


**PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH:
ENHANCING BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT &
MANAGEMENT TO PREVENT TARGETED VIOLENCE**

GENE DEISINGER, PH.D.
PRINCIPAL & CO-FOUNDER



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Twitter: @GDeisinger
@SigmaTMA

Facebook: SIGMA Threat Management Associates
www.SigmaTMA.com

GENE DEISINGER, PH.D.

SIGMA THREAT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES, LLC


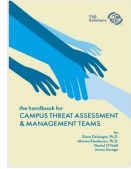
- Principal & Co-Founder
- Virginia Center for School & Campus Safety
- Threat Management Consultant

Education, Training & Certifications:

- Ph.D., Counseling Psychology;
- Licensed Psychologist (IA);
- Certified Health Service Provider in Psychology;
- Certified Law Enforcement Officer (Retired);

Experience:

- Virginia Tech (Retired 12/2014)
 - Deputy Chief of Police
 - Director, Threat Management Services
- Iowa State University
 - Primary Threat Manager 1994-2009
- Lead Author:
 - The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams (2008)*

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TARGETED VIOLENCE

Targeted Violence: "Incident of violence where a known or knowable assailant chooses a particular target(s) prior to a violent attack."

Typically involves:

- Grievance
- Expression of grievance and use of violence
- Research & Planning
- Preparation
- Implementation

Source: FBI (2017). Making Prevention of Violence a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks

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TARGETED VIOLENCE

Examples of Targeted violence:

- Grievance-based violence
 - Workplace
 - Schools & Campuses
 - Houses of Worship / Faith communities
 - Government agencies
 - Public figures / law enforcement officers
- Suicide in public location
- Stalking
- Domestic / Intimate partner violence
- Public mass violence
- Lone actor Terrorism / Violent extremism

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INSIDER THREATS

- Espionage / Counter-Intelligence
- Theft
 - Material
 - Intellectual property
- Disruption / Sabotage
- Suicide
- Targeted violence
 - Grievance-based violence
 - Stalking
 - Domestic / Dating violence
 - Mass violence
 - Terrorism / Violent extremism

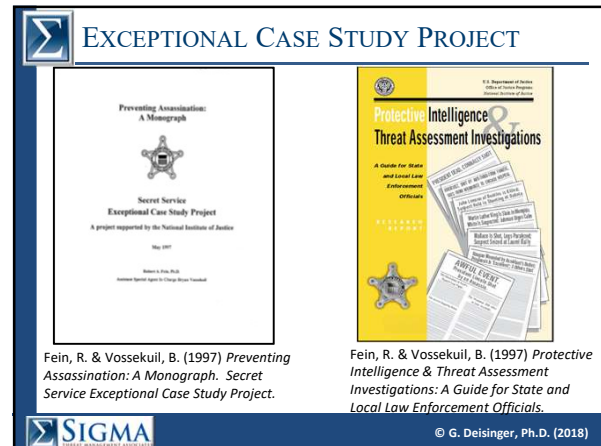
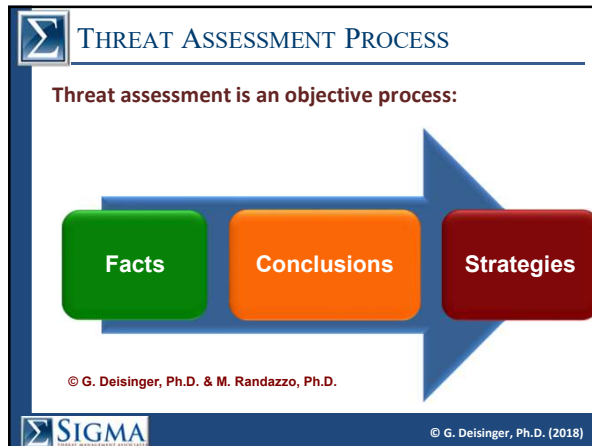
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THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

A systematic process that is designed to:

- IDENTIFY** situations/persons of concern
- INQUIRE / Investigate** & gather information
- ASSESS** situation
- MANAGE** the situation/mitigate risk

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EXCEPTIONAL CASE STUDY PROJECT

Key Findings:

- Assassination is the end result of a discernible and understandable process of thinking and behavior
- Attackers and near-lethal approachers do not fit any reliable descriptive or demographic profiles
- Attackers and near-lethal approachers often demonstrated "attack-related" behaviors
- Mental illness only rarely plays a key role in assassination behaviors.
- Persons who pose an actual threat often do not make threats, especially direct threats.

