. **(Ibid)**

**Acquisition-** *Once the subject completes the planning phase; they are positioned to begin the Acquisition stage. In some cases, a subject may perform some activities included in the Acquisition stage simultaneously while they continue to gain further insight and develop a plan of attack. (Ibid)* The Columbine assailants planned their attack for about a year while assembling pipe bombs and purchasing weapons.

**Signs of Acquisition Include:** Acquiring Weapon(s); Assembling Equipment; Arranging Transportation; Observing Significant Dates; Conducting Final-Act Behaviors; and Costuming (the selection of clothing that is perceived to be meaningful to the attack.) **(Ibid)**

**Case Example**

Assailants from Columbine High School, Virginia Tech, a Colorado Movie Theater, and the Youth With A Mission and New Life Church shooter all acquired several weapons, a large amount of ammunition, and other supportive equipment prior to their assaults.

**Implementation-** This step actually includes two sub-steps; namely **Breach** and **Attack**.

**Breach-** *During the Breach phase, an attacker probes and tests the target's security. Breach activity can include simplistic or elaborate attempts to enter into close proximity to the target.*

Since it is heavily influenced by the personal attributes of the attacker, breach activity will typically mirror a person's intellectual and mental prowess. The time span and repetition required for breach activities can vary. **(Ibid)**

Some breach activities such as violations of protective orders, stalking, and un-authorized entry are easily detected by law enforcement while others such as normal pedestrian or transportation activities may be less detectible. **(Ibid)**

**Signs of Breach Include:** Boundary Probing (the testing or violation of socially acceptable personal boundaries, [e.g. violating protection orders, showing up at a target's place of business or residence, or gaining access to a target's residence or family members]); a Dry-Run Rehearsal Approach; and a Surreptitious Approach. **(Ibid)**

**Case Examples**

Examples of breach behavior include but are not limited to the following:

- A would-be assassin stalked President Jimmy Carter in various cities by attending campaign rallies. At one point the actor was within 20 feet of Carter.
- A shooter made a prior attempt to assault the people at the LA Fitness Center in Pittsburgh.
- An assailant had video tapes of the YWAM Center, and diagrams of a co-worker's home with whom he had disagreements.

**Attack-** *The second sub-step of the Implementation stage, is the culmination of all previous efforts. Fortunately, for many reasons, and in spite of the time and effort required in most cases some potential attackers cannot take the final step. (Ibid) Those however, who do carry out their attack will have done so after traversing through a distinctive and discernable process. (Ibid)*

Some would-be attackers back out of the final step due to emotional reasons; namely they lose courage, become apprehensive about being apprehended, or other reasons. Security measures present at the scene of an intended attack have played a part in some potential attacker's decision to abort their plan. It is conceivable that the perceived conditions at the scene, unexpected events, or other factors could also play a subjective role in an individual's mind and disqualify the attack as not fitting their "ideal event." **(Ibid)**

**Direction of Movement-** Not every individual who begins to ascend the pathway to violence will commit a violent act.

In fact, an individual may begin to ascend the pathway only to find that his grievance has been resolved, or that they are not capable of doing what they perceive is needed to resolve their grievance. In these cases, an individual may actually descend the pathway.

**Compression of Time and Activity-** As a person ascends the pathway, a compression of time and activity often occurs. In other words, as one gets closer to an attack, their activities become more numerous, they often take place in a shorter period of time, and with a greater degree of intensity. This phenomenon is represented by the spacing and size of the graphic boxes in the Pathway graphic.

## Section 2 Threat Assessment Process

**Introduction-** Conducting a threat assessment is different from conducting a criminal investigation. The latter focuses on establishing a clear hard line of evidence of criminal wrongdoing.

Threat assessments require looking beyond the criminal aspects of a case and asking such questions as: **(Calhoun & Watson 2003)**

1. What is at stake for the subject?
2. Is the subject communicating an intention to act violently to friends or colleagues?
3. Are there any positive influences in the subject's life to dissuade him or her from acting violently?
4. Does the subject indicate any faith in the future for themselves?
5. Do the subject's behaviors suggest that they do not intend to act violently?
6. What, if anything, can be done to resolve the subject's issues with the target?
7. Does the subject give any indication that their issue or grievance can be resolved peacefully and reasonably?

Consider the analogy of a new house that is being framed. The house will have different floors (relating to the various sub topics such as Warning Behaviors, Risk Factors Stabilizing Factors, and Trigger Events).

Within each floor, additional framing is provided to further define the rooms within that floor. These rooms represent the specific factors in each of the subcategories.

### “WoRST:” A Structural Framework

The threat assessment process seeks to gather information in an effort to describe the likelihood that a subject will commit an act of violence at a particular point in time.

This information often falls into one of several common categories. These categories can serve as a partial framework to assessing threats.

Represented by the acronym “**WoRST**,” this framework includes: **W**arning Behaviors; **R**isk Factors; **S**tabilization (Protective) Factors; and **T**rigger (or Precipitating) Events.



### Warning Behaviors: A Typology (Meloy, Hoffman, Guldemann, & James 2011)

Warning Behaviors represent acts which constitute evidence of an accelerating risk situation. These behaviors are contemporary in nature and often exist in a continuing state. Since these behaviors are current, they may be altered by threat & risk management efforts.

Warning behaviors involve dynamic risk factors (those occurring contemporaneously) and are subject to observation and intelligence gathering.

The following typology of warning behaviors lists factors that indicate an increasing or accelerating risk of intended or targeted violence.

**Pathway Warning Behavior-** Any behavior that is reflected on the pathway to violence. Such behaviors include research, planning, preparation, and implementation of an attack. **(Calhoun & Weston, 2003; Fein & Vossekuil, 1998 1999)**

**Fixation Warning Behavior-** Any behavior that indicates that a subject is becoming increasingly preoccupied with a person, cause or course of action. (Mullen et. a. 2009)

Such behavior is gauged by the following criteria:

- An increased obsession on a person or cause.
- An increasingly strident opinion;
- Increased negative characterization of the object of the fixation.
- An angry emotional undertone; typically accompanied by social or occupational deterioration.

**Identification Warning Behavior-** A psychological desire to be a commando (Dietz, 1986; Knoll, 2010), to have a “warrior mentality” (Hempel et. a., 1999); or to closely associate with weapons, military, or law enforcement paraphernalia, to identify with previous attackers, assassins, or as an agent to advance a cause or ideology.

