

ABSTRACT

Patricia L. Barfield, THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT: PROTOCOL AND BUDGETARY NEEDS FOR TOOLS AND MEMBER TRAINING IN HIGHER EDUCATION (Under the direction of Dr. Heidi Puckett). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2021.

The primary goal of threat assessment is to prevent individuals who are on a pathway to violence. Threat assessment entails a three-step process beginning with identifying a concern, assessing the risk and managing the posed threat (Vossekuil, United States. Department of Education, & United States. Secret Service, 2002). A southeastern public university has a threat assessment policy that needs revision and full implementation to improve processes and budgetary needs for threat assessment tools and member training. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to collect and analyze information that was to be used to create a revised and fully implemented threat assessment policy at a southeastern university system and a baseline TAM team protocol for other institutions to consider adapting to fit their campus needs.

This study surveyed threat assessment and management team members at the study institution and conducted remote semi-structured interviews by phone with threat assessment chairs from three additional public southeastern universities to collect data on the threat assessment policy, processes, and budgetary needs for training and tools at the study university. Qualitative data was collected from both the semi-structured interviews and the open-ended questions in the survey. Quantitative data was collected in order to determine the ideal amount of new member training, on-going training and best-practice threat assessment tools.

The results from the mixed methods study indicated that universities within a southeastern public system varied with policy, funding, threat assessment tools, and specialized member training. It is recommended that the southeastern university public system implement a baseline for institutions to consider mirroring based on best practices regarding funding, new

member and consistent specialized member training and threat assessment tools to appropriately assess and mitigate campus threats.

THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT: PROTOCOL AND BUDGETARY NEEDS
FOR TOOLS AND MEMBER TRAINING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family, friends, and colleagues. To my husband, I could not have done this without your help and understanding of how much espresso I needed. Thank you for your continued support and love. To my children, I can't wait to spend more time with you in the evenings! To my parents and in-laws, thank you for always supporting and helping me when I felt overwhelmed with my dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

April 20, 1999, April 16, 2007, and February 14, 2018 are three of the most notable dates in the history of campus violence. In 2007, a Virginia Tech student completed the deadliest campus shooting in history; he murdered 32 individuals, wounded 17 and committed suicide thereafter. During the attack at Columbine High School in 1999, two individuals shot and killed 13 people and injured 21 before fatally shooting themselves. In 2018, a former student of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL opened fire and killed 17 individuals, and injured 17 more. Violence, the dynamics of campus attacks, and the perpetrators involved are often misunderstood. Campus administrators can identify and assess individuals who rise to a level of concern for others. Intervening before an attack occurs is a critical way to prevent harm to campus and the community at large (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Unfortunately, these events have shaped a narrative about school and culture (Altheide, 2009). Violence from the Virginia Tech shooting brought awareness and attention to the public, media and policymakers (Chen et al., 2015). College and university campuses are experiencing an increase in violent incidents. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Secret Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation reviewed incidents of targeted violence that had impacted colleges and universities in the twentieth century (Meloy & Hoffmann, 2014). The results (see Figure 1) indicated 272 cases met the criteria for targeted violence; approximately 80% of those cases occurred on campuses, in residential settings (residence halls or apartments), on public grounds, and in administrative or classroom buildings. Public areas and residential settings characterized the most common locations for victims to be attacked (Meloy & Hoffman, 2014, p. 108).

National attention to the safety and security of college campuses has prompted law enforcement, mental health providers, educators and parents to ask questions pertaining to prior knowledge of an individual of concern before an attack occurs (Fein, 2002). If officials have knowledge regarding the behaviors of concern beforehand, it is important that these educators, mental health providers and law enforcement officials act to prevent these attacks. Reports of targeted school violence cannot be ignored. The Secret Service developed threat assessment to identify, assess and manage individuals and/or groups who may pose a risk of violence (Fein, 2002).

The Department of Education and Secret Service began the Safe School Initiative in 1999. The initiative began with a study of the pre-attack behaviors of 37 incidents of targeted school violence (Fein, 2002). The incidents identified occurred from December 1974 through May 2000 in the United States. The Safe School Initiative concluded that most attackers did not directly threaten their targets but engaged in pre-attack behaviors displaying potential violence. Officials were not able to properly identify the behavior (Fein, 2002). This process relies heavily on a focus on individual behaviors, instead of indicated threats, as the basis for determining whether there is a cause for concern related to an individual. The threat assessment process is used for investigating, assessing and managing targeted violence to prevent school violence. The broader goal of threat assessment is to create safer school environments by helping school administrators and law enforcement officials respond effectively to threats and behaviors of concern that may lead to a risk of violence (Fein, 2002).

Threat assessment is one tool used by campuses to prevent, rather than to merely respond to, violence, and threat assessment relies on a comprehensive, multilateral approach by campus units in which information is shared and acted upon. A threat assessment team is designed to

TARGETED VIOLENCE AFFECTING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

About the Incidents

- Occurs on and off-campus
 - 80% on-campus (residence, grounds, class/admin)
 - 20% off-campus (residence, public area)
- Precipitating events present: 83%
- Targeted one or more specific persons: 73%
- Pre-incident threat/aggression to target: 29%
- Pre-incident concerns reported by others: 31%

Source: U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Dept. of Education, & Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education*.