Source: Fein, R. & Vossekuil, B. (1997) *Preventing Assassination: A Monograph*. Secret Service Exceptional Case Study Project.

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LESSONS LEARNED: TARGETED VIOLENCE

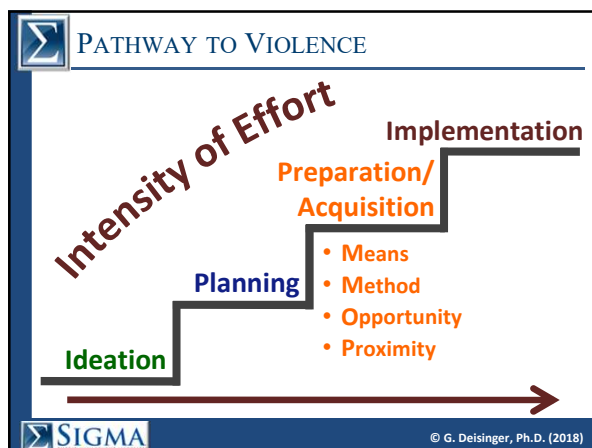
Perpetrators of serious targeted violence don't "just snap."

These incidents are not impulsive or random.

- Most (over 75%) consider, plan, and prepare before engaging in violent behavior;
- Most (over 75%) discuss their plans with others before the attack.

Source: U.S. Secret Service & U.S. Dept. of Education (2002). *Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative*.

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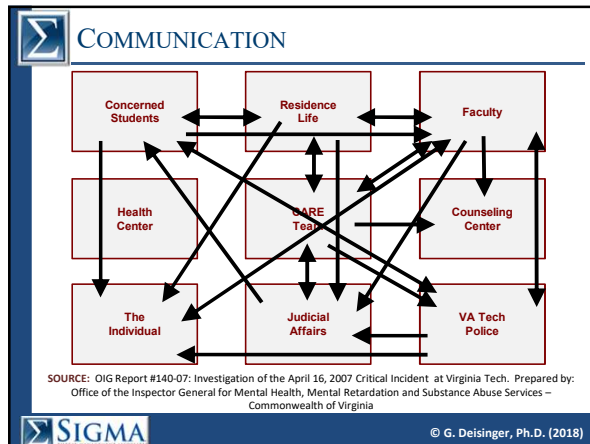


LESSONS LEARNED: TARGETED VIOLENCE

- Many targeted attacks can be prevented.
- Information about a subject's ideas and plans for violence can be observed or discovered before harm can occur.
- Information available is likely to be scattered and fragmented.
- Key is to act quickly upon an initial report of concern, see who else has a piece of the puzzle, then pull all the information together to see what picture emerges.

Source: U.S. Secret Service & U.S. Dept. of Education (2002). *Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative*.

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MODE OF VIOLENCE: AFFECTIVE

- Intense emotion and expressiveness;
- Violence is reactive and immediate;
- Violence against perceived threats;
- Heightened and diffuse awareness;
- Goal is threat reduction (homeostasis);
- Primarily emotional and defensive;
- Rapid displacement of target;
- Reactions are time limited;

Source: Meloy, *Violence Risk & Threat Assessment*

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MODE OF VIOLENCE: PREDATORY

- Minimal emotion or expression;
- Violence is planned and purposeful;
- Violence against specified targets;
- Heightened and focused awareness;
- Violence serves variable goals;
- Primarily cognitive and attack-oriented;
 - Often preceded by private ritual;
- Minimal displacement of target;
- Not time limited;

