

# **Threat Assessment**

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The threat assessment process examines the behavior of a student/adult in relation to the context of a discussion or interaction/action with or about others.

A threat can be:

- Non-credible - expression of anger, frustration or banter that can be quickly or easily resolved.
- Credible - serious intent to harm others that involved detailed plans and/or a means to create harm with some reference to school.

## **Process**

### **Evaluate the Statement or Action**

- Interview Victim
- Interview Perpetrators
- Interview Witnesses
- Consider the context in which a statement was made or an action taken.
- Does there appear to be an actual intent to harm someone?
- Does the perpetrator have a disability?
- Involve law enforcement in threat assessment determination.
- Is there a weapon referenced and/or possible use of a weapon to cause harm.
- Is the statement/action an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger or frustration?

## **Behavioral Considerations in Determining Non-Credible vs Credible Threat**

### **Non-Credible**

- Subject admits to threat (statement or behavior)
- Subject has explanation for threat as benign (such as a joke or figure of speech).
- Subject admits feeling angry toward targets at time of threat.
- Subject retracts threat or denies intent to harm.
- Subject apologetic or willing to make amends for threat.
- Subject willing to resolve threat through conflict resolution or some other means.

### **Credible**

- Subject continues to feel angry toward target.
- Subject expressed threat on more than one occasion.
- Subject has specific plan for carrying out the threat.
- Subject engaged in preparation for carrying out the threat.
- Subject has prior conflict with target or other motive.

- Subject is suicidal. (Supplement with suicide assessment.)
- Threat involved use of a weapon, other than a firearm, such as a knife or club.
- Threat involves use of a firearm.
- Subject has possession of, or ready access to, a firearm.
- Subject has or sought accomplices or audience for carrying out threat.
- Threat involves gang conflict.

### **Non-Credible Threat Action**

- Resolve via communication
- Retraction, explanation or apology
- Possible support services for victim and/or perpetrator
- Inform parents of victim and perpetrator, school administrators, school board and school community.

### **Credible Threat Action**

- Inform potential victim/s, staff, parents of the school
- Inform parent of victim and perpetrator, school administrators, school board and school community
- Develop a plan to keep students and staff safe (short and long term)
- Assess services needed for victim/s and perpetrator/s
- Consider if a disability is involved (perpetrator/s)

## **Possible Responses after Evaluation of Student's Intent/Actions & Interview with Victim and Victim's Parents and Perpetrator and Perpetrator's Parents \***

- Student Apology
- Increased Monitoring of Student
- Parent Conference
- Counseling
- Conflict Mediation
- Schedule/Room Change
- Transportation Change
- Assessment for Special Education Services
- Behavior Support Plan
- In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension
- Expulsion

\* Adapted from "The Virginia Model for Student Threat Assessment"  
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