

Operational Services

Exhibit - Threat Assessment Case Management Strategies¹

Case management is a critical component of Building-level Threat Assessment Team (TAT) work. TATs use this exhibit to examine types of research-based case management strategies when developing a case management plan in response to a threat. Types include: subject-based, target-based, environmental/systemic, and monitoring for the impact of precipitating events on case management. See subhead **Responding to and Managing Threats** in 4:190-AP2, *Threat Assessment Team (TAT)*.

Case management integrates interventions, as appropriate, across the following relevant domains:²

- S** De-escalate, assist, refer, correct, contain, or control the **Subject** who may pose a threat of violence, harm, or significant disruption to self or others; or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention;
- T** Decrease vulnerabilities, provide support and assistance for the **Target**/others impacted or otherwise indicating a need for assistance or intervention;
- E** Address **Environmental**/systemic issues to minimize impact, escalation, or recurrence;
- P** Prepare for and mitigate against **Precipitating events** that may impact the situation; and
- PLUS** Are there any actions the TAT can or should facilitate to address any concerns noted, beyond those already being effectively done?

Subject-Based Case Management Strategies

Schools regularly use many of the following examples of interventions or strategies to address situations involving concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior. TATs should consider a broad range of interventions that may de-escalate, assist, refer, contain, control or redirect the subject away from plans and preparation for violence; and toward engaging with others, problem solving, adapting, and improving their coping skills and well-being. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Check-in/check-out to maintain channel of communication and engagement (with subject) to:
 - a. Gather information
 - b. Build rapport and relationship
 - c. Decrease isolation
 - d. De-escalate volatile reactions
 - e. Provide feedback and mentoring
 - f. Monitor reactions to grievances, interventions, and precipitating events
2. Problem-solving about legitimate grievances
3. Parent/family involvement
4. Referral for assistance or support services, such as:
 - a. Academic/work assistance
 - b. Special education IEP or Section 504 accommodations

¹ Adapted from *Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines*, Fifth Edition (July 2023), Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, Virginia Dept. of Criminal Justice Services, at: www.dcjs.virginia.gov/sites/dcjs.virginia.gov/files/k-12_threat_assessment_management_mppg_mpd.pdf.

² Source: *Deisinger (1996); Deisinger & Nolan (2020)*.

- c. Alternative schooling/work
- d. Social skills training
- e. Conflict resolution training/anger management
- f. Behavioral contracting
- g. Modification of classroom assignment or work schedule
- h. Involvement in extracurricular activities
- i. Performance improvement plans
- j. Peer coaching/mentoring
- 5. Welfare/well-being checks
- 6. Counseling/mental health services, such as:
 - a. Check-in/check-out with school counseling staff
 - b. Ongoing support with school counseling staff
 - c. Outpatient counseling/mental health care
 - d. Emergency psychiatric evaluation
- 7. Independent medical/psychological evaluations, such as:
 - a. Clinical violence risk and *direct threat* evaluation
 - b. Fitness for duty evaluation
- 8. Referral for disciplinary measures, such as:
 - a. Subject confrontation or warning
 - b. Administrative orders for no contact or communication
 - c. Detention
 - d. Suspension
 - e. Termination/expulsion
- 9. Referral/notification to law enforcement or criminal justice system
 - a. Law enforcement/juvenile justice involvement
 - b. Court-issued protective orders
 - c. Diversion programs

TATs select intervention strategies with the greatest potential for addressing short-term crises as well as longer-term preventive power. While holding students and staff accountable for their actions, school administrators will be fair and reasonable in disciplinary responses. Disciplinary responses may be combined with other actions such as parent/guardian conferences, modifications of student classroom assignment or schedule, and referrals to in-school and community-based programs.

TATs recognize that even fair and reasonable discipline can be perceived by the subject as punitive discipline, which may lead to escalating threatening behavior. Suspension, expulsion, or termination may risk triggering an immediate or delayed violent response unless they are coupled with containment and support. Suspension, expulsion, or termination options that focus solely on accountability and controlling the subject do not address the ongoing challenges of:

- 1. Moving the subject away from thoughts, plans of, and capacity for violence and/or disruption;
- 2. Connecting the subject to resources (when needed);
- 3. Mitigating organizational/systemic factors; and
- 4. Monitoring the subject when he/she is no longer connected to the District.