President Reagan’s would-be assassin identified with and imitated Robert De Niro’s character-Travis Bickel in the movie “Taxi Driver.” The assailant started wearing an army jacket and boots, began drinking peach brandy, and feeding a fascination with guns.

**Novel Aggression Warning Behavior-** An act of violence that appears unrelated to any targeted violence pathway warning behavior which is committed for the first time.

Such behaviors may be used to test the ability (de Becker, 1997) of the subject to actually do a violent act (Hull, 1952), or a behavioral tryout (MacCulloch, Snowden, Wood, & Mills, 1983).

#### Case Example

**Virginia Tech Example-** After killing two co-eds on the morning of April 16, 2007, Virginia Tech shooter went back to his dorm room, accessed his computer, and then went to the post office to mail a copy of his manifesto to a major news source.

Only then did he go to Norris Hall where he began his mass killing event. Some believe that the shooter’s first two victims were an example of Novel Aggression.

**Energy Burst Warning Behavior-** An increase in the frequency or variety of any noted activities related to the target, even if the activities themselves are relatively innocuous, usually in the days or weeks before an attack. (Odgers et.al. 2009)

#### Case Example

Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford’s’ assailant exhibited a flurry of activity in the twelve hours preceding his attack. This activity consisted of a variety of social media postings of photos of him in a “G string” holding his Glock, searching internet websites pertaining to assassins and lethal injection, going to Wal-Mart and Circle K to develop the pictures, and buy ammunition and a black diaper bag.

**Leakage Warning Behavior-** Any type of communication a subject delivers to a third party that reveals the subject’s intent to do harm. (Meloy & O’Toole, 2011)

“Third parties are typically other people, but the means of communication could vary widely, from planned or spontaneous utterances, to letters, diaries, emails, voice mails, blogs, journals, internet posting, tweets, text messages, video postings, and future means of social communication that are yet to be invented.” (Ibid)

**Nature of Leakage-** Leakage can be intentional or unintentional and can occur for a variety of social, personal, psychological reasons, or tactical reasons.

“Leakage can also vary in specificity as to when, where, what act will occur, and what the target will be, all variables that likely affect its predictive power.” (Ibid)

**Importance of Leakage-** When studying adolescent mass murders, such as school shootings, the phenomena of “leakage” emerges.

“Leakage’ occurs when a student intentionally or unintentionally reveals clues to feeling, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, or intentions that may signal an impending violent act.” (O’Toole, 2000)

“These clues could take the form of subtle threats, boasts, innuendos, predictions or ultimatums.” (Ibid)

Clues may be “spoken or conveyed in stories, diaries, essays, poems, letters, songs, drawings, doodles, tattoos, or videos.” (Ibid)

“Leakage is considered one of the most important clues preceding an adolescent’s violent act.” (Ibid)

Leakage is not limited to violence committed by adolescents, since this phenomenon often occurs among other age demographics such as adult mass murders, as well as other types of targeted and intended violence.

Leakage may indicate where on the pathway to violence the subject is located, which direction they may be heading, and perhaps the speed in which the progress is occurring.

Leakage does not occur in every instance of intended or targeted violence, and its value will depend, in part, on whether it is detected, and by whom.

However, when it does occur it provides individuals in school and workplace environments, as well as social circles, neighborhoods, mental health and law enforcement officials with an opportunity to detect possible threats in progress.

#### Case Examples

- The Colorado movie shooter allegedly mailed a journal to his psychiatrist. This journal is believed to contain indicators of Holmes’ intention to commit the shootings.
- A Maryland man who threatened to kill people in his workplace, made several threatening statements to another supervisor in two separate phone calls made in the same morning. The actor told his supervisor that he “wanted to see his boss’s brain splatter all over the sidewalk.” The actor also said “I’m a joker, and I’m gonna load my guns and blow everybody up.”

**Last Resort Warning Behavior-** This behavior is characterized by evidence of a violent “action imperative” (Mohandie & Duffy, 1999) and results in increasing desperation or distress through declaration in word or deed, forcing the individual into a position of last resort where there is no alternative other than violence. (de Becker 1997)

Last resort warning behaviors can be a reaction to a ‘slow-burning’ precipitating event that the subject perceives as backing him into the proverbial corner. As a result, the subject exhibits behavior that indicates that they are becoming more disturbed, despondent, and resigned to the prospect that there is no other perceived viable alternative but to act violently. (Meloy et. al. 2011).

**Directly Communicated Threat Warning Behavior-** The communication of a direct threat to the target or law enforcement before an act of violence. A threat is a written or oral communication that implicitly or explicitly states a wish or intent to injure, kill or damage the target, individuals symbolically or actually associated with the target.

**Risk Factors-** A large number of risk factors exist that can be applied to a wide variety of violent acts. Some risk factors apply more specifically to certain, more focused violent acts such as domestic violence, or sexual violence.

Many of the violence risk factors apply to violent acts occurring in the school, campus, or workplace settings.

**“V I O L E N C E R I S K”** (White & Meloy 2007)- One threat assessment instrument designed for the workplace lists violence risk factors as follows:

