



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION ITEM

Senate Bill 11- Texas Education Code 37.115 (2)(d)(e)- Safe and Supportive Schools Program (SSSP)/ Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA) Revision

TOPIC: _____

SUBMITTED BY: Gloria S. Rendon OF: Deputy Superintendent

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD: _____

DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: November 17, 2021

RECOMMENDATION:

**Safe and Supportive Schools Program (SSSP)/
Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA) *Approved Summer 2020***
-Annex 15 of the United ISD Emergency Operations Plan

Replace: *The team shall include a district-level administrator.* OF PAGE 9 to read:
The team will include four (4) district-level administrators.

RATIONALE:

Safe and Supportive School Teams will improve the multi-disciplinary constructivist approach in assessing behavioral threat assessments with campus administration.

BUDGETARY INFORMATION

None

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE AND COMPLIANCE:



United ISD

Safe and Supportive Schools Program (SSSP)/
Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA)

Annex 15 of the United ISD Emergency Operations Plan

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United ISD Safe and Supportive School Program 1

Revision Table			
Revised by	Submitted by	Approved Date	Revised Items
UISD Board of Trustees	Gloria S. Rendon	Summer 2020	Approval of SSSP/BTA
UISD Board of Trustees	Gloria S. Rendon	Pending Approval: 11/17/2021	Page 9 - District Team

Acknowledgments:

- SIGMA: Threat Management Associates
- Texas State School Safety Center
- Navigate Prepared Threat Assessment
- National Threat Assessment Center. (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.
- Threat Assessment in Schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates. The United States Secret Service. United States Department of Education.
- Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, Second Edition, 2016

Safe and Supportive School Program (SSSP)	4
Behavior Threat Assessment Defined	4
What is a threat?	4
When do we conduct a Behavioral Threat Assessment?	5
What are the goals of Behavioral Threat Assessment?	5
What Behavioral Threat Assessment IS and IS NOT:	5
Understanding the Pathway to Violence	6
Implications for Prevention	7
United ISD and Navigate Threat Assessment	8
United ISD Safe and Supportive School Program (SSSP)	9
United ISD Safe and Supportive School Program Teams	9
District Level BTA Teams	10
Campus Level BTA Teams	10
Identifying Threats	11
Types of Threats	11
Examples of Transient Threats:	11
Examples of Substantive Threats:	11
Threat Priority Levels	12
Identifying if a Threat Assessment should be Warranted	14
Reporting Threats	15
FERPA and Involving Outside Law Enforcement	16
Analyzing and Assessing Threats	17
Threat Assessment Procedures	17
Analyzing threats	18
Maintain documentation	18
Use a Community Systems Approach	18
Social Life	18
Rapport	19
Concerning Behaviors	19
Investigative themes	20
Assessing Threats	32
Two Assessment Questions:	32
Case Management	34
Threat Assessment and Management	37
Priority 4 (Minimal to No Threat) Risk Threat Responses	37
Priority 3 (Moderate) Risk Threat Responses	38
Priority 2 (High) Risk Threat Responses	39
Priority 1 (Imminent) Risk Responses	41
Effective Case Management	43
Re-assessing and Monitoring a Case	44
Summary	45

Safe and Supportive School Program (SSSP)

The Safe and Supportive School Program is Behavioral Threat Assessment, a fact-based, systematic process designed to IDENTIFY, INQUIRE, ASSESS, and MANAGE potentially dangerous or violent situations. A key goal is to distinguish between MAKING a threat and POSING a threat.

- **Identify** the person or situation whose behavior has raised some concern about potential violence.
- **Inquire/Ask Questions & Gather** additional relevant information about the person and situation.
Note: The focus of threat assessment is to understand the situation and how best to mitigate safety concerns. It is not the same as a criminal or disciplinary investigative process.
- **Assess** the person and situation based on the totality of the information that is reasonably available, to determine whether the person or situation poses a threat of violence or harm to others and/or self.
- **Manage** the threat by implementing an intervention, supervision, and/or monitoring plan to prevent harm where possible and to reduce/mitigate the impact of the situation.

Threat Assessment identifies if students are on a pathway to violence; getting a student off the pathway to violence; helping him or her with the problem at hand, if any; provide support and problem solving throughout their career at the District and as citizens in the community.

Behavior Threat Assessment Defined

Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (oftentimes referred to as Threat Assessment) provides an evidence-based approach toward identifying students or other individuals who pose a threat, intervening with appropriate resources, and ultimately improving the safety and well-being of the individual of concern, the situation, and the school.

What is a threat?

A threat is an expression of intent to harm someone.

- Spoken, written or expressed in some way.
- Includes gestures
- Direct
 - “I’m going to get you after school!”
- Indirect
 - “I’m going to get him after school!”
- Possession of weapons
- Weapons are presumed to be a threat until investigation clearly determines otherwise

When do we conduct a Behavioral Threat Assessment?

Behavioral threat assessment should be undertaken any time a threat is reported to school authorities. A threat assessment is conducted when a person (or persons) threaten(s) to commit a violent act or engages in behavior that appears to threaten an act of violence.

What are the goals of Behavioral Threat Assessment?

The primary goal of the behavioral threat assessment & management process is to determine if a person of concern poses a threat of violence – whether to others, to themselves, or possibly to both self and others. And, in cases where the team’s assessment is that the person of concern does pose a threat of violence, the goal of the behavioral threat assessment & management process at that point is to implement a strategy to reduce the threat that is posed.

What Behavioral Threat Assessment IS and IS NOT:

Threat Assessment IS:	Threat Assessment IS NOT:
A fact-based, investigative approach to determining how likely a person is to carry out a threat of violence. (Safe School Initiative Study, 2002)	A simple checklist of warning signs or red flags used to remove a student from school.
A means to identify, assess, and manage individuals who are at risk for violence against themselves or others	A means to label a student as a troublemaker and enact consequences.
A way to identify someone who has the potential for violence in many forms - self-harm, assault, risk taking behaviors, suicide, substance abuse, and other aggressive or dangerous behaviors.	A means to find “the next school shooter”.

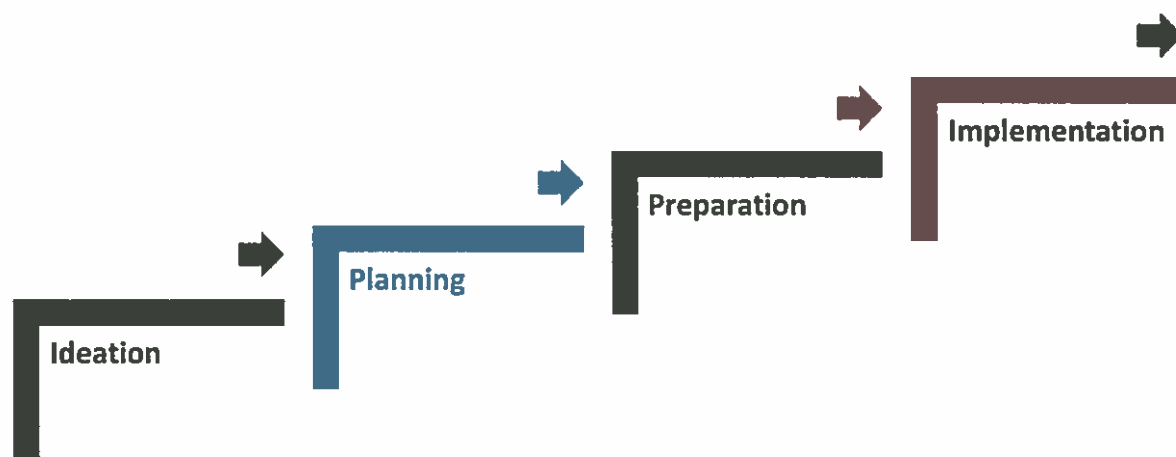
Table 2.1

(Chart Reference: <https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/tam-toolkit/defining-tam>)

Behavioral Threat Assessment is:

- NOT the same as profiling
- NOT adversarial
- NOT the same as a disciplinary process
- NOT a panacea for safe schools
- NOT the same as a behavioral assessment

Understanding the Pathway to Violence



(Graphic Reference: <https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/tam-toolkit/understanding>)

The graphic above illustrates the “pathway to violence” typically taken by those who have engaged in school shootings and other acts of targeted violence: they start with an idea to do harm, develop a plan to carry it out, prepare by acquiring the means or capacity to do harm, and then implement the violent act.