In addition, a student who is suspended or expelled is often under less supervision than if he/she were to remain in a school setting. 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." TATs consider and plan for those responses by using separation strategies intentionally, being aware of their limitations, and anticipating their consequences.

Target-Based Case Management Strategies

TATs attempt to minimize risk and negative impact on identified or identifiable targets and seek to maintain contact with targets (where appropriate) to help monitor the actions and impact of the subject of concern. Examples of target-based case management strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. Strategies for Targets
 - a. Set clear limits and boundaries with the subject regarding communications and contact.
 - b. Document all contacts with the subject using a log noting the date/time/means of contact, nature of contact, witnesses, and impact on the target.
 - c. Monitor communications for changes/escalations by the subject.
 - d. Avoid contact with or response to the subject - do not reinforce the subject's attempts to get a response.
 - e. Minimize reactivity to the subject's actions.
 - f. Minimize publicly available information especially with social media and phone, e.g., by scrubbing Internet information, checking privacy settings on social media applications.
 - g. Maintain/enhance situational awareness.
 - h. Vary routine - be careful about consistent habits.
 - i. Develop contingency plans for avoidance or escape from the subject, shelter, situational awareness, and personal safety.
 - j. Use support systems - being/feeling like a target can be stressful.
2. Organizational Strategies for Reducing Target Vulnerability
 - a. Engage/liaise with target - assign a team member as a point of contact for support and assistance.
 - b. Change work/class schedule (hours and/or location).
 - c. Change/enhance security in work/class location.
 - d. Notify staff who can help monitor if the subject is present or posing a threat to target.
 - e. Security staffing
 - f. Safety escorts
 - g. Fear management
 - h. Counseling/employee assistance program referrals

Environmental/System Case Management Strategies

TATs take a holistic view of the situation, monitoring for underlying systemic causes that may be contributing not just to a given case, but perhaps to a range of cases over time. This level of intervention focuses on group and subgroup behavior, not just that of the subject or target. Strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. Address systemic, policy, or procedural problems.
2. Address reporting gaps/delays.
3. Intervene with associates that support violent behavior.
4. Enhance conflict management skills of groups.
5. Bullying prevention/intervention programs
6. Enhance supervisory skills and accountability.
7. Enhance school/workplace climate by building a safe, caring, and connected community. TATs work best in schools that have an overall safe climate, where students and employees feel respected and feel that situations are handled fairly. Connection through human relationships is a central component of a culture of safety and respect. The principle objective of school violence-reduction strategies is to create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support within the school. Strategies to support and enhance a positive school/workplace climate include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Effective communication among and between school staff, students, and parents/guardians.
 - b. School climate assessments and intervention with identified issues.
 - c. Emphasis on school connectedness.

- d. Strong but caring stance against a code of silence.
- e. Bullying/harassment prevention and intervention.
- f. School-law enforcement partnerships, including well-trained school resource officers.
- g. Collaborative relationships with mental health, social services, and other community-based resources.
- h. Planning and preparation to deal with, respond to, and recover from potential crises.
- i. Physical security and crime prevention through environmental design.

Monitoring for the Impact of Precipitating Events on Case Management

TATs recognize that cases do not occur in a vacuum and that life continues while they are assessing and intervening with a given case. TATs maintain an ongoing, longitudinal approach to anticipating, monitoring for, and (to the extent possible) managing the impact of potential precipitating events such as:

1. Minimize unnecessary precipitants where possible (look to systemic issues that unnecessarily impact cases).
2. Consider the impact of the timing and location of interviews.
3. Monitor and plan for loss/injustice impacting the subject, e.g., job or income, status, relationship, health, rejection/ostracization, etc.
4. Monitor and plan for key dates/events in the process of case management, such as:
 - a. Anniversaries, e.g., date of beginning of relationship, date of end of relationship, date served with court orders/separation documents, birthdays, holidays, etc.
 - b. Hearings
 - c. Court dates
 - d. Service of notice about outcomes
5. Monitor for reactions to administrative/court actions.
6. Monitor for reactions to case management/interventions.
7. Monitor for contagion effect of other high profile or locally significant acts of violence.