Source: Meloy, *Violence Risk & Threat Assessment*

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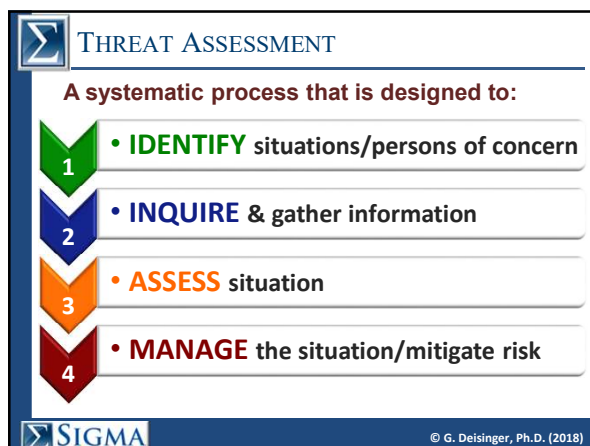
HAVING A TEAM IS NOT ENOUGH

Organizations must have a systematic process that:

- Utilizes effective & relevant multi-disciplinary approach, capable of addressing all threats;
- Enables centralized awareness of developing concerns through active outreach programs & consultations;
- Facilitates a thorough & contextual assessment;
- Implements proactive & integrated case management;
- Monitors & re-assesses case on a longitudinal basis;
- Conducts all practices in accordance with relevant laws, policies, and standards of practice;
- Adapts to challenges & changing needs.

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MULTI-DISCIPLINARY BTAM PROCESS:

Goals:

- Increase awareness of developing concerns/threats
- Maximize skills and resources to address concerns
- Enhance ability to monitor outcomes
- Enhance:
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Coordination
 - Capitalization

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MULTI-DISCIPLINARY BTAM PROCESS:

Multi-Disciplinary Involvement by:

- Management
- Security / Business Protection
- Human Resources / Organizational Development
- Legal Counsel
- Mental Health Professional *
- Threat Management Consultant *
- Independent Medical/Psychological Evaluator **

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KEY DYNAMICS OF SUCCESSFUL TEAMS

Psychological Safety: We take risks without feeling insecure or embarrassed.

Dependability: We can count on each other to do high quality work on time.

Structure & Clarity: We are clear about our goals, roles, and execution plans.

Meaning of Work: We are working on something that is personally important for each of us.

Impact of Work: We fundamentally believe that the work we are doing matters.

Julia Rozovsky, The five keys to a successful Google team (2015)

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PERPETRATOR AFFILIATION

Perpetrator Relation to Workplace

- Type 1: Unaffiliated (with other criminal intent)
- Type 2: Customer/Client
- Type 3: Employee
- Type 4: Personal Relationship

Source:
University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center (2001).
Workplace Violence: A Report to the Nation.

- Type 5: Unaffiliated (without other criminal intent)

Source: G. Deisinger (2005).

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TARGETS

Targets can be:

- Persons
- Places
- Programs
- Processes
- Philosophies
- Proxies

Chosen based on:

- Desirability
- Vulnerability
- Availability

Source: FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit

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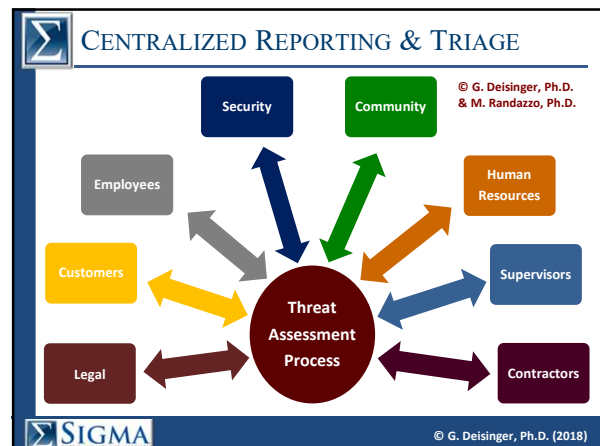
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FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT

For effective bystander intervention & engagement, people need to know:

- Their role and responsibility
 - GOAL: Consult and engage about concerns
- What to consult about
- Where (and with whom) to consult
- Consultations are wanted
- Something will be done
- Regular reminders of issues and process

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BUILDING AWARENESS

Outreach/Awareness presentations

- Managers, supervisors, employees
- Contractors

Training Sessions

- Consulting & case management process;
- Verbal de-escalation
- Incident survival

Information: Available and sustained

- Website
- E-mail updates/newsletters
- Social media

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RECORD KEEPING

- Centralized incident tracking database
- Document reports and actions - include date, time, subjects, targets, behaviors of concern, witnesses
 - Data
 - Assessment
 - Plan
- Preserve evidence: Keep copies of email, memos, etc.

