

Campus Safety CONFERENCE 2021

Be Vigilant

Post-COVID Threat Assessments: Return to School Return to Work

July 2021



#CSC21

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Housekeeping

- Cellphones on vibrate or silent
- Access to the presentation
- Q&A Session at end
- Evaluations
- Social Media



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- Senior Vice President for Investigative Operations
SIGMA Threat Management Associates
- Retired NCIS Division Chief, Threat Management
Unit, NCIS Family and Sexual Violence Unit &
Violent Crime
- 30+ years experience conducting and supervising
investigations of sexual assault, stalking, domestic
violence, and dating violence.
- Trained in Trauma Informed Interviewing
- Former Probation / Parole Officer for Sex
Offenders



Question:

What has changed?



Answer: A lot – operationally, interpersonally



Question:

What has NOT changed?



Answer: The need for safety & security measures



What We May See During Return to School & Work



What Students & Employees May Bring In:

Increased stress during physical distancing includes:

- social isolation
- exposure to domestic violence
- family, community stressors
- mental health concerns due to social isolation
- anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and substance
- online activity

Decrease in:

- adult supervision
- access to protective factors

Loss of routine, consistency, predictability, support



- Civil unrest
- Political tension and divisiveness
- Misinformation and disinformation
- Decreased trust in government and protective agencies (e.g. law enforcement, health department)
- Diminished tolerance for injustice or perceived injustice

**Intervention = support to family/individuals, decreasing isolation,
increasing connectedness**

What Might We See?

After having experiences that overwhelm our ability to cope, people may have/make:

- Increased anxiety / fears
- Emotional numbing
- Increased efforts to control surroundings
- Decreased sleep
- Disruption to daily life
- Shorter temper / Increased anger
- Threats
- Substance use / abuse

Recent data show an increase in suicidal thoughts and attempts

Threat Assessment Professionals know all too well that it is never a good thing when persons of concern think too much about death

When assessing for risk of violence to others, its important to consider whether the person is suicidal. Suicide intervention can help reduce risk.

Additional Concerns about Stalking, Domestic Violence & Trauma



Women ages 20 to 24 are at greatest risk of becoming victims of domestic violence

Every year, 1 in 3 women who is a victim of homicide is murdered by her current or former partner

Domestic violence is most likely to occur between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

During the 6 months following an episode of domestic violence, 1/3 of battered women are victimized again.

Safe Haven 2012

Strangulation

Recency and severity of attack

Frequency of attack (escalating)

Access to weapons

Threats involving a gun or weapon

Threats of homicide

**** When the partner tries to leave**

Strangulation vs. Choking

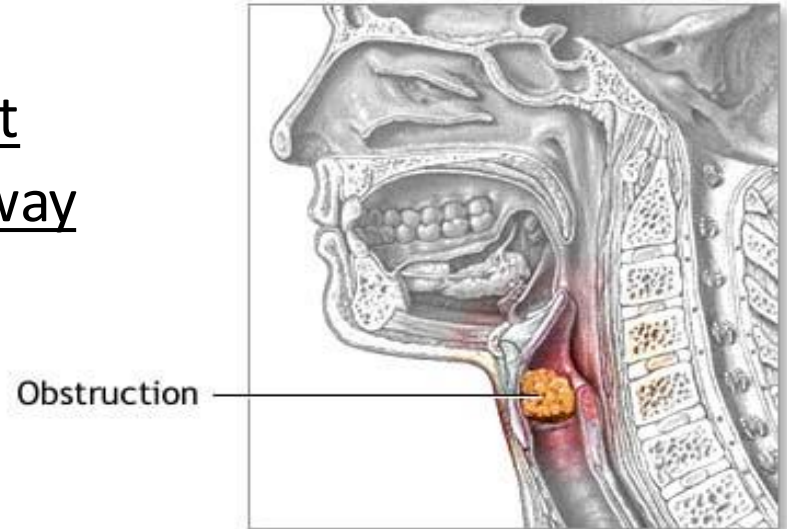
Choking is accidental

An internal obstruction of the airway

Strangulation is intentional and violent

An external obstruction of the airway

Lethal Felony Assault



Strangulation is, in fact, one of the best predictors for the subsequent homicide of victims of domestic violence.

Victims may have no visible injuries whatsoever, yet because of underlying brain damage due to the lack of oxygen during the strangulation assault, they may have serious internal injuries or die days, even weeks later

- NFJC- Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention

The Continuum of Stalking Behaviors

Benign unwanted contacts to communicate

Harassing contacts to frustrate/annoy the victim

Threatening contacts to make the victim fearful

Property damage

Violence against the victim/3rd persons

What is Trauma?

