INTRODUCTION
These materials offer a starting point when addressing possible school-violence, but are not intended to be a script or to be implemented in rote fashion. At all times it is expected that school personnel will use professional judgment in assessing and addressing potential threats to safety. It is essential to use “warning signs” and other materials responsibly. The processes described herein offer an opportunity to help maintain school safety by identifying and referring individuals who need help. They are not intended to encourage school-wide student profiling, labeling, or other stigmatizing of individuals.

☐ In the event of an IMMEDIATE danger:
  • Call Law Enforcement or 911
  • Take immediate action to secure or isolate the individual posing a threat, and prevent access to potential weapons (if known)
  • Take immediate action to move others from harm’s way (in immediate vicinity of event)
  • Initiate Lockdown procedures

☐ If Warning Signs are observed, but there is not an imminent risk:
  • Have individual or team observing Warning Signs complete a Threat Assessment Referral Form (if not completed already)
  • Activate appropriate members of Emergency Management Team
  • Interview the individual under concern
  • Notify 911, as indicated
  • Notify and consult with the Board Attorney, as indicated
  • Notify District Support Team, Central Office
  • Contact parents or legal guardian and obtain a release of information to exchange information between agencies
  • Review Warning Signs, Risk Factors, Precipitating Events, Stabilizing Factors by completing Threat Assessment Worksheet
  • Determine level of risk using Risk For Harm Categories
  • Develop an action plan according to the determined level of risk
  • Document referrals, actions taken, follow-up plans, etc.
  • Develop plan to monitor student’s response to actions taken, a “return to school plan” and to review new information as it becomes available

☐ Additional steps for our school/facility (if any):
  •
  •
  •
  •
  •
Threat Assessment Referral Form

If you become concerned that an individual may pose a risk for harming himself or others complete this form by stating your concern, checking the Warning Signs of which you are aware, and explaining items checked. Turn it directly to the school’s principal or designee. In an Imminent safety threat, notify principal immediately and take immediate action to secure or isolate the individual, and move other students from harm’s way.

Individual under concern_____________________________ Date of birth________________
Person(s) completing this form__________________________ Room/phone________________
School_________________________________________________ Date of referral__________

I.  Reason for Referral (explain your concerns)__________________________________________

II.  Imminent Warning Signs (when an individual displays Imminent Warning Signs; take immediate action to maintain safety, mobilize law enforcement & appropriate school personnel)

☐ 1. Possession and/or use of firearm or other weapon  ☐ 4. Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons
☐ 2. Suicide threats or statements  ☐ 5. Severe destruction of property
☐ 3. Detailed threats of lethal violence (time, place, method)  ☐ 6. Serious physical fighting with peers, family, others

III.  Early Warning Signs (mark items, then elaborate below)

☐ 7. Social withdrawal or lacking interpersonal skills  ☐ 18. Intolerance for differences, prejudicial attitudes
☐ 8. Excessive feelings of isolation & being alone  ☐ 19. Drug & alcohol use
☐ 9. Excessive feelings of rejection  ☐ 20. Affiliation with gangs
☐ 10. Being a victim of violence, teasing, bullying  ☐ 21. Inappropriate access, possession, use of firearms
☐ 11. Feelings of being picked on  ☐ 22. Threats of violence (direct or indirect)
☐ 12. Low school interest, poor academic performance  ☐ 23. Talking about weapons or bombs
☐ 14. Uncontrolled anger  ☐ 25. Seeing self as victim of a particular individual
☐ 15. Patterns of impulsive & chronic, hitting & bullying  ☐ 26. General statements of distorted, bizarre thoughts
☐ 16. History of discipline problems  ☐ 27. Feelings of being persecuted
☐ 17. History of violent, aggressive & antisocial behavior across settings (i.e., fighting, fire setting, cruelty to animals, vandalism, etc., especially begun before age 12)  ☐ 28. Obsession with particular person
              ☐ 29. Depression
              ☐ 30. Marked change in appearance

IV.  Explain checked items; describe known Precipitating Events (use back if needed)

__________________________________________________________________________

V.  Turn in this form and any materials you may have which may be necessary to conduct a preliminary risk assessment (i.e., writings, notes, printed e-mail or Internet materials, books, drawings, confiscated items, etc.).

FOR OFFICE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM USE:
Date Received:_______School Case Manager assigned to follow referral:________________________
Threat Assessment Worksheet (2 pages)

Coupled with the Referral Form (which addresses Warning Signs), this outline addresses Risk Factors, Precipitating Events, and Stabilizing Factors. The worksheet is designed to provide a concise way to organize known concerns when conducting a preliminary risk assessment and to list relevant school and agency involvement.