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THREAT ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

Targeted Violence is the product of an interaction among multiple domains:

S The **subject** who may take violent action;

T Vulnerabilities of the **target** of such actions;

E An **environment** that facilitates or permits violence, or does not discourage it; and,

P **Precipitating events** that may trigger change.

Source: G. Deisinger & M. Randazzo

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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

What are the subject's grievance(s) & goal(s)?

- What first brought subject to someone's attention?
- What are the major or unresolved grievances?
- Who/what is the focus of the grievance?
- Fixation** on grievance, target, or need for resolution?
- What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result?
- Does the subject perceive any alternatives?
- Is the subject running out of options?

Adapted from: U.S. Secret Service, *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* (2000) & Meloy, et al. *Warning Behaviors*.

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PRECIPITANTS OF TARGETED VIOLENCE

Sources of Grievances:	Motivations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Political Religious Racial/Ethnic Environmental Special Interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justice Revenge Notoriety / Recognition Despair/Desperation Death Martyrdom

Source: FBI (2017). *Making Prevention of Violence a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks*

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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Have there been communications indicating intent for violence or disruption?

- Are there **Direct threats** of violence/harm?
- Is there **Leakage**?
- What means/modes communication have been used?
- Who are communications directed to?
- What is relationship between subject and target?
- Has anyone been alerted or "warned away"?

Adapted from: U.S. Secret Service, *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* (2000) & Meloy, et al. *Warning Behaviors*.

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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Has subject demonstrated Identification and/or inappropriate interest with other perpetrator's:

- Personal background/circumstances
 - Pseudocommando / Warrior / Agent of change
- Grievances
- Tactics / weapons
- Outcomes

Adapted from: U.S. Secret Service, *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* (2000) & Meloy, et al. *Warning Behaviors*.
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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Does the subject have (or are they developing) the capacity to engage in targeted violence?

- Are there Pathway Behaviors? Where on Pathway?
 - Planning
 - Preparation (Means, Method, Opportunity, Proximity)
- Is subject developing the perceived capability (skill & will)?
- Are there changes in activity levels or Energy Bursts?
- History of violence or aspects of Novel Aggression?

Adapted from: U.S. Secret Service, *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* (2000) & Meloy, et al. *Warning Behaviors*.
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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Is the subject experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?

- Is subject having significant difficulty coping?
- Are there indications of Last Resort behaviors?
 - Desperation / action imperative
 - Lack of perceived alternatives
 - Violence justified to address perceived grievance
 - Lack of concern / welcoming consequences
 - Development of legacy token

Adapted from: U.S. Secret Service, *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* (2000) & Meloy, et al. *Warning Behaviors*.
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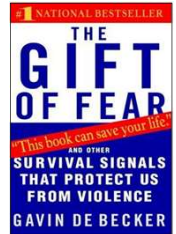
KEY POINTS ABOUT VIOLENCE

Dangerousness is not a permanent state of being nor solely an attribute of a person.

Dangerousness is **situational** & based on:

Justification;
Alternatives;
Consequences; and
Ability.

Source: Gavin de Becker
The Gift of Fear



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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Has the subject's behavior indicated or raised concern of need for intervention or supportive services?

- Does subject have difficulty coping?
- Symptoms of severe, acute, untreated mental illness:
 - Significant lack of contact with reality:
 - Hallucinations (especially command hallucinations)
 - Delusions (especially paranoid / persecutory or grandiosity)
 - Extreme wariness, distrust, paranoia
 - Symptoms that impact subject's perceptions of grievances or how others respond to subject?
 - Major Depression
 - Alcohol or other drug use/abuse?
- Subject have access to & actively engaged in treatment?