Elaborating on the steps along the path:

Ideation: Expressing thoughts or fantasies considering the use of violence to address a real or perceived grievance, threat, or provocation. Note that many people have occasional or fleeting thoughts of violence in response to perceived grievances. Most do not act on those thoughts or move forward along the pathway. Therefore, the knowledge that someone is thinking about violence does not confirm that a danger exists but should alert us to the possibility and that the person may be struggling with a grievance of some sort or otherwise considering violence as a way to solve a problem.

Planning: Giving thought and consideration not only to the idea of committing violence but the who, what, when, where, and how of doing so. Expressions may begin to reference timing, location, targets, means, methods, etc. The person of concern may seek out and gather information regarding prior shootings or shooters, information about potential targets, means of causing harm, equipment, etc.

Preparation: Beyond just acquiring weapons, this stage involves attempts to prepare for the violence and to develop or acquire the means and methods to engage in harm to target(s)/victim(s). They may try to obtain the means to fulfill their plans (e.g. weapons, tools, particular clothing, etc.) They may adjust plans if they encounter barriers or see opportunities that support their violent ideas and plans. The person of concern may test boundaries to practice accessing secure areas.

Implementation: The person of concern moves to carry out the violent plan.

Research indicates that while targeted violence incidents are rarely spontaneous and impulsive, they can escalate rapidly from ideation through implementation. This may be expedited by a sense of desperation for resolution, lack of concern for consequences, or the influences of others encouraging escalation (e.g., through social media or direct communications). When there are indications that a person of concern may pose a threat to the school community, the threat assessment team will need to move quickly to inquire about and intervene in that planning or preparation.

Implications for Prevention

Many school shootings and other acts of targeted violence are preventable. The challenge is that, while pieces of the puzzle are usually available, the information is likely to be scattered and fragmented. When a threat is reported, a multi-disciplinary threat assessment team can act quickly to assemble the facts to determine if the person of concern is on the pathway to violence, and to work with them to solve underlying problems and move them away from thoughts/plans of violence.

United ISD and Navigate Threat Assessment

United ISD currently uses the Navigate Threat Assessment program to keep track and record all District BTAs.

United ISD Safe and Supportive School Program (SSSP)

United ISD Safe and Supportive School Program Teams

- The Safe and Supportive School Program team must include persons with expertise in counseling (e.g., a guidance counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker), instruction (e.g., a teacher or administrator with instructional experience), school administration (e.g., a principal or other senior administrator from the school(s); and law enforcement (typically a school resource officer). Other school staff (or community resources) may serve as regular members on the team, or be consulted during the threat assessment process, as appropriate, and as determined by the team.
- School threat assessment teams should have a designated team leader, typically a principal or other senior administrator for the school(s)
- Team members shall work collaboratively with each other, with other school staff, and (as appropriate) with community resources to support the purposes of the team and the safety of the school and its students and staff.
- The threat assessment team leader may designate a subset of team members to triage cases reported to the team. This triage process serves to screen cases and determine their appropriateness for review and/or action by the full team. If the team elects to implement a triage process, at least two members of the team will review initial reports of concern to determine if existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns, or whether the full team should further assess and manage the situation. All members of the team should have the opportunity to review triaged cases to ensure they have been adequately addressed.
- Unless it is not feasible to do so, all team members should be involved with the assessment and intervention of individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students.
- Team members shall actively, lawfully, and ethically communicate with each other; with school administrators; and with other school staff who have a need to know particular information to support the safety and well-being of the school, its students, and its staff.
- In fulfilling "statutory" responsibilities, school threat assessment teams shall:
 - Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening behavior that may represent a threat by conducting presentations, broadly disseminating relevant information, and ensuring access to consultation from threat assessment teams;
 - Clearly identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported;
 - The team shall include a four (4) district-level administrators.
 - The school division level threat assessment team shall provide oversight to school-level threat assessment teams; ensure that procedures are maintained for effective information sharing between the school division and community mental health and law enforcement agencies; assess the effectiveness of the threat assessment process throughout the school division; and recommend changes to policies and procedures, as needed, to ensure an effective threat assessment process reflecting known best practices.

District Level BTA Teams

Campus Level BTA Teams

Identifying Threats

Types of Threats

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. It may be spoken, written, or symbolic. Threats can be expressed directly or indirectly to the victim or to others, and threats may be explicit or implied. Threats sometimes, but rarely, actually involve guns or explosive devices. Many students who make a threat will never carry it out. Conversely, others who pose a real danger may not make an explicit threat. Threats may be communicated to the intended victim or related to a third party. A threat to harm others can be transient (i.e., expression of anger or frustration that can be quickly or easily resolved) or substantive (i.e., serious intent to harm others that involves a detailed plan and means):

Examples of Transient Threats:

- Non-genuine expression
- Non-enduring intent to harm
- Temporary feelings of anger
- Tactic in argument
- Intended as a joke or figure of speech
- Resolved on the scene or in office (time-limited)
- Ends with an apology, retraction, or clarification

Examples of Substantive Threats:

- Specific and plausible details such as a specific victim, time, place, and method
- Repeated over time or conveyed to differing individuals
- Involves planning, substantial thought, or preparatory steps
- Recruitment or involvement of accomplices
- Invitation for an audience to observe the threat being carried out
- Physical evidence of intent to carry out threat (e.g., lists, drawings, written plan)

Substantive threats can be serious assault (e.g., beat up or hurt) or very serious (e.g., kill, rape, inflict severe injury, or involves the use of weapons).

Threat Priority Levels

Priority 1 (Imminent) - Immediate and/or severe risk with capability of significant harm or impact. Requires immediate subject containment, law enforcement notification, reduction of target vulnerability, ongoing case management plan; Active monitoring.

The person/situation appears to pose a clear and imminent threat of serious violence toward self or others and requires containment. TAP Team should contact law enforcement/United ISD PD to pursue containment options and/or protect identified target(s). Once containment action has been taken, the TAP Team will develop and implement a management plan. SRP should be activated during school hours.

Imminent or Very Serious Substantive Threats generally involve a substantive homicidal and/or suicidal threat to kill. United ISD Police Department should be notified immediately!

- Threat contains specific, plausible, details
- "I'm gonna shoot Mr. Smith with my dad's shotgun"
- Threat has been repeated over time or the student has told multiple parties of the threat
- The threat is presented to others as a plan or there are suggestions to others that a violent act has been planned
- "Wait and see what happens next Tuesday in the cafeteria."
- There are accomplices, or the student has sought accomplices to carry out the threat
- The student has invited others to observe the threat being carried out
- There is a physical evidence of intent to carry out the threat.

Examples:

Written plans

Lists of intended victims (hit list)

Drawings

Weapons

Bomb making materials

Literature encouraging or describing how to commit acts of violence

Priority 2 (High) - Urgent/rapidly escalating and/or developing capability for risk of serious harm / significant impact. Law enforcement/security notification. Requires target protection, ongoing case management plan. Typically requires intervention with environmental factors or precipitating events. Active monitoring.