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Note. Retrieved from Threat Assessment Resources International (2012).

Figure 1. Targeted violence affecting institutions of higher education.

help individuals in distress and to prevent people from harming themselves and/or others (Deisinger et al., 2008). Threat assessment teams focus on identifying threats to prevent violence of the entire campus at large (Van Brunt, 2012). Threat assessment teams not only manage students, but also faculty, staff, and community members who may pose a threat to the institution. Often, campuses are responding to violence instead of *preventing* these attacks (Deisinger et al., 2008).

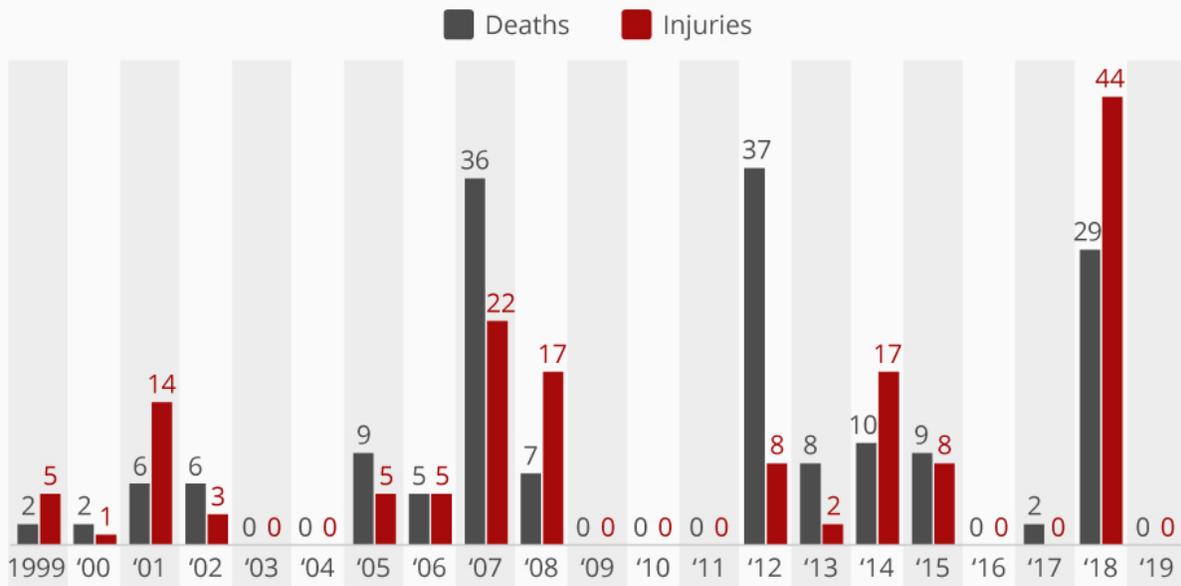
Background of the Problem

Policymakers are understanding and recognizing the lack of formalized threat assessment and management procedures as well. U.S. Congressman Brian Babin began serving as the representative from Texas's 36th Congressional district in 2015. U.S. Congressman Babin is a primary advocate for the Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety (TAPS) Act bill. The TAPS Act anticipates establishing guidelines and best practices across the federal government, the state, and local levels. The TAPS Act will provide an opportunity for state and local entities to receive training, support and resources to establish a multidisciplinary behavioral threat assessment and management unit (B. Babin, personal communication, July 2019).

Figure 2 illustrates the number of victims of school shootings in the U.S. in between 1999-2019. The chance of serious campus attacks is rare; however, the consequences can be devastating and lingering for a campus community. Campus violence is not only happening in America. In 2007, a student shot and killed nine students in Finland, and in 2008, another student from Finland shot and killed 10 students (Weisenbach et al., 2011). Both shooters posted on social media stating what they were planning to do prior to their attack. The social media concerns were posted on YouTube and not one person reported these concerns to officials. Crime can happen in a variety of educational settings around the world. Early detection and intervention

After Columbine: Victims of School Shootings in the U.S.

Deaths and injuries due to school shootings in the United States since April 21, 1999*



@StatistaCharts

* As of April 18, 2019. Incidents included if at least two deaths were involved, excluding that of the perpetrator.

Source: Wikipedia

statista

Note. Retrieved from Statista.com (2021).

Figure 2. After Columbine: Victims of school shootings in the US.

are a key component to mitigating threatening behavior. Engaging with individuals and intervening can eliminate a full-blown crisis scenario (Weisenbach et al., 2011).

Campus violence does not emerge spontaneously and most attackers leak information prior to an incident (Van Brunt, 2012). If threat assessment teams are able to recognize this information, it could be possible to prevent a situation from becoming violent. For example, a threat assessment team could intervene if a partner becomes suicidal or depressed after the relationship ends or if one partner stalks the other partner. Many perpetrators of a targeted attack often raise warning signs among multiple people they encounter, which may include professors, friends, and mental health counselors (Deisinger et al., 2008). Research indicates that dangerous people rarely display all relevant signs to one group on campus (Lake, 2007). Often, the information is not shared collaboratively, so none of the concerned parties have a clear or full understanding of what is going on with the individual. Without a team approach, the extent of a posed threat to the community or others will remain unknown and possibly too late for a threat assessment team to intervene (Deisinger et al., 2008). Colleges must manage a team efficiently and effectively in order to collaborate on a multi-faceted level (Lake, 2007).

