# ONTIC

Loyola University

# Basic Campus Threat Assessment

Participant Manual

This behavioral threat assessment training is intended to provide base-level information about targeted acts/violence and prevention and/or intervention measures. The class will provide instruction on the threat assessment and incident management process, including how to screen cases, gather information, analyze and assess the information, and implement intervention/threat management when needed. Note that a behavioral threat assessment is not the same as a violence risk assessment nor a clinical assessment of dangerousness of an individual.
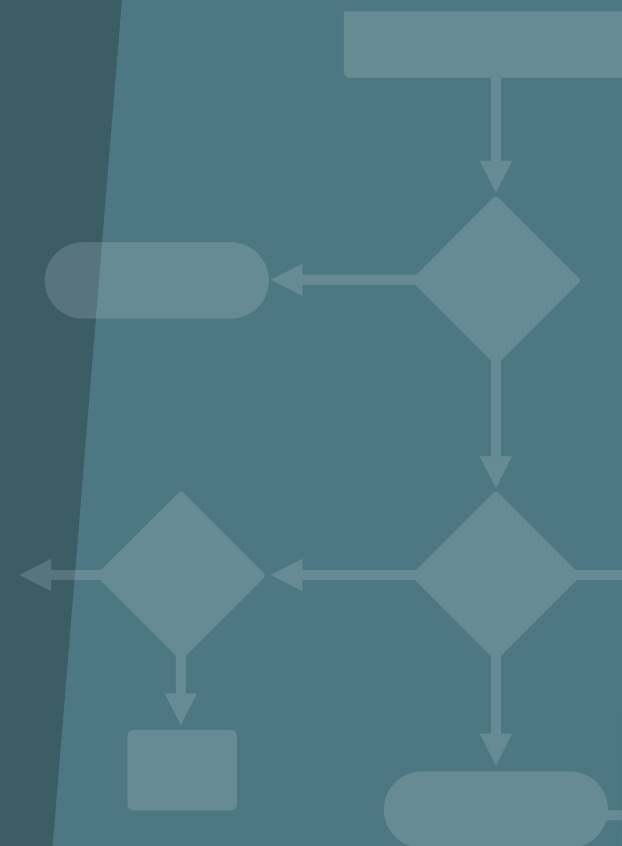
## Course objectives

At the end of the course, participants will:

- Be familiar with the fundamentals of threat assessment and why colleges and universities should use it
- Understand the pathway to violence and how prevention is possible
- Know components of best practices in threat assessment for colleges and universities
- Understand how to integrate campus threat assessment functions

- Understand how to work a threat assessment case and gain practice using procedures including, including:
  - How to screen cases to see if a threat assessment is warranted
  - How to gather information from multiple sources
  - How to analyze the information using 11-Key Questions
  - How to make an assessment
  - If needed, how to develop a case management plan to reduce risk

## Impulsive / Reactive violence

- Intense emotion and expressiveness
- Violence is reactive and immediate
- Violence against perceived threats
- Goal is threat reduction

## Predatory / Targeted violence

- Less reactive and emotional than affective violence
- Violence is planned and purposeful
- Violence thought out in advance
- Violence against specific targets
- Heightened and focused awareness
- Violence in order to achieve goal or goals

## Different types of violence

**Different types of violent behavior**

- Impulsive / reactive violence
- Targeted / predatory violence

**Examples of targeted violence / sabotage**

- Workplace shootings
- College / university shootings
- Assassination
- Stalking
- Insider threats

Source: Meloy, Violence Risk & Threat Assessment
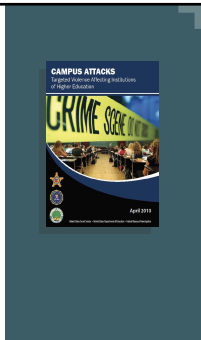
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## Targeted violence on campus

**Joint project of the:**

- US Secret Service
- US Department of Education
- Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Attacks: 1990 - 2010**

- 272 incidents

Source:
U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010).
Campus Attacks; Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education. Washington DC: Authors.

