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Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams at Rancho Santiago Community College District

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Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams at Rancho Santiago Community College District.

A Master Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

American Public University

by

Alistair M. Winter

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Public Administration

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American Public University

Charles Town, WV
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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this thesis to my wonderful wife, Lizette. Her support and patience over the past two years have been monumental.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I want to give thanks to God for giving me the ability, perseverance and wisdom to complete these courses and this thesis.

I want to acknowledge my friend and colleague, Martin Stringer, whose constant nagging and encouragement set me out on this path to complete a Master’s degree. Some days I was not so sure I still liked him!

I want to also thank Dr. Bartman for her help and guidance throughout this process, she was always quick to answer questions and willing to offer help and support. Thank you!

My children, Jane, Josiah and Jack provided inspiration to me as I have competed this thesis and my degree. I trust this offers them inspiration that no matter what age they are to set challenges and aspire for great things.
Lastly, but by no means in the least I want to thank the person who means most to me in the world. She has provided me with the love, support and encouragement throughout our 10 years together. The stability that she brings to our home and into all our lives is exemplary. Her selflessness to allow me many hours to study and research at our local Starbucks is an example of who she is. When things got tough and I got stressed, she continued to be that person who pointed me to the reasons I was doing this. God has really blessed me with a great friend and wife. To my wonderful wife, Lizette, I love you with everything that I am.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams at Rancho Santiago Community College District.

by

Alistair M. Winter


Charles Town, West Virginia

Dr. C Bartman, Thesis Professor.

As a result of the terrible events at Columbine, Virginia Tech and the increasing number of school based shootings in the U.S., there is substantial research to prevent school based shootings. Findings indicate that on many occasions, pre-incident behaviors, known as leakage, are observed which may allow institutions to prevent and intervene. In short, other people may know something is going to happen and identifying ways to intervene is vitally important if our schools are to be safe. This project uses the research around these findings to identify best
practice and procedures for Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) to put in place Threat Assessment Management Teams (TAMT). The project set out by examining the two main organizations, NaBITA and SIGMA, which have developed TAMT after the Virginia Tech shootings. The research from both organizations is substantial and set out the processes and procedures which schools should put in place. It was decided to adopt the model set out by NaBITA, for its ease of use and comprehensive inclusion of assessment of mental state of mind and risk, along with aggression levels. It is hoped that the adoption and implementation of this model will make RSCCD a safer place to study and work.
Introduction

The landscape of our K-12 schools, community colleges and universities has changed drastically over the past two decades. There have been some very high profile school shootings from Columbine in 1999, Virginia Tech in 2007, Sandy Hook in 2012, Isla Vista in 2014, and Umpqua Community College in 2015. Cornell (2010) outlined the plague of school shootings is not going away and if anything it is spreading to nearly epidemic proportions. This point has been made many times in academic research and Cornell (2010) is making these statements prior to the events at Sandy Hook, Isla Vista and Umpqua. In the wake of these school shootings, there have been many questions raised over and over again: How could this happen? What sort of person would do this? Where will it happen next and when? Can we ever be safe? Can we ever stop a person who just snaps?

These questions are very understandable, they are driven by normal human reactions of fear, misapprehension and half-truth about what actually goes on in the dynamics of a campus attack and what is going on with the actual shooter themselves. Cornell (2010) argues that since the explosion of school violence in the 1990s there has been a “nationwide adaption of zero-tolerance discipline policies” (n.p.). This has led to thousands of students being suspended and expelled from their schools, often for very minor offenses that do not propose serious threats to other students or staff. To combat this overreaction, Cornell (2010) points out that there needed to be some better way to measure the threat with a view to identifying and preventing school violence, not just indiscriminate punishment of everyone who contravenes a discipline rule. Threat assessment was not a new approach and has been mainly
used in the mental health and law enforcement areas, where there was a major concern within these disciplines to identify and manage people who may pose a threat to those around them (Borum, R., Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., & Berglund, J., 1999). It appears a natural transition that these principles would move into the area of school violence as mental health and law enforcement are two critical players in this area. In their research, Blair and Martaindale (2013) point out that in the period 2000 to 2010 there were eighty-four active shooter events. In a further study conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), they report that between 2010 and 2013 there has been another seventy-six incidents classified as active shooting events (U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014). This gives a clear indication of the increasing nature of these terrible events. In the last four years, there has been nearly as many incidents as the first ten years of this century; this is alarming. Research would indicate that two thirds of active shooter incidents target two main locations, schools and businesses (Blair, Martaindale, 2013). It can be argued that these locations are targeted because they are seen to be ‘soft targets’ and also locations where there are concentrations of people. Both of these locations are equally valid for this research project.

Some of the worst active shooter events have occurred on school campuses, where students are targeted as they try to get better education. This is one of the locations that parents and the students themselves expect to be safe. This project will address both potential campus and workplace violence. Deisinger, Randazzo, O’Neill and Savage (2008) remark that there is a sense that “campus violence has reached epidemic proportions” (p.3). It is very important to note as well that the numbers of active shooter events were increasing at an alarming rate: between 2000 and 2006 there as an annual average of 6.4 incidents, between 2007 and 2013 there was an average of 16.4 incidents occurring (U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau
of Investigation, 2014). In terms of the locations where these incidents occurred, it was recorded that over 70% happened in either the workplace or an educational environment (U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2014). These statistics are just a snapshot of more complete research which formed the basis of the move towards action and towards prevention rather than reaction.

There are a number of very high profile school shootings which this project is going to consider with a view to learning from their experience and from the findings of the reports into the events. All of these school shootings gained more media attention across a broader range of issues than any previous act of violence. Birkland and Lawrence (2009) argue that attention peaked with the events which occurred at Columbine in 1999, and this event spurred a very quick response in terms of policies and procedures made available to schools. Again, it needs to be remembered that Birkland and Lawrence (2009) wrote their article prior to the increase in school shootings since 2010. It can be argued that the events of Sandy Hook created a new impetus in terms of public opinion. Birkland and Lawrence (2009) also point out that the Columbine school shootings was the most closely watched news event of the year, with 68% of the public paying very close attention to the events. The events of Columbine in 1999 had an effect on public opinion and the range of measures taken to combat school violence, but it appears from the research available that the priority really changed after the events of Virginia Tech in 2007. Over and over again there are references to the changes that occurred after Virginia Tech, most of which reference the introduction of threat assessment to schools and colleges. In fact, Addington (2009) points out that the initial response to Columbine was not necessarily threat assessment, but visible security measures, such as metal detectors, cameras as well as trained security guards. It can be argued that though these responses may have an effect
of preventing violence they only have a limited effect and may make the school look more like a prison, which effects the student’s attitude to school. The main aim of these visible security responses was to prevent violence in the schools, but it did not use the resources available to the best effect. This project will elaborate on the fact that on most occasions there are individuals who are aware of the intention of the perpetrator prior to the event. Melroy and O’Toole (2011) describe this as “leakage”. This is the main aim of threat assessment to identify and intervene as early as possible in the plans of the perpetrator. While these visible security responses have a place, this project will not be examining this type of response to school violence.

After the Virginia Tech shootings, there was a real move towards Threat Assessment Management Teams (TAMT) and the state legislature immediately reacted by enacting legislation to make sure every college and university put in place threat assessment procedures; this certainly created an impetus throughout Virginia and it can be argued that this was the real start of recognition that TAMT was one of the best ways to early identification and prevention of individuals of concern. Virginia Tech stands out as a pivotal point in the history of school shootings and as such this project will be considering this event and the subsequent research. Deisinger, Randazzo, O’Neill and Savage (2008) argue this point exactly when they state that since the shootings at Virginia Tech there has been “an overwhelming amount of media attention devoted to campus threats and campus security issues” (p.3); they point out much discussion has been around “high tech solutions” (p.3) and there was “finally a discussion around threat assessment on campus” (p.3). Deisinger et al., (2008) point out that it is their strongly held belief that threat assessment provides “an effective and low-cost solution to make campuses safer” (p.4) and this is why they use the term finally in their text. There appears to have been some frustration by Deisinger et al., (2008) in the lack of consideration of threat assessment as a
way to deal with school violence. Although Fein, Vossekuil, Pollack, Borum, Modzeleski, and Reddy, (2002) published research and guidelines on threat assessment only several years after Columbine, this does not appear to have gained much attention or traction among colleges. It may have been the case that because of the time delay between the shootings and the publication that the impetus was lost. This project will argue this is no longer the case and threat assessment is now the main approach that schools and colleges should use to attempt to deal with the potential of school violence. Over eighty percent of all reports into school violence, which have been published since Virginia Tech, indicate a real need for TAMT to be established (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Definitions

TAMT are defined as a “multi-disciplinary team that is responsible for the careful and contextual identification and evaluation of behaviors that raise concern and that may precede violent activity on campus” (Deisinger et al., 2008, p.5). Threat assessment is not concerned with identifying dangerous situations, but rather the investigation of groups and individuals who have made threats or have been involved in some sort of threatening behavior (Cornell, 2010). That is what makes it more effective. The early identification of these persons of concern enables colleges and universities to intervene and take appropriate preventative steps. Cornell (2010) points out that the endorsement of TAMT as a means to deal with potential school violence has come also from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the United States Secret Service (USSS), in fact the USSS have been using threat assessment procedures for many years to protect the President and other government officials. It is very important that violence prevention takes place long before the gunman appears in the hallway of the school or the principal’s office. There is a very important distinction which needs to be made to differentiate
between criminal profiling and threat assessment. Criminal profiling attempts to identify perpetrators by matching them to a set of characteristics which indicate a propensity towards violence (Cornell, 2010; Deisinger et al., 2008). While this has a role in law enforcement, criminal profiling has been widely rejected as a way for school officials to prevent school violence for two reasons: school shootings are statistically so rare and the characteristics shared by perpetrators are not specific to violent individuals (Cornell, 2010). In other words, school shootings are so rare that the statistics cannot be relied on to build a picture of a potentially violent individual and the personal characteristics are experienced by many individuals who do not become violent that they cannot be the factors considered. Vossekuiil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, Modzeleski, (2002) point out that no single type of person who can be either labelled or identified as a potential perpetrator of school violence. In contrast, threat assessment is concerned with behaviors and words of individuals, it is evidence based focusing on certain behaviors of individuals (Deisinger et al., 2008). Reddy et al. (2001) make the point that usually in school based attacks both “the perpetrator and target (s) are identified or identifiable prior to the incident”, they call this targeted violence (p.157-158). This is important to remember as this forms the basis of threat assessment and intervention.

Project Purpose

Having established some of the important definitions and distinctions in threat assessment, there is a requirement to set out the particular problem which this project will address. Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) serves a growing and dynamic area in Orange County, California. The district serves a population of more than seven hundred thousand residents in the communities of Anaheim Hills, Orange, Santa Ana, Villa Park, and parts of Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Irvine, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove and Tustin (Discover
The District covers an area equivalent to nearly twenty-five percent of Orange County, and the District uses eight different facilities including two credit colleges, Santa Ana College (SAC) and Santiago Canyon Colleges (SCC), and several other sites which are used for Continuing Education or non-credit classes (Discover RSCCD, 2016). In fall 2014, the unduplicated headcount of the District was 40,653, at both credit and non-credit colleges with an ethnically diverse population; the majority of the population mainly being Latino at fifty-nine percent and Caucasian around twenty percent (District fact sheet, 2016). The district employs 4,104 full-time and part-time employees which, along with the forty thousand plus students, creates significant potential for individuals to cause concern. The District has realized their need for mechanisms to deal with threats and persons of concern for a number of years, and as such the two main campuses have had teams. There is nothing in place for the Continuing Education sites or students. There are no formal policies or procedures in place for the teams in existence. In fact, it can be argued that they do not fully understand their role or responsibilities. This creates a number of problems. At SAC, there was a team of people who had received no formal training, met on very few occasions and there was much confusion around their role on campus. At SCC, there was a little more organization to their team, it met on an irregular schedule and there are major gaps in terms of communication and policy. There has been a couple of recent occasions when there have been persons of concern who have come to the attention of the Safety and Security. While these incidents have been dealt with in an effective way, there was potential for violence and because of a lack of formal policy, there was a lack of consistency on how the incidents were handled. Another concern was the lack of a collaborative approach between campus departments, which is a guiding principle of threat assessment, and finally the lack of
formalized records of the decision making process. It is this last concern which emphasizes the requirement for formal policies.

It is these concerns at RSCCD which this project wants to address. In order to achieve this, it will consider the following:

1. The history and development of threat assessment principles,
2. The increasing use of TAMT in colleges and universities,
3. Two specific models (National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) and SIGMA),
4. Communication within the process and in terms of notifying the community in the event of a threat, and as a result,
5. Develop written policies and procedures for RSCCD,
6. Develop an implementation plan for TAMT including a timetable.