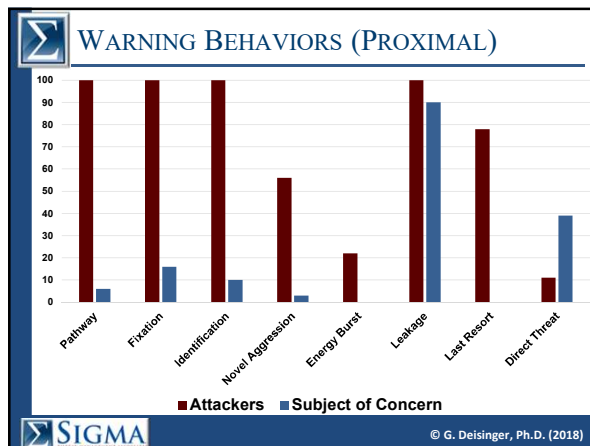
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WARNING BEHAVIORS (PROXIMAL)

- Pathway (actions)
- Fixation
- Identification
- Novel Aggression
- Energy Burst
- Leakage
- Directly Communicated Threat
- Last Resort Behaviors

Source:
Meloy & Hoffman

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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Does the subject have a trusting & sustained relationship with at least one responsible person?

- Is subject emotionally connected to other people?
- Does subject have a friend, colleague, family member, or other person that they trust and can rely upon?
- Does that other person have skill and willingness to monitor, intervene, support subject?
- Is the relationship in jeopardy?
- Increased isolation or separation from others?

Adapted from: U.S. Secret Service, *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* (2000).

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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Does the subject have inhibitors for use of violence?

- Views violence as unacceptable
- Sustains trusted and valued relationships / support systems
- Accepts responsibility for actions
- Demonstrates remorse for inappropriate behavior
- Respects reasonable limits & expectations
- Uses socially sanctioned means of addressing grievances
- Values life, job, relationships, freedom
- Fears loss of reputation, job, freedom, life
- Maintains and uses effective coping skills
- Treatment compliance/engagement

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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Are Targets (or others) indicating vulnerability or concern about the subject's potential for violence?

- Are targets or others around the subject engaging in protective actions (e.g. distancing, avoiding, minimizing conflict, etc.)
- Are targets engaging in behavior or in situations that increase their desirability, availability or vulnerability?
- Do targets have adequate coping and support resources?
- Are those who know the subject concerned that he or she might take action based on violent ideas or plans?
- Are those who know the subject concerned about a specific target?

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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Are there Environmental/Systemic factors that are impacting the situation?

- Systemic, policy, or procedural problems
- Silos, gaps, or delays in reporting of concerns
- Poor conflict management skills
- Poor supervisory skills and/or willingness to address
- Organizational climate concerns: e.g., harassment, bullying
- Lack of support resources in community
- Social influences of others in environment
 - Actively discourage or encourage/dare use of violence?
 - Deny/minimize the possibility of violence?
 - Passively collude with act?


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KEY INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS

Are there Precipitating Events that may impact the situation currently and in foreseeable future?


- Loss / Injustice
 - Job / income
 - Status
 - Relationship / support
 - Health
 - Community/Identity (Rejection / Ostracization);
- Key dates / events
 - Relational
 - Administrative action/order (Issuance, service, violation)
 - Court order (Issuance, service, violation)
- Opportunity (availability and vulnerability of target)
- Case Management Interventions


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 **PRECIPITATING EVENTS**

Intervention Outcomes


- Improve situation.
- Worsen situation.
- No discernable change in situation.
- Create new concern/situation.


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 **IMPROVING DECISION-MAKING**

What is the consistency and credibility of information about the situation?

- Are the subject's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?
- Do collateral sources confirm or dispute what the subject says is going on and how they are dealing with it?
- Are there multiple sources?
- Do sources have direct and unique knowledge of subject and/or situation?
- Do any sources have ulterior motives?
- What gaps exist in understanding of the situation?


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 **IMPROVING DECISION-MAKING**

Protecting Against Cognitive Bias

- Confirmation Bias
- Anchoring
- Over-Confidence
- In-group Bias
- Availability Bias
- Probability neglect
- Fundamental attribution error
- Hindsight Bias

Source: Daniel Kahneman (2013) Thinking Fast & Slow


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 **PRIORITIZATION**

Prioritization based on totality of circumstances:

- Nature of threat(s)
- Immediacy of threat(s)
- Probability / likelihood / credibility of threat(s)
- Severity of consequence / impact of threat(s)
- Rate of change in situation
- Impact (current or impending) of precipitants
- Vulnerability & reactivity of target
- Political & social influences
- Unknowns

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 **INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT**

Effective case management integrates interventions across the (relevant) domains:


S De-escalate, contain, or control the subject who may take violent action;


T Decrease vulnerabilities of the target;

E Modify physical and cultural environment to discourage escalation; and,

P Prepare for & mitigate against precipitating events that may trigger adverse reactions.