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## Targeted violence on campus

**About the perpetrators**

- Age: 16 – 64
- Gender:  Male (80%); Female (20%)
- Status
  - Current / Former Student:  60%
  - Current / Former Employee: 11%
  - Indirectly Affiliated:  20%
  - No known Affiliation:  9%

Source:
U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010).
Campus Attacks; Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education. Washington DC: Authors.
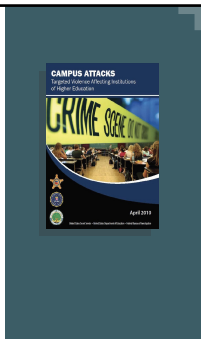
## Targeted violence on campus

**About the incidents**

- Occur on and off-campus
  - 80% on-campus (residence, grounds, class/admin)
  - 20% off-campus (residence, public area)
- Precipitating events present: 83%
- Targeted one or more specific persons: 73%
- Pre-incident threat/aggression to target: 29%
- Pre-incident concerns reported by others: 31%

Source:
U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010).
Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence affecting Institutions of Higher Education. Washington DC: Authors.

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## Facts about targeted violence

- Most consider, plan, and prepare before engaging in violent behavior. Their behavior follows a "pathway to violence."

- Most discuss their plans with others before the attack.

- Signs of preparation may indicate the person is close to launching or implementing plans for violence.

Sources:
U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of Targeted School Violence in the U.S. (2002). Washington DC: Authors.

U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education. Washington DC: Authors.

**PERPETRATORS OF TARGETED VIOLENCE DON'T "JUST SNAP"**
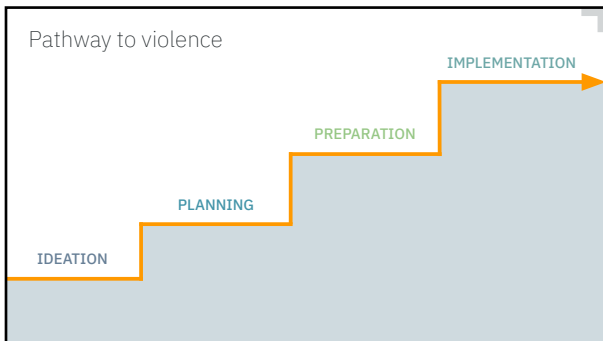
**THESE INCIDENTS ARE RARELY IMPULSIVE OR RANDOM**

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## Pathway to violence

IMPLEMENTATION

PREPARATION

PLANNING

IDEATION

## Facts about targeted violence

- No accurate or useful "profile."
- Most have concerned several others with troubling behavior before their attacks.
- Most are desperate, despondent, or suicidal prior to their attacks.

Sources:
U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of Targeted School Violence in the U.S. (2002). Washington, DC: Authors.

U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education. Washington DC: Authors.

**PROFILING**

DOESN'T HELP US DETERMINE IF SOMEONE IS PLANNING A VIOLENT ACT

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## Prevention is possible

- Many targeted attacks can be prevented.
- A person's ideas and plans for violence may be detectable before harm can occur.
- Information is likely to be scattered and fragmented.
- Team should act quickly upon initial report, gather more information ("collect the dots"), and assemble the information to assess whether the person is on a pathway to violence ("connect the dots").

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## Prevention is possible

- Threat assessment is not an adversarial process. Engagement with a person of concern can be critical to preventing violence or harm.
- In a nutshell, threat assessment involves asking:
  - Is this person on a pathway to violence?
  - If so, why? Why are they considering or resorting to violence?
  - How can we get this person off the pathway to violence?
  - How can we help them solve their problem, fix their situation, or address their condition in a non-violent way?
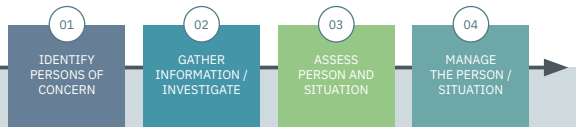
## What is threat assessment?

A systematic process that is designed to:

| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| IDENTIFY PERSONS OF CONCERN | GATHER INFORMATION / INVESTIGATE | ASSESS PERSON AND SITUATION | MANAGE THE PERSON / SITUATION |

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## A fact-based process

Behavioral threat assessment is fact-based and deductive:

FACTS → CONCLUSIONS → STRATEGIES

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## Why threat assessment?