The person/situation appears to pose a threat of self-harm or physical violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacks immediacy and/or a specific plan – or a specified plan of violence does exist but currently lacks a specific target. TAP Team develops a monitoring plan.

High priority threats are statements that express a lasting desire and intention to cause harm.

- If in doubt about the nature of the threat, treat it as substantive
- Substantive threats are evaluated by the Threat Assessment Team
- If a threat is not retracted or resolved it should be considered as substantive
- "I'm going to jump you after school." – said with intent to injure
- A student threatens to hit or strike a classmate with his/her fist – said in anger and not retracted later
- Note: High priority threats are further evaluated to see if they are very serious.

Priority 3 (Moderate) - On-going, and/or moderate risk with minimal capability of harm; some impact; Environmental or precipitating factors may be present. Consider law enforcement/security notification. Requires ongoing assessment & case management plan; May require interventions with target, environment or precipitating events. Referrals as appropriate; Active monitoring.

The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, but does exhibit behaviors/circumstances that are likely to be disruptive to the community. This case warrants intervention, to include referral and/or monitoring to minimize the risk of escalation. TAP Team develops a monitoring plan.

Priority 4 (Minimal to No Threat) - Minimal and/or low risk of harm/impact. No intent, plan, and/or lacks a developmental understanding of words/actions. Target, environmental/systemic factors, or precipitating events may need intervention but can be handled through problem-solving. May involve some ongoing assessment & case management or periodic active monitoring; Referrals as appropriate; Passive monitoring; May close case if no Team interventions necessary.

The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is there evidence of significant disruption to the community. TAP closes the case or maintains report for potential re-examination in the future.

Transient threats are statements that do not express a lasting intent to harm someone

- Specific words not as important as intention
- By definition, does not require protective action
- All low risk threats end in an apology or explanation that makes it clear that the threat is over
- “I’m gonna kill you” – said as a joke
- “I’m gonna kill you” – said in the heat of competition during a sporting event
- Two young students use their fingers to “shoot” one another while playing cops and robbers
- “I’m gonna bust you up” – said in anger but then retracted after the student calms down

Identifying if a Threat Assessment should be Warranted

1. Has there been any mention of thoughts/plans of violence to others (or to self and others)?
2. Have other behaviors raised concern about violence to others (or to self and others)?
3. In addition to engaging in troubling behavior, is the person of concern known to have access to a lethal weapon such as a firearm or is the person known to be trying to gain such access?
4. Is there a target, victim or third party that is so fearful that they are taking protective action?
5. For cases with a 504 Plan or IEP, is the behavior inconsistent with baseline behaviors and/or cannot be managed with an existing behavior plan or other interventions already in place?

Based on the screening survey answers, is a Threat Assessment warranted?

If "Yes" was answered to ANY of these questions then a threat assessment should be warranted. Follow through the next steps and visit Navigate Prepared to begin threat assessment.

<https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Reporting Threats

- When an individual makes a threat or engages in concerning communications or behaviors that suggest the likelihood of a threatening situation, the Threat Assessment Program guidelines shall be followed. The goal of the threat assessment process is to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment, to protect and support potential victims, and to provide assistance, as needed, to the individual being assessed.
- All employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to report immediately to the school administration any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest an individual may intend to commit an act of violence.
- Students, staff, and community members can also report a threat to the United ISD Police Department by calling 956-473-3631 or anonymously to the Crime Stoppers Hotline by calling 956-727-TIPS.

FERPA and Involving Outside Law Enforcement

In some situations, school administrators may determine that it is necessary to disclose a student's education records (or PII contained in those records) to appropriate parties in order to address a specific and articulable threat of a health or safety emergency. FERPA's health or safety emergency provision permits such disclosures when the disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.⁵⁸ This exception to FERPA's general consent requirement is limited to the period of the emergency and does not allow for a blanket release of PII from a student's education records. Rather, these disclosures must be related to a significant and articulable emergency, such as an impending natural disaster, a terrorist attack, a campus threat, or the outbreak of an epidemic disease. Please refer to the following previously issued Department guidance entitled, "Addressing Emergencies on Campus," issued in June 2011, for additional information: <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/addressingemergencies-campus>.

An educational agency or institution may disclose personally identifiable information from education records without consent to threat assessment team members who are not employees of the district or institution if they qualify as "school officials" with "legitimate educational interests" under § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B). To receive the education records under the "school officials" exception, members of the threat assessment team who are not school employees must be under the direct control of the educational agency or institution with respect to the maintenance and use of personally identifiable information from education records. For example, a representative from the city police who serves on a school's threat assessment team generally could not redisclose to the city police personally identifiable information from a student's education records to which he or she was privy as part of the team during the initial discussions about a particular student. However, once the threat assessment team determines¹¹ that a health or safety emergency exists, he or she may disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education records to appropriate officials under the health or safety emergency exception under §§ 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36.

Analyzing and Assessing Threats

Threat Assessment Procedures

**Receive report → Screen report → Gather information →
→ Organize and analyze information → Make assessment**

**IF NEEDED: Develop & implement case management strategies →
→ Re-assess → Close and document cases**

Analyzing threats

- Teams should organize their information gathering around several themes or areas pertaining to the student's actions, circumstances, and any other relevant threat assessment factors. Addressing each theme is necessary for a complete assessment and may uncover other avenues of inquiry to help determine whether the student is at risk for engaging in violence. Using the themes to identify where the student might be struggling will help the Team identify the most appropriate resources. Keep in mind, there is no need to wait until the Team has completed all interviews or addressed every theme before taking action. As soon as an area for intervention is identified, suitable management strategies should be enacted.
- When information about a student's behavior and communications passes an agreed-upon threshold of concern, school officials should initiate a threat assessment inquiry. Upon receiving information concerning a potentially threatening situation, the threat assessment team must first consider: "How much time do we have?" An inquiry should be initiated immediately (within hours of notification) in any situation of concern.

Maintain documentation

Maintain documentation to keep track of when reports come in; the information that is gathered; when, where, and how it was obtained; who was interviewed; the behaviors and circumstances of the student of concern; and the intervention strategies taken. Documentation requirements, such as forms and templates, should be included in the plan to ensure standardization across cases.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Use a Community Systems Approach

An effective approach for gathering information to assess a student of concern is to identify the sources that may have information on the student's actions and circumstances. This involves identifying the persons with whom the student has a relationship or frequently interacts and the organizations or platforms that may be familiar with the student's behaviors. Students exist in more than one system and they come in contact with people beyond their classmates and teachers at school. Gathering information from multiple sources ensures that Teams are identifying concerning behaviors, accurately assessing the student's risks and needs, and providing the appropriate interventions, supports, and resources.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Social Life

Examine online social media pages, conduct interviews, review class assignments, and consider searching the student's locker or desk. Team members should also review academic, disciplinary, law enforcement, and other formal records that may be related to the student. When reviewing school records, be sure to determine whether the student has been the subject of previous reports to school officials, especially if the student has a history of engaging in other concerning or threatening behaviors. Also determine if the student received any

intervention or supports and whether those were beneficial or successful. The Team may be able to draw on information from previous incidents and interventions to address the current situation for the student. This factor further emphasizes the importance of the Team's documentation to ensure the accuracy and availability of information regarding prior contacts the student of concern may have had with the Team.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Rapport

Build rapport that can facilitate information-gathering efforts. By demonstrating that their goal is to support individuals who may be struggling, while ensuring that the student and the school are safe, Teams may be better able to build a positive relationship with a student of concern and the student's parents or guardians. When Teams have established this rapport, parents or guardians may be more likely to share their own concerns, and the student may be more forthcoming about frustrations, needs, goals, or plans.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Concerning Behaviors

Evaluate the student's concerning behaviors and communications in the context of his/her age and social and emotional development. Some students' behaviors might seem unusual or maladaptive, but may be normal for adolescent behavior or in the context of a mental or developmental disorder. To ensure that these students are being accurately assessed, collect information from diverse sources, including the reporting party, the student of concern, classmates, teammates, teachers, and friends. Consider whether those outside of their immediate circle, such as neighbors or community groups, may be in a position to share information regarding observed behaviors.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Investigative themes

- The investigative questions below are designed to assist a Threat Assessment Team with understanding the specific concerns regarding the person/situation of concern, any motive and potential target(s), and ultimate likelihood of the ability to carry out an act of violence. The responses obtained here will then be considered and used to answer the assessment questions in [assessing the threat](#).