Through this project it is planned that RSCCD will be able to intervene and deal with individuals who are causing concern. It is the overall aim of this project to provide a robust and encompassing set of policies and procedures to deal with concerning behavior as well as make sure students, faculty and staff are as safe as possible, while at school or in the workplace.

Literature Review

Background and History of Threat Assessment in Schools

The concerns around “targeted school violence” is the driving force behind the introduction and development of TAMT in our schools. These concerns are not unfounded as previously discussed with the increasing nature of these events, but there needs to be a clear understanding of the development of TAMT and what behaviors or outcomes they are trying to
prevent. There must be a clear distinction between predicting violence and preventing violence (Reddy, Borum, Berglund, Vossekuil, Fein, Modzeleski, 2001). The former implies that the outcome is the accuracy of the assessor’s prediction – to be able to gauge accurately who is more likely to be violent, and the situations when the probability is greatest (Sewell, Mendelson, 2000). Reddy et al. (2001) point out that violence prevention is more concerned with “effecting appropriate intervention” (p.159); this moves the need to be right about the prediction that a child may be violent, to being able to provide suitable services. This can be argued to be less punitive than school discipline and is therefore better for the students. It may be easier to influence the student by establishing a friendship through counselling or introducing a mentor to their life than emphasizing the danger the student may pose to others. This is the driving force behind threat assessment.

United States Secret Service (USSS)

Prior to threat assessment being widely applied to schools it was being used by the USSS and other law enforcement agencies to prevent acts of violence. Vossekuil et al. (2004) point out that the USSS believes that threat assessment is as important as the physical measures it employs. USSS had three main steps which all happen prior to the person of concern having an opportunity to attack:

- attempting to identify individuals who have an idea or plan to attack a protectee of the USSS,
- after collecting pertinent information assessing whether the individual actually poses a risk to the protectee,
- and managing and mitigating the threat.
These principles, as set out by the USSS, have become the basis of the threat assessment processes for schools. In 1998, the USSS recognized that the principles which they had been using would be of use to other agencies and as such they issued a report, *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State and Local Law Enforcement Officials* (Vossekuil et al., 2004). Additionally, the *Safe School Report Interim Report* in 2000 was a collaborative report between the USSS and Department of Education officials. These documents provided the fundamental research work for the beginning of threat assessment principles being applied to targeted school violence.

Traditionally, law enforcement is reactive to violence, they seek to apprehend the perpetrator after the crime has been committed (Fein, Vossekuil, Holden, 1995). Threat assessment is different, in many instances law enforcement, or some other authority, is given information regarding someone who is causing concern to the reporter. Fein, Vossekuil and Holden (1995) make a clear distinction between someone who is making a threat and someone who is posing a threat; not everyone who makes a threat is actually intending to follow through on their words. This is a very important difference to note and other factors must be considered when making the determination around the threats; for example, what other actions the person of concern has been involved in such as targeting a particular target or planning for the incident. Fein, Vossekuil and Holden (1995) point out that there has been a lack of clear guidance for law enforcement in threat assessment. They set out to outline the fundamental principles of threat assessment. Along with Fein and Vossekuil (1998), this can be seen as the foundational work for threat assessment and was built upon over the following years, prior to the Columbine shootings in 1999. As part of this discussion, it is vital to note that while there are bigger problems statistically in American schools, the school shootings which have occurred have increased the
fear among students, parents and educators. Vossekuil et al. (2004) argue that “each school
based attack has had a tremendous and lasting effect on the school in which it occurred, the
surrounding community and the nation at large” (p.7). This has become the driving force behind
the threat assessment research and implementation of policies and procedures in the following
years. Another major catalyst in TAMT development was the Columbine shootings.

Columbine Shootings

On April 20, 1999, two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, murdered twelve fellow
students and one teacher before finally committing suicide (Erikson, 2001). Subsequent to the
event there was an official review of the event. What was established by this report was there
were a number of pre-incident indicators which, if they had been recognized, there may have
been a possibility to prevent the shootings. As a result, there were a large number of
recommendations concerning many aspects of the incident response. In terms of threat
assessment, the report made recommendations that schools should work on changing the culture
of the school to make it easier for students and staff to report concerning behavior and a TAMT
being established at every Colorado High school (Erikson, 2001). This was a very important
move in the development of TAMT, it was establishing the recognition that threat assessment
had a role in preventing school based acts of targeted violence. The report also set out how the
team should be composed, recognizing the need for the following positions or roles: someone
who knows the students, the local law enforcement’s School Resource Officer (SRO), a trained
mental health professional and someone who will be able to influence the school culture
(Erikson, 2001). The inclusion of these roles in threat assessment showed very innovative
thinking on behalf of the report writers; it was the first time the composition of a TAMT had
been set out and has proved to be the basis moving forward. Another innovative
recommendation of the report was for violence prevention education for the students, staff and more importantly parents; these were to be in the schools and community based (Erikson, 2001). As TAMT have developed over the years since Columbine, the education of those groups has proven to be vitally important. This report was important in the development and introduction of TAMT in Colorado.

Subsequent to Columbine

Fein et al. (2002) point out through the “Safe School Initiative” that after three years of study that “some of the school attacks may be preventable” (p.4). This research conducted with officials from the U.S. Department of Education’s Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program and the U.S. Secret Service’s National Threat Assessment Center, spent time researching and examining not only the Columbine shootings but other incidents of targeted violence. It built upon earlier work that the USSS had in place for investigating threats against the President of the United States. Furthermore, the “Safe School Initiative” made every effort to produce information which would be beneficial for school administrators, law enforcement officials and mental health professionals (Vossekuil et al. 2004). Vossekuil et al. (2004) used thirty-seven incidents to explore forty-one attackers, from 1974 to 2000. They explored primary sources of information to identify patterns and when primary sources did not provide answers, the researchers were careful not to draw conclusions. This research was very important in the development of threat assessment principles; it provided the basis for many further studies and conclusions.

Fein et al. (2002) discovered several fundamental aspects to targeted violence which again would underpin the development of TAMT; firstly, targeted violence was rarely impulsive, it was usually planned in advance; secondly, the planning usually did not go on without some sort of observable behavior which meant that others often knew about the plan. Consideration of
these two aspects of targeted violence would indicate that there is a possibility that future events could be prevented. Fein et al. (2002) went on to outline what should be in place to prevent the incidents; there should be procedures to identify, assess and manage persons who are involved in concerning behavior. These are principles which were set out in detail in the Fein et al. (2002) research and provided the foundation for further research and guidelines. One of the basic premises of threat assessment is to define what kind of incidents the TAMT are attempting to prevent (Cornell, 1990; Fein et al., 2002; Hoagwood, 2000; Reddy et al., 2001).

After the Columbine shootings, there was substantial work around TAMT providing evidence which clearly indicated the benefits of TAMT. This research laid very clear foundations for the inclusion of TAMT at our schools and colleges, yet it would appear that the research did not get implemented or was at least not followed through on at a Federal or State level. This was unfortunately illustrated by another major incident of school based targeted violence which occurred in April 2007 at Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech

While threat assessment was first suggested as a way to address the risk of active shooters on campuses, after the Columbine shootings; it was not until the Virginia Tech shootings, when there was an increased recognition of the real need for colleges to have these capabilities (Deisinger et al., 2008). On April 16, 2007, Seung Hui Cho shot and killed 32 students and faculty, wounded 17 more and then killed himself (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). In the aftermath of this incident, Timothy Kaine, Governor Commonwealth of Virginia, set up a review panel which was to seek out answers to the many questions which the incident raised. Kaine acknowledged that it was important the answers be sought out by experts who could establish the facts (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). The panel set out by
carrying a comprehensive review of the incident. The scope of their work involved establishing or attempting to establish answers to the following questions:

- Review how Cho committed the murders, including how Cho came into possession of the firearms used,
- Review and establish any facts which would indicate Cho’s psychological condition and behavioral indicators prior to and at the time of the shootings,
- Construct a timeline of the events from the time of the first murder to Cho committing suicide in Norris Hall,
- Review the responses of the State authorities, local authorities, and private providers in order to set out how the Commonwealth could improve its response to a similar emergency situation; this should include the first responders response, on-campus actions following the tragedy, services offered to the victims and victim’s families,
- Any other enquiries the panel felt was necessary to establish the facts surrounding the incident and
- Make recommendations and appropriate measures to improve the law, policies, procedures and systems for the operation of public safety (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007).

It can be observed that this was a very comprehensive review not only of Virginia Tech and their response, but also at a State level. This review and report was a very important step forward in the development of TAMT not only in Virginia, but its effects stretched across the United States.
Virginia Review Panel

The Review Panel conducted interviews of over 200 people and the physical review of thousands of documents. There were two types of findings emanating from the report. In reviewing actions taken during the incident, what was done well and what could have been done better were the driving forces; the second type of finding was to identify major administrative failings leading up to the events (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Some of the major findings of the report were:

- Cho had displayed signs of mental illness from his earliest childhood which had been dealt with in an effective way by his middle and high schools, also subsequent to the Columbine shootings Cho had expressed some suicidal and homicidal ideations in his writings. Cho received treatment which included medication at this time.
- In his junior year, Cho had numerous incidents which gave clear indications of mental instability. Although many departments were aware of the behavior, not one department was aware of all the incidents and “no one connected the dots” (p.2),
- Due to a failure to understand federal laws governing privacy of health and education records, university officials had failed to act or attempt to establish the extent of Cho’s problems,
- Cho was able to purchase two firearms, even though under federal law he should not have been able,
- There were failings in how the university communicated with the wider campus community after the first shootings, at West Ambler Johnston, in order to make them aware and alert,
• The VT police reacted well to the first shootings, but their belief that the perpetrator was probably off campus was premature (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007).

Keller, Hughes and Hertz (2011) point out that Cho came to the attention of the Virginia Tech on thirty-one separate occasions before carrying out his attack. These findings clearly set the stage for the need for TAMT; there needs to be a single point on a campus to which information can be passed. This team has to be able to take the information, connect the dots, act on it, carry out further investigations and be able to take preventative steps to intervene. The Virginia Tech Review Panel was not only tasked with examining what went wrong, but also in their scope they had to propose recommendations for the future (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007).

Among many recommendations, the review panel recommended that universities should have a “threat assessment team that includes representatives from law enforcement, human resources, students and academic affairs, legal counsel and mental health functions” (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007, p. 19). This resulted in the enactment of legislation in Virginia mandating that all public institutions of higher education “should have in place policies and procedures for the prevention of violence on campus, including assessment and intervention” (Cornell, 2009, p.1). This example really underscores the three guiding principles involved in threat assessment: school based violence is most likely the result of a process of behaviors which are intentional and observable, not a random event (Fein and Vossekuil 1998; Fein et al. 2002). Secondly, school based targeted violence usually comes from an interaction between the attacker and past stressful events and the target (Borum et al. 1999). Finally, in nearly all the incidents of school based targeted violence the identification of preceding behaviors which give indications to the attackers’ intentions were available (Borum et al., 1999; Fein et al., 1995; Deisinger et al., 2008).
Leakage

Keller, Hughes and Hertz (2011) argue for one more important principle, something that The Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007) did not consider; that is the need for a method to allow for easy communication of information which the TAMT need to know. This would help them to get out in front of any concerning behavior. To explain this further, it can be described as a move away from the belief that the violence was dispositional (lying within the person), static (not able to change), dichotomous (either present or not present) to more of an understanding that it is predominantly contextual (dependent on situations), dynamic (able to change) and continuous (potentially there in all situations) (Borum et al, 1999). This is very important to note and understand. It can be argued from this new position that anyone has the potential to carry out an act of violence and that could be set off by external factors in that person’s life. Borum et al. (1999) continue to argue that threat assessment is not something which can be predicted by any actuarial methods, and studies using this type of data showed that it was plagued by problems and weak conclusions; on the other hand, assessments and predictions of future violence by mental health professionals showed more encouraging results. This assertion validates the opinions previously discussed of how threat assessment is more concerned with the person and their behavior rather than a standard set of criteria. In the Safe School Initiative (Vossekuiil et al, 2002), a joint study by the United States Secret Service and the United States Department of Education, it was argued that there was information which could be obtained or was at least knowable prior to many of the school based shootings. Meloy and O’Toole (2011) describe this as leakage and it has clearly been established that in most cases there has been some communication of the intention prior to the event. This concept was first defined as:
…a student intentionally or unintentionally reveals clues to feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, or intentions that may signal an impending violent act. These clues could take the form of subtle threats, boasts, innuendos, predictions, or ultimatums. Clues could be spoken or conveyed in stories, diaries, essays, poems, letters, songs, drawings, doodles, tattoos, or videos (O’Toole, 2000, p.14).

This has to be one of the most important aspects of threat assessment. Meloy and O’Toole (2011) further narrow the definition of leakage, as “communication to a third party of an intent to do harm to a target” (p.514). This communication could be on any source whether verbal or written, in a paper or even on social media. The specificity of the leakage can vary greatly and it is something which needs to be taken into account by a TAMT, but at a bare minimum leakage cannot be ignored; it needs to be acted on. This is significant as it has established the need for TAMT and the principles and standards for threat assessment which have continued into the present day.