Individual under concern __________________________ Date of birth __________________________
Person(s) completing this form __________________________
Parent/legal guardian name __________________________ Phone __________________________
School __________________________ Date of referral __________________________

I. School & Agency Involvement (past or present) To determine if safety concerns have been noted by others. List name, contact information & date of involvement if known:

School Law Enforcement or Discipline Referrals __________________________
Special Education, 504, or Under Consideration __________________________
School-based Mental Health or Social Services __________________________
Family Resource and Youth Services Center __________________________
Community Social Services __________________________
Police, Juvenile Court, Probation Services __________________________
Community Mental Health Services __________________________
Current or prior institutionalization or foster care placement __________________________
Other __________________________
Comments/concerns expressed by any of the above __________________________

II. Risk Factors (indicate if Observed, Documented, or Suspected; circle O, D, S, respectively)

In possession or has access to weapons (O, D, S) __________________________
History of impulsive violent or other antisocial behavior (O, D, S) __________________________
Child abuse/neglect (O, D, S) __________________________
Isolation or social withdrawal (O, D, S) __________________________
Domestic violence or other family conflict (O, D, S) __________________________
Depression, mental illness, medical ailment (O, D, S) (list current medications) __________________________
Substance abuse or drug trafficking (O, D, S) __________________________
Fire setting (O, D, S) __________________________
II. Risk Factors (cont.) (indicate Observed, Documented, or Suspected, O, D, S, respectively)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Observed (O), Documented (D), Suspected (S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bed Wetting</td>
<td>O, D, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruelty to animals</td>
<td>O, D, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupation with real or fictional violence</td>
<td>O, D, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated exposure to violence (desensitization)</td>
<td>O, D, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang involvement or affiliation</td>
<td>O, D, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>O, D, S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Precipitating Events (recent triggers which may influence violence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent public humiliation/embarrassment (whether instigated by adult or peer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyfriend/girlfriend relationship difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death, loss or other traumatic event</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Highly publicized violent act (such as a school shooting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family fight or conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recent victim of teasing, bullying or abuse</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Stabilizing Factors (factors which may minimize or mitigate likelihood of violence)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective parental involvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved with mental health; list provider or agency (if known)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support networks (church, school, social organizations)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Close alliance with a supportive adult (counselor, mentor, teacher, minister, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive, constructive peer group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate outlets for anger or other strong feelings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive focus on the future or appropriate future events</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Category of Risk (Determine a Risk for Harm Category based on available information)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Category</th>
<th>Imminent - High - Moderate - Minor - Low/No (date &amp; time of determination)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NOTE: RFH Categories represent a distinct moment in time and may change from hour to hour, and day to day. Following an initial assessment, it is essential to monitor on-going status, to reassess level of risk according to new information, and to document significant changes.
RISK (or Threat) ASSESSMENT CONCEPTS

I. **Warning Signs**: A sign or indicator that causes concern for safety.
   A. **Imminent Warning Sign**: A sign which indicates that an individual is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self or others. Imminent Warning Signs call for immediate action by school authorities and law enforcement.
   B. **Early Warning Signs**: Certain behavioral and emotional signs that, when viewed in a context, may signal a troubled individual. Early Warning Signs call for a referral to a school's Threat Assessment Team for assessment.

II. **Risk Factors**: Historical or background conditions which may influence the potential for violence. These factors may include family history of violence, prior antisocial behavior, mental health background, and various social factors.

III. **Precipitating Events**: Recent events or “triggers” which may increase potential for violence. These factors may include recent family conflict, rejection from a significant peer, serious conflict with a teacher, etc.

IV. **Stabilizing Factors**: Support systems or networks in place for an individual which may decrease the likelihood for violence. These factors may include effective parental relationships, positive peer groups, strong relationship with a teacher, counselor or therapist, etc.

V. **Threat Assessment**: The process of reviewing Warning Signs, Risk Factors, Precipitating Events, and Stabilizing Factors, to determine the Risk for Harm Category and develop an appropriate plan of action.
RISK FOR HARM CATEGORIES

Risk For Harm Categories provide a way for schools to determine and assign a level of risk based on a review of Warning Signs, Risk Factors, Precipitating Events, and Stabilizing Factors. Based on level of risk, the Emergency Management Team develops action plans to maintain safety and to help an individual gain access to needed services or interventions. The descriptors following each Category are not an exhaustive list, but are provided as a frame of reference.

**Category 1: Imminent Risk for Harm.**
An individual is, or is very close to, behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self or others. Examples include: detailed threats of lethal violence, suicide threats, possession and/or use of firearms or other weapons, serious physical fighting, etc. Most of these individuals will qualify for immediate hospitalization or arrest. Responses may include: immediate action to secure individual, arrest or hospitalization, facility lock down, security response, parent notification, background or records check, “return to school plans,” ongoing case management.

