Behavioral Threat Assessment
Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions:

Q: What is Behavioral Threat Assessment Management?

A: Behavioral Threat Assessment Management (BTAM) is a fact-based, investigative approach to evaluate threats and determine how likely a person is to carry out a threat of violence. By investigating, gathering facts, and assessing threats, the Behavioral Threat Assessment Management Team can do four important tasks:

1. Identify persons of concern: This could be an individual at risk for violence against themselves or others. Keep in mind that these individuals may be any type of school stakeholder including, a student, staff member, parent, or community member.

2. Gather information/investigate: Avoid focusing on a single factor. Consider interactions between the person, the situation, and the setting using multiple data sources.

3. Assess person and situation: How concerned should we be about this individual? Be mindful of where the individual falls on the pathway to violence — ideation, planning, preparation, or implementation.

4. Manage the person/situation: What are we going to do about it? How is the school or any other agency providing appropriate support and interventions? Are we taking necessary steps to deter the individual from engaging in violence?

Q: Why should Maine schools have a BTAM team?

A: The goal of the BTAM Team is to move individuals off a pathway to violence and resolve the underlying issues that may have put them on that pathway by providing needed resources to reduce the stressors surrounding the situation, removing, or redirecting the individual's motive, and creating a situation that is less prone to violence. While the State of Maine does not currently have a legal requirement for schools to implement BTAM processes, they have aligned with federal recommendations and research based best practices and adopted BTAM as a key strategy to identify threats and implement effective interventions.

Q: How do I report concerning behaviors?

A: To report concerning behaviors go to the forms section on the RSU 13 website and fill out the Threat Assessment Referral Form and send it to your your school administrator.

Q: What type of behaviors should be reported to a BTAM team?

A: Any behavior that you feel poses a threat of harm to others. This can include direct or indirect threats, concerning behaviors, social media posts, or any other action that causes concern. The BTAM Team will follow up on all threats to assess the potential of violence and complete the BTAM process.

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Policy Questions:

Q: Does Maine have state legislation regarding BTAM?

A: While the State of Maine does not currently have a legislative requirement for schools to implement BTAM processes, they have aligned with federal recommendations and research based best practices and adopted BTAM as a key strategy to identify threats and implement effective interventions. In addition, the Department of Education's Maine School Safety Center has developed resources to further build upon an ongoing statewide effort to address school safety by enhancing prevention and intervention efforts to support students and school staff and is implementing statewide trainings for multidisciplinary school teams utilizing the CSTAG model.

Implementation Questions:

Q: How does a BTAM team conduct a threat assessment?

A: The Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines walk team members through a five-step decision tree as they gather and evaluate information related to the situation and the person of concern, analyze the information to determine the correct classification for the threat, document any actions taken in response to receiving the threat, conduct a variety of interviews to determine the level of support needed and develop a case management plan to support the person of interest. Not all threats are created equal, and they vary in how specific or plausible they are, and in the motivation, capacity, and intent of the person making the threat. All threats, however, need to be assessed quickly and dealt with in a timely, appropriate manner.

Q: How does a BTAM team ensure a safe, positive reentry for a student returning to campus?

A: When a threat is made that rises to the level of needing law enforcement involvement, or an alternative/disciplinary placement is made based on board policy or state law applicable to the situation, consideration must be given for when the student returns. The management plan should be developed in the same timeframe as opening the case and reviewed one week before the student returns with any additional information provided by the alternate placement team and/or law enforcement agency. The team should also consider any restorative practices that can be put in place and where the student may fall within established multi-tiered systems of support to ensure they receive the needed supports when they return to campus. Similarly, if a student receives a referral for mental health evaluation and/or placement at a residential treatment facility, the management plan should be developed with those interventions in mind and with input from their mental health provider.

Case Management Questions:

Q: How does a BTAM team know a case management plan is working?

A: A critical component of the BTAM process is reviewing case management plans to ensure they are producing the intended impact and that the subject is moving off the pathway to violence. Guidelines have been established for how often teams should meet to review each case based on the classification assigned to the case. At each meeting, the current plan should be reviewed to ensure all tasks are completed, resources can be added or removed as needed, new tasks assigned, and the next review scheduled.