Other warning behaviors

Leakage is only one of the warning behaviors which a TAMT needs to consider. Meloy and O’Toole (2011) discuss six different warning behaviors which can assist a TAMT in making their decisions. These behaviors are:

1. Pathway warning behavior: this is the research or preparation which the individual may have undertaken.

2. Fixation- a behavior which shows a growing obsession with a person or a certain issue.

3. Identification – either with previous attackers in other school based targeted violence, or an identification with military or law enforcement.
4. Novel aggression – acts of violence which are committed for the first time, often these are personal tests to see whether they are capable of violence.

5. Leakage – communication of their intentions.

6. Last resort – increasing distraction or distress declared by word or action.

These warning behaviors can be used in making a decision around whether a person of concern is actually posing a threat or not. These warning behaviors have different levels of importance and certainly a culmination of any of them would be more alarming. In both the examples, this project has discussed there are very clear examples of warning behaviors. It lends support to the arguments for TAMT and are worth noting. These warning behaviors work well within the NaBITA model.

Leakage at Columbine

At Columbine, both attackers were involved in various pre-attack planning; there was significant leakage (Erikson, 2001; Meloy, O’Toole, 2011). This involved various writings on one of the attacker’s webs sites, with statements like “Wouldn’t be fun to kill all those jocks?” and other more prolific statements which were very threatening in nature (Meloy, O’Toole, 2011, p.516). As well as statements like this, the two killers asked a friend to purchase a semi-automatic assault pistol. There were videos of the killers and friends practicing in the woods with firearms. These are clear warning behaviors, namely leakage, pathway and identification (Meloy, O’Toole, 2011). These events were all prior to the act of violence. After the event, even more evidence of warning behaviors was found during searches of the homes of the two killers. This touches on something which will be discussed more in the implementation section; however, there needs to be an understanding of reaching out to parents on occasions as they may be able to provide information which is not available to the team.
Leakage at Virginia Tech

The second example this project examined was at Virginia Tech. On this occasion there were as many as thirty-one incidents involving Cho which came to the attention of administrators prior to the violence; many of these were early warning behaviors. These incidents included stabbing the carpet at a party, violent writings in his poetry class, annoying different female students with persistent contact via various means, suicidal thoughts expressed, subsequent committal for mental health evaluation, and significant purchases of equipment and firearms (The Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). While it is worth noting that not all these behaviors were observed by others, there were many that were. These warning behaviors exhibited by Cho, though different from Columbine, can be identified as pathway, novel aggression and fixation. In both these acts, there were clearly indications which, if acted on, may have prevented the attacks. What makes the concept of leakage so important is the value it holds to threat assessment. Examples of leakage, whether it is pathway, identification, or fixation allow TAMT to assess its significance (Meloy, O’Toole, 2011). One piece of leakage may not pose much relevance to a TAMT, but in combination these individual acts or behaviors may lead to a totally different decision; that is why it is very important to have the avenue for people to report their observations.

Threat Assessment Management Team Composition, Roles and Responsibilities

Moving beyond the historical development and need for college based TAMT, it is important to clearly establish what they are supposed to achieve. Having clear guidance and policy are very important. These teams are working together to define and to address the concerning behaviors of individuals in a cooperative and mutually beneficial way. Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) point out that there is legislation which gives certain responsibilities, such as
protecting people while they are at school; threat assessment is one way to achieve this. Policy is concerned with how it is implemented; by implication policy is critical. This is why it is so important to clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of TAMT in policy and administrative regulation. Deisinger et al. (2008) point this out and argue that policy creates accountability. Prior to outlining the main roles and responsibilities, it is important to establish the importance of policy. While there are many sources which outline the main roles and responsibilities of TAMT, RSCCD is going to use Deisinger et al. (2008) as it is standard. Deisinger et al. (2008) clearly set out not only the roles, but the responsibilities in a very clear and concise way.

Team Composition

This is probably the most agreed aspect of TAMT, with all the prominent researchers agreeing that the team should be a multidisciplinary team composed of individuals from various departments on campus (Fein et al., 2002; Deisinger et al. 2008; Keller, Hughes & Hertz, 2011). This should include administration, faculty, student services, law enforcement or security, a mental health component, and possibly legal counsel. This allows for maximum collaboration and coordination of efforts. According to Deisinger et al. (2008) this is not limited to these people, but on occasions there can be others with expertise or special knowledge brought to the team to give advice. Deisinger et al. (2008) also make the argument that on occasion the team may consist of others from outside the campus community. This could include local public agencies, for example, because the threat or concerning behavior may have affected areas outside of the campus. Another aspect of the team is that it needs to establish good relationships with departments within campus who may not have representatives on the team in order to let those departments know the TAMT exists, wants reports and may need information from those departments. The size of the team will really depend on the size of the institution and the nature
of the institution; for example, a four-year college will have representatives from housing on the team whereas a community college without housing does not have those roles. Also, the size of the team may vary depending on the nature of the incident they are considering. Keller, Hughes and Hertz (2011) point out that on occasion, because of responsibilities the other team members have, they may not be able to meet to consider an individual. For example, in an emergency a staff member may be off campus and the team members must have the ability to act even when permanent team members are not present. While they may have a point, this problem can be overcome in policy and directions to the team which allows the team to make decisions even when people are missing from the meetings. As long as the team has a quorum set out in their policy then the actions can be taken. These are important considerations and must be set out clearly in the RSCCD administrative regulations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Team composition is important, but more important is setting out the roles and responsibilities. First of all, there must be a team leader, who is responsible for leading the team, assigning responsibilities to other members, ensuring the process is followed and facilitating discussions (Deisinger et al., 2008). Further to this Keehan (2009) adds that the leader must be the “champion of the team’s purpose and goals” (p.6), have the time to manage the team and be respected by the campus community. Randazzo and Plummer (2009) agree with these attributes of the team leader, but very importantly add that the team leader must have the authority to act and get the attention of senior college officials if necessary. These are critical in that if the team leader is not qualified the team may well fail or be very limited in their effectiveness. At RSCCD, they have suffered from this mistake in that at one campus the team leader was the Associate Dean of Student Development, who did not have the impetus to lead the team because
of his many responsibilities. In terms of other roles, they really follow along with the department the team member represents. For example, the law enforcement or security team member will be responsible for conducting investigations, coordinating efforts and coordinates emergency services and the student affairs member will be responsible for liaising with the college’s academic affairs and student services (Deisinger et al., 2009). During the training of the team, there needs to be some discussion around the roles and what is expected from the respective members. Having clearly set out roles which the team members understand and agree to is critical to the working of the team. As Deisinger et al. (2008) point out, each member of the team has his/her own area of proficiency and they can make a unique contribution to the conversation, other team members need not overstep their areas of expertise when giving their opinion and making recommendations. For example, the student affairs representative should not provide input about the law enforcement issues when they have no recognized expertise in that area. This should not curtail conversation or discussion, each team member must be allowed to ask questions and raise issues which they may concern them. To enable this further and create the team dynamic, they should train together and meet on a regular basis to discuss and manage cases. Having set out the requirement for TAMT, the roles and responsibilities, this project has to set it in context for RSCCD.

Threat Assessment at RSCCD

As previously discussed, RSCCD is a multi-campus community college district, which in and of itself poses many problems in terms of consistency and collaboration of processes and procedures. There are two credit colleges and two continuing education sites which tend to work independently of each other, and this has been the case it relation of threat assessment. At RSCCD, there are Board Policies (BP) which set out the policy of RSCCD, such as BP 3510,
Workplace Violence Plan, which simply states that RSCCD will provide a workplace and environment which is free of violence and the threat of violence (BP3510 Workplace Violence Plan, 2015). Policy is written to meet legal requirements and other obligations, such as those set out in the Education Code. Along with policy, Administrative Regulations (AR) are written to give guidance on how to implement the policy. Not every BP has an AR, but for example BP 3510 has a corresponding AR, AR 3510, which outlines how the district will ensure the workplace is free from violence or the threat of violence. BP’s and AR’s form the policy making backbone of RSCCD’s policy development and are overseen by the Board of Trustees and the Executive Vice Chancellor of Human Resources and Educational Services. These policies are meant to be the way the district ensures that there is a consistent approach to dealing with the business of each college. In terms of threat assessment, this has been one of the major flaws in development of teams within RSCCD.

TAMT at RSCCD - History

There have been attempts to develop teams at both campuses, but they have not been supported with clear policy and procedures. Santa Anna College (SAC) has had a ‘Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT)’ for a number of years. This team was set up as a response to the nationwide move to TAMT on college campuses, and as such did have an idea of what their role was. It was a multidisciplinary team composed of the critical departments across the campus. It was co-chaired by the Associate Dean of Student Development and the Lieutenant, Safety and Security; however, the team really lacked direction and training, it did not meet on a regular basis and was very confused over the various privacy laws around student health and academic records. It is interesting that these are common problems associated with TAMT. This has caused problems when and if cases have developed, with the team discussing whether they are
able to discuss a person of concern rather than the case itself. The lack of formal training is the main contributor to this. At Santiago Canyon College (SCC) there is a Threat Assessment Team (TAT) which was established in 2012. This team was again established as a multidisciplinary team of various departments. After some research and discussion, this team set out to follow the model established by the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA). SCC joined NaBITA and also had training from the group on their model and processes. This helped in cementing the role and purpose of this group, but because of recent critical personnel changes this team has not met or followed up on developing formal policy or procedures. This brief history of threat assessment at RSCCD points out the main issues that have been experienced in that there has been no consistent or collaborative approach to threat assessment. The district has been acting as two separate colleges which leaves real gaps in approach and in the event of concerning behavior there could be significant information missed. An added concern is that students can attend both colleges at the same time, so it is important that there are clear lines of communication between the respective teams. Also, the campus communities (students, faculty and staff) are not aware of the existence of the teams with no formal avenues for information to be passed along.

Practically, at the colleges, there has been a sense that they set up the teams, but did not follow through. The campus administration recognized the need for TAMT and as such spent time and effort to establish teams, but for many reasons the teams did not continue to develop the skills, policy and procedures they needed. The teams also did not recognize the requirement to educate students, faculty and staff on an ongoing basis; this is one of the most important aspects of successful implementation of TAMT. Community colleges by their nature are significantly more transient in terms of students and faculty, especially part-time faculty who tend to teach for
a time and then move on. Students in practice normally turn over every two to three years, and as a consequence there needs to be a settled education process to reach this transient population. This is supported by various pieces of research around implementation, such as Deisinger et al. (2008) and Randazzo and Plummer (2009). Having discussed the historical development of TAMT at both a national and at RSCCD, it has been clearly established that there is a need for TAMT on the campuses of RSCCD. While there is significant research available around TAMT, Sigma and NaBITA are two organizations which have clearly set out policies and procedures and which are being used throughout colleges and universities across the United States. It is important to examine what these organizations are arguing for and establishing best practice from their work.

NaBITA

The National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) was established in 2009 and at the same time they launched their Threat Assessment Tool. See appendix 1 (Sokolow, Lewis, Reinach Wolf, Van Brunt, Byrnes, 2009). Their model is widely used in colleges and universities across the United States (Sokolow, Lewis, Schuster, Swinton, Van Brunt, 2014). While there is a clear recognition of the role of mental health in the process and the threat of harm to the individual, NaBITA argued there is more. There is a requirement to assess the potential of harm to others and mental health is not as useful to assess this as the idea of self-harm (Sokolow et al., 2009).

NaBITA Tool

This tool recognized the limitations and capacity of current threat assessment and developed “a multidisciplinary threat assessment tool that holistically synthesizes three essential bodies of knowledge into a cohesive model” (Sokolow et al, 2009, p.3). NaBITA advocates for five levels
of risk, from mild risk to moderate risk to elevated risk to severe risk to extreme risk (Sokolow et al., 2009). These five levels are explained with behavioral statements which are applicable to potentially violent and injurious acts, along with risks to reputation, facilities and normal college operations (Sokolow et al., 2009). In order to assess mental health, NaBITA designed the “D” scale (appendix 2). They acknowledge that some may argue that it is an over simplification, but NaBITA points out that it is designed to be easy to apply “without needing a high level of mental health expertise” (Sokolow et al., 2009, p.3). The “D” scale progressively escalates from Distress to Disturbance to Dysregulation to Decompensation (this is a parallel level of risk to Dysregulation) (Sokolow et al., 2009, p.3; Sokolow, Lewis, Schuster, Swinton, Van Brunt, 2014). The definition of each “D” is shown in appendix 2, and can be seen to be clear expressions which can be measured against behaviors of individuals of concern and also outlines possible intervention strategies which can be used for guidance. Finally, when measuring aggression, NaBITA has nine levels; these range from hardening, to harmful debate, to illustrating intent, to image destruction, to forced loss of face, to threat strategies, to limited destructive blows, to win/lose attack, to plunging together into the abyss (Sokolow et al. 2009; Sokolow et al., 2014). These levels of aggression are supplemented with definitions and behaviors, which are often associated with the escalation of aggression, and offer TAMT the ability to identify and get ahead of behaviors to intervene and prevent incidents of violence (Appendix 2).