Behavioral threat assessment is broadly recommended by:

- Virginia Tech Review Panel (governor's panel)
- Report to President from U.S. Departments of Education, Justice, Health & Human Services
- Numerous professional associations:
  - AASCU, ASCA (ASJA), IACLEA, MHEC, NAAG, NASPA
- Several state task forces on campus safety
- State Laws

Mass Shootings at Virginia Tech
April 16, 2007
Report of the Review Panel
Presented to
Governor Kaine
Commonwealth of Virginia

AUGUST 2007

## Why threat assessment?

American national standard:

- "A Risk Analysis Standard for Natural and Man-Made Hazards to Higher Education Institutions" (2010).
ASME Innovative Technologies Institute LLC

- Approved by American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

- The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams (Deisinger, Randazzo, O'Neill & Savage, 2008)

- Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project (Randazzo & Plummer, 2009)

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## Components of campus threat assessment best practices

- ❏ Multi-disciplinary team
- ❏ Authority to engage in threat assessment
- ❏ Basic training in threat assessment & threat management
- ❏ Standard threat assessment processes and procedures
- ❏ Access to case management & intervention resources

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## Threat assessment team

Multi-disciplinary membership:

- Student Affairs
- Student Conduct
- Human Resources
- Provost's Office
- General Counsel's Office
- Campus Police / Public Safety
- Title IX Coordinator / Investigator
- Ad hoc members

## Additional components

- ❏ Administration support (and administrative support)
- ❏ Advanced threat assessment training
- ❏ Database and other documentation
- ❏ Campus-wide awareness strategies
- ❏ Reporting mechanisms
- ❏ Community relationships (engagement with gatekeepers)

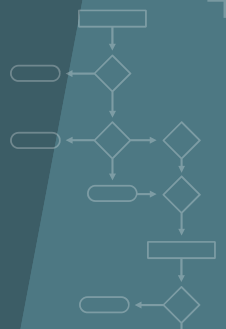## Using Threat Assessment Procedures

## Threat assessment procedures

Using campus threat assessment procedures:

- ❏ **Receive and screen** report about a person of concern.
  - ❏ **Screen** report for imminence
  - ❏ **Screen** report to determine need for full threat assessment
- ❏ **Gather information** about the person and situation.
- ❏ **Analyze** information using Key Investigative Questions
- ❏ **Make assessment** about whether person poses threat.
- ❏ **Develop plan** to reduce risk / manage case (if needed)
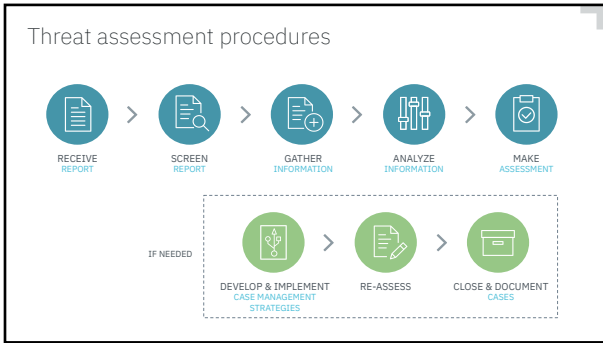- ❏ **Re-assess** and change plan if needed
- ❏ **Close and document** case

## Threat assessment procedures

RECEIVE REPORT > SCREEN REPORT > GATHER INFORMATION > ANALYZE INFORMATION > MAKE ASSESSMENT

IF NEEDED

DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT CASE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES > RE-ASSESS > CLOSE & DOCUMENT CASES

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## Threat assessment procedures

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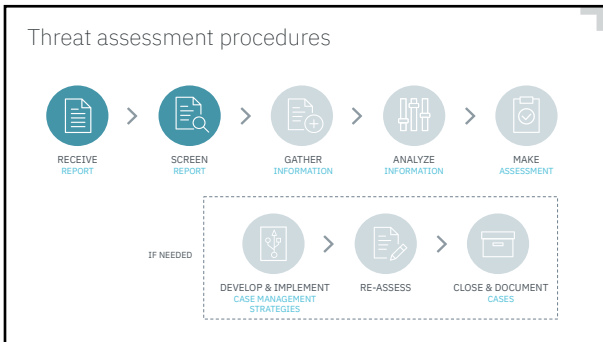
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## Receive and screen report

**1.** Does this matter require immediate police response?
Is there imminent danger to person or place?

If **YES**

❏ Call 9-1-1, alert law enforcement/Campus Security
❏ Notify others who need to know (potential targets or victims, other school personnel, crisis team to activate emergency protocols, etc.)
❏ Run threat assessment

**If NO**

❏ Proceed to Question 2

## Receive and screen report

**2.** Do you need to run a threat assessment?

❏ Has the person threatened violence, or have they communicated in any way their violent thoughts or intent (writings, class assignments, drawings, blog/social media posts, etc.)?