<b>V</b>	<b>Violence Preoccupation:</b> Revels in violent ideas, fantasies; identification with violent perpetrators; sees violence as justified.
<b>I</b>	<b>Intent &amp; Threats:</b> Expressed intentions, threats, motives, or plans to harm others or self (spoken, written, electronic, gestures, symbols).
<b>O</b>	<b>Others are Concerned:</b> Concern or fear exists among potential targets or those who know the subject that he or she may act violently. A former psychiatric patient's behavior was a concern to his former physician and to some of his neighbors. The Colorado movie theater assailant allegedly mailed his journal to his psychiatrist who became concerned about his behavior.
<b>L</b>	<b>Losses Recent or Impending or Significant Stress:</b> Recent or likely job or other significant loss; relationship, financial, status, pride, family or significant other death, academic failure; strong denial or poor coping with losses; stress felt as 'unbearable.' Significant stress is not always related to a loss. In some cases, it could be brought on by a promotion.
<b>E</b>	<b>Entitlement and Negative Attitudes:</b> Very self-centered, defensive or demanding; lacks any concern for and/or blames others; habitual lying; perceives management or other's position as "great injustice" to self; extreme jealousy or envy.
<b>N</b>	<b>Noncompliant or Menacing Behaviors:</b> Stalking, harassment or, bullying; vindictive actions; security breaches; defiance of workplace rules. Prior to his attack at Western Psychiatric Institute & Clinic, a former patient had showed up at a medical facility with a baseball bat and threatened staff.
<b>C</b>	<b>Capacity &amp; Actions Preparatory for Violence:</b> First interest in or additional acquisition of weapons in troubled context; increased practice or planning behaviors; weapons at worksite; has or seeks access to targets. The Colorado movie shooter acquired large amounts of ammunition and weapons.
<b>E</b>	<b>Extreme Moods:</b> Angry outbursts; agitation 'very gloomy' extreme or sudden mood swings; suicidal feelings; notable isolation.
<b>R</b>	<b>Real Provocations or Destabilizers:</b> Situational factors, such as when others in or outside of workplace are provoking or supporting subject's volatility; highly stressful workplace; insufficient management attention to risk potential.
<b>I</b>	<b>Irrational Thinking:</b> Bizarre or highly suspicious beliefs, especially if they include violent ideas or fears of violence; makes highly irrational accusations, especially toward management or coworkers.
<b>S</b>	<b>Substance Abuse:</b> Use of amphetamines or other stimulants; abuse of alcohol; evidence of misconduct or violence while under influence.
<b>K</b>	<b>Known History of Violence, Criminality or Conflict:</b> Violent history, especially if recent or frequent, including domestic / intimate partner violence or abuse; pattern of litigiousness or persistent conflict, especially in work contexts.

**Stabilizing (Protective) Factors-** Identifying risk factors and warning signs are only one part of a threat assessment.

*In addition to factors that increase the potential of violence, a set of factors exists which help stabilize, or inoculate an individual and thus help move an individual away from an act of violence. These factors are sometimes called Stabilizing Factors, Protective Factors, or Buffers Against Violence Risk.*

*Stabilizing factors help maintain a person in a state of well-being and normally serve to inhibit an individual from committing an act of violence. Stabilizing factors promote adherence to cultural norms and reinforce one's self control over their impulses and temper.*

*"Inhibitors work much like dominoes standing in a row. As long as each remains standing, each exerts an inhibiting effect on the subject acting out violently. But as each domino topples, the inhibiting effect dissipates. Indeed, as a domino falls, the momentum toward violence can increase." (Calhoun & Watson 2003).*

*While the presence of Stabilizing factors may help reduce the risk of violence, the **absence** of such factors will most likely increase the risk.*

**"P R O T E C T"** Threat assessment practitioners have proposed the following list of "Stabilizers and Buffers Against Violence Risk" (White & Meloy 2007)

<b>P</b>	<b>Positive Personal Attachments:</b> Positive family or intimate attachments; other pro-social attachments & involvement; "Family needs me" attitude.
<b>R</b>	<b>Remorse is Genuine for Transgressions:</b> Genuine remorse for fear inducing conduct or policy violations.
<b>O</b>	<b>Obeys Limits Set by Employer or Authorities:</b> Positive or appropriate response to limit-setting and defined boundaries; motivated to avoid law enforcement or legal consequences for threatening or criminal behaviors.
<b>T</b>	<b>Takes Sanctioned Actions to Address "Wrongs" &amp; Setbacks:</b> Seeks appropriate help for problems, e.g. legal resources, grievance proceedings, career guidance, spiritual support, friendly counsel.
<b>E</b>	<b>Enjoys Life and Freedom:</b> Demonstrates attitude of "Something to lose" (vs. "Nothing to lose"); sees personal future beyond current grievance or setbacks.
<b>C</b>	<b>Coping Skills are Positive:</b> Demonstrates general characteristics of resilience, flexibility in the face of adversity; responds positively to defusing and negotiating; problem solving skills evident.
<b>T</b>	<b>Treatment Compliance:</b> Complies with appropriate treatment for mental health issues relevant to violence risk.

**Trigger (or Precipitating) Events** - Examples of possible trigger (Precipitating) events can include obtaining / serving PFA, a potential breakup, an anticipated interview with police; a significant personal loss, (e.g. loss of shared custody, termination of employment), an impending financial crisis; and a serious personal or family illness.

### How to Investigate Threats

**Four Investigative Circles: An Investigative Procedure-** Effectively assessing threats requires an interdisciplinary investigative process to gather pertinent information which will illuminate the likelihood of a person committing an act of violence at a particular point in time.

Ideally, this interdisciplinary process would involve professionals from a variety of stakeholder fields such as mental health, law enforcement, workplace or school officials and others, in an effort to bring the most complete set of expertise to bear on addressing potential threats.

This investigative procedure includes four circles of inquiry. (Calhoun & Weston 2003) The circles are as follows:



**The First Circle: “Cir-Con”- Examining the Circumstances and Context-** Examining the circumstances and the context in which threats are made can assist officers in better understanding the nature and progress of the threats.

**Circumstances-** What can be inferred from the inappropriate contact / communication? *How was the contact / communication delivered. E.G. Written (letter, email, telephone, vs. verbal confrontation and suspicious activity.*

What is the message, intent, request, or demand being made? *Is the purpose of the contact / communication to warn, intimidate, cause physical injury or emotional harm, or to gather information?*

How much target knowledge can be deduced from the inappropriate contact/communication? *The more the subject knows or attempts to know about the target, the greater potential risk.*

Why did the subject choose this target? *The greater the involvement or concern of the subject with the target, the higher the potential risk.*

Is the Intimacy Effect at play? *“The intimacy effect simply postulates that the more intimate the relationship between the threatener and the target, the more likely the threat will serve as a pre-incident indicator of future violence.”*

**Context-** Has the subject’s life, circumstances, or situation changed significantly? If so, in what way? The more changes that have occurred or the greater the significance of the change, the higher the potential risk.

Does this inappropriate contact or communication indicate a change in the subject’s previous behavior or demeanor toward the target? Comparing the previous relationship between the subject and target with the current complaint may signify a move toward potential violence, no move beyond the status quo, or a move away from violence.

Has the subject made other inappropriate contacts / communications in the past?

What is the target’s current situation? The greater the target’s involvement in controversial or confrontational issues, especially pertaining to the subject, the greater the risk. Has the target received other inappropriate contacts / communications in the past? Look for changes in patterns, escalations, or other indicators of increased violence potential.