1. MOTIVE: What is the person's motive(s) and goal(s)?

Some Questions to help you think through:

What first brought the person to the attention of the team?

What motivated their behavior? What was their goal?

Do those conditions still exist and are the conditions being addressed?

Does the person have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?

Additional Guidance:

The purpose of this question is to understand the overall context of the behavior that first brought the person to the attention of the threat assessment team, and also to understand whether those conditions or situation still exist. If those conditions or underlying problems still exist, the team can use that information in crafting a management or referral/monitoring plan if necessary. This question also helps to remind the team why they are discussing this person: what has raised a concern or worried someone about this person?

People may have a variety of motives that place them at risk for engaging in harmful behavior, whether to themselves or others. If you can discover the person's motivation for engaging in the concerning behavior that brought him/her to the attention of the Team, then you can understand more about the person's goals. The Team should also assess how far the person may be willing to go to achieve these goals, and what or who may be a potential target. Understanding motive further allows the Team to develop management strategies that can direct the person away from violent choices.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

2. COMMUNICATIONS: Have there been any communication suggesting ideas or intent to engage in violence?

Some Questions to help you think through:

What, if anything, has the person communicated to someone else or written somewhere concerning his or her ideas/intentions?

Have friends been alerted or "warned away"?

Additional Guidance:

If the team finds that the person of concern has communicated an idea or plan to do harm - and that the source of that information is credible - this is a strong indication that the person may be on a pathway toward violence and therefore may pose a threat. The team should try to confirm or corroborate this information through another source, or through other information.

Look for concerning, unusual, bizarre, threatening, or violent communications the person made. The person's communications may reveal grievances held about certain issues or a possible intended target. They may allude to violent intentions or warn others to stay away from school at a certain time. They may reveal information relevant to the other investigative themes by making reference to feelings of hopelessness or suicide, a fascination with violence, interest in weapons, or other inappropriate interests. These statements might be made in person to classmates, teammates, or friends; in writing on assignments or tests; and/or via social media, text messages, or photo or video-sharing sites.

Earlier NTAC research that examined attacks on schools found that not every person directly threatened their target prior to an attack, but in a majority of incidents (81%), another person was aware of what the person was thinking or planning. It is important for Teams to remember that a person who has not made threatening statements may still be at risk for engaging in violence. Whether or not the person made a direct threat should not be the lone indicator of concern.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

3. INAPPROPRIATE INTERESTS: Has the person shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?

Please make notes on all that apply:

- *Previous attacks or attackers (e.g., historical events, copy-cattig, current events)*
- *Weapons fixation or recent weapons acquisition*
- *Incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murderers)*
- *Obsessive pursuit, stalking or monitoring others*
- *Murder-suicide*
- *Other*

Additional Guidance:

A "yes" to this question alone does not necessarily indicate that the person in question poses a threat or is otherwise in need of some assistance. Many people are interested in these topics but never pose any threat. However, if a person shows some fascination or fixation on any of these topics and has raised concern in another way, such as by expressing an idea to do harm to others or to himself/herself, recently purchasing a weapon, or showing helplessness or despair, the combination of these facts should increase the team's concern about the person in question.

Gather information about whether the person has shown inappropriate or heightened interest in concerning topics such as school attacks or attackers, mass attacks, or other types of violence. These interests might appear in the person's communications, the books the person reads, the movies the person watches, or the activities the person enjoys. The context of the person's interests is an important factor to consider. For example, a person's interest in weapons may not be concerning if the person is a hunter or is on the school's rifle team, with no evidence of an inappropriate or unhealthy fixation on weapons. In other situations, the context surrounding a person's interest in weapons could be of concern. For example, if a person is fixated on past school shooters or discusses what firearm would be best to use in a mass attack.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

4. PLANNING: Has the person engaged in attack-related behaviors or other preparatory behaviors?

These behaviors might include:

- Developing an attack idea or plan
- Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons
- Surveillance, or checking out possible sites or areas for attack
- Rehearsing attacks or ambushes
- Any behavior that moves an idea of harm forward toward actual harm

Additional Guidance:

If the team determines that the person has any attack-related behavior, this is an indication that the person is on a pathway toward violence and has taken a step(s) forward toward carrying out an idea to do harm. Any of these behaviors should prompt the team to try to corroborate or confirm these behaviors through other sources (or confirm the reliability of the source reporting these behaviors). Any attack-related behaviors should be seen as a serious indication of potential violence.

Targeted attacks at school are rarely sudden or impulsive acts of violence. The Team should assess whether the person has made specific plans to harm the school. The person might create lists of individuals or groups targeted for violence, or research tactics and materials needed to carry out the attack. The person may conduct surveillance, draw maps of the planned location, and test security responses at school. He/she may write out detailed steps and rehearse some aspects of a plan, such as getting to the school, the timing of the attack, or whether to attempt escape, be captured, or commit suicide. The person may also acquire, manufacture, or practice with a weapon.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

5. CAPACITY: Does the person have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?

Some questions to help you think through:

- Is the person organized enough to plan and execute an attack?
- Does the person have the means, e.g. access to a weapon, to carry out the attack?

Additional Guidance:

It is important for the team to recognize that in some regions, it is quite common to own weapons and to have experience using weapons from a young age. Therefore, what the team should focus on is the combination of the person owning or having access to weapons AND some indication that the person has an idea or plan to do harm. Similarly, the team should be concerned if the person develops an idea to do harm and THEN starts showing an interest in weapons. Either combination should raise the team's concern, and move the team toward determining that the person poses a threat.

Determine whether the person's thinking and behavior are organized enough to plan and execute an attack and whether the person has the resources to carry it out. Planning does not need to be elaborate and could be as simple as taking a weapon from home and inflicting harm on classmates at school. Other attackers may develop more complex and lengthier plans. At the very least, carrying out an attack requires that the person has access to a weapon and the ability to get that weapon to school undetected.

In addition to determining whether the person has any inappropriate interests or fascination with weapons, the Team should assess whether the person has access to weapons. Because many school attackers used firearms acquired from their homes, consider whether the family keeps weapons at home or if there is a relative or friend who has weapons. Sometimes parents who keep weapons at home incorrectly assume that their children are unaware of where they are stored or how to access them. If there are weapons at home, the Team should determine if they are stored appropriately and if the person knows how to use them or has done so in the past. The Team should also remember that firearms are not the only weapons to be concerned about. Even though many school attackers have used firearms in carrying out their attacks, explosives, incendiary devices, bladed weapons, or combinations of these weapons have been used in past attacks.

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6. DESPERATION/DESPAIR: Is the person experiencing hopelessness, desperation and/or despair?

Some questions to help you think through:

- Does the person feel out of options?
- Is there information that the person is experiencing desperation or despair?
- Has the person experienced a recent failure, loss, or humiliation?
- Is the person having difficulty coping with a stressful event?
- Does the person have a history of suicidal gestures, final acts, behaviors, or suicide attempts?

If you believe the person may be suicidal, initiate your district suicide protocols and continue with the threat assessment process located in the United ISD Standard Response Protocol Handbook.