The NaBITA tool also elaborates on how to measure each of these components by giving statements which can be evaluated in each case; this tool is a straightforward and applicable model of threat assessment (Sokolow et al, 2009). This model is a well thought out set of standards, which simplifies the threat assessment process. For example, it can be produced in a
two-sided page and breaks the process into assessing behaviors and actions rather than attempting to profile the individual. Initially, criticism of this model was its lack of academic research to back up its formulation and application. In NaBITA’s initial 2009 white paper, there were no other research references referred to by the authors. By way of admission and correction, NaBITA published a 2014 white paper which stated they are mindful of their ongoing obligation to update and validate the model (Sokolow et al, 2014). In this paper, there are significantly more references and verified validation of the aspects of the tool. In fact, they mention “more intentional attribution of the scholarly conceptual underpinnings of the tool” (Sokolow et al, 2014, p.2). In updating their tool, NaBITA realized they needed to update the concept of identifying a baseline for the concerning individual; this has become an improved aspect of the tool (Sokolow et al, 2014). It can be argued that the baseline for everyone is different, which is why it is very important to consider this when there is a person of concern. A person of concern’s behavior always needs to be assessed in terms of their baseline: how far off their baseline is their current behavior? Baseline is the starting position, from which the team will assess the trajectory of the individual.

SIVRA-35

The second major improvement in this tool from the 2009 version was the introduction of a validated Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment - 35 (SIVRA-35) to assist with the initial assessment of the person of concern (Sokolow et al, 2014). Van Brunt (2013) points out that the new assessment interview tool scores risk based on answers to the questions and provides a very useful way to classify risk. The SIVRA-35 allows for assessment through narrative and structured questions and also a “quantitative, numeric scoring key to further assist staff in their decision making” (Van Brunt, 2013, p.114). The SIVRA-35 scores from 0-70
ranging from low risk to high risk and allows for assessment by clinical and non-clinical staff (Van Brunt, 2013). Sokolow et al., (2014) point out that the SIVRA-35 is not a test to assess suicidal students, but rather those who pose a risk or violence to others. This is important for TAMT to remember, so that they do not waste time or effort. This assessment tool is only available through an annual subscription, so there is no example available, but is something that RSCCD should consider during the implementation phase of this project.

How should TAMT use the NaBITA tool?

The overall risk level is illustrated by the five levels of general risk (mild to extreme). It is getting to this decision where the NaBITA tool is very useful. It should be noted that there is no level of ‘no risk’ – everyone poses some level of risk. The initial assessment in any incident is probably one of the most important processes of the TAMT. The concept of baseline is vital during this initial phase. It is clear that in a college, university or workplace, colleagues and friends potentially know a significant amount about individuals of concern, it is important that the TAMT dig into this information; they need to know the individual.

Baseline theory

Sokolow et al. (2014) point out that one of the first questions is to find out what is the “normal baseline” (p.15) for the individual of concern. To Sokolow et al., (2014) “normal” means that the individual is no closer to harm or violence than any other person who makes a similar threat, in order to establish this there are two relevant questions:

1. Is the individual off his / her baseline?
2. Does the individual have an elevated baseline? (p.15).
As an example to illustrate this principle, Janine is involved in self-injuries via cutting herself; the level of risk would be elevated for Janine. If the TAMT gets a second report regarding Janine of exactly the same behavior, the risk level would not necessarily change (Sokolow et al. 2014). The first report increases the level of risk for Janine, but then this behavior becomes the new baseline, meaning that the same behavior would not increase the risk level. This is not to say that Janine is not at risk or posing a risk, just that the further cutting behaviors does not change her risk level at this stage. What this does is give the TAMT vital information regarding her trajectory in that there are more incidents of concern, the TAMT needs to watch where her trajectory will go. Sokolow et al., (2014) argue that “being off your baseline simply gives context to someone’s trajectory toward harm or violence” (p.16). Another consideration around baseline is whether the individual has an elevated baseline to start. Sokolow et al., (2014) state this cannot be an opinion, but should be verified by empirical data; it must be research based. This is something that the mental health professional on the team can help with, as they will have a background in research of risk factors for violence or self-harm. If there is no independent empirical research to indicate the increased risk of harm or violence, then the baseline is normal.

Back to our example, Janine has been involved in cutting behavior; let’s assume that she is 20% more likely to attempt suicide as a result of her behavior. With the five level scale of risk, it can be argued that each step is 20% of the path to violence or self-harm; so, in our example, Janine would be a baseline one level higher than the mild step one, she would be moderate on the scale (See appendix 1). If this is not effective, then there could be wrong choices made to manage the threat.
NaBITA Tool Summary

The NaBITA tool is very comprehensive and, although it is fairly simple and straightforward, it balances mental health concerns, direct threat and disruptive behavior, along with a consideration of aggression in the individual of concern (Van Brunt, 2013). These are observable and can be drawn out from witnesses and those who know the individual. This is one of the strengths of this model. With appropriate training this tool can become a very powerful way for colleges to manage and address threats. It has clearly set out levels of behavior, mental health and aggression behaviors which can be scored to determine the level of risk. Sokolow et al., (2014) point out that TAMT should use the tool in the following order:

1. Identify the behavior,
2. Gather additional data,
3. Assess baseline and trajectory,
4. Assign risk level,
5. Determine the institutional intervention/response (p.18).

Appropriate action can then be taken against the individual of concern; this is the main benefit of this model. Some limitations associated with this tool is that it does not provide more guidance on managing and reviewing the decisions of the team. NaBITA is concerned with developing models of threat assessment which are verified by academic research, mental health studies, law enforcement evidence and best campus practices (Sokolow et al., 2014). This model as a tool for campus TAMT is very useful, offering ways to provide early intervention, well-timed response and stop incidents of violence.
SIGMA

SIGMA is an organization similar to NaBITA who offers training and consulting services to help companies and colleges maintain a safe environment. The main authors behind the work of SIGMA were heavily involved in the aftermath and implementation of TAMT in Virginia and at Virginia Tech; this contributes to their credibility and expertise. Deisinger et al. (2008) point out that after Virginia Tech many campuses were offered many different security solutions, but the real answer to preventing school shootings is threat assessment. TAMT is defined as a “Multidisciplinary team that is responsible for the careful and contextual identification and evaluation of behaviors that raise concern and that may precede violent activity on campus” (Deisinger et al., 2008, p.5). This is a similar definition to NaBITA and other pieces of threat assessment research, and as such provides no new information to the procedure. SIGMA does not offer a pictorial tool for threat assessment, but rather sets out a series of steps to be followed in the event of a person of concern comes to their attention. These follow the normal line of identifying the persons of concern: conducting an initial screening, gathering information, answering the key questions about the person’s behavior, making the assessment, developing a plan to manage the person, monitoring the plan and finally, making appropriate referrals for the person (Deisinger et al., 2008). It is worth elaborating on each of these steps as there is important practical information provided by the authors in their research.

Campus Education

In order for the TAMT to identify individuals, they have to educate the campus community that there is a process available to handle these types of situations. This has to be a multi-level process with many levels of reporting; even if individuals witnessing the behaviors do not report directly to the TAMT, but rather to someone else they trust, that individual should
know that they should report to the TAMT (Deisinger et al., 2008). There should be mechanisms which encourage reporting,

Deisinger et al., (2008) state it this way:

“the college or university must make a consistent effort to remind the campus community that reports about suspicious behavior are wanted, what signs to look for, how to report them and that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated objectively” (p.48).

The message should be that any information is welcome, however minor or insignificant the TAMT is interested. There should be no penalty for reporting information. To achieve this level of information gathering, the TAMT should be marketed and training should be developed across the campus community. This training will vary in level of intensity depending on who is the audience; there should be a general awareness training across the campus community, followed by more specific training for those who would be judged to be in frontline positions, like student affairs, resident assistants or mental health services. The general awareness training should clearly outline the role, raise awareness of the TAMT and the purpose of the TAMT. It should make sure that the message is that the TAMT is about helping people, not a punitive process, but rather to intervene and get help for those who are in need (Deisinger et al., 2008). Nolan, Randazzo and Deisinger (2011) argue that this training should be a multilevel with as many campus departments involved in getting the message out to the campus community as possible.

Reporting Methods

Along with the active training, there needs to be multiple ways for the campus community to report their concerns, from anonymous options to in person interviews (Deisinger et al., 2008; Keehan, 2009). What is important to realize is that the reporting of information
must be really encouraged. There needs to be an environment where the campus community understands that the university or college will take seriously the reports (Keehan, 2009). While there has been a reluctance to publicize TAMT existence on some campuses, to operate in secrecy in case they alarm the campus community, this is not in the best interest of the operation of the TAMT. The campus community needs to know that teams exist and they can be trusted to act in the best interests of the persons of concern (Keehan, 2009). Deisinger et al. (2008) argue that not only should the TAMT have several reporting options, but they should be proactive in their interaction with the various constituents on the campus, they should check in with various critical individuals and departments. This lessens the risk of missing something, but more importantly it raises the profile of the TAMT and encourages reporting.

After the identification of a person of concern, there should be an initial assessment, the depth of this process will depend greatly on whether an imminent danger is determined (Deisinger et al., 2008). In situations when an imminent threat is not present, the TAMT need to make sure that if a full assessment is needed, the TAMT should convene and gather as much information as possible to make their decisions. Conducting this full enquiry, if necessary, should add to the information that the TAMT already has; it is clear from reviews and research that prior to most campus or workplace attacks there are indicators of violence (Deisinger et al., 2008). This is what the team is looking for and what they need to assess. To gather as much information as possible, Deisinger et al., (2008) point out that there needs to be a comprehensive approach to the process, the TAMT needs to reach out to as many sources as possible. This includes campus security or police, judicial affairs or student conduct, mental health services, professors or lecturers, resident assistants or directors, and even family if deemed appropriate (Deisinger et al., 2008; Keehan, 2009). It is important to remember at this time that there is a
number of legal provisions which protect the privacy of individuals, such as the Family
Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and
Accountability Act (HIPAA). FERPA protects educational records from disclosure without the
student’s consent, it is widely misunderstood and is fairly narrow in its application. HIPAA’s
privacy rules do not apply to campus-created student treatment records and therefore this legal
provision does not affect the work of TAMT (Keehan, 2009). The TAMT must take care when
making a full enquiry to not contravene these legal provisions, but alternatively they must not be
put off making their enquiries as both laws have provisions to ensure that public safety is not
compromised. In fact, Keehan (2009) points out that the FERPA law only “applies to records
and provides many exceptions to allowing disclosure without a student’s consent” (p.23).
Personal observations, law enforcement or campus security records are not educational records
and, therefore, not protected by FERPA (Keehan, 2009). Along with these provisions FERPA
also allows education officials to discuss a student’s educational records if it is for a legitimate
educational interest, and also to divulge information if there is a risk to the health or safety of the
student or others (Keehan, 2009). These exceptions and rules within FERPA make it clear that
the legal provisions should not impact the work or assessment process of the TAMT if it is
concerning someone who is exhibiting concerning behavior. TAMT should be well educated in
these legal provisions, so it is not hindered in its work.

Full Enquiry

Returning to the SIGMA process, the full enquiry should set out to answer key questions
such as the motive: has there been any concerning communication suggesting an attack, has the
person of concern shown an interest in previous campus or workplace attacks? Has the person
engaged in attack-related behaviors? Does the person have the capacity to carry out an attack? Is
the person experiencing hopelessness? And does the person of concern see violence as an acceptable way to address problems? (Deisinger et al., 2008). These questions are a very helpful guide for the TAMT to assess the behaviors and information they have received and it can be argued that they provide a more practical approach than NaBITA. NaBITA does not set out their approach to assessment in such questions, but they set out behaviors and ask the TAMT to assess where the concerning individual fits. Combining the two approaches, with the behaviors from NaBITA and the questions from SIGMA, is using the best of both worlds. This approach will allow TAMT in RSCCD to use the charts and diagrams from NaBITA, along with the questions from SIGMA to make a full assessment of concerning individuals.

Once the TAMT conducts the full enquiry, the team needs to make a determination of the threat posed. Deisinger et al. (2008) argue the team must answer two main questions:

a. Does the person pose a threat of harm, whether to him/herself or others?

b. If the person does not pose a threat of harm, does the person otherwise show a need for help or intervention?