Source: G. Deisinger & M. Randazzo

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 **CASE MANAGEMENT**

Develop an individualized plan based on information gathered in the investigation and other facts known about the situation.


- Plan must be fact-based and situation-specific.
- Engagement with internal subject can be critical, even when dealing with someone who is very angry.
- Distancing (internal subject) makes monitoring and intervention more difficult.
- Personalities & skills matter.
- Utilize less intrusive measures first;

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SUBJECT-BASED STRATEGIES

Implement appropriate strategies:


- No further action
- Monitor/Watch & wait;
- Third party monitoring
- Third party intervention
- Direct interview
- Administrative actions
 - Probation, suspension, expulsion/termination, no contact/communication, no trespass/ban from premises
- Civil actions
- Mental Health interventions (voluntary or involuntary)
- Criminal justice interventions

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ENGAGEMENT

Utilize key relationships (with subject, target and witnesses) as channel of communication for:

- Information gathering and assessment;
- Redirect from violence / targets;
- Problem solving / support
- Set boundaries / limitations
- Admonishment / confrontation
- Intervention / referral
- Monitoring
- Deterrence

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TARGET MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Coaching regarding personal safety approaches


- Clear limits and boundaries
- Monitor communications for changes / escalations
- Avoid contact / response
 - Document all contacts from/with subject
- Minimize reactivity to subject actions
- Minimize public information
- Maintain/enhance situational awareness
- Vary routine
- Develop contingency plans
 - Escape, shelter, defense
- Utilize support systems

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TARGET MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Organizational Roles in Reducing Target Vulnerability

- Engagement with Target
- Change work hours
- Change work location
- Change/enhance security in work location
- Notice to co-workers
- Security staffing
- Safety escorts
- Fear management
- EAP / Counseling referrals

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ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT


- Address systemic, policy, or procedural problems
- Identify/address reporting gaps/delays
- Intervene with associates that support violent behavior
- Enhance conflict management skills
- Enhance supervisory skills & accountability
- Enhance organizational climate – caring community
 - Emphasize fairness & respect
 - Effective communication
 - People rewarded, supported, and held accountable
 - Prevention & early intervention with inappropriate behaviors
 - Build engagement for mutual safety & well-being

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MANAGE PRECIPITATING EVENTS

Stressors / Escalators:

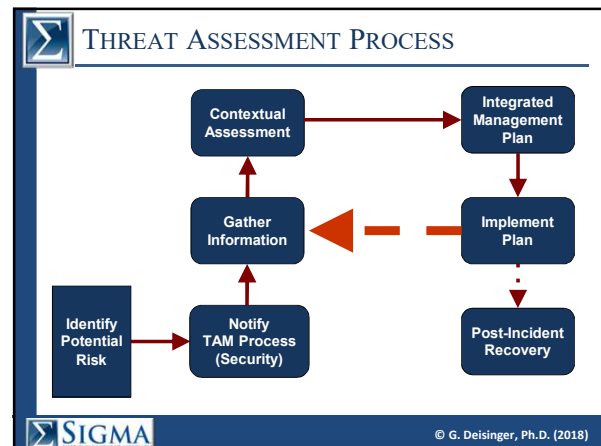
- Minimize unnecessary precipitants where possible
- Consider impact of timing and location of interventions
- Monitor & plan for Loss / Injustice
- Monitor & plan for Key dates / events
- Monitor for reactions to administrative/court actions
- Monitor reactions to case management/interventions

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IMPLEMENT, MONITOR, FOLLOW UP

- Once the plan is developed, it needs to be implemented and monitored.
 - Active monitoring – seek out information
 - Passive monitoring – dependent on further reports
- Further interventions or referrals may be necessary.
- Continue to follow up as necessary.
- Close the case once threat priority/status has been reduced to acceptable level.

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WHAT RULES MAY APPLY?

