Goal of threat assessment: Contribute to a safe campus by helping potential offenders overcome the underlying sources of their anger or hopelessness.

How?
1. Use an interdisciplinary approach to identify individuals whose behavior causes concern or disruption on or off campus.
2. Assess whether the individual shows a need for intervention or assistance or poses a threat of violence to self or others.
3. Manage any potential threat posed by the individual, to include referral for assistance, disrupting potential plans of attack, otherwise mitigating the risk, and implementing strategies to facilitate long-term resolution.

Premise of Threat Assessment
The threat assessment process is based on the premise that each situation should be viewed and assessed individually and guided by the facts. Judgments about an individual’s risk of violence should be based upon an analysis of his/her behaviors and the context in which they occur. Blanket characterizations, demographic profiles, or stereotypes do not provide a reliable basis for making judgments of the threat posed by a particular individual.

Issues
1. Identifying the specific behaviors that are suggestive of an attack against persons (including students, faculty, and staff);
2. Considering whether concerning, suicidal, or threatening behaviors are warning signs of a violent act; and
3. Fostering a secure environment while simultaneously promoting academic freedom and creative expression, and protecting student privacy.

When to ask for assistance
1. Emergency: Call 911 if an injury has occurred, or there is a serious threat to one’s safety that requires immediate attention. (Example: Someone is confronted by an angry person who indicates by words and actions intent to harm.)
2. “Behaviors of Concern”
   - See FBI Quick Reference Guide on opposite page
   - See the Faculty Guide on Students in Distress http://www.ccsu.edu/uploaded/departments/AdministrativeDepartments/Counseling_and_Wellness_Center/Documents/FacultyGuide_StudentsInDistress.pdf
   - Contact the Vice President for Student Affairs, Human Resources (for employee concerns), or the CCSU Police regarding behaviors that raise concern for someone’s safety or well-being, or behaviors that are significantly disruptive to CCSU’s learning, working, or living environment.

Remember, the behavior you see may be just one “piece of the puzzle.” By engaging the other campus stakeholders there is a better chance to make an informed decision.
REMEMBER

- There is not a “profile” of a school shooter-instead the students who carried out the attacks differed from one another in numerous ways.
- School shootings are rarely impulsive acts.
- They are typically thought out and planned in advance.
- Prior to most school shootings other students knew the shooting was going to occur but failed to notify an adult.
- Very few of the attackers ever directed threats to their targets before the attack.
- The most common goal was retribution. The justifications and excuses offered indicated this stemmed not from an absence of values but from a well-developed value system in which violence was acceptable.
- In many cases, other students were involved in the attack in some capacity.
- Many offenders experienced a significant personal loss in the months leading up to the attack, such as a death, breakup, or divorce in the family.
- Many offenders engaged in repetitive viewing of violent media and were often fascinated with previous school shootings. Repeated viewing of movies depicting school shootings, such as “Zero Day” and “Elephant,” may indicate a fascination with campus attacks.
- Be aware of the subject’s online videos, blogs, and social networking activities.

Assessing Threatening Communications - Five Dimensions (Mohandie, 2000)

- Organized vs. disorganized thought processes
- Fixed vs. variable themes
- Focused vs. general target identification
- Violent action imperative vs. alternative coping means
- Short time imperative vs. lack of urgency

Threat assessment - 11 Key Questions (U.S. Secret Service, 2002)

- What are the student’s motive(s) and goals?
- Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?
- Has the student shown inappropriate interest in school attacks, weapons, and/or mass violence?
- Has the student engaged in any attack-related behaviors?
- Does the student have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?
- Is the student experiencing hopelessness, desperation and/or despair?
- Does the student have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?
- Does the student see violence as an acceptable/desirable way to solve problems?
- Is the student’s version of events consistent with his/her actions?
- Are other people concerned about the student’s potential for violence?
- What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?

Motives

- 24% motivated by desire for attention or recognition.
- 27% motivated by suicide or desperation.
- 34% motivated by attempt to solve a problem.
- 54% had multiple motives.
- 61% motivated by desire for revenge.
- 75% felt bullied/persecuted/threatened by others.

Statistics

- 27% of attackers exhibited interest in violent movies.
- 37% of attackers exhibited interest in violent interest in violence in their own writings, poems, essays, and journal entries.
- 59% of attacks occurred during the school day.
- 63% of attackers had a known history of weapons use.
- 66% acquired the weapon used from their own home or that of a relative.
- 93% of attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the attack that caused others to be concerned.
- 93% of attackers planned out the attack in advance.
- 95% of attackers were current students.
- Odds are one in 1 million that a student will die at school as a result of a violent act.

Warning Signs

- Investigators should probe to discover if the subject has engaged in research, planning, or preparation (e.g., researched weapons or made attempts to obtain a weapon). Movement from thought to action represents a severe escalation of the risk of violence.
- In around 80% of school shootings at least one person had information that the attacker was thinking about or planning the school attack. In nearly 2/3, more than one person had information about the attack before it occurred. In nearly all of these cases, the person who knew was a peer, a friend, schoolmate, or sibling.
- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most attacks were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention.
- Be conscious of the “Werther Effect,” defined as a duplication or copycat of another suicidal act. School shootings are typically well-publicized, sensationalized events that can trigger an increase in similar acts for roughly days or weeks after the attack.

Resources

- www.fbi.gov
- www.safetyzone.org (DOE and DOJ)
- www.ncjrs.org/school_safety
- www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS
- www.secretservice.gov/ntac.htm
- www.keepschoolssafe.org

THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

Mission:
The purpose of the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) is to provide a multidisciplinary structure that reduces or eliminates fragmented care and is focused on prevention and early intervention in situations where students or employees may be experiencing extreme distress, may be engaged in harmful or disruptive behaviors, or where there is the potential for violence. The goals of the Team are:

- To manage each case individually;
- To initiate appropriate interventions;
- To ensure that victims receive appropriate care and/or assistance;
- To be a resource for students, faculty, administrators, and staff;
- To determine appropriate action to assist the departments, faculty, staff and students;
- To conduct an investigation as appropriate;
- To develop and implement an action plan to respond to specific incidents.

TEAM MEMBERS

Police Dispatch (860) 832-2375
Richard Bachoo (Administrative Affairs) (860) 832-1776
Carl Lovitt (Academic Affairs) (860) 832-2228
Jason Powell (CCSU Police) (860) 832-2375
Edward Dercole (CCSU Police) (860) 832-2375
Laura Tordenti (Student Affairs) (860) 832-1601
Ramon Hernandez (Student Affairs) (860) 832-1601
Carolyn Magnan (Special Assistant to the President) (860) 832-3025
Christopher Dukes (Office of Student Conduct) (860) 832-1667
Mark McLaughlin (Institutional Advancement) (860) 832-0065
Lou Pisano (Human Resources) (860) 832-1760
Rosa Rodriguez (Diversity and Equity) (860) 832-0178
Member of the university Counseling Services (860) 832-1945