**Second Circle- Establishing Content and Motive-** Why is the subject making the inappropriate contact? Does the subject seem to be trying to cause an emotional reaction (i.e. fear), are they trying to intimidate another; or is there another possible reason for the subject’s behavior or communication?

Does the subject seem to believe that any action of the potential target threatens the subject’s inhibitors? Sometimes a subject may feel compelled to act out violently because they perceive the target’s action as being detrimental or potentially detrimental to the subject. Does the subject provide any facts or information that can be corroborated?

### **Third Circle- Getting Information on the Subject**

- Compile a definitive biography on the subject.
- Is there anything in the subject’s background suggesting a propensity for violence or explosive behavior? Lack of evidence is not evidence of absence.
- What is the subject’s current situation?
- What is the subject’s current mental health condition?
- Does the subject own or have an interest in, or expertise with weapons?
- What inhibitors currently exist in the subject’s life? Does the subject perceive any of those inhibitors toppling or in danger?

- Has the subject suffered some recent loss? Has the subject engaged in any final act behaviors? Has the subject engaged in any attack-related behaviors?
- What are the subject's issues that prompted the inappropriate contact? How does the subject interact with others?

**Fourth Circle- Interviewing the Subject-** Interviewing a subject requires law enforcement officers to adequately prepare and exercise appropriate forethought. A decision to interview a subject of a threat assessment investigation must sometimes be made.

**Advantages of Interviewing Subjects-** Subjects can be the best direct source of information about themselves, their concerns, motives, and intentions. Subjects may be amenable to corrective actions.

**Disadvantages in Interviewing Subjects-** Interviewing a suspect may increase the risk of a physical confrontation. Conducting an interview may anger the subject or convince them to take imminent action.

**When to Interview-** An interview may be advisable when needed to find solutions to the subject's behaviors, but the subject has not yet committed a criminal offense. Interviews may also clarify subject communication, the circumstances and context of their behavior, or other issues that are ambiguous or confusing.

**When Not to Interview-** Interviews should probably not be conducted if the subject's behavior suggests that they would resist any efforts to resolve the problem.

**Identify the Stakes for the Subject (Calhoun & Weston 2003)-** Recognizing and understanding what the stakes are to the subject can be important in assessing threats. The costs to a subject of a course of conduct and the willingness of the subject to pay those costs can help illustrate the potential trajectory on the pathway to violence.

Stakes are determined from the subject's point of view and indicate their motivation to commit an act of intended violence. Stakes indicate how the subject views a course of conduct.

"A subject's stake in a situation can be personal, ideological, political, financial, related to deeply held religious or moral beliefs, emotional or delusional. ...They may involve intangible issues, such as honor, justice, family support, emotional ties, perceived rights, or ideological beliefs that make the grievance far more important to the subject than what an objective observer would see."

A subject's stake in a given course of conduct can be placed on a continuum ranging from: No Stake in the Matter; to Normal Acceptance; to A Mild Loss; to Much to Lose; to Everything to Lose. The way in which a subject perceives the stakes is affected by the presence or absence of inhibitors (i.e. stabilizing or protective factors) in their life.

## Section Three Interventions & Management Strategies

**S.T.E.P. Revisited-** Once a threat has been identified, and classified, it must be managed. One way to conceptualize this process is to revisit the STEP principle.

**S- Subject-** Threat management must determine legal and effective ways to control, contain, and de-escalate the subject and dissuade them from committing violent actions.

**T- Target-** Efforts must be made to identify and decrease the vulnerabilities of the potential target (s).

**E- Environment-** When possible and prudent, the physical, social, and routine environment should be modified to discourage escalation and aggressive acts.

**P- Precipitating Events-** An attempt should be made to identify reasonable events that could act as triggers or precipitating events of violence. Preparations should be made to mitigate the effects of such events, or if possible, eliminate them.

Management options should begin with the minimum intrusive level of intervention and work from there.

**Types of Control** - Managing threats depends on the controls available to a given subject / situation. The law enforcement professional should weigh all aspects of control and threat management in an attempt to balance safety, resources, and effectiveness.

The reluctance to dedicate resources to the level of investigation and monitoring necessary to effectively prevent an incident is understandable.

However, when the cost of prevention is compared to the cost of an incident in dollars, injuries, psychological trauma, death, political fallout, litigation and the future costs of security enhancement after an incident, the cost of prevention becomes more justifiable and attractive.

**Spheres of Control-** Generally speaking, there are six spheres of control available to manage most threats.

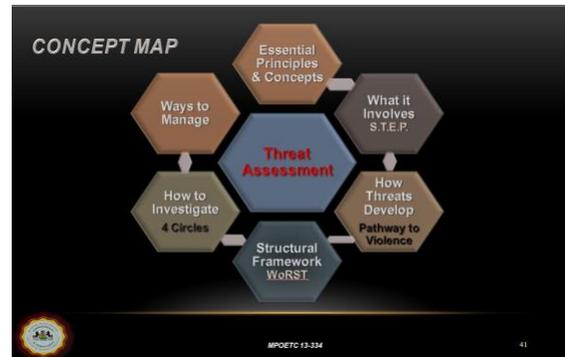
**Legal Control-** Perhaps the most commonly used sphere of control for the police officer is that of imposing legal sanctions through arrest and prosecution.

**Arrest and prosecution-** When justified, arrest and prosecution may allow officers to facilitate measures that may allow for a “cooling off period” or some other way to create space between the suspect and their target. Some of these measures may include but are not limited to the following:

- Recommending to the prosecutor that the suspect be referred to behavioral health services.
- Request or recommend a “no contact order” as a condition of probationary sentence, or as a condition of release after a continuance.

**Obtain a Protection from Abuse Order-** In some cases a PFA helps to set a boundary and provides an opportunity to assess compliance to legal intervention. It also may give cause to arrest when there wasn't one previously

Unfortunately, arrest and prosecution, referrals and recommendations, and protection orders can, in many cases also result in an escalation of the threat.



When possible, the subject's attitudes toward authority figures, the criminal justice system, & law enforcement should be assessed to anticipate likely reactions.

If possible also assess the subject's past interactions and patterns of behavior with law enforcement. Has the subject exhibited occurrences such as past restraining/protection order violations, arrests/incarcerations, and assaults on officers?

Before obtaining a PFA, consider identifying the effect of previously obtained restraining orders & violations.

**Physical Control-** In some cases, potential victims may be amenable to move their residence or workplace to another location. Victims can be cautioned to keep the new location confidential when possible.