Additional Guidance:

If the team determines that the person in question is experiencing - or has recently experienced - desperation, hopelessness, and/or thoughts of suicide and there is NO other information indicating the person has thoughts or plans to harm other people, the team should develop a plan to refer the person to necessary mental health care or emergency psychiatric intervention, possibly involving the institution's counseling center and/or police or local law enforcement if necessary.

If the team determines that the person in question is experiencing - or has recently experienced - desperation, hopelessness, and/or thoughts of suicide and there IS information that the person also has thoughts or plans to harm other people, the team should determine that the person poses a threat and move to develop and implement a management plan to intervene with the person. The management plan should include resources to evaluate and treat the person's desperation and/or suicidal thoughts/plans.

All people face stressors such as setbacks, losses, and other challenges as part of their lives. While many people are resilient and can overcome these situations, for some, these stressors may become overwhelming and ultimately influence their decision to carry out an attack at school. Gather information on stressors the person is experiencing, how the person is coping with them, and whether there are supportive friends or family who can help the person overcome them. Assess whether the person experienced stressors in the past that are still having an effect, such as a move to a new school, and whether there might be additional setbacks or losses in the near future, like a relationship that might be ending.

Stressors can occur in all areas of a person's life, including at school with coursework, friendships, romantic relationships, or teammates; or outside of school with parents, siblings, or at jobs. Many people can experience bullying, a stressor which can take place in person at school or online at home. Teams should intervene and prevent bullying and cyberbullying of a person who has been brought to their attention. More broadly, administrators should work to address any concerns regarding bullying school-wide and ensure their school has a safe climate for all people.

Anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, and other mental health issues are important factors to consider when conducting an assessment. Keep in mind that people with emotional issues or developmental disorders might behave in a way that is maladaptive, but might not be concerning or threatening because the behavior is a product of their diagnosis. Behaviors exhibited by a person with a diagnosed disorder need to be evaluated in the context of that diagnosis and the person's known baseline of behavior. If the person is experiencing feelings related to a diagnosable mental illness, such as depression, then the Team needs to consider the effect of these feelings on their behaviors when assessing the person's risk of engaging in harm to self or others.

Assess whether the person feels hopeless, desperate, or out of options. Determine if the person has had thoughts about or engaged in behaviors that would indicate the person's desperation. The Team should determine whether the person has felt this way before, how the person managed those feelings then, and whether those same resources for coping are available to the person now. Consider whether the person has tried addressing the problems in a positive way, but was unable to resolve them, thereby leading to a sense of hopelessness about their situation.

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7. PROTECTIVE FACTORS: Does the person have a trusting relationship with at least one meaningful person?

Some questions to help you think through:

- Is there anyone that the person can feel they can confide in, e.g., a teacher, family member, coach, counselor, advisor, etc.?
- Is the person emotionally connected to - or disconnected - from others?
- Is there anyone in the school or district who feels they have a good relationship with the person of concern?
- Does the person have other protective factors or relationships?

Additional Guidance:

If the team decides that the person in question poses a threat of harm, the team can solicit the help of this responsible person. The responsible person can also be encouraged to take a more active role in discouraging the person from engaging in any harm - whether to himself/herself, others, or both.

A thorough threat assessment requires understanding the full picture of a person's behaviors and environment, which also includes accounting for the positive and prosocial influences on the person's life. The Team should identify factors that may restore hope to a person who feels defeated, desperate, or in a situation that is impossible to overcome. This includes determining whether the person has a positive, trusting relationship with an adult at school. This could be a teacher, coach, guidance counselor, administrator, nurse, resource officer, or janitor. A trusted adult at school in whom the person can confide and who will listen without judgment can help direct a person toward resources, supports, and options to overcome setbacks. Learn who the person's friends are at school and if the person feels emotionally connected to other people. A person may need help developing friendships that they can rely on for support.

Positive situational or personal factors might help to deter a person from engaging in negative or harmful behaviors. Changes in a person's life, such as having a new romantic relationship or becoming a member of a team or club, might discourage any plan to engage in violence. The Team could also use activities or groups the person wants to take part in as motivation for the person to engage in positive and constructive behaviors, such as attending class, completing assignments, and adhering to a conduct or behavior code.

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8. VIOLENCE: Does the person view violence as an acceptable, desirable, or the only way to solve problems?

Some questions to help you think through:

- Does the environment around the person (family, friends, others) support or endorse violence as a way of solving problems or disputes?
- Has the person been dared by others to engage in an act of violence?
- Do they feel death is an answer?
- Have they in the past?

Additional Guidance:

A "yes" to this question should increase the team's concern about the person in question. But it should also lead the team to consider what options they may have for helping the person solve their problems or improve their situation so that the person no longer looks toward violence to solve the problem.

Some people, who are feeling hopeless and out of options, may think violence is the only way to solve a problem or settle a grievance. The Team should look to see whether the person thinks violence is acceptable or necessary, if the person has used violence in the past to address problems and whether the person has thought of alternative ways to address the grievances. The Team should also assess whether peers or others, support and encourage the person to use violence as a means to an end. If possible, connect the person with more positive, prosocial role models who discourage violence and identify more acceptable ways to solve problems.

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9. CONSISTENCY: Is the person's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?

Some questions to help you think through:

- Does what the person is telling you to match the information you've gathered?
- Does the person say they are "fine", but other information contradicts them?

Additional Guidance:

If the team decides to interview the person of concern, the interview can be used as an opportunity to determine how forthcoming or truthful the person is being with the team. The less forthcoming the person is, the more work the team may have to do to develop an alliance if a management plan is needed.

The Team should corroborate the person's statements to determine that they are consistent with the person's actions and behaviors and with what other people say about the person. When inconsistencies are identified, the Team should then try to determine why that is the case. For example, the person might say that he/she is handling a romantic break-up well, but posts on social media indicate the person is struggling to move on, and friends report that the person is more upset or angry about the break-up than reported. Determine whether the inconsistency is because the person is deliberately hiding something or if the inconsistency stems from another underlying issue. For example, a depressed person may claim that they are isolated, even if they regularly go out with a large group of people. If the inconsistency is deliberate, it is important to determine why the person feels the need to conceal his/her actions. The concealment may be as simple as a fear of facing punishment for some other inappropriate behavior, or it may be related to hidden plans for a violent act.

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10. CONCERNED OTHERS: Are other people concerned about the person's potential for violence?

Some questions to help you think through:

- Has anyone witnessed troubling changes in the person's behaviors, mood, attitude, artwork or writings?
- Has anyone taken protective actions because of the person's behavior?
- Is there anyone in fear that they are a target?
- Is anyone concerned that the person could be otherwise harmful or destructive?

Additional Guidance:

As people are often reluctant to see violence as a possibility, if the team learns that someone in the person's life does think the person is capable of violence, this should raise the team's concern considerably. However, the team should recognize that those in close relationships with the person may be too close to the person/situation to admit violence is possible or even likely.

In previous incidents, many people made statements or engaged in behaviors prior to their attacks that elicited concern from others in their lives. Assess whether parents, friends, classmates, teachers or others who know the person are worried about the person and whether they have taken any actions in response to their concerns. Gather information on the specific behaviors that caused worry or fear. These could include behaviors that may have elicited concerns about the safety of the person or others, such as unusual, bizarre or threatening statements; intimidating or aggressive acts; indications of planning for an attack; suicidal ideations or gestures; or a fixation on a specific target. Other behaviors that elicit concern may not necessarily be indicative of violence, but do require that the Team assess the behavior and provide appropriate supports. Examples of these behaviors include alcohol or drug use; behavior changes related to academic performance, social habits, mood, or physical appearance; conflicts with others; and withdrawal or isolation.