Whatever the answers to these questions, the intensity of the threat will mainly determine the actions to be taken. NaBITA’s pictorial model is the most effective way of determining the action to be taken, as it examines both mental health and level of aggression in one place. These two factors determine the risk level and therefore the actions to be taken. Once decisions are agreed, there needs to be a plan developed and implemented (Keehan, 2009; Nolan, Randazzo and Deisinger, 2011). The different options open to the TAMT are wide ranging, but depend greatly on what is the risk assessed. Options range from a conversation with the concerning individual to law enforcement and mental health professional intervention (Deisinger et al., 2008). These options need to be carefully considered as the TAMT needs to make sure they do
not antagonize the individual, but also do not underestimate the behavior and the potential threat. This is the most challenging part of the process. Once action is taken, that is not the end of the process. The TAMT must monitor their plan and refer and follow up as appropriate. These steps set out by SIGMA must be documented and recorded. Nolan, Randazzo and Deisinger (2011) assert that “documentation that states the rationale for the team’s decisions and summarizes the factual basis for those decisions can memorialize the team’s thinking if its decisions are ever questioned” (p.116). These steps are similar to the steps set out in several other documents and guides for TAMT. Deisinger et al., (2008) offer some very useful templates and flowcharts which will prove very beneficial in this project. They provide guidance for the TAMT to be able to keep consistency when the team is handling persons of concern.

Comparison of NaBITA and SIGMA

It is important for this project to make a decision around which model to use and implement, after examining the research. There are three particular aspects of the models which need to be considered, the validity, effectiveness and ease of use. While both models have many unique attributes and many overlapping concepts, NaBITA’s use of their pictorial chart (Appendices 1 and 2) along with the definitions and observable behaviors, gives it an advantage over the SIGMA model. This is not to say that SIGMA is without use; their questions to use during the assessment process are very valuable and may be incorporated into RSCCD’s processes and guidance. Overall, NaBITA’s D-scale, five levels of risk and nine levels of aggression provide a very clear set of standards around which a team could carry out an assessment. Sokolow et al. (2009) describe these as “tools in the toolbox” (p.8) which offers a real sense of their use and purpose; they offer practical guidance that SIGMA does not.
Communication

There is a significant gap in the research around TAMT in terms of communication. Deisinger et al. (2008) do offer some guidance in relation to the team communication which is useful in describing the need for constant review of cases and regular communication between team members. What is significantly missing is external communication with the students, faculty and staff within the college setting. In this project, this is a major concern because the rumor and speculation can suddenly take hold on a campus, creating an atmosphere of fear and alarm. Deisinger et al. (2008) argue that the TAMT should meet on a regular basis in order to build relationships and establish effective working relationships between team members. This is solid advice and will add to the effectiveness of the TAMT. The team members have other responsibilities which are often competing for their time and attention, and TAMT membership can often be seen as just something else to do. This should be avoided at all costs because of the immense duty the team has. Effective communication within the TAMT is one way to make sure the team works together in a collaborative manner. The team communication is enhanced when team members are aware of their and the other team members’ interpersonal styles and capabilities (Deisinger et al., 2008). It is critical that the TAMT is more than a reactive set of individuals thrown together in an emergency, they must have a relationship which means they can work together in potentially stressful situations. To achieve this, they must meet on a regular basis to build both knowledge and relationships. The TAMT should set out the schedule for their meetings on an annual basis.

Communication of Threats

While there are clearly established principles for notifying persons who may have been threatened by another person and obligations under the Clery Act, by issuing timely warnings,
there is much potential for confusion in between. The Clery Act sets out many responsibilities for campus administrators, among which is issuing timely warnings. A timely warning is defined as a warning which alerts the campus community about crimes that pose a serious or continuing threat to safety (Ward, Mann, 2011). The instructions are very clear that timely warnings should not be limited to Clery Crimes, but should be used when there are other situations which pose a threat to the campus community. This makes this a very useful tool for the TAMT to get the message out to their campus community. At RSCCD, the issuing of timely warnings is the responsibility of District Safety and Security. As the RSCCD TAMT would be co-chaired by a Safety and Security Lieutenant, there will not be any confusion when timely warnings should be issued. Conveying the timely warning should be done in a way to reach as much of the campus community as quickly as possible; this can be achieved by using the college’s mass communication system. The mass communication system is only one way to convey the timely warning, and should not be used in isolation, but should be combined with notices on campus and internal emails to faculty and staff. Records and reasons for issuing timely warnings must be recorded (Ward, Mann, 2011). This falls in line with the recommendations for TAMT in maintaining records and determinations. When there is a threat against an individual the TAMT must make clear communication to that person about the threat. Once notified, that person must be given advice on personal safety and offered the services of District Safety and Security.

In the event of a threat to the campus community, communication must be clear and appropriate in order to avoid confusion. Much of the potential for confusion relates to the rumor and speculation that often happens when only some of the story has been divulged or mentioned by someone who has some knowledge. Within campuses, there is much discussion among
students, faculty and staff especially when it comes to potentially violent incidents; if clear communication is not provided, then rumor and speculation will fill that gap. In previous incidents at RSCCD, there have been times when the communication has been poor and this project is planning to set out communication guidelines and procedures to assist the TAMT in making those decisions. This has caused confusion and embarrassment to some administrators and needs to be clarified to avoid repeat occurrences. These guidelines will be set out in the implementation section of the project. To conclude, communication is a two-way process in threat assessment: the ability for the campus community to communicate with the TAMT and then the TAMT’s ability to communicate with the campus community (Balancing Safety and Support on Campus: A Guide For Campus Teams, n.d.).

One final aspect of the communication requirement is that there needs to be accurate and detailed records kept of decisions made by the TAMT. This is very important and stressed throughout the academic research of many scholars (Deisinger et al., 2008; Sokolow et al., 2009; Randazzo, Plummer, 2009). Bearing in mind the confidentiality demands with FERPA and HIPAA, the team must be mindful of this, but it needs to be understood that it should not hamper the assessment process. Randazzo and Plummer (2009) argue that the team should develop a multi-layered system of documentation for its case records. What this looks like will need to be developed by each TAMT at RSCCD once they receive their training and set up their internal processes.

Implementation Plan

While there have been efforts to establish and operate TAMT at RSCCD, they have been unconnected; therefore, there were two different sets of processes, creating a lack of consistency and a lack of information sharing. One of the main purposes of this project is to bring a
consistent and unvarying approach using the same assessment criteria, therefore, making sure everyone is treated in an equitable manner. It must be noted that while both teams will work independent of each other, there is an expectation that they will share information about students who attend both campuses. Also, the TAMT at each location will be authorized to make the decision which best suits their campus. Each campus has its own culture and ethos and must be able to make their own conclusions. Throughout this implementation process, the teams need to bear in mind their respective campus in terms of their culture, minority groups and their diverse populations, such as Hispanics and the disabled population. The teams need to make sure there are suitable materials available for these groups.

Implementation – Setting Policy

The implementation has to commence with the setting of policies and administrative regulations, these are fundamental to any process within our District. It is not intended to write new policies and administrative regulations, but to incorporate the TAMT processes and procedures within the existing Administrative Regulation - AR 3510 Workplace Violence Plan (Appendix 3). The existing policy - BP 3510 Workplace Violence Plan (Appendix 4) clearly sets the violence prohibition strategy. Adding the threat assessment component to the administrative regulation will mean that it will address the violence prevention strategy. Cornell (2010) points out that so often there is a myopic focus on preparing for the attack without concluding that threat assessment provides a vital prevention strategy. This is frequently overlooked. The current policy clearly points out the prohibition on violence in the workplace and that RSCCD wants to deal with all violence and threats of violence in an effective way (BP 3510 Workplace Violence Plan, 2015). This policy charges the Chancellor to set in place administrative regulations which set out to all employees what is regarded as a violent act, requiring an
employee to report such incidents, and that there will be no retaliation for such reporting. The additions to the administrative regulation set out the role and responsibility of the TAMT, being the establishment of a team which will educate the campus communities, assess threats and prevent violence on campus (AR3510 Workplace Violence Plan, 2015).

Implementation – Administrative Regulation

The core composition of the team is also outlined in the Administrative Regulation and is as follows:

- Lieutenant District Safety & Security (Chair)
- Associate Dean of Student Development
- School psychologist / Mental Health Services
- Continuing Education Dean
- Disabled Student Services and Program Specialist

These roles are critical to the effective working of the team based on much of the research that has been considered such as Deisinger et al. (2008), Cornell (2009) and Randazzo, Plummer, (2009). These roles are compulsory, but the TAMT has the authority to add to the core membership, if they can justify it and believe it is necessary to make assessments for their campus. The degree of flexibility has to be authorized and it could be argued that it is necessary as the specific TAMT will know their campus operations better than anyone else. Deisinger et al. (2008) points out that all the members of the team will be able to take their area of expertise and “make a unique contribution to the process” (p.41). The individuals in the core membership are there for their particular expertise and roles on campus, membership should not be based on personalities or position on campus. A Vice President should not be a member in a TAMT just because of their important position, but only if they can effectively give something to the
assessment process. Members should bring their expertise to the process, but others should feel free to question and raise other observations and concerns they may have; this process is about consultation and consensus (Deisinger et al., 2008). It is recommended that the team members should feel free to challenge and question each other in the team meetings, not in the sense of challenging someone’s expertise in a subject, but in a way to illicit the best decision. Also, if necessary the team should be authorized to bring in other experts to help in the decision making process. One final consideration and recommendation is that the team meets on a regular basis in the beginning of their existence, this assists in the team developing consensus and relationships. It is recommended initially, if there are no cases to consider, these meetings could be used for short table top exercises in order to practice the use of the assessment tool.

Implementation – Training the teams

Following from the composition of the team, it is important that these individuals are given effective training on what they are charged to accomplish. This is one of the most important aspects of the establishment of the TAMT; without training, the TAMT would lack chemistry and expertise. The importance of the task which they are responsible for, makes it very evident that specialized training is necessary; it must be relevant and allow the team “to develop expertise and effectiveness” (Keehan, 2009, p.28). In the case of this project and the adoption of NaBITA as the model of choice, the training should include the NaBITA Threat Assessment Model (Appendix 1). NaBITA offers various training options with two-day certification courses for new teams and for existing teams, and also advanced risk assessment certification courses (NaBITA Certification Courses, 2016). The basic certification course is aimed at schools who are in the early stages of threat assessment or do not have a team; the focus is twofold, gaining an understanding of the common best practices for TAMT and a guide to
hands-on tools to use on their campuses (NaBITA Certification Courses, 2016). This training appears to cover a significant amount of information which has been considered by this project and it is not believed it would be suitable for the RSCCD teams. The second certification training is titled Best Practice training, but on further examination it would appear that, again, a significant part of the first day is spent reviewing the formation and composition of teams. These aspects are covered in this project and would not add to the knowledge of the RSCCD teams, therefore this training would not be suitable. Instead of having NaBITA train on these subjects, it is intended that the executive summary and PowerPoint presentation will be presented to the teams. Therefore, these presentations will cover much of this background information.

A different solution is needed. RSCCD teams need to be trained in the NaBITA threat assessment model and on how best to achieve good results. An alternative solution is the Behavioral Intervention Team Comprehensive Review and Training Day. This allows the campus to pick three to four different topics which they can receive training on at their site in one day. This is advantageous because sending twelve to fifteen people to an offsite location for two-day certification training would be very expensive and may be difficult to justify. Alternatively, this subject specific training allows RSCCD to pick the most important subjects that are needed. There are subjects, such as applying the NaBITA Threat Assessment rubric consistently to all cases, along with some case studies which are designed to demonstrate how to best apply the tool to issues of disruptive behavior and mental health crisis. Another topic to consider for training is the effective marketing of the TAMT. This includes discussion around advertising strategies and catchy logos. The final important training subject is around writing case notes for the team members; it is intended that the team will learn what well written notes look like and avoid some of the common pitfalls (BIT Comprehensive Review and Training Day,
It is recommended that the core TMT members choose the subjects which they believe would be most beneficial to them in order to start working in their role. This will set the agenda for the training and ensure that the training is specific to the needs of the teams. It is also recommended that the TAMT consider having regular training or table top exercises, on an annual basis. This helps improve knowledge and expertise, but more importantly allows TAMT to get up to date with new developments in the area of threat assessment.

Implementation – Educating the campus community

The next phase in implementation is the education of the potential reporters on campus. This includes students, faculty, staff and other acquaintances. This is one of the most important implementation steps and must not be a “one off” event but must occur on a regular basis. Prior to the education process, there needs to be the identification of potential sources of reports. The people who are the most likely to report concerning behavior are those who have most contact with the individual. It is recommended that the TAMT get together to make a list of the groups identified as potential sources of reports. Once identified, there may need to be different methods to reach these groups. Faculty and staff will need a different approach than students.