In cases where moving the victim is not possible, a crime prevention approach may assist the victim in hardening their physical security around their residence and any specially targeted facility.

When possible, increased security presence (visible patrol) may be possible, at least for an appropriate time period.

Physical surveillance measures, (alarms, video equipment, etc.) around the victim or targeted facility may assist in response and prosecution efforts.

In addition to hardening the victim's residence and place of employment, knowing the subject's location, routines, and habits may assist the victim and police in formulating measures which may mitigate the threat.

### **Institutional Control**

**Other Law Enforcement Agencies/ Workplace and School Security-** If the subject lives or works outside a department's jurisdiction officers from its agency will need to cooperate with the agencies having jurisdiction in the areas the subject frequents.

Shared information is critical in multi-jurisdictional cases. In past cases, threats and suspicious actions were communicated to multiple agencies and jurisdictions, but handling of the cases was compartmentalized.

**In the workplace/school-** Most schools and businesses will already have a violence policy/procedure in place, but for smaller operations where threat management is a new concept officers may have to inform/educate administrators about workplace/school violence policies/practices.

School environments are governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Some provisions of this act may impair law enforcement's efforts to obtain information regarding a suspect student.

Officials in these environments or who are working with these settings should seek the advice of legal counsel to formulate and adapt policies that include at least the following principles and guidelines:

- Set and communicate boundaries for inter-personal contact
- Establish organizational culture that condemns workplace/school violence
- Conduct Workplace/School Violence awareness briefs
- Establish a security-employee/student liaison
- Hold ALL employees/students accountable for their behavior
- Use administrative infractions to provide consequences and establish boundaries
- Encourage reporting (hotline)

When permissible, workplace officials may be able to monitor the subject through organizational means (work computer, work email, check-ins with coworkers & supervisors).

Supervisors can use the subject's workload to direct them and possibly alter the pattern of contact and behavior towards potential victims.

Human Resources personnel may need to be involved in cases involving termination, or reassigning or removing the subject from points of conflict/victims within the organization.

## **Social Control**

**The Subject-** Inform Suspect of investigation and boundaries.

Caution must be used when informing the suspect of the investigation. Depending on several factors such as the subject's respect for authority, and their level of receptiveness, this action could be beneficial or detrimental.

If possible, institute measures that may help change the subject's thinking about violence; with the goal to make violence an unacceptable solution.

Find the "loss factor" that will help adjust behavior. Leverage "likes" and "wants"- Behavior may be altered by manipulating the factors that the subject feels are important to them.

For example:

- The subject hates his boss, but likes his job and wants to keep it.
- The subject hates his ex-wife, but wants to keep visitation with his kids.

"Knock it off approach"- This approach may work with subjects who have "a lot to lose" or are motivated to maintain their freedom. This approach will probably be ineffective with psychotic persons. This approach will probably also be ineffective with highly motivated individuals who want to proclaim their message.

Accurate subject assessment is needed since these actions may agitate the suspect and precipitate unwanted behavior (thus serving as a trigger event).

**Victim /Targeted Facility** - Inform victims of safety measures to be taken to avoid contact with the subject. When the victim is removed from the subject's social circle, the chances of conflict are reduced.

- Phone number change
- Address change (temporary?)
- Alternate routes to regular activities
- Situational awareness
- Contact with mutual friends/ co-workers
- Change in work assignment

If target is a business/ physical location: Check that the business has a security/ threat management plan in place and that it is being implemented.

Employees should be apprised of the situation and asked to report ANY contact with the subject immediately.

Some employees are likely to be a friend of the subject and depending on the situation may be placed in a difficult position. Safety of everyone involved must be stressed to these persons even at the expense of the friendship with the subject.

Many incidents have reports of friends/co-workers observing subject leakage, but did not believe reporting it would be the "right" thing to do. Leakage observed by un-trained individuals is a weak link in assessing threats.

## Family, Friends, Neighbors, and other Contacts

**Leverage the suspect's social network-** Family and friends may assist in controlling suspect behaviors by the following actions:

- Identify social network, caretakers, and contacts to whom the subject responds.
- Use social contacts & other individuals to report on the subject's behavior & location.
- Identify trusted individuals who can conduct daily welfare checks and who are willing to report this information to authorities.
- Identify and assess obsessions, grievances, and other pathway behaviors, warning behaviors, plans, etc.
- Reports concerns to law enforcement authorities.

**Psychological Control-** Officers, school officials and human resource representatives should, when possible, attempt to establish a relationship with hospital clinicians who have treated subject in an attempt to provide accurate and contemporary subject information.

Like the other spheres of influence, mental health resources can be used to help stabilize a subject. Officers will need to remember the criteria for section 302 involuntary committals; particularly those related to recent actions taken due to a mental disorder that create a threat to self or others.

Provisions of the Mental Health Procedures Act will, at times, differ from the procedures instituted in specific counties or jurisdictions. Police administrations should seek the guidance of their legal counsel in summarizing the applicable provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 and how these provisions affect their officer's ability to receive pertinent information regarding suspects. Local practice regarding the release or sharing of medical and psychological information regarding a suspect varies and may not fully conform to the intent of the HIPAA.

Crisis intervention teams may be available in particular jurisdictions and would be an excellent resource to tap regarding threat matters. Although a component of the Legal sphere of influence, a Protection from Abuse order can, in some cases provide psychological reinforcement of appropriate boundaries.

When practicable, officers, school, and employment officials should refer the suspect to outpatient counseling. Increase visible patrol of a target area, location, or individual, can serve as a psychological deterrent. Increase security in the workplace can also serve as a psychological deterrent.

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# Reference Material

## Appendix A

### Victimology (ATAP 2006)

In order to more accurately assess a threat, it is critical to gather information on the victim or target. Such information will help define the opportunities the subject may have to access the victim. Many times an unrealized connection exists between the victim and the subject that the subject can exploit. Some approaches taken by the investigator may seem accusatory or unfair to the victim, but a clear history of all contacts and the motivations of both parties must be investigated to obtain a clear picture of the relationship between the victim and the subject.

If the threat is reported by a third-party, similar information must be gathered to ascertain truthfulness and motivation for the report.