- Federal/National & State Employee Privacy Laws
- Federal Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act
- State public accommodations laws / disability-related employment laws
- Federal Healthcare Privacy Laws
- State Patient-Health Care Professional Privileges
- Freedom of Information / Open Records Laws
- Organizational Policies

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POLICIES TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS

Policies with TAM-related implications:

- Workplace violence prevention
- Threat assessment & management
- Harassment & discrimination
- Crisis management
- Employee discipline
- Interim suspension
- Fitness for duty
- Direct threat evaluations
- Weapons
- Bomb threat

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INFORMED BY RESEARCH & PRACTICE

Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence: Considerations for Assessment the Risk of Future Violent Behavior (2006)

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP)
www.atapworldwide.org

Available at:
downloads.workplaceviolencenews.com/rage-v.pdf

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INFORMED BY RESEARCH & PRACTICE

Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention American National Standard (2011)

Society for Human Resource Management & ASIS International

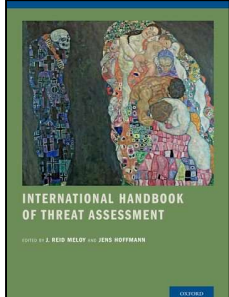
Available at:
www.abdi-secure-e-commerce.com/asis/ps-1092-30-1967.aspx

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INFORMED BY RESEARCH & PRACTICE

International Handbook of Threat Assessment (2014)

Edited by:
J. Reid Meloy &
Jens Hoffmann




Available at:
www.oup.com/us

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INFORMED BY RESEARCH & PRACTICE

Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks (2017)

US Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Behavioral Analysis Unit



Available at: <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/making-prevention-a-reality.pdf>

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CHALLENGES

Communication and Coordination is Critical!

- Multiple processes that manage cases:
 - Threat Assessment & Management
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Domestic Violence
 - Insider Threat
 - Executive Protection
- Mind the Gap!
 - Clarify mission/roles
 - Shared membership
 - Regular communication
 - Integrated planning
 - Designated authority and responsibility

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SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE



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WHEN YOUR ONLY TOOL IS A HAMMER. . .

Over-Reliance on Control-Based Strategies

- Discipline
- Suspension
- Administrative orders
- Court orders
- Criminal prosecution
- Termination

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Never equate separation with safety

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COMMON PITFALLS

Undue rush to sever connection with person of concern

- Separation may:
 - Decrease opportunities to monitor situation
 - Decrease resources available to mitigate risk
 - Exacerbate rather than minimize threat
- Case-by-case evaluation must be done, balancing pros and cons of separation vs. continued engagement
- Anticipate separation as potential precipitating event and have plan to monitor/intervene.

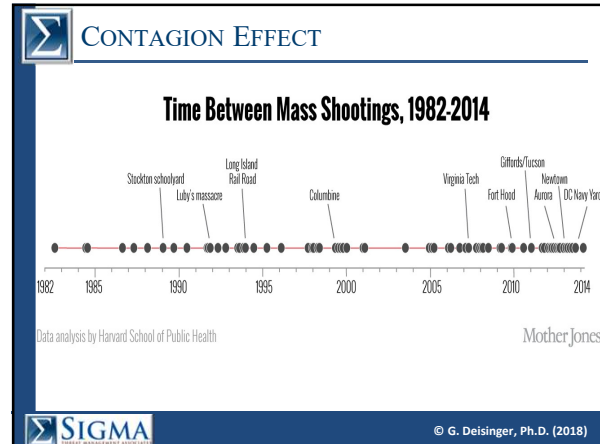
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CHALLENGES

Prepare for re-integration of subject:

- Evaluate subject readiness to safely and effectively participate in experience
- Coach subject of concern about re-entry
- Anticipate environmental aspects which subject of concern may encounter
- Develop proactive case management plan
- Monitor & Re-assess
- Intervene as appropriate

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GROWING/FUTURE CHALLENGES

Lone Actor Terrorism / Violent Extremism

- Domestic & international influence
- Social media / contagion effect
- Modify tactics
- Targets of availability

Considerations:

- Community engagement
- Collaboration & partnership
- Full Emergency Preparedness

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SIGMA Threat Management Associates

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Gene Deisinger, Ph.D.
Principal & Co-Founder
SIGMA THREAT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES, LLC

Mobile: 540-392-5284
GDeisinger@SigmaTMA.com

www.SigmaTMA.com

Twitter: @GDeisinger
@SigmaTMA

Facebook: SIGMA Threat Management Associates