Keehan (2009) points out that the Secret Service and Department of Education indicated that the school climate affected whether bystanders were willing to report threats or concerning behaviors. The bystanders were more likely to “volunteer information if they thought the school would take it seriously and address the situation appropriately” (Keehan, 2009, p.10). This research lends weight to the importance of this process. The TAMT must foster an environment on campus in which everyone understands that information, however minor, is valuable and should be reported. It is up to the respective teams on their campuses to educate their campus community on the team’s existence, purpose, the types of concerning behavior which should be
reported and how people can report. Keehan (2009) makes some very good suggestions in relation to educating the potential reporters about what should be reported, which should be considered by the TAMTs at RSCCD:

- If the reporter believes that there is an imminent threat then the report should be directed to the campus safety and security department or local law enforcement and not the TAMT,
- Reporting thresholds should be low – individuals should feel empowered to report the smallest concern,
- Descriptions of what to report should be simple and easy to understand,
- The simple slogan of ‘See something, say something’ should be considered.

It is very important to keep the guidance to the campus community simple and brief, this makes it more marketable and encourages reporting. Keehan (2009) points out that there should be a variety of methods used to educate the campus community: workshops, live presentations, online trainings, and emails are just some of the potential training mechanisms. For the purposes of this project, the TAMT at their campuses must design an education program for their campus community. Considering the research available, which recommends a variety of approaches, these are some of the options available to the RSCCD teams:

- Live workshops during flex week prior to the start of the semester. These could be managed by departments or different constituent groups,
- A webpage which provides the opportunity to reach everyone within the campus community, it also provides backup information for those who may have concerns,
- Having a suitable online training is a cost effective way of training multiple groups, although it does not allow for discussion or questions to clarify concerns. It is
recommended that this should only be used when there is no other option for in person training,

- Emails to students, faculty and staff can be an effective ways of reminding people of the TAMT and reporting options,
- Pamphlets and posters should be used across the campus to get the “See Something, Say Something” message to the campus community (Keehan, 2009).

Implementation – Reporting options

Associated with the education process, the TAMT should consider having practical reporting options. There needs to be a number of options to make reporting easy and accessible to everyone. There will be existing communication channels on the RSCCD campus whether through chain of command or other departmental processes, and these should be used if possible. Along with these existing channels, there also needs to be other methods, such as online reporting forms, an email address, telephone access to campus safety and in person possibilities. The TAMT should champion these methods and make sure that there is suitable marketing across the campus and during training sessions. Keehan (2009), points out that there should be continued assessment of reporting options and the team should consider the effectiveness on at least an annual basis. Another vital aspect of the training and educating of the campus community must take into account the campus turnover in students and staff. This means that the training must be ongoing, as pointed out in AR3510. Each TAMT must manage this on their respective campus, the chair and co-chair must be champions of threat assessment on the campus. There will need to be suitable resources for different groups with the campus which will provide easy and succinct information such the Threat Assessment Folder (Appendix 6). It is intended to create further documentation like
this for each of the campuses and centers. This will make sure that the subject is kept on the minds of the campus community and should consider other innovative ways of getting their message across. This could include giveaways, threat assessment days on campus, informational emails on a regular basis, and other marketing items such as pens, book markers or magnetic signs for filing cabinets.

The final recommendation for the effective implementation of TAMT is the adoption of a form to record the concerns of the individuals who make reports. Once a concerning report is received and the initial screenings suggest an investigation is needed, there is a need for the collection of the key information. This has to be accomplished in an effective and consistent manner by whoever is recording the information. This is best achieved by using a form to collect the information bearing in mind the required information. This Threat Assessment Referral form (Appendix 5) has been designed in accordance with the research from Deisinger et al. (2008) and Randazzo and Plummer (2009). It is intended to be a guide to the investigating team member to lead the discussion and the fact finding, but should not be seen as prescriptive. The investigating team member should attempt to get answers to all the questions on the Threat Assessment Referral form, but the investigation should not be delayed in order to get all the answers. The TAMT members should have the ability to adopt this form to their campus culture, it is intended to be a guide to the team. The Threat Assessment Referral form should be used to start the case notes which the team should complete. The purpose of TAMT is the collection of information and subsequent decisions to intervene and as such there needs to be effective record keeping. Bearing in mind the legal restrictions around sharing of information, such as FERPA and HIPAA legislation, the team must make sure they comply with these in their record keeping. Consideration must be given
to the fact that the SIVRA-35 will also take place once the TAMT is trained, and may supersede the Threat Assessment Referral form.

Implementation Timeline

As the plan is to formally launch the TAMT prior to the start of the Fall Semester 2016, there is a need to set out a clear achievable timetable for implementation. In order to help this implementation process a checklist has been designed to set goals and who is responsible (Appendix 7). This timetable needs to bear in mind the campus calendars and be in place for August 22, 2016. This is the proposed timetable:

- By the end of April 2016 – Formal presentation of project and executive summary to RS CCD Vice Chancellor,
- May 2016 – Approval of new AR 3510 Workplace Violence plan by the District Council,
- June 2016 – Training by NaBITA on the use of the threat assessment tool, marketing strategies and keeping accurate and effective records. This has been provisionally scheduled for June 20, 2016.
- June 2016 – The respective teams should start meetings and working on their own campus process and meeting schedules,
- July 2016 – Work on marketing strategies such as informational booklets (Appendix 6) and website for the campus communities. Attention needs to be given at this stage to the diverse ethnic groups on campus and also our disabled population. There will need to be resources suitable for all these groups,
- August 2016 – Start process of education with posters, pamphlets and training for staff,
• August 15-19, 2016 – The TAMT should use this week of Flex activities to raise awareness among the faculty prior to the start of the fall semester. This should include the distribution of education pamphlets such as Appendix 6.

• August 22, 2016 – The students need to be educated around the subject of threat assessment and the purpose of the TAMT. It is recommended that the TAMT on each campus reaches out to the Associated Student Government to educate them about the reporting methods. This could be accompanied by taking part in student events like Club Rush, or town hall meetings. This is a critical aspect of the implementation process which requires focused attention on the student body, because they are the largest grouping who may have contact with people who are exhibiting concerning behavior,

• August – December 2016 – Regular reminders should be sent to the campus community, such as monthly emails, to reinforce the launch of the TAMT.

• December 2016 – Each TAMT should carry out a review of their effectiveness in reaching their communities. This could be accomplished by exit surveys of faculty, staff and students. This review needs to be used to better inform the respective teams in order to allow them to identify shortcomings and tailor their message for the Spring 2017 semester,

• Spring 2017 – After a review of the success of the launch in fall 2016, the TAMT should maintain the process of education.

This timetable is a guide for the prospective teams and, in spite of the other pressures each of the teams will have with other responsibilities, they need to pursue this. It is recommended that the chair of the TAMT take lead responsibility for this education process.
The education process needs to be championed and overseen by someone who has authority to make it happen on the campus in order to make it effective.

Conclusion

There is a troubling increase in the number of active shooter incidents across the nation which is substantiated by two recent FBI research projects (Blair, Martaindale, 2013; Blair, Martaindale, & Nichols 2014). Accompanying this, in California in the last several years, there have been at least three incidents of involving incidents of multiple deaths on college campuses. In spite of these incidents, there has been no direction from the elected representatives or the Chancellor’s office. This project set out to establish the need for TAMTs on the campuses of RSCCD. In order to achieve this, there was historical discussion around the need for threat assessment on campuses by examining two major active shooting incidents, Columbine and Virginia Tech. These two examples gave clear indication that there were pre-incident behaviors which, if identified, may have helped to stop the incidents occurring or at least given opportunity to intervene in the lives of the individuals concerned. Having established the requirement for TAMT, there was discussion around the development of these teams, examining research from experts in the area. It was noted although recommended after the events in Columbine in 1999, it was not until after the Virginia Tech incidents in 2007 that adoption and implementation really occurred. The incidents at Virginia Tech led the legislature in Virginia to mandate that all universities and community colleges put in place threat assessment teams and associated processes. This had the effect of raising awareness and increasing the research around this subject. This research led to best practices being identified and set out in various publications, and two leading models becoming widely used nationwide across colleges and universities.
These two models, by NaBITA and SIGMA, use similar principles, such as early identification of threats, central reporting and collection of these reports. In essence, the principles offer guidance to assess threats and make decisions around intervention and management of the persons of concern. Where the models differ is around the methodology, in that SIGMA uses a set of questions to gather the information and then uses this to make its assessment. On the other hand, NaBITA uses a model (Appendices 1 and 2) which is pictorial. It uses various observable behaviors and offers guidance on their application. It consists of the four ‘Ds’; distress, disturbance, dysregulation and medically disabled, which are accompanied by nine levels of aggression from hardening to lose/lose attack. This chart and associated definition of terms allows for the TAMT to make decisions based on the evidence available. The NaBITA model is being adopted as the model for RSCCD.

Having decided on the model to be used at RSCCD, it is important to establish an implementation plan. This has to start with policies and administrative regulations which give legitimacy to the team and its process. The project identified the Workplace Violence policy and administrative regulation as the place where this would best sit. This was decided because it meant there was no need to write new policies, which would take substantial time to get approved through current college processes and also it allowed for quicker adoption. The updated administrative regulation and policy (Appendix 3) outlines the main points for the TAMT, like core team composition and a flowchart of the threat assessment process. The other main aspects of the implementation plan include the training of the teams. The need for effective training is reinforced by the research around the subject, it develops processes and also the effectiveness of the team (Deisinger et al., 2008). After the training of the teams, there needs to be education of the campus communities, such as faculty, staff and students. This is a critical
part of the process in that there needs to be knowledge of the purpose and role of the TAMT in order to garner the information required. This education should be accompanied by suitable resources in a variety of formats to get the message across and also to keep the message in people’s minds. Education cannot be a one off or isolated process; it needs to be ongoing and reviewed on an annual basis at least. The project set out a proposed timetable to supplement the implementation plan, setting out a guide for the respective campus teams to get launched for the start of the 2016 fall semester. This is a challenging timetable and will need concerted efforts from those core members of the team. It is further challenged by the differing campus communities and diverse population of the campuses.

The successful implementation of this project is possible with the help and support of those core members of the TAMT. It will be a concerted effort to achieve this, but it is necessary because of the threat of violent incidents on our campuses. RSCCD cannot stand by and not do anything.
References


### NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool

**Mental & Behavioral Health, “The D-Scale”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disturbance</th>
<th>Generalized Risk</th>
<th>Nine Levels of Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dysregulation/Medically Disabled*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Suicidal</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 Lose/Lose Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Para-suicidal (extreme cutting, eating disordered)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 Win/Lose Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Individuals engaging in risk taking behaviors (e.g., substance abusing)</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 Limited Destructive Blows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Hostile, aggressive, relationally abusive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Individuals deficient in skills that regulate emotion, cognition, self, behavior and relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Behaviorally disruptive, unusual and/or bizarre acting</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Threat Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Destructive, apparently harmful to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Substance abusing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally troubled</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Forced Loss of Face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals impacted by situational stresses and traumatic events</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Image Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May be psychiatrically symptomatic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sociodisabled is a clinical term, as in a psychotic break. It is not the same as “disabled” under federal law.*

(Sokolow et al., 2014)
Appendix 2 – Classifying Risk (Sokolow et al., 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifying Risk</th>
<th>Intervention Tools to address risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MILD RISK</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disruptive or concerning behavior.</td>
<td>- confrontation by reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student may or may not show signs of distress.</td>
<td>- behavioral contract or treatment plan with student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No threat made or present.</td>
<td>- student conduct response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- evaluate for disability services and/or medical referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODERATE RISK</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More involved or repeated disruption. Behavior more concerning.</td>
<td>- conflict management, mediation, problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likely distressed or low-level disturbance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Possible threat made or present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat is vague and indirect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information about threat or threat itself is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat lacks realism, or is repeated with variations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Content of threat suggests threatener is unlikely to carry it out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELEVATED RISK</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Seriously disruptive incident(s)</td>
<td>- confrontation by reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exhibiting clear distress, more likely disturbance</td>
<td>- evaluate parental/guardian notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat made or present</td>
<td>- evaluate need to request permission from student to receive medical/educational records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat is vague, but direct, or specific but indirect</td>
<td>- consider interim suspension if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likely to be repeated or shared with multiple reporters</td>
<td>- evaluate for disability services and/or medical referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information about threat or threat itself is consistent, plausible or includes increasing detail of a plan (time, place, etc.)</td>
<td>- consider referral or mandated assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat likely to be repeated with consistency (may try to convince listener they are serious)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Content of threat suggests threatener may carry it out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEVERE RISK</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Disturbed or advancing to dysregulation</td>
<td>- possible confrontation by reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat made or present</td>
<td>- parental/guardian notification obligatory unless contraindicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat is vague, but direct, or specific but indirect</td>
<td>- evaluate emergency notification to others (FERPA/HIPAA/Crery)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likely to be repeated or shared with multiple reporters</td>
<td>- no behavioral contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information about threat or threat itself is consistent, plausible or includes specific detail of a plan (time, place, etc.), often with steps already taken</td>
<td>- recommend interim suspension if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat likely to be repeated with consistency</td>
<td>- possible liaison with local police to compare red flags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Content of threat suggests threatener will carry it out (reference to weapons, means, and target).</td>
<td>- deploy mandated assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threatener may appear detached</td>
<td>- evaluate for medical/psychological transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- evaluate for custodial hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- consider voluntary/involuntary medical withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- direct threat eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- law enforcement response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- consider eligibility for involuntary commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTREME RISK</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student is dysregulated (way off baseline) or medically disabled</td>
<td>- possible confrontation by reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat made or present</td>
<td>- parental/guardian notification obligatory unless contraindicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat is concrete (specific or direct)</td>
<td>- evaluate emergency notification to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likely to be repeated or shared with multiple reporters</td>
<td>- no behavioral contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information about threat or threat itself is consistent, plausible or includes specific detail of a plan (time, place, etc.), often with steps already taken</td>
<td>- interim suspension if applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threat may be repeated with consistency</td>
<td>- possible liaison with local police to compare red flags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Content of threat suggests threatener will carry it out (reference to weapons, means, and target).</td>
<td>- too serious for mandated assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Threatener may appear detached</td>
<td>- evaluate for medical/psychological transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- evaluate for custodial hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- initiate voluntary/involuntary medical withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- direct threat eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- law enforcement response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- consider eligibility for involuntary commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 - Workplace Violence Plan - AR3510

Rancho Santiago Community College District is committed to providing a safe work and educational environment that is free of violence and the threat of violence.