The investigator/assessor will attempt to:

- Ascertain the reporting party's motivation for the current report:
  - What is the current relationship? (employer/employee, friendship, romantic, service employee/customer, public figure, etc.)
  - Could the current report be retaliatory against the subject?
  - Is there a possibility that the reporting person is misinformed or intentionally providing misinformation?
- Ascertain the reporting party's or victim's past history of reports:
  - Is there a history of similar reports about the same or a different threat or subject?
  - What is the motivation for past reports?
  - Is there a pattern?
  - Is there a possibility that the reports were retaliatory against the subject?
  - Were past reports accurate?
  - Were previously reported situations resolved? If so, how?
- Determine if this person is a "chronic victim"? Are there multiple incidents of this person being stalked/harassed/threatened:
  - By the same or different subject?
- Access reports where reporting party was a victim, witness or actor to determine past conduct.

Is the victim in a public position/service related field that tends to these types of threat? (politician, complaint desk, investment representative, school employee, etc.)

Is the victim involved in a controversial situation with the subject? (divorce, child custody, failed business venture, etc.) If this type of situation exists, the investigator must be that much more critical of all data supplied by the reporting person. That does not insinuate that information should be disregarded without review. The investigator **MUST** examine all facts to determine veracity.

## Appendix B

### Interviewing the Subject: Preliminary Issues (ATAP 2006)

If time allows, a complete investigative analysis of the subject is advisable before conducting an interview. Information is available by normal investigative means that can aid the decision of when or if an interview should be conducted with the subject. It may bring to light previously unnoticed connections between the victim or target and the subject of investigation.

Pre-interview background information will help the investigator to better judge the subject's truthfulness, connection to reality, and aggressiveness, and give context to information gathered during any future interview.

Changes in the familial, financial, or living conditions can cause desperation, depression and a "nothing to lose mentality" that may increase the subject's violence risk.

Possible useful subject information:

- Criminal History
  - Violent crimes, disorderly conduct (fighting), public intoxication, substance abuse and any crimes that show a lack of respect for societal rules and norms should heighten investigative awareness of the subject, but a lack of public disorder crimes should not lower suspicions.
  - Many times subjects have NO history of violent or public disorder crimes (see "History of Violent Behavior" section below). The lack of an arrest history should not discount the subject as a potential threat.
  - Note instances where the subject caused injury.
  - Note the types of injury and any weapon used.
  - Obtain copies of all reports where subject was a victim, witness or actor to help determine past conduct.
  - Motor vehicle infractions - recent increase in violations indicating a disregard for self, others, societal rules or a series of distracted or otherwise pre-occupied driving.
  - Check Probation or Parole records; consider an interview with probation/parole officer.
- Mental Health History
  - Mental health treatment alone does not indicate a need for increased concern, but a history of treatment for violent episodes or self-destructive tendencies are noteworthy.
  - Does the subject have a diagnosed mental disorder?
  - Is the subject compliant with treatment and medications?
  - Does the subject show obvious signs of mental illness? (delusions, paranoia, grandiose fantasies, violent command hallucinations?)
- History of Substance Abuse
  - Can the abuse be documented? (criminal history, witnesses, admission, medical treatment)
  - Is the subject self-medicating an underlying mental illness?
  - Is the subject using a substance which may lower inhibitions or promote paranoia?
  - Does the subject exhibit violent tendencies when using the substance?

- History of violent or threatening behavior- recent and childhood
  - Have Protection from Abuse orders been filed against the subject?
  - Interviews of past and present neighbors, landlords, spouse, friends, romantic interests, teachers, employers, co-workers often leads to information not available in the criminal record.
  - School records- fighting, bullying, threatening, teachers' and counselors' impressions.
  - Recent change in behavior, including sudden interest in weapons.
  - Military discharge other than honorable (depending on circumstances), interview of recent commanding officers, unit members, VA counselors.
- Civil Records
  - Check recent Credit Reports
  - Discover evidence of financial strife or negative motivations to contact or retaliate against the victim.
  - Bankruptcy - Strong negative motivator- "Nothing to Lose"
  - Child Custody / Divorce Proceedings
  - Loss of child visitation rights should be considered a strong negative motivator as demonstrated in the recent rash of murder/suicide episodes among families where the visitation circumstances were altered.
  - Public liens/ foreclosure notices
- Military/ Tactical/ Weapons Training and Possession
  - Weapons training, especially with combat experience, increases tactical threat.
  - Military History
  - Recent return from combat (post-traumatic stress disorder, "stand down" adjustment problems)
  - Formal or informal firearms training - (police, military, gun club, paramilitary, anti-government advocacy groups, hate groups, books, internet records)
- Proximity to Victim
  - Is the subject within a geographical area that allows an approach or attack on the victim?
  - Live in the same premises?
  - Work in the same premises?
  - Intersecting paths that could lead to confrontation (planned or accidental)  
Common friends, relatives, hobbies, interests, schools, shopping areas.
- Family History
  - Is there an "inherited" violence cycle in the subject's family?
  - Family / Friend support structure present?
  - Recent change in familial relationship or living conditions?
    - Death
    - Divorce/separation
    - Child custody
    - Loss of job
    - Loss of home

- Social Networking Data
  - May be accessed through network "Friends"
  - Published blogs, interest lists
  - Special Interest Group online memberships
  - References to victim/target
  - Pictures of victim/target
  - Pictures of subject with weapons/ videos of training, weapons use
- Mail Cover
  - Associations
  - Subscriptions
  - Legal Notices
- Trash Pull
  - Receipts for travel, secondary phones, discarded plans, journals

## Appendix C

### Assessing communicated threats

Ask: What is the purpose of the threatening communication?

- To motivate a person into conducting a desired behavior
- To vent frustration- "Cognitive leakage"
- If verbal threat does not achieve desired outcome, subject may decide to resort to violence. (Turner & Gelles (2005) Model)
- Presence of theme fixation, target focus, action imperative, time imperative.

**Principles-** The principles of assessing communicated threats include differentiating between: Organized vs. Disorganized communication; Fixed and Focused communication; and Action/Time Imperatives.

**Organized vs. Disorganized Communication-** What is the level of organization and coherence? Does it have a central theme? Does it keep to the theme in a logical manner?

**Organized** – presents a single and continuous theme that is linear and logical.

**Disorganized-** presents a multitude of messages which are jumbled together.

**Fixed-** The degree to which a subject blames a person or organization for the perceived or actual conflict. Subject concludes that personal or professional problems are the fault of the command or personal relationship. Communication is reviewed for content that reflects blame.