❏ Other behaviors that have raised concern about potential violence, to include:
- Sexual Assault*
- Dating Violence*
- Stalking/CyberStalking*
- Domestic Violence Assault*

❏ Is there a fearful victim/third party taking protective action and/or is someone concerned about behavior(s)?

❏ Other reason to run a threat assessment, e.g., there are unanswered questions about the matter.

If NO to all, close case

If YES to any, run to a threat assessment

*If any of these behaviors are present, please notify Title IX Coordinator.

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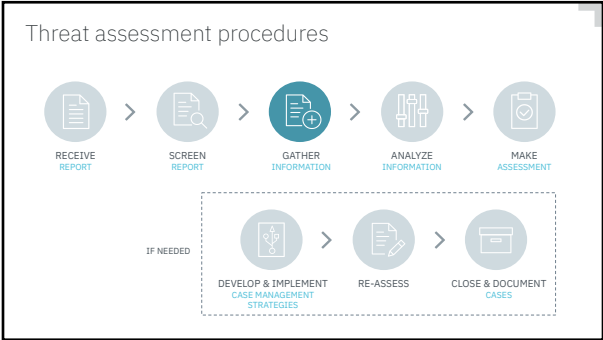## Threat assessment procedures

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> MAKE
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IF NEEDED

DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT
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STRATEGIES

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## Gather information

See out information from multiple sources about the person and his/her situation:

**Who might have information?**
- Professors / Supervisors
- Student Affairs / Employee Relations
- Student Conduct / HR
- Counseling Center / EAP
- Social media sites / Internet
- Campus Police / Public Safety
- Local law enforcement
- Community entities
- Person of concern
- Others?

## Gather information

- Recognize that violence is a dynamic process. It stems from an interaction between the person, their situation, and their setting.
- Avoid reliance on single factors.
- Utilize multiple collateral data sources:
  - Credible
  - First-hand knowledge
  - Evaluate and minimize impact of bias
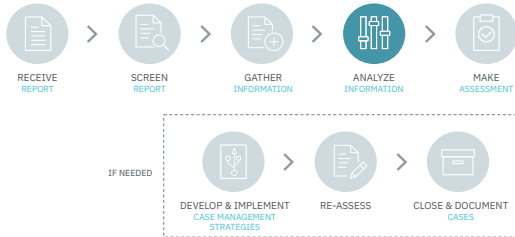- Anticipate and assess impact of the investigative process on the person and his/her situation.

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## Analyze information

Analyze information by answering 11 investigative questions

1. What are the person's motive(s) and goals? / What first brought him/her to someone's attention?
2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?
3. Has the person shown any inappropriate interest in school attacks/attackers, weapons, incidents of mass violence?
4. Has the person engaged in attack-related behaviors?
5. Does the person have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?

## Analyze information

Organize and analyze information by answering 11 investigative questions

6. Is the person experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?
7. Does the person have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?
8. Does the person see violence as an acceptable, desirable – or the only – way to solve a problem?
9. Are the person's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?
10. Are other people concerned about the person's potential for violence?
11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood the person will engage in violence or resort to violence?

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## Make the assessment

Ground rules for team discussion:

- Focus on facts of specific case.
- Focus on the person's behavior rather than the person's traits.
- Focus on understanding of context of behavior.
- Examine progression of behavior over time.
- Corroborate critical information.

## Make the assessment

Answer two assessment questions:

1. Does the person pose a threat of harm, whether to himself, to others, or both? That is, does the person's behavior suggest that he or she is on a pathway toward harm?

   If YES, then develop and implement a case management plan.

   If NO, proceed to second question.

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## Make the assessment

Answer two assessment questions:

2. If the person does not pose a threat of violence, does the person otherwise show a need for help or intervention, such as mental health care?

   If YES, then develop and implement a referral and monitoring plan.
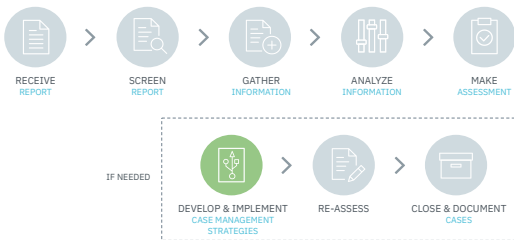
   If NO, the case can be closed.