Responding to Acts or Threats of Violence

The top priority in this process is effectively handling critical workplace incidents involving actual or potential violence. Violence or the threat of violence against or by any employee of the District or any other person is unacceptable. Immediate action will be taken to stop any act or threat of violence on district property.

A non-employee on District property, who commits or threatens violent behavior, shall be subject to criminal and civil sanctions, including removal from the property, restraining orders and prosecution.

Any District employee or student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action pursuant to the applicable policies and procedures of the District, and may further be subject to such additional civil and criminal sanctions, including but not limited to, restraining orders, criminal charges, and civil law suits, as permitted by law.

Any employee who is the victim of any violent threatening or harassing conduct, any witness to such conduct, or anyone receiving a report of such conduct, whether the perpetrator is a District employee or a non-employee, shall immediately report the incident to his/her supervisor and to
the District Safety Department. In emergency situations, the employee may also call the local law enforcement agency by calling 9-1-1.

No one, acting in good faith, who initiates a complaint or reports an incident under this policy will be subject to retaliation or harassment.

Any employee reported to be a perpetrator will be provided both due process and representation before disciplinary action is taken.

In the event the District fears for the safety of the perpetrator or the safety of others at the scene of the violent act, the District Safety Department, 3-3-3 and the local police, 9-1-1, will be called.

**Definitions of Acts or Threats of Violence:**

- Striking, punching, slapping or assaulting another person.
- Fighting or challenging another person to fight.
- Grabbing, pinching or touching another person in an unwanted way whether sexually or otherwise.
- Engaging in dangerous, threatening or unwanted horseplay.
- Possession, use, or threat of use, of a firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object, including but not limited to any facsimile firearm, knife or explosive, on District property, including parking lots, other exterior premises, District vehicles, or while
engaged in activities for the District in other locations, unless such possession or use is a requirement of the job.

- Threatening harm or harming another person, or any other action or conduct that implies the threat of bodily harm.

- Bringing or possessing any dirk, dagger, ice pick, or knife having a fixed blade longer than 2½ inches upon the grounds, unless the person is authorized to possess such a weapon in the course of his or her employment, has been authorized by a District employee to have the knife, or is a duly appointed peace officer who is engaged in the performance of his or her duties.

- RSCCD’s employees, students, and volunteers, or any visitor or other third party attending a sporting, entertainment, or educational event, or visiting an academic or administrative office building, or dining facility, are further prohibited from carrying, maintaining, or storing a firearm or weapon on any college facility, even if the owner has a valid permit, when it is not required by the individual’s job, or in accordance with the relevant RSCCD Student Code of Conduct. This prohibition applies to all events on campus where people congregate in any public or outdoor areas. Any such individual who is reported or discovered to possess a firearm or weapon on College property will be asked to remove it immediately. Failure to comply may result in a student conduct referral and/or arrest, or an employee disciplinary action and/or arrest.

The following groups are exempted from this regulation: Employees may possess a firearm or weapon only if the employee is:
1. Required to possess the firearm or weapon as a part of the employee’s job duties with
   RSCCD;

2. Using the firearm or weapon in conjunction with training received by the employee in
   order to perform the responsibilities of his/her job with the College.


Threat Assessment Management Teams (TAMT)

Each college shall establish a committee with responsibility for education, threat assessment and
violence prevention on campus. The core membership of the team will be these positions:

- Lieutenant District Safety & Security (Chair)
- Associate Dean of Student Development (Co-Chair)
- School psychologist / Mental Health Services
- Continuing Education Dean
- Disabled Student Services and Program Specialist

or as needed others that could assist the committee with completing its work. The team is
charged with using its training and judgment to assess, intervene, and follow policies for
individuals whose behaviors may present a threat to the safety of the campus community as
appropriate; working with law enforcement and mental health agencies to expedite assessment
and intervention; and developing comprehensive fact-based assessments of students, employees,
or other individuals who may present a threat to the College. The TAMT is empowered to take
timely and appropriate action, consistent with the judgment of the team, college policy and applicable law even in the event not all members are present.

Each TAMT shall publish annual guidance to faculty, staff and students regarding the following:

a. how to recognize and report aberrant or potentially harmful behavior that may represent a threat to the community;
b. policies and procedures for the assessment of individuals whose behavior may present a threat;
c. appropriate means of intervention with such individuals;
d. college/system action to resolve potential threats; and to whom on the college’s threat assessment team, or through what method, potentially threatening behavior should be reported

Employee and student responsibilities should include:

a. Administrators, faculty members, staff members, and students should take any threat or violent act seriously and report acts of violence or threats to the appropriate authorities as set forth in this policy.
b. Department heads, directors, and supervisors are also responsible for communicating the policy to all employees under their supervision, overseeing facility safety, identifying and providing violence prevention training to employees as appropriate, and ensuring that all employees are aware of how to report potential threats;
c. Reporting incidents or threats of violence to their immediate supervisor, Human Resource Office, campus Safety & Security, Threat Assessment Team members, or other designated individuals or offices by stated college policy. This can be completed in person, via telephone, or by using the online Maxient reporting tool.

d. Providing Human Resources and the immediate supervisor, or a college’s Safety & Security office, with a copy of any Protective Orders from a court which lists the College Campus / Office as protected areas so that appropriate enforcement activities occur.

e. No person who, in good faith, reports threatening or otherwise troubling behavior in accordance with this policy will be subject to retaliation.

Human Resources will coordinate employee-related preventive measures, including conducting criminal conviction checks in accordance with RSCCD policy, providing awareness programs to new employees, coordinating referrals to the employee assistance program, advising employees and managers, making referrals to the TAT / BAT and providing case management, providing conflict resolution services, and coordinating with other college and community resources to support victims of violence.

Student Services will coordinate student-related preventive measures including training for psychologists, student employees, and students through other education and training methods. The Associate Dean of Student Development is responsible for responding to and adjudicating violations of the College Student Code of Conduct policy. The Associate Dean of Student Development or Lieutenant, District Safety and Security staff will coordinate and convene the
Threat Assessment Team, the goal of which is to coordinate support services and administrative response to crises threats or concerns involving students, make referrals to the Crisis Intervention Teams, and provide case management.

Procedures for reporting or responding to threats by any person:

Any individual who believes there is an immediate danger to the health or safety of any member of the college community should call the District Safety & Security or local law enforcement (911) immediately.

Individuals should call the District Safety & Security (714-564-6330) to notify the Threat Assessment Team about a concerning behavior or situation observed. Members of staff or faculty can make use of the MAXIENT online reporting tool, which is available on everyone’s desk top computer.

EMERGENCIES OR PERSONS OF CONCERN: Students, faculty, staff, and visitors may report emergencies, criminal actions and suspicious behavior to the District Safety & Security (714-564-6330) or by dialing 333 from any campus phone or by activating the blue emergency phones located on campus. If “911” is dialed from a cellular phone or pay phone, the call will be routed to an off-campus police department or dispatch center. If this should occur, the caller should describe the nature of the emergency to the dispatcher. In order to avoid this type of delay, campus patrons may consider programming cellular phones to the District Safety & Security (714-564-6330). All non-emergency calls to the District Safety & Security should also be directed to (714-564-6330).
DISTRESSED EMPLOYEES: Concerns about the behavior of, or statements made by RSCCD employees, full or part time, including faculty employees, administrative or confidential employees, classified may be reported to Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources at 714-480-7490. Matters needing immediate attention should be directed to the District Safety & Security at 714-480-7331.

DISTRESSED STUDENTS: The Associate Dean of Student Development Office, or Safety & Security out of normal office hours, takes reports of students who may be in distress. The Associate Dean of Student Development reporting system allows faculty members and critical staff members to submit information about a student whose exhibited behaviors or statements may be of concern (in or outside of the classroom). Contact may be made by phone to the respective campus Associate Dean or the MAXIENT reporting system available on the computer desktop of every network computer. Matters needing immediate attention should be directed to District Safety & Security at 714-480-7331.

Legal References: Cal/OSHA; Labor Code Sections 6300 et seq. Title 8, Section 3203 Code of Civil Procedure Section 527.8 Penal Code Sections 273.6; 626.9; 626.10; and 12021

Responsible Manager: Chief, District Safety and Security

Revised TBC
Threat Assessment Process – refer to the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool

Threat Occurs, Imminent. Warning signs reported, or Concerning behaviors observed.
(Signs of Distress, Disturbance, and Dysregulation / Medically Disabled)
Law Enforcement should be contacted ANY TIME information suggests the need for immediate law enforcement assistance

Faculty, staff, or Safety & Security report concerns

3rd Party reports concerns

Reported by telephone / online / in person / 3rd party

Threat Team Assembles and Evaluates Level of Concern
- NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool
  - Classifying Risk
  - Nine Levels of Aggression
  - Intervention tools to address risk as classified

Mild / Moderate Risk
- Consider Confrontation by reporter.
- Continued monitoring / refer for counseling.
- Behavioral Contract.
- Possible Medical Referral.

Moderate / Elevated Risk
- Counseling / Behavioral Contract.
- Consider mandated medical / psychological referral.
- Consider parental / guardian notification.
- Consider requesting medical / educational history.
- Suspension if applicable

Severe / Extreme
- Parental / Guardian notification?
- Evaluate emergency notification to others (FERPA/CLERY/HIPAA considerations).
- Suspension if applicable
- Law Enforcement involvement.
- Hold for Medical / Psychological assessment.

Concern / Condition is Stabilized – Develop Action and Support Plan.
- Action & Support Plan is implemented based on the level of concern
  - Respective Notifications should be made to potential targets.
  - Set action plan for student recommencing studies.
    - Plan for re-entry
    - Continue monitoring

Document all concerns and action plans
- Document all the concerns, investigations steps taken, and Action Plans
  - Have central storage of information

Ongoing Monitoring
- Re-engage the Threat Assessment Plan as necessary
- Reevaluate the whole process as necessary.
Appendix 4 – Board Policy

BP 3510 Workplace Violence Plan

Reference:

The Board is committed to providing a district work and learning environment that is free of violence and the threat of violence. The Board's priority is the effective handling of critical workplace violence incidents, including those dealing with actual or potential violence.

The Chancellor shall establish administrative procedures that assure that employees are informed regarding what actions will be considered violent acts, and requiring any employee who is the victim of any violent conduct in the workplace, or is a witness to violent conduct, to report the incident, and that employees are informed that there will be no retaliation for such reporting.

Revised: August 19, 2013 (Previously BP4139 and BP3522)

References Updated: May 18, 2015
Appendix 5 – Threat Referral Form

Threat Assessment Referral

This Threat Assessment Referral form is designed to help RSCCD Safety Officers report a student/staff who may be displaying behaviors which are concerning. Officers should meet with the reporting person and then forward the form to your supervisor.