**Focus-** Note where and how the subject has identified specific targets responsible for their problems. The focus can represent the subject's feelings of persecution, or being singled out. The focus can help identify the source of the problem

### Action / Time Imperatives

- **Action Imperative-** No other avenues will resolve the conflict yet subject feels pressure to take action.
  - "If you don't do this, then...."
    - Specificity increases risk
- **Time Imperative-** Applies a deadline to the action imperative.

**Assessment-** Assessing the communication, content and process, and context.

- What is going on in the person's life that triggered this communication?
- What is going on in current events/pop culture?
- Any other media or social influences?

**Assess appropriateness-** To whom was it sent? Is this the correct person for the concern? Was the concern appropriate?

**Assess motivation** (why this is being done), **mood** (depression/agitation), and **impulsivity**.

## Appendix D

### Stalking Investigative Questions

#### Investigative Questions for Stalking Cases (Fein, Vossekuil, 1998, and Borum et al 1999)

1. What is the stalker's motivation in making the statements or taking the actions that have caused them to come to the attention of law enforcement?
2. Attempt to determine why the suspect is acting in the manner they are. Is the actor attempting to obtain help in dealing with personal problems?
3. What has the subject communicated to anyone concerning his or her intentions?
4. Has the subject shown an interest in targeted violence, perpetrators of targeted violence, weapons, extremist groups or murder? In one Pennsylvania case, a stalker wrote several novels and sent them to the victim's new fiancé. These novels detailed a police officer being stalked by a female killer.
5. Has the subject engaged in attack-related behavior, including any menacing, harassing, or stalking-type behavior? Consider how willing and capable the subject is to use violence, blame the victim, engage in preparatory behaviors, conduct surveillance or information gathering on a target and/or location, and circumvent security systems or procedures.
6. Does the subject have a history of mental illness involving command hallucinations, delusional ideas, feeling of persecution, etc., with any indication that they have acted on those hallucinations, beliefs, or feelings? Most people involved in stalking behavior will exhibit some mental emotional or behavioral disorders. If a subject experiences command hallucinations, determine whether their hallucinations command them to commit a violent or aggressive act. Subjects experiencing these types of command hallucinations are more likely to commit a violent act. Determine whether the subject is regularly taking their medications. Also determine whether the subject has or is currently using alcohol or non-prescribed drugs.
7. Does the subject have the organizational capability to develop and carry out a plan? The level of intellectual ability may contribute to the ability to organize and plan one's actions. Stalkers are often highly intelligent. The presence of a mental illness will, in some cases, lessen a subject's ability to organize, develop, and carry out a plan. In other cases, subjects with a mental illness will retain these abilities. If a suspect is mentally ill, what would their capacities be while they are in treatment as well as while they are not being treated?
8. Has the subject experienced a recent loss and or loss of status, and has this led to feelings of desperation and despair?
9. What is the subject saying, and is it consistent with their actions? By corroborating the suspect's account of events, officers may obtain additional information that is useful in building a criminal case.
10. Are the subject's acquaintances, family, or friends concerned that the subject will take action based on inappropriate ideas? Determine if friends, family, or acquaintances are fearful of the subject or are concerned that the subject will act violently.
11. What factors in the subject's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood of the subject attempting to attack a target?

## Appendix E

### Threat Classification Systems

Once pertinent information is obtained and reviewed regarding a threat assessment case, or subject, a system of classification of threat could be used to estimate the level of threat and possible corrective actions.

Departments with a Threat Assessment Team may wish to develop a classification system in an effort to more clearly communicate the threat to its officers, and case managers.

One such classification system is as follows:

**Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)**- Subject appears to pose a clear/immediate threat of violence or self-harm. Requires immediate containment, law enforcement intervention, target protection, and management plan.

**Priority 2 (High Risk)**- Subject appears to pose a threat of violence or self-harm but lacks immediacy or specific plan. Requires threat management plan.

**Priority 3 (Moderate Risk)**- Subject does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time but exhibits behaviors or circumstances that are likely to be disruptive to the community. Requires active monitoring and referrals.

**Priority 4 (Low Risk)**- Does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is significant disruption to the community expected. Requires passive monitoring and referrals as appropriate.

**Priority 5 (No Identified Risk)**- Does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is significant disruption to the community expected. Close case.

Another classification system (International Assessment Services) is as follows:

**Category I**- High Violence Potential, Qualifies for Immediate Arrest or Hospitalization

**Category II**- High Violence Potential, Does Not Qualify For Arrest or Hospitalization

**Category III**- Insufficient Evidence for Violence Potential, Sufficient Evidence for the Repetitive / Intentional Infliction of Emotional distress Upon Others

**Category IV**- Insufficient Evidence for Violence Potential, Sufficient Evidence for the Unintentional Infliction of Emotional Distress Upon Others

**Category V**- Insufficient Evidence for Violence Potential, Insufficient Evidence for Emotional Distress Upon Others

## Appendix F

### The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
  - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
  - Accrediting organizations;
  - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Source: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

## Appendix G

### Case Study- Oslo Norway bomber / mass shooter

On July 22, 2011 at 3:22 pm in Oslo and Utoya, Norway, a terrorist detonated a fertilizer bomb in Oslo next to government buildings and kills 8. The actor then took a boat to the island of Utoya, and executes 69 people, mostly adolescents, at a summer camp, utilizing a Ruger Mini-14 and Glock 34 pistol. He surrendered peacefully to police with a smile on his face.

**Pathway Warning Behaviors-** Any behavior that is part of research, planning, preparation, or implementation of an attack (Fein & Vossekuil, 1998, 1999; Calhoun & Weston, 2003)

#### Research/Planning

- Conducts basic research on body armor, weapons, explosives/chemicals
- Joins a pistol club in 2005 just in case he needed to buy a gun legally one day
- Creates company "Geofarm" for credible cover (Autumn, 2009)
- Collects e-mail addresses of nationalists, finishes in March 2010; 7000 Facebook contacts - > worries about watchlists;
- Careful with his cell phone - >afraid of wiretapping
- Familiarizes himself with the routes & programs his GPS