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11. STRESSORS: What circumstances might affect the likelihood the person may decide to engage in violence or resort to violence?

Some questions to help you think through:

- What factors could increase the likelihood that the person would resort to violence or engage in violence?
- Are there any upcoming or expected setbacks, losses, or challenges?
- What factors could decrease the likelihood that the person would resort to violence or engage in violence?
- Are there any upcoming positive developments or things the person is looking forward to?
- Are there available resources that could be used to reduce risk?

Additional Guidance:

All of us are capable of violence under the right (or wrong) circumstances. By asking this question, the team can identify what factors in the person's life might change in the near- to mid-term and whether those changes could make things better or worse for the person in question. If things look like they might improve for the person, the team could monitor the person and situation for a while and reassess after some time has passed. If things look like they might deteriorate, the team can develop a management plan (if they believe the person poses a threat of harm or self-harm) or a referral plan (if the person does not pose a threat but appears in need of help) to help counteract the downturn in the person's circumstances.

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Assessing Threats

When a threat is reported, the school administrator and/or threat assessment team leader shall initiate an initial inquiry/triage and, in consultation with the threat assessment team, make a determination of the seriousness of the threat as expeditiously as possible in accordance with United ISD Threat Assessment Program. The Threat Assessment team should review and discuss the responses obtained in the last step ([Analyzing Threats](#)). Using that information, the Team should then answer the below assessment questions to provide the Team with an assessment to whether the person / situation poses a threat of violence. All this can be assessed through the Navigate Threat Assessment module.

Two Assessment Questions:

1. Does the person of concern pose a threat of harm, whether to him/herself, to others, or both? That is, does the person's behavior suggest that he or she is on a pathway towards harm?
 2. If the person of concern does not pose a threat of harm, does the person otherwise show a need for help or intervention, such as mental health care?
 3. Select a priority level for the case that the team feels is most appropriate. (Refer to [Threat Priority Levels](#))
- Upon notification of threatening behavior or communications, the school administrator or threat assessment team leader shall determine if an **imminent** threat is believed to exist. If the individual appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence, the administrator shall notify law enforcement and follow United ISD Standard Response Protocol Handbook and United ISD Standard Response Protocols (Lockdown, Lockout, Hold, Evacuate, Shelter.)
 - If there is no reasonably apparent imminent threat present, or once such an imminent threat is contained, the threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the situation is screened/triaged to determine if the full threat assessment team needs to be involved.
 - If it is determined that the threat is not identifiable or a low threat of violence or harm to self or others, and the threat assessment team determines that no further assessment, intervention, or monitoring is required at this time to prevent violence:
 - The threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the incident and review is adequately documented via Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>
 - If the individual (about whom the report was made) does not pose a threat but could benefit from or is in need of some other need of assistance, the threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the individual is referred to the appropriate District, school or community-based resources.
 - If it cannot be determined with a reasonable degree of confidence that the alleged threat is no/low threat, then a more in- depth assessment is to be undertaken by the threat assessment team to determine the nature and degree of any safety concerns and to develop strategies to prevent violence and reduce risk, as necessary. The assessment may include but not be limited to reviews of records; interview and consultation with staff, students or community who know the individual; and interviews of the individual and the target/recipient of the threat(s).

- Based on information collected, the school threat assessment team shall determine strategies to mitigate the threat and provide intervention and assistance to those involved, as needed.
- Upon a determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, a threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian.
- In instances where the threat is deemed moderate risk or high risk, or requires further intervention to prevent violence or serious harm, the school administrator shall notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who is the target/recipient of a threat as well as the parent and/or guardian of any student who made the threat.
- In cases involving no/low risk threats, the school administrator may notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who is the target/recipient of a threat and/or may notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who made the threat.

Case Management

What are the key components and functions of a management strategy?

Who should manage the threatening situation, and what the components of the plan are, will depend on the specific threatening situation. For example, a student who is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile or criminal justice system could be supervised or managed by court or justice system officials. If the student remains in school, school administrators might work with parents to impose and monitor the student's compliance with supervision or management plan.

Successful management of a threatening situation requires substantial time and effort. Management of these situations comprises three related functions:

1. Controlling/containing the situation and/or student in a way that will prevent the possibility of an attack;
2. Protecting and aiding possible targets; and
3. Providing support and guidance to help the student deal successfully with his or her problems.

What should I take into consideration when developing a management strategy?

Managing Threatening Situations for the Short Term

Managing a student of concern involves short-term and longer-term considerations. In the short term, after a threat assessment investigation has concluded that a student poses a risk of targeted school violence, authorities must move immediately to intervene with that student to contain the threatening situation and reduce the potential for violence.

In some cases, subjecting the student to a threat assessment inquiry or investigation may have the added effect of containing future threatening behavior. As a result of the inquiry or investigation, the potential attacker receives help in addressing the problems that may have prompted his or her action and abandons plans for the attack, believing that an attack is not feasible or necessary.

In other situations, there must be more overt containment of potential attackers. Containment and control in these situations may include supervision and/or confinement of the student of concern and the protection of possible targets.

Managing Threatening Situations for the Long Term

Once the immediate threat of a situation is believed to be under control for the short term, the threat assessment team should turn its attention to longer-term safety. The threat assessment team should address two central questions: What steps should be taken to contain a potential attacker over the longer term? What course of action should be pursued to deter the potential attacker from posing a future threat of violence?

The primary goal in a school threat assessment is to prevent an attack. The intervention or management strategy selected therefore should be the one with the greatest potential for long-term preventive power.

Threat managers should ask: "What will be the most effective and least damaging course of action?" When confronted with a problem, professionals often choose the tools with which they are most familiar: Police officers arrest; mental health professionals commit; workplace managers fire; principals suspend or expel.

Caution should be used in a given situation of concern to make sure that the response of authorities is appropriate to the problem.

The most familiar response may or may not be the best response, the best course of action for the longer term. For example, school administrators may feel pressured to "get tough" or "set an example" by suspending or expelling a student who threatens to bring a weapon to school. However, suspension or expulsion of a student can create the risk of triggering either an immediate or a delayed violent response unless such actions are coupled with containment and support. A student who is expelled may conclude: "I have lost everything. I have only a short time to act. I will give them what they deserve." Acting upon those beliefs, the student may return to school with weapons and attack others. In addition, a student who is suspended or expelled without alternative educational placement may be under less supervision than if he or she were to remain in a school setting.

Those with responsibility to manage a student assessed as posing a threat of targeted violence should consider options for the long-term management of threatening situations in the context of the primary goal of prevention. The response with the greatest punitive power may or may not have the greatest preventive power. Although arresting a student may be necessary in a particular situation, without careful attention to the need for confinement, weapons removal, or interpersonal intervention, that action may be insufficient to prevent an eventual attack at school or otherwise protect a target. Similarly, referring a student to the mental health system, without seeing that referral in the context of an overall monitoring/management plan, may not be sufficient to prevent targeted violence.

What is an integrated systems approach to managing a threatening situation?

The Safe School Initiative found that school attackers' formulation of ideas about carrying out an attack oftentimes followed failed efforts to solve problems and reduce emotional pain through nonviolent means. Helping a student to see that he or she has a future, and directing that student to effective, non-violent ways to resolve disputes and conflicts, takes sensitivity, commitment, and an integrated systems approach to meeting the needs of that student.

An integrated systems approach can enhance the potential effectiveness of both short- and long-term strategies for managing threatening situations. Those responsible for managing a situation and student of concern—school officials, law enforcement officers, mental health professionals, youth service workers, court, probation, or correctional staff—should identify existing resources within the community that can play roles in managing students who pose threats of targeted school violence.

How do I define prohibited and concerning behaviors?