**If this is an immediate life threatening situation,**

*Please call 911 for emergency services.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student/staff named below is involved in a situation of concern - one that involves a threat, a violent act or other potentially dangerous behavior or behavior which is causing concern. Our college has the obligation and responsibility to investigate any situation that may be dangerous for the student, faculty and/or staff.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student/Staff Name &amp; ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date, Time, Location and Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor or Staff Reporting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please complete the following sections with as much information as possible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the incident or situation. Include whether or not you were involved directly with the student/staff. Please attach any evidence of the concerns (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are your concerns about the person’s potential for violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. No concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Some concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Moderate concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. High concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the student/staff communicated any recent threats, ideas of violence, wishes or intentions of harm to any person, animal or property (at school, home or in the community)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, describe the threat and how the threat was expressed:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the student/staff expressed a desire or plan to hurt himself/herself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Yes (has a plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No (does not have a plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes to either, explain the details of the desire and/or plan:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If this involves the potential for imminent danger please follow emergency policy and procedures immediately.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>If yes, describe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the student/staff discuss or reference interests, fascinations or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identifications with violence (especially vindictive or revengeful acts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of violence through movies, music, video games, literature or internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>search)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, describe:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the student/staff become increasingly focused or agitated about a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>particular issue (such as social problems, family issues, boyfriend/girlfriend, injustice, bullying, revenge, etc.)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, describe:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the student/staff displayed any recent mood or behavior changes?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the student/staff experienced recent losses of any kind?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If yes, describe:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there certain situations that agitate the student/staff or escalate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the student/staff violent actions, ideas, or communications?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, describe:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the student/staff attitudes toward violence and the justification to use it or not?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the student/staff view himself/herself?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Leader</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Follower</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Victim</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Loner</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Outcast</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the student/staff have a history of physical, sexual or emotional trauma?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If yes, describe:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there drug/alcohol concerns with the student/staff?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, describe:</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the student/staff positive relationships, if known?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Family, best friend, group at school, church, community or private organizations, pets, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>What relationship do you have with the student/staff currently?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current academic or work performance, this student/staff is:</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Failing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Doing marginal work</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Average work</td>
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<td>4. Above average work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your overall risk assessment of the student/staff behavior:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. High concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moderate concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Some concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Low concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other concerns not addressed in the questionnaire:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Observations and Notes:**


Safety Officer: ____________________________ Date: ___/___/___
Lieutenant: _____________________________ Date: ___/___/___
Appendix 6 – Threat Assessment Folder

IN GENERAL

WHEN RESPONDING TO STUDENTS OF CONCERN

- Safety First: The welfare of students and the campus community is the top priority when a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior. The most effective means of preventing suicide and violence is provided through professional help and follow-up care.
- Trust your instincts: If you experience any sense of unease about a student, it is important to pay attention to these inner signals. Seek consultation from the department chair, your superior, or the Threat Assessment Team. Promptly report safety concerns and conduct code violations.
- Listen sensitively and carefully: Distressed students need to be seen, heard, and helped. Many students will have trouble articulating their real concerns and feelings. Don’t be afraid to ask students directly of they are under the influences of drugs or alcohol, feel confused, or have thoughts of harming themselves or others.
- Be proactive: Engage students early on, setting limits on disruptive or self-destructive behavior. Consult the Student Code of Conduct and/or the class schedule to inform students in writing of standards of behavior and consequences for campus classrooms and its possible consequences for disruptive behavior. devote time to training them in the information in the class schedule or at www.sccollege.edu/studentServices/StudentDiscipline.
- Avoid escalating: Distressed students can be sensitive and easily provoked. Avoid threatening, humiliating, and intimidating responses. Use a non-confrontational approach. Help them connect with the necessary campus resources for assistance.
- No excuses: Disability or cultural norms are not considered legitimate excuses for disruptive behavior on campus.
- Help them get help: Be available. Show interest and offer support. Refer the students to campus departments or offices that have necessary expertise and personnel to help them. Use one of the Useful Phone Numbers on the front of this folder.
- Work as a team: Share information and consult with the appropriate college officials to coordinate care for the student, including whom to reach out to parents. Safeguard students’ privacy rights. Serious or persistent inappropriate behavior should always be reported to the TAT and may result in misconduct charges.

KNOW THE CODE

There is a difference between students’ behavior that is a “concern” versus behavior that is a “violation” of the Standards of Student Conduct, also known as the “Code of Conduct”.

Students who are enrolled in RCCCD courses located at SCC, as well as other locations with whom the district is affiliated, must adhere to the Code of Conduct or be at risk of receiving disciplinary action should they be found in violation.

All students, including those with a disability, are held accountable for ensuring they remain within the limits of discipline policies. The right to an environment that is safe and conducive to learning belongs to all students, therefore all are responsible for its security.

If a student’s behavior is disruptive to the learning process, faculty and staff are to report such conditions to the Associated Town of Student Development at extension 8962.

Should a student’s behavior become menacing, this may be a case that transcends discipline and is instead one of a mental health matter. Use your best judgment and contact either SCC Security at 84760 or 911 if you believe the situation is one of imminent danger.

For detailed information regarding the Code of Conduct go to:
www.sccollege.edu/studentServices/StudentDiscipline

SCC THREAT ASSESSMENT

See something? Say something. DO SOMETHING.

DISRUPTIVE OR DISTRESSED?

DISRUPTIVE STUDENT
A student whose conduct is clearly and intentionally reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening, including self-harmful behavior.

To get help
If you are concerned for your or others’ safety due to a student’s disruptive or threatening behavior, call 911 or the Safety and Security Department.

Report incident to:
- Student Conduct office
- Safety and Security
For Consultation or Emergency Counseling
- SCC Psychologist
- Crisis Intervention Team
- SCC Safety and Security

EMERGENCY:
Life Threatening Situations
From any landline or cell phone: 911

NON EMERGENCY:
Safety & Security: (714) 628-4733
- Student Health Center: (714) 628-4733

If a student is causing a disruption but does not pose a threat:
- Ensure your safety in the environment
- Use a calm, non-confrontational approach to defuse/mitigate the situation.
- Set limits by explaining how the behavior is inappropriate.
- If behavior continues, ask the student to stop and warn him or her that official action may be taken.
- If the behavior persists ask the student to leave. Inform him or her that refusal to leave may be a separate violation subject to discipline.
- Immediately report the incident to the Student Conduct office and Safety & Security

DISTRESSED STUDENT
A student with persistent behaviors such as:
- Unusually anxious
- Sad
- Irritable
- Withdrawn
- Continued
- Lack motivation and/or concentration
- Seeks constant attention
- Demonstrates bizarre or erratic behavior
- Expresses suicidal thoughts

To get help
Consultation and Referrals
- Health Center
- Safety and Security
- Crisis Intervention Team
- Counseling Center
- Administrative/Student Conduct
- Student conduct office

Useful Phone Numbers

EMERGENCY:
Life Threatening Situations
- From any landline or cell phone: 911
- Safety & Security from school: extension 333

NON EMERGENCY:
Safety & Security: (714) 628-4733
- Student Health Center: (714) 628-4733

If a student is causing a disruption but does not pose a threat:
- Ensure your safety in the environment
- Use a calm, non-confrontational approach to defuse/mitigate the situation.
- Set limits by explaining how the behavior is inappropriate.
- If behavior continues, ask the student to stop and warn him or her that official action may be taken.
- If the behavior persists ask the student to leave. Inform him or her that refusal to leave may be a separate violation subject to discipline.
- Immediately report the incident to the Student Conduct office and Safety & Security

Security is Everyone’s Responsibility

Appendix 7 Implementation Checklist
# Threat Assessment Management Teams Implementation Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Task</th>
<th>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DATE COMPLETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policies and Administration Regulations</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Write additions for the Board Policy on Workplace Violence (BP 3510).</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Write additions to the Administration Regulation (AR 3510).</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Consult with interested parties around amendments to the Board Policy and Administrative Regulation:</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Student Services,</td>
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<td>- Mental health Services</td>
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<td>- Disabled Services and Programs Specialists (DSPS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Safety and Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Submit amended Board Policy for approval to Board of Trustees for discussion.</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Submit Administrative Regulation to District Council for discussion and approval.</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Share new Board policy and Administrative Regulation with campus communities and students.</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Identify and Notify the Core membership of TAMD</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Working with local campus administrators identify the core membership of the TAMD</td>
<td>Campus Lieutenant</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Assemble the TAMD and inform them of their responsibilities and the purpose of the new teams.</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Review Executive summary of project and PowerPoint presentation with membership</td>
<td>Campus Lieutenants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Review policy definition and administrative regulation with core members.</td>
<td>Campus Lieutenants</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Examine challenges posed by threat assessment and associated intervention and managing of individuals.</td>
<td>Campus Lieutenants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The team should consider education programs to raise awareness across the campus community bearing in mind campus culture, diversity and disabled communities.</td>
<td>Campus Lieutenants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training and Processes for core membership of TAMD</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Develop a training schedule for the core membership of the teams:</td>
<td>Chief Winter in conjunction with NaBITA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation Task</td>
<td>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</td>
<td>DATE COMPLETED</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review of the NaBITA assessment tool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Application of the NaBITA assessment tool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Effective case notes and record keeping.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• FERPA and HIPAA requirements and restrictions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Identify which employees must be trained:</td>
<td>Campus Lieutenants and Chief Winter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Responsible employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Confidential employee</td>
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<td>• Those likely to receive reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Investigators</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Other employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Provide easy access to policy to students, employees, third parties, and guests,</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>(i.e. website, posters, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Include policy with new student information.</td>
<td>Chief Winter / Student Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Train and retrain students and employees on policy at orientation, campus-wide</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>trainings, and other opportunities when possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Track policy distribution and trainings on Policy</td>
<td>Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Develop protocols for initiating an investigation without the reporter’s consent,</td>
<td>Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>including:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identifying who is responsible for making the decision to go forward without</td>
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<tr>
<td>consent</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Advising reporter of decision to go forward without consent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Develop assessment procedure to determine whether law enforcement must be</td>
<td>Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>notified of potential crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Develop procedures to make known and implement prompt interim measures and</td>
<td>Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>assistance from both campus and community resources upon learning of concerning</td>
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<td>behavior, including:</td>
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<td>• Counseling and mental health services</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Health and medical services</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Victim’s advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Legal assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Academic arrangements</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Living arrangements</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Transportation options</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Working arrangements</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Develop protocols to deal with third parties, including:</td>
<td>Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Requests from third parties (parents, fellow students, etc.) to act on behalf of</td>
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<tr>
<td>a student</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appropriate steps to take when allegations are against someone who is not a</td>
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<tr>
<td>student or employee of institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Incorporating information in contracts and joint venture agreements consistent</td>
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<td>with institution’s obligations to act if</td>
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### Implementation Task

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<tr>
<th>Implementation Task</th>
<th>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>there is concerning behavior by a vendor or contractor,</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Procedures to follow after report of concerning behavior, including</td>
<td>Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The importance of preserving evidence for criminal prosecutions or protective orders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How and to whom to report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Law enforcement options</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The rights of victims regarding various protective order</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Specific Training for Safety and Security

1. Train Campus Safety & Security on:  
   • Concerning Behavior – what to look for.  
   • Threat Assessment policies.  
   • Administrative Regulations.  
   • Use of the Threat Assessment Referral form.  
   • ‘See Something, Say Something’ principles.  

2. Make sure Campus Safety and Security are aware of:  
   • The NaBITA assessment tool  
   • Internal mechanisms for reporting and convening the TAMT.  

### Marketing Strategies

1. Identify marketing strategies for the launch of TAMT  
   • Following on from NaBITA training use their suggestions for marketing TAMT.  
   • Respective teams should work on message they want to convey with launch of the TAMT.  
   • Work with RSCCD graphic designer and publications to produce leaflets, posters and web site for TAMT.  
   • Make sure leaflets and other marketing materials are suitable for all the diverse population of our campuses.  

2. Advise students, faculty and staff of the “See something, Say something” campaign.  

   • Attend student orientation, faculty and staff meetings,  
   • Leaflets and posters on campus.  
   • Online campaign by email.  

4. During Flex week for faculty make sure there are opportunities to speak with and educate faculty on the new processes and procedures.  

5. Provide notices of policy, process and procedures in areas where they are easily located, using language that is easily understood and distributed widely  

6. Include general topics in all training:  
   • Threat Assessment policy or policies, including key definitions, covered behaviors, interim measures, sanctions  
   • Contact for Threat Assessment Management Team(s)  

   | Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter | Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter | Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter | Campus TAMTs and Chief Winter | Campus TAMTs | Campus TAMTs |
### Implementation Task

<table>
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<th>Implementation Task</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advising students and other Complainants on how to report</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Obligations regarding reporting and confidentiality issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Risk reduction, warning signs and how to recognize concerning behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Covered activities include both on-campus and off-campus activities</td>
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</table>

### Communication Strategies

1. Adopt and publicize reporting procedures with prompt clear timelines and equitable procedures
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 

2. Review provisions for confidential reporting, who will evaluate requests for confidentiality
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 

3. Develop protocol for advising administration on campus regarding the information and actions.
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 

4. Review any other legal requirements to notify persons or campus of threats.
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 

5. Ensure efforts will alleviate continuing effects or threatening environment
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 

6. Consider how to process complaints during school breaks and notify persons or campus.
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 

7. If appropriate, outline remedies—discipline, counseling, remedies for person of concern and others:
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 
     - Campus escorts
     - Separate classes and activities
     - Counseling, medical and academic support
     - Adjustment of academic and other requirements including Complainant’s conduct

8. Consider other campus-wide remedies as necessary, including:
   - **PERSON RESPONSIBLE**: Campus TAMTs
   - **DATE COMPLETED**: 
     - Training or re-training employees in proper response
     - Education and policy statements
     - Bystander intervention programs
     - Campus surveys