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## Threat assessment procedures

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>

CLOSE & DOCUMENT
CASES

## Develop a case management plan

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.

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## Develop a case management plan

Effective case management incorporates interventions of 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)

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## Develop a case management plan

Try to involve someone whom the person trusts:

- Team member
- Faculty member
- Academic advisor
- Residential advisor
- Coach

- Parent / family member
- Outside counselor
- Faith-based counselor
- Others?

## Develop a case management plan

*A case management plan can include any combination of the following:*

- Outpatient counseling/mental health care
- Emergency psychiatric evaluation
- Mentoring relationship
- Academic accommodations
- Suspension/dismissal
- Medical / personal leave of absence
- Involvement in extracurricular activities
- Social skills training
- Behavioral contract
- Family involvement
- Law enforcement involvement
- Diversion programs
- Management by walking around/alliance
- Others

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## Re-assess

*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
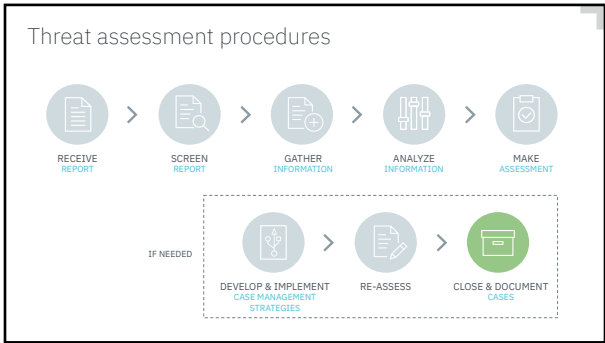- Continue to monitor and re-assess as needed

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## Close the case

- When the team's assessment is that the person of concern does not pose a threat of violence or self-harm - or no longer poses a threat of violence or self-harm – the team can close the case.

- The team should be sure to document the case, including scheduling any future dates to check-in or follow-up, if needed.

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## Title IX / VAWA investigations

**NEED FOR COLLABORATION:**

- Title IX and VAWA investigations can involve ongoing safety concerns:
  - To victim(s)
  - To employees
  - To others on campus

- Under Title IX regulations, threat assessment process is allowed to be used for the "individualized safety and risk analysis" to determine if a person poses a threat of violence.

- Title IX / VAWA investigations can benefit from input from a threat assessment team.

## Title IX / VAWA investigations

**NEED FOR COLLABORATION:**

- Threat assessment investigations that involve dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking need to involve:
  - Trauma-informed interviewing
  - Referral to Title IX coordinator
  - Parallel investigations

- Threat assessment investigations can benefit from expertise of Title IX investigators and others

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## Title IX / VAWA investigations

**NEED FOR COLLABORATION:**

- Failure to coordinate can lead to compartmentalized information, disjointed safety or intervention efforts

- Lack of coordination can also result in multiple unnecessary contacts with victim to obtain the same information

- Coordinated efforts can yield enhanced information-sharing and integrated safety efforts

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## Title IX / VAWA investigations

**STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE COLLABORATION:**

- Work with individuals, rather than departments

- Engage in liaison-building efforts

- Give away/share information first, then ask for information

- Invite them to your meetings

- Access legal counsel for confidentiality and jurisdiction questions

- Meet face to face outside of a case

- Be dependable

## Emergency Removal

- Under the 2020 Title IX regulations, a student respondent can be removed from campus / the college's education program following an "individualized safety and risk analysis."
- If the analysis determines that the student respondent poses a threat to the physical safety of anyone on campus, an emergency removal is permissible.
- The student respondent has the right to appeal the decision.
- The threat assessment process can be used to conduct the "individualized safety and risk analysis."
- The threat assessment team should follow its standard threat assessment process when conducting an "individualized safety and risk analysis."
- Respondents who are non-student employees can be put on administrative leave.

## Summary

- It is possible to prevent violence at colleges and universities.
- Campus 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
  - Guidelines / procedures to help team follow the threat assessment process
  - Intervention resources
- Make sure your team has opportunities to practice working together and using threat assessment procedures. Practice makes the process better, easier.