Schools need to establish policies defining prohibited behaviors that are unacceptable and therefore warrant immediate intervention. These include threatening or engaging in violence, bringing a weapon to school, bullying or harassing others, and other concerning or criminal behaviors. Keep in mind that concerning behaviors occur along a continuum. School policies should also identify behaviors that may not necessarily be indicative of violence, but also warrant some type of intervention. These include a marked decline in performance; increased absenteeism; withdrawal or isolation; sudden or dramatic changes in behavior or appearance; drug or alcohol use; and erratic, depressive, and other emotional or mental health symptoms.

- If these behaviors are observed or reported to the Team, schools can offer resources and supports in the form of mentoring and counseling, mental health care, tutoring, or social and family services.

- The threshold for intervention should be relatively low so that Teams can identify students in distress before their behavior escalates to the point that classmates, teachers, or parents are concerned about their safety or the safety of others. It is much easier to intervene when the concern is related to a student's struggle to overcome personal setbacks, such as a romantic breakup, than when there are concerns about threats posed to others.
- During the assessment process, Teams may identify other concerning statements and actions made by the student that may not already be addressed in their policies. Gathering information about these behaviors will help the Team assess whether the student is at risk for attacking the school or its students and identify strategies to mitigate that risk.

Where do I get potential threat assessment cases from?

Students may elicit concern from those around them in a variety of ways. They may make threatening or concerning statements in person, online, or in text messages; they may engage in observable risky behavior; or they may turn in assignments with statements or content that is unusual or bizarre. When this occurs, those around the student need a method of reporting their concerns to the Team.

- Schools can establish one or more reporting mechanisms, such as an online form posted on the school website, a dedicated email address or phone number, smart phone application platforms, or another mechanism that is accessible for a particular school community.
- Students, teachers, staff, school resource officers, and parents should be provided training and guidance on recognizing behaviors of concern, their roles and responsibilities in reporting the behavior, and how to report the information.
- Teams need to be sure that a team member proactively monitors all incoming reports and can respond immediately when someone's safety is concerned.
- Regardless of what method schools choose to receive these reports, there should be an option for passing information anonymously, as students are more likely to report concerning or threatening information when they can do so without fear of retribution for coming forward.
- The school community should feel confident that team members will be responsive to their concerns, and that reports will be acted upon, kept confidential, and handled appropriately.

What are case resources?

Select from the options below to create a case management plan for this case. Consider things that can be used to:

- address the person of concern
- protect and/or support a target
- establish boundaries
- provide support to / monitor the person of concern
- build skills, relationships, resilience
- involve law enforcement
- modify environmental factors
- consider and plan for potential impact of precipitating events

Threat Assessment and Management

Based on an individualized assessment of the risk or priority of the case, teams will engage case management strategies that are sufficient, fair and reasonable to address the concerns identified. For each general threat level there is a minimal level of response or case management that is appropriate. Keep in mind that these are general guidelines to prompt consideration of a starting point in developing a case management strategy. A given case may have a fact pattern that necessitates deviation from the general guidelines. Where that is the case, teams should deliberate, reach consensus upon action steps, and document the facts or circumstances that factored into their case management planning. Following are examples of options and considerations for case management for the various levels of threat.

Priority 4 (Minimal to No Threat) Risk Threat Responses

A minimal risk threat is one in which the person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence and any underlying issues can be resolved easily. The response to such a threat depends on the context of the threat, whether the threat requires some form of disciplinary action, and what is necessary to resolve the situation. Some low threat cases are generated from a misunderstanding of what was communicated, something taken out of context, or a statement made in the heat of the moment but with not actions to indicate intent to cause harm. Many low risk threats are resolved with a clarification, explanation, retraction and or an apology – all of which (in conjunction with the absence of any other behaviors of concern) indicates that the threat is non-existent or minimal, and is over. School administrators should generally consider the following:

- Since minimal risk threats by definition do not appear to pose a threat and can be easily resolved, action to protect the person(s) to whom the threat was directed should not be necessary. When the person to whom the threat was directed is a student, his/her parents or guardian may be notified, at the discretion of the threat assessment team or school administration. If parents of a threatened student are notified, they should be contacted promptly and reassured that the threat has been resolved. Parents of the student engaging in the low risk threatening behavior may also be notified so they are aware of the situation and that it has been resolved.
- Some low risk threats may be subject to disciplinary action based on Student Code of Conduct. The parent or guardian of the subject student is to be notified of the incident and of the disciplinary action taken. All relevant disciplinary due processes should be followed.
- When the threat assessment team determines a threat to be low risk, the case may be resolved entirely with no further action or resolved with referral to appropriate school or community-based resources. When subjects are referred for resources or services, a member of the threat assessment team may be designated to monitor the subject's reactions for a short period of time, and that the referral was made effectively.
- If new information comes to the attention of the team, re-assess and update the case management plan.

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Priority 3 (Moderate) Risk Threat Responses

A moderate risk threat will typically result in notifying the intended target(s) of the threat and taking precautions to protect them, taking steps to monitor and supervise the subject, and taking disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The threat assessment team will also work to address the conflict or problem that led to the threat. Examples of strategies that may be employed include but are not limited to:

- Take precautions to protect potential victims. Precautions typically include:
 - Provide direct supervision so the subject cannot carry out the threat while at school, at school functions, or on the bus.
 - Caution the subject who made the threat about the consequences of carrying out the threat.
 - Where the subject is a student, contact the student subject's parents to assume responsibility for supervision of the student and to enlist their support in preventing the student from carrying out the threat.
 - Notify the intended target(s) and (if they are students) their parents. The intended target(s) (and, where appropriate) their parents, must be notified of the seriousness of the threat, the identity of the subject who made the threat, and what actions are being taken to support the safety of the target and the school as a whole.
- Consult with the school resource officer to assist in monitoring and supervising the subject as well as determining the need, if any, for law enforcement action.
- Follow applicable disciplinary procedure in accordance with Student Code of Conduct policy.
- Where appropriate, refer the subject for counseling, conflict mediation, or other interventions to reduce the threat of violence and to address the underlying conflict or issues that led to the threat. The school administrator should involve school-based professionals (such as the school psychologist, counselor, or social worker) or community based professionals who can provide assistance and appropriate intervention.
- Where mental health or disability issues are reasonably believed to be causing or contributing to violence risk, a mental health risk assessment may be conducted, following parameters for the mental health risk assessment as outlined in the section below regarding high risk threats.

Priority 2 (High) Risk Threat Responses

Threatening behaviors indicating the intent, planning, or preparation to cause serious bodily injury or death (e.g., to rape, physically assault and inflict serious injury, kill, or use weapons against others) requires the immediate involvement of the threat assessment team. When the threat is determined to be high risk, the threat assessment team must:

- Take immediate precautions to protect potential victims:
 - Provide direct supervision so the subject cannot carry out the threat while at school, at school programs, or on the bus.
 - Caution the subject who made the threat about the consequences of carrying out the threat.
 - Where the subject is a student, contact the subject student's parents and enlist their support in preventing the student from carrying out the threat; either law enforcement or the student's parents should assume responsibility for supervising the student.
 - Notify the intended target(s) and (if they are students) their parents. The intended target(s) (and, where appropriate) their parents, must be notified of the seriousness of the threat, the identity of the subject who made the threat, and what actions are being taken to support the safety of the target and the school as a whole.
 - Follow applicable disciplinary procedure in accordance with the student code of conduct.
- High Risk Threat in which Threat Assessment cannot be completed right away due to high risk:
 - Follow United ISD Standard Response Protocols
 - Inform United ISD Police Department and the Office of the Superintendent
 - Notify parents/guardians of student who is making a threat(s).
 - Call for a threat assessment of student's home/vehicle. Coordinate with United ISD Police Department.
 - Assess if students has access to weapons.
 - Remove any staff/students in immediate danger
 - Notify parents of those who were threatened
 - Provide counseling to those affected and if need be talk to the entire campus about the ongoing situation.
 - Notify school faculty and staff if needed.
 - Coordinate with the Office of the Superintendent and Emergency Management Coordinator
 - Depending on findings UISD PD should complete a report for review by the Webb County District Attorney.
 - If warranted advise outside law enforcement of student.
- Where mental health or disability issues are reasonably believed to be causing or contributing to violence risk, a mental health risk assessment should be conducted by a qualified independent medical/psychological professional. The professional conducting the evaluation should not have a treatment relationship with the subject. The assessment should be based on a review of all available information including but not limited to interview of the subject by the professional. The written report must identify the problem or conflict that prompted the threat and recommend strategies to address the problem and to reduce the risk of violence.
 - The school administrator or disciplinary hearing officer will determine the conditions of readmission to school that may include the requirement to cooperate in a mental health evaluation. If the subject is a student, the parents are to be notified of all requirements and any

failure to comply. A readmission meeting must be held prior to the subjects return to school/work.