**Trauma can be thought
of as
any circumstance
where we question our
survival.**

Victim Responses to Trauma

Victims deal with the trauma in many ways. These are all NORMAL reactions:

- Crying
- Laughing
- Failure to recall events in order
- Unwillingness to talk about the event
- Victim still in contact with suspect after the event
- Humiliation – including regarding:
 - Who will believe them?
 - Victim might have been drinking
 - May have had sex with the suspect in the past
 - Victim willingly went with the suspect
 - Social stereotypes
 - Medical procedures (rape kit, disease)
 - Who knows? Who will find out?

Acknowledge their trauma/pain/difficult situation

What are you able to tell-me about experience?

Tell me more about ...

Help me understand your thoughts when...?

What are you able to remember about...

the 5 senses

What were your reactions to this experience

physically/emotionally

What was the most difficult part of this experience for you?

What, if anything, can't you forget about your experience?

How Threat Assessment Can Help Schools / Colleges / Workplaces



What is Threat Assessment?

A systematic, fact-finding process designed to:



Does there have to be a
crime?

NO—Just a Concern

THE GOAL IS SAFETY!

Why Threat Assessment?

Recommended by:

Defense Science Board Task Force on Predicting Violent Behavior (2012)

ASIS / SHRM Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention (ANSI-approved National Standard 2011; updated by ASIS 2020)

FBI Task Force Report

Higher Education (ANSI-approved national standard)

K12 Schools (USSS/ED model)

Protective agencies (USSS, USCP, State Dept)

Judicial Security (US DOJ/OIG)

What is the perceived conflict?

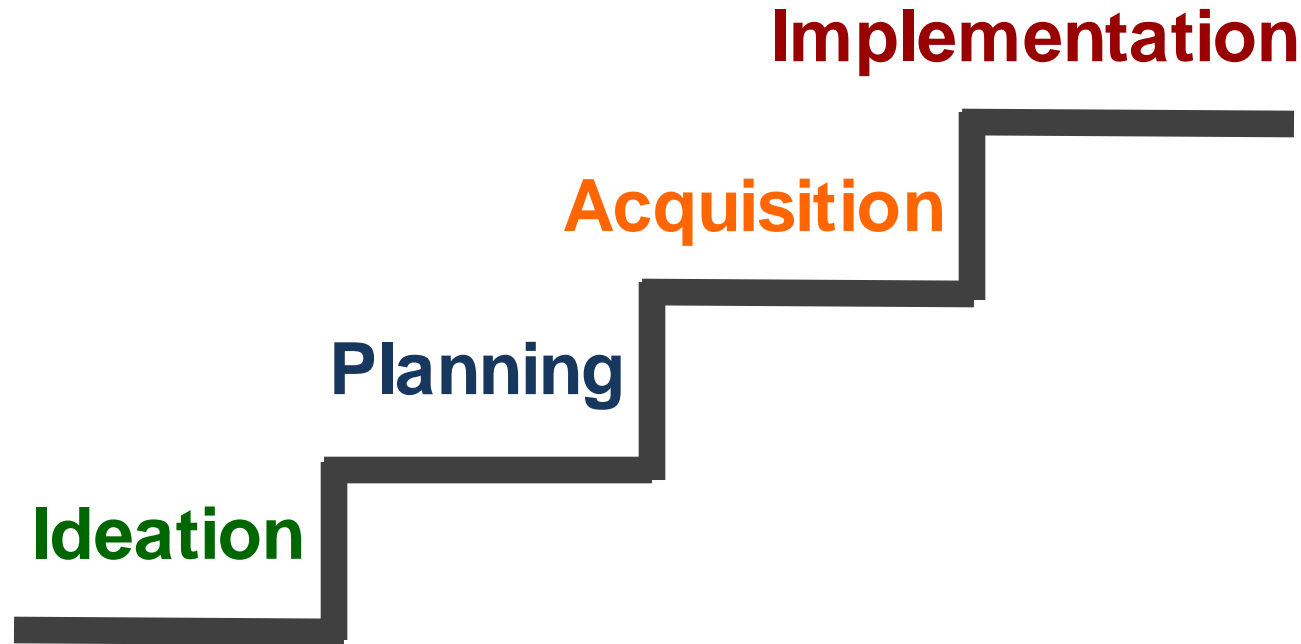
Why this target? At this time?

What are the subject's current life stressors? (intimate relationships, other relationships, workplace, health, financial)

Where is the subject on the path to violence? (thinking violent thoughts, making plans, conducting pre-attack behaviors)

Is the Person on the Pathway to Violence?