#### Preparation

- Buries his body armour in the forest (July, 2010)
- In 2010, he receives a medical certificate needed to obtain a driver's license.
- Travels to Prague to purchase weapon, fails (August, 2010)
- Rifle application ("hunting deer," September 2010), accepted October 2010
- Pistol training required in order to get one (November 2010 - January 2011, 15 sessions); Application January, 2011
- Three rifle trainings conducted to acquire experience (November 2010 – January 2011)
- Starts to buy chemicals (end of November 2010)
- Motivates himself with steroids and caffeine, "World of Warcraft", music
- Buys digital camera for photo session (early 2011)
- Creates YouTube video ("marketing movie trailer") to promote compendium (February 15-26, 2011)
- Converts public listing of company from regular to agricultural, allows him to rent a farm and large amounts of fertilizer
- Rents Fiat Doblo, removes all "AVIS" insignias, rents farm in April 2011
- Orders 300 kilogram fertilizer on April 27th
- Builds bomb on farm between April - July 2011
- Tests bomb device on June 13, 2011
- Darkened the windows of the farm (neighbor didn't intervene)
- Physical exercises (for years) and uses steroids (months) to become "one man army"
- Digs up body armour & buys upgraded ammunition (July 4-5, 2011)
- Rents Passat, removes stickers (July 16, 2011)
- Puts part of the bomb in rented Passat (July 18, 2011)

#### Implementation

- Spends night at mother's place
- Sleeps till 0800, installing high speed modem and outlook for distribution of manifest, takes more time than planned

- Parks Fiat at Hammersbourg Square, takes taxi home, uploads video, last entry in manifest.
- Walks to Passat, changes to military clothes, attaches blue lights on the roof ("Police"), drives car to building, puts on helmet with visor and vest.
- Lit the fuse, moves away with the Glock in his hand, walks to Fiat, heard the "bang."
- Uses his GPS to drive to the ferry.
- Pretends to be police officer to deceive people. Tells woman who is in charge of security to gather all guards to a meeting where he would inform them about the bomb, kills them
- Victim: He was cold and calm, stated "I'll kill you all."

**Fixation-** Any behavior that indicates an increasingly pathological preoccupation with a person or a cause (Mullen et al., 2009). It is measured by:

- a) increasing perseveration (repeated preoccupation) with the person or cause;
- b) increasingly harsh opinion;
- c) increasingly negative characterization of the object of fixation;
- e) angry emotional undertone that results in deterioration of social and occupational life.

#### Fixation on a cause

- Violent response to Islamization of Europe through multiculturalism of liberal politicians and their social dominance in government.
- Intense preoccupation: time and financial investment.
- His "project" took nine years and cost about 300,000 Euros (\$230,000 USD).
- 1,500 pages of writing in his "Declaration of Independence."

#### Social and emotional functioning:

- Isolated himself more and more from colleagues ("I have a book deal").
- Son's involvement in writing abnormal; "He lectured me about politics;" "I felt trapped with him;" "He was going completely mad" (Mother's statement to forensic expert)
- Long relationship not possible because of his "project"

**Identification-** Any behavior that indicates a psychological desire to be a "pseudocommando" (Dietz, 1986; Knoll, 2010), have a "warrior mentality" (Hempel et al., 1999), closely associate with weapons or other military or law enforcement paraphernalia, identify with previous attackers or assassins, or to identify oneself as an agent to advance a particular cause or belief system.

- Has warrior mentality/Pseudocommando
- Wears wetsuit in Youtube video, poses with an automatic weapon
- Plays violent video games
- When he calls the police he identifies himself as "commandant"
- Idealization of Knights Templar (11th-13th centuries), reborn in London meeting in 2002, nine founding members, perhaps a fantasy
- Great admiration for Israel's IDF forces, uses an Israeli protective vest Identifies with other assassins and warriors
- Adapted (copied) text from Unabomber, arrested in 1996: bombed 1978-1995, 3 dead, 23 injured
- Mentions the Oklahoma City bomber in his writing, arrested April 19, 1995 after OK Bombing, 168 dead
- Likens himself to American commanders in WW II who decided to drop the atom bomb
- Identifies himself as an agent to advance a particular cause or belief system:
- life as a resistance fighter against multiculturalism, Marxism, and Islamization of Europe (Eurabia)

**Novel Aggression-** An act of violence which appears unrelated to any targeted violence pathway warning behavior which is committed for the first time. Such behaviors may be utilized to test the ability (**de Becker, JACA**) of the subject to actually do a violent act, may be a measure of response tendency, the motivation to act on the environment (**Hull, 1952**), a behavioral tryout (**MacCulloch, Snowden, Wood & Mills, 1983**), or proof of kill (**G. Deisinger, personal communication, 2011**).

- “World of Warcraft” on the internet (virtual)

**Energy Burst-** An increase in the frequency or variety of any noted activities related to the target, even if the activities themselves are relatively innocuous, usually in the days or weeks before the attack (**Odgers et al., 2009**).

- very active the last two years (2009-2011),
- increased after he rented the farm (preparation of bomb, etc.).
- He isolated himself more and more to focus on his “project” and avoid discovery, but he purposely maintained a few (close) social relations so no one would become suspicious.
- Used steroids and stimulants (ephedrine, caffeine & aspirin) to maintain his energy and drive.

**Leakage-** The communication to a third party of an intent to do harm to a target through an attack (**Meloy & O’Toole, Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 2011, online**).

- 12 min long Youtube video
- 1,500 pages long manifest called “ European Declaration of Independence“
- Sent video and text to 7,000 Facebook friends hours before attacks

**Directly Communicated Threat-** The act of communicating a direct threat to a target or law enforcement personnel. A threat is a written or oral communication that implicitly or explicitly states a wish or intent to damage, injure, or kill the target, or individuals symbolically or actually associated with the target. The actor made no direct threats

**Last Resort-** Last Resort Warning Behavior consists of evidence of a violent “action imperative.” (**Mohandie & Duffy, 1999**) This behavior shows an increasing level of desperation or distress through declaration in word or deed, forcing the individual into a position of last resort. There is no alternative other than violence, and the consequences are justified (**de Becker, 1997**).

- Progress party too “moderate,” lost confidence in the democratic processes, they will never be in a position to change Norway.
- His sense of belief for immediacy of his actions is evident
- “Media has main responsibility because they did not publish my opinions before the attack”
- Saw no other alternative than violence (e.g., “time for dialogue is over”)
- He felt violence was justified (e.g., “He who saves the country, violates no law” quote by Napoleon)
- He acted in “self-defense”

(Compiled from presentation “Warning Behaviors of Andres Breivik” Meloy, Hoffmann, van der Meer, August 2012)