- Every effort will be made by threat assessment team members to obtain any required signed permission for release and exchange of information with mental health provider(s), if any, and where appropriate, local law enforcement agencies.
- After receiving the mental health evaluation report, the threat assessment team shall convene to complete and implement a written safety plan to address the immediate steps taken to prevent the threat from being carried out and a plan for further action before the subject is permitted to return to school or an alternative educational environment. The safety plan should include:
 - conditions under which the subject may return to school/work;
 - interventions, such as counseling or medication, that are needed to reduce risk;
 - scheduled follow-up contact with the subject (and parent if subject is a student) to assess changes in risk and update the safety plan over time, until the perceived threat is resolved; and
 - person(s) who are responsible for monitoring and verifying that the safety plan recommendations are being followed.
 - A student/employee should only be removed if the threatening behaviors engaged in by the subject are a violation of the relevant Student Code of Conduct, and when all applicable disciplinary procedures are followed. However, in the event that the applicable disciplinary procedures are not available to school-based staff and the school administration or threat assessment team believes that the subject poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services, the direct threat standard may be utilized. Before applying the direct threat standard, the school administrator should contact the school division's Director of Special Education, and, where available, legal counsel.
 - In utilizing the direct threat standard where a subject has a disability, it is important to note that a determination that a person with a disability poses a direct threat may not be based on generalizations or stereotypes about the effects of a particular disability and must be based on an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment relying on current medical evidence or on the best available objective evidence, to determine: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Priority 1 (Imminent) Risk Responses

An imminent threat exists when the person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward others. Such threats require immediate containment and action to protect identified target(s) and referral to United ISD Police Department. Following immediate containment and action to protect identified target(s), these threats require the involvement of the threat assessment team for the purpose of conducting/coordinating appropriate mental health assessment and developing a safety plan. Procedures for notification of the superintendent or designee, senior division administrator, and parents of a student subject and/or intended target student(s) that are set forth for high risk threats are to be followed.

- Imminent Risk Threat in which Threat Assessment cannot be completed right away due to imminent risk:
 - Follow United ISD Standard Response Protocols
 - Inform United ISD Police Department and the Office of the Superintendent
 - Notify parents/guardians of student who is making a threat(s).
 - Call for a threat assessment of student's home/vehicle. Coordinate with United ISD Police Department.
 - Assess if students has access to weapons.
 - Remove any staff/students in immediate danger
 - Notify parents of those who were threatened
 - Provide counseling to those affected and if need be talk to the entire campus about the ongoing situation.
 - Notify school faculty and staff if needed.
 - Coordinate with the Office of the Superintendent and Emergency Management Coordinator
 - Depending on findings UISD PD should complete a report for review by the Webb County District Attorney.
 - If warranted advise outside law enforcement of student.

- Where mental health or disability issues are reasonably believed to be causing or contributing to violence risk, a mental health risk assessment should be conducted by a qualified independent medical/psychological professional. The professional conducting the evaluation should not have a treatment relationship with the subject. The assessment should be based on a review of all available information including but not limited to interview of the subject by the professional. The written report must identify the problem or conflict that prompted the threat and recommend strategies to address the problem and to reduce the risk of violence.
 - The school administrator or disciplinary hearing officer will determine the conditions of readmission to school/work that may include the requirement to cooperate in a mental health evaluation. If the subject is a student, the parents are to be notified of all requirements and any failure to comply.

Readmission to campus:

- After receiving the mental health evaluation report, the threat assessment team shall convene to complete and implement a written safety plan to address the immediate steps taken to prevent the threat from being carried out and a plan for further action

before the subject is permitted to return to school or an alternative educational environment. The safety plan should include:

- conditions under which the subject may return to school/work;
- interventions, such as counseling or medication, that are needed to reduce risk;
- scheduled follow-up contact with the subject (and parent if subject is a student) to assess changes in risk and update the safety plan over time, until the perceived threat is resolved; and
- person(s) who are responsible for monitoring and verifying that the safety plan recommendations are being followed.
- Complete Formal Threat Assessment
- Adhere to Student Code of Conduct for consequences, if applicable.
- Threat assessment team members will obtain any required signed permission for release and exchange of information with mental health provider(s), if any, and where appropriate, local law enforcement agencies.
- Notification for staff of student readmission.
- Notification for parents and students who have have class with returning student.
- Provide counseling/support for all students involved. Contact local agencies for support.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Effective Case Management

Develop an individualized management plan based on information gathered in the investigation and other facts known about the person of concern.

- Case management is more art than science.
- Plan must be fact-based and person-specific.
- Engagement is essential, even when dealing with someone who is very angry.
- Distancing makes monitoring and intervention more difficult.
- Personalities involved matter.

Effective case management incorporates interventions in each of the (relevant) factors:

- S. De-escalate, contain, or control the subject who may take violent action;
- T. Decrease vulnerabilities of the target;
- E. Modify physical and cultural environment to discourage escalation; and,
- P. Prepare for & mitigate against precipitating events that may trigger adverse reactions.

Source: Deisinger, Randazzo, O'Neill & Savage (2008)

Re-assessing and Monitoring a Case

Once a case management plan has been developed and implemented, the team should:

- Monitor the person of concern and situation:
 - Is the management plan having the intended effect?
 - Are there any new problems?
 - Re-assess the person of concern by answering (again) the two assessment questions
 - Change the case management plan if necessary
 - Continue to monitor and re-assess as needed

A key focus of the threat assessment process is to connect the student to services and support systems that provide encouragement and hope, and reduce the likelihood that the student will engage in future threatening behavior. The ultimate objective is to enable the student to function without monitoring by responsible adult authorities. Monitoring of a student may be discontinued after responsible authorities have completed the following tasks:

- Assessing whether (and to what extent) the student has changed unacceptable thinking and behavior over time; and
- Developing and supporting intervention strategies that encourage and help the student to change.

After a determination is made that the subject no longer poses a threat of targeted school violence, formal monitoring is ended. However, the student still may remain involved with service systems within the community that will support his or her continued successful functioning.

Navigate Threat Assessment will be used for documenting these questions and following through the threat assessment. Link to Navigate Threat Assessment: <https://test-secure.navigateta.com/>

Summary

- It is possible to prevent school violence.
- School threat assessment can identify and help address a broad array of problematic behavior.
- Program components should include access to:
 - Multi-disciplinary team
 - Threat assessment training
 - Intervention resources
- Enhancing a school's climate can help enhance school safety...
...as can efforts to foster more connections between students and adults in school/community.
- Make sure your team has opportunities to practice working together and using threat assessment procedures. Practice makes the process better, easier.