**Category 2: High Risk for Harm.**
An individual has displayed significant Early Warning Signs, has significant existing Risk Factors and/or Precipitating Events, and has few Stabilizing Factors. May not qualify for hospitalization or arrest at present, but requires referrals for needed services and active case management. Responses may include: immediate action to secure individual, security response, parent notification, psychological consult/evaluation, background check.

**Category 3: Moderate Risk for Harm.**
An individual has displayed some Early Warning Signs and may have existing Risk Factors or recent Precipitating Events, but also may have some Stabilizing Factors. There may be evidence of internal emotional distress (depression, social withdrawal, etc.) or of intentional infliction of distress on others (bullying, intimidation, seeking to cause fear, etc.). Responses may include: security response, parent notification, psychological consult/evaluation, background or records check, ongoing case management.

**Category 4: Minor Risk for Harm.**
An individual has displayed minor Early Warning Signs, but assessment reveals little history of serious Risk Factors or dangerous behavior. Stabilizing Factors appear to be reasonably well established. There may be evidence of the unintentional infliction of distress on others (insensitive remarks, “teasing” taken too far, etc.). Responses may include: review of school records, parent notification, psychological consult, security response.

**Category 5: Low/No Risk for Harm.**
Upon assessment it appears there is insufficient evidence for any risk for harm. Situations under this category can include misunderstandings, poor decision making, false accusations from peers (seeking to get other peers in trouble), etc. Responses may include: investigation of the situation, notification and involvement of others as needed, etc.
Brief Interview Outline
for Individual Under Concern

When interviewing an individual about safety concerns, one method is to ask questions which move from general introduction, to fact finding, to recognition of concerns, to assessing support networks, to developing an outline for next steps. The following questions are not intended to be a scripted interview, but provide a sample structure for the kinds of questions which may need to be asked. Individuals using this outline are encouraged to use their professional judgment and experience, and to broaden or alter the questions. Note, in general it is good to avoid “yes or no” questions.

1. “Seems like you’ve been having a hard time lately, what’s going on?” (to establish rapport and trust and to open dialog in a non-threatening way)

2. “What is your understanding of why you have been asked to come to the office?” (to review factual events)

3. “What is your understanding of why school staff are concerned?” (to determine if student is aware of effect behavior has on others)

4. “What has been going on recently with you at school?” (to look into possible precipitating events such as peer conflict, student/teacher interactions, failing grades, etc.; follow appropriate leads)

5. “How are things going with your family?” (to look into events such as recent moves, divorce, deaths or losses, conflict)

6. “What else is going on with you?” (to look into events outside of school such as community unrest, threats, police involvement, medical issues, etc.)

7. “Who do you have to talk to or assist you with this situation?” (to determine what supports or stabilizing factors may be available or in place such as mental health professionals, peer groups, family supports, church groups, etc.)

8. “Given (whatever is going on), what are you planning to do?” or, “What are you thinking about doing?” (follow-up on appropriate leads, including the level of detail in stated plans, ability to carry out plans, etc.) (NOTE: If there is an IMMINENT RISK take immediate action to maintain safety by contacting school security and/or 911).

9. Close with a statement that describes short term next steps (i.e., “I’ll need to contact your parents to talk about...” or, “You will be suspended for two days, then we’ll...”). Try to determine student’s affect or mood prior to his/her departure, and alert others if necessary.
Assessment Questions for Mental Health Professionals

Individual under concern_________________________ Date of birth____________
Parent/legal guardian name_______________________ Phone________________
Mental health professional’s name_________________ Phone________________
Person(s) requesting information__________________ Phone________________
School name____________________________________ Date of referral________

The following outline is provided by schools to mental health professionals when referrals are made for “Risk for Harm” assessments. In order to serve students who may pose a safety risk to themselves or others, it is essential that the child’s school has appropriate information about his/her potential for dangerous behavior.

Suggested use: School staff should complete this form and provide it (with accompanying materials as appropriate) to the mental health professional who will be conducting an evaluation. The mental health professional should then assess the concerns and address them in a report back to the school.

I. Brief description of reason for current referral, and a listing of any items which may accompany this referral (Threat assessment Worksheet, student notes, printed e-mails, writing assignments, relevant documentation from other sources, etc.):

II. Requested information (please address these questions in your report to the school):

1. What is this individual’s understanding regarding the serious nature of their recent actions (behavior, oral or written communications, gestures, etc.)?
2. What is their understanding of the distress, harm, fear, etc., caused by their actions?
3. What is this individual’s understanding of the inappropriateness of their actions?
4. What is your understanding of the causes of this individual’s actions?
5. What, if anything, is planned to address these issues and prevent their recurrence?
6. At this time, what level of risk is this individual (low, moderate, high or critical)?
7. If or when this individual returns to school, what may school staff, parents or others need to know to assist and support the student and take action when needed?
8. Other question(s):__________________________________________

__________________________________________