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Determine if a person is on a pathway to violence / self-harm

If so, find ways to get them off the pathway and onto a better path

Support victims / all involved through connection to support

Resolve conflict

Prevent harm / violence

Prevent recurrence of threatening behaviors

Using Threat Assessment in Return to School / Work



Use Your Team or Start a Team

- The Threat Assessment Team should meet regularly and as needed
- Meet in person or virtually
- Consider:
 - Secure cloud-based platform
 - Assign responsibilities
 - Use a spreadsheet to track assignments
 - Be flexible
- Adopt and emphasize a care-for-the-caregiver culture



Update Prohibited Behavior

- Add remote-specific violations to code of conduct
- Expect possible increases in:
 - Concerning social media posts
 - Threats made during video conferencing classroom sessions
 - Cyberbullying
 - Increased resentment due to societal and educational inequities
 - Absenteeism



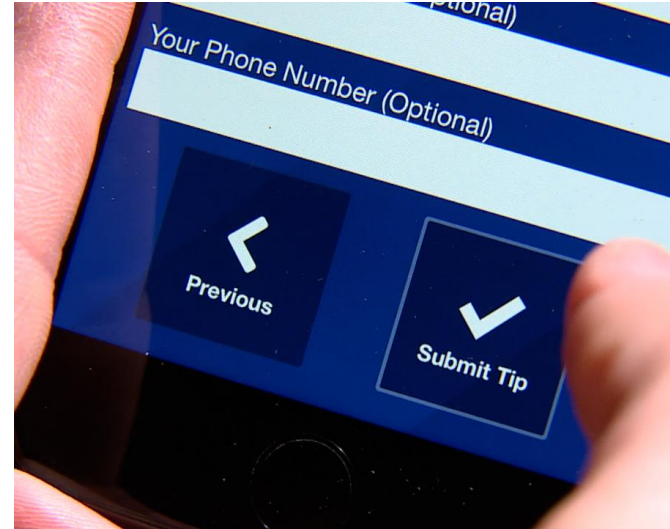
Remind Everyone to Report Concerns

Remind everyone to report & what to report

- Original list
- Additional behaviors

Various reporting methods should be available:

- Online form
- Dedicated email address or phone number
- Phone App
- Anonymous reporting
- 911
- Tell someone



Changes to Law Enforcement Involvement?

- Identify access to current law enforcement supports
 - Many SRO's have now been reassigned
- LE and MH intervention may be earlier in process than normal
- If law enforcement's initial determination is no imminent threat, school/campus/workplace team can and should complete the threat assessment process.



Update Training for All

- Emphasize that safety is everyone's responsibility
- Ask everyone to keep an eye on each other, and be alert to new behaviors of concern, increases in known behaviors
- Provide training for:
 - All staff (not just certified staff)
 - Students
 - Managers / supervisors
 - Law enforcement
 - New threat assessment team members



- Screen reports – is a threat assessment needed?
- Gather information from multiple sources
 - Conduct interviews remotely
 - Access records remotely
 - Review behavior
 - Review social media
- Analyze information
- Make assessment
- Develop and implement intervention plan if needed
- Work process in brief segments where necessary



Add Trauma-Informed Questions

Ask about:

1. How has the pandemic impacted you?
2. How has social distancing impacted you?
3. What activities are you currently engaged with?
4. What racial bias, tension, and inequities have you experienced?
5. What systematic racism and implicit racism have you experienced?
6. What racial tensions and inequities have you witnessed?
7. How are you coping?
8. Have you experienced hopelessness?
9. Have you had suicidal thoughts?
10. How are you doing academically?
11. What supports do you have socially? At home? Virtually?
12. What has been working well for you?

- Does the victim believe the threat?
- Does the threat involve murder, suicide or both?
- Are others aware or think there may be a threat?
- Is it detailed and specific?
- Is the threatened act consistent with his past behavior?
- Does the abuser have the means to carry it out?
- Have there been "rehearsals" of the act that is being threatened?
- Does the threat extend to others (children, family, police, new partner)?

Update Intervention Resources

- Resources/interventions to assist person of concern and family
 - Virtual supports
 - Community supports
- Progress Monitoring
 - Virtual check-ins
- Determine if disciplinary action is appropriate
 - Overly punitive measures can escalate risk
- Monitor behavior in virtual meetings/classroom, chats
- Ask law enforcement or family for assistance in removing weapons access, monitoring home behavior
- Reduce stressors by connecting to resources
- Apps for mental health support



Evaluate & Enhance School / Work Climates

- Conduct updated surveys of school or workplace climate
- Be transparent about results
- Solicit input from various constituencies
- Reinforce a safe school/work environment
 - Encourage respectful behavior
 - Encourage patience
 - Respond to disruptive behavior
- Care-for-the-caregiver support for all personnel



COMMUNICATE! COLLABORATE!

It Takes a Village

Recognize, address, and work around silos

SIGMA Threat Management Associates LLC

703-286-2274

888-957-4462

Training@SigmaTMA.com

@SigmaTMA