It is imperative that colleges are taking steps to ensure the safety of the students, staff, and faculty on campus. Students are now attending college with mental health concerns that may require an increasing volume of psychological therapy and psychiatric drugs. An increasing number of veterans are now seeking higher education and may experience a variety of health issues as they re-enter society. Overall, students are feeling an enormous amount of pressure to succeed as a result of current economic challenges (Weisenbach et al., 2011).

A key step would be for colleges to establish a multidisciplinary team to respond to threats or other dangerous behaviors (Fox & Savage, 2009). Following the Virginia Tech

massacre, the University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force recommended the establishment of threat assessment teams in hopes of preventing future acts of violence (Nelson-Moss, 2015). A threat assessment team can be extremely helpful in identifying concerning behavior and helping the individual of concern (Deisinger et al., 2008). Almost 80% of four-year colleges and universities have threat assessment teams (Van Brunt, 2012). Meloy et al. (2013) suggest violence risk assessment instruments should be incorporated to ensure all relevant factors are being considered about an individual. Threat assessment teams were established to help individuals in distress and/or to prevent people from harming themselves and/or others. Threat assessment teams evaluate and manage students, faculty, staff and community members who may pose a threat to the institution (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Although student-initiated violence is ongoing, campuses also should consider how to manage threatening matters involving faculty and staff. Staff and faculty member cases range from sexual misconduct to murder on campus, and this would suggest that this increasing violence extends beyond the student population (Weisenbach et al., 2011). Threat assessment has evolved significantly since the attack at Columbine. Upon further review, it was found that many people had pieces of information about Harris and Klebold before they launched their Columbine attack. Yet, the information was never shared. The pre-meditated aspect of these attacks indicates a responsibility to intervene (Goodrum et al., 2019).

Over the past 20 years, there has been a surge of professional judgement instruments in violence risk assessment. Violence risk assessment instruments assist individuals with organizing data to ensure all relevant factors are being considered (Meloy et al., 2013). Instruments offer a coding criterion for assessing each present or absent evidence-based factor. Instruments do not recommend specific intervention suggestions; however, they may help form a “narrative” to

reduce and manage the identified risks of concern. Workplace mass murder and targeted violence has been a social and occupational issue since the 1980s (Meloy & Hoffman, 2014). Consistency with threat assessment instruments is key among responders and in the decision-making process (Meloy et al., 2013).

Problem Statement

Based on incidents of violence that have occurred at institutions, as well as taking into consideration the research conducted by Deisinger et al. (2008), one can see the importance of focusing on threat assessment policies at colleges and universities. To provide as much safety and security as possible for individuals at the institution, there must be a policy in place regarding threat assessment, including how the policy is enacted when necessary (Deisinger et al., 2008; Goodrum et al., 2019; Meloy et al., 2013; Nelson-Moss, 2015; Van Brunt, 2012). Although policies regarding threat assessment are multi-faceted, after examining the current policy at the research institution, this study focused on the following aspects: improvement of current structure and protocol, consideration of budget allowance and funding, and training of those involved in threat assessment.

After reviewing the current TAM Team policy at the study institution, it was noted that there was a lack of focus and attention on these aspects, which are vital parts of ensuring safety for individuals within the institution. Further evaluation of the current policy at the study institution, collection of survey data from current threat assessment team members, and the opportunity to conduct interviews with chairs of threat assessment teams at other institutions will allow the study institution to update and implement a revised threat assessment policy that may better meet the needs of the institution.

The study institution does have a threat assessment policy (Appendix C); but, as previously mentioned, upon informal review of the current policy at this institution it was noted that it needs revision to improve protocol and budgetary needs for threat assessment tools and member training for full implementation. The threat assessment and management team (TAM) at the study institution has not been able to access specialized risk assessment tools and provide the appropriate member training without an annual budget. This indicated that there is not a consistent “one way” or method of evaluating and managing posed threats. I currently serve as a Chair of a TAM team at an institution within the indicated southeastern public university system. I conducted an initial review in Spring 2018 of the TAM teams threat assessment protocol, specifically focusing on budgetary needs for threat assessment tools and member training. This review further indicated the need to establish a revision and implementation of the full policy at the study institution.

In 2011, the study institution implemented a Threat Assessment and Management Team under the Health, Safety and Welfare sub-category in Campus Environment. The threat assessment policy (see Appendix C) was implemented in 2011, but it needed revision to ensure the university is addressing and managing campus threats with best-practice tools and member training. While the Threat Assessment Team was efficient in triaging referrals, responding to imminent threats, and providing immediate interventions, the policy was not fully implemented. There were inconsistencies between daily practice and policy. Examples of the discrepancies included that the team was only meeting when an individual of concern was presented to the members for review, not weekly for member training and group morale. At the time of the study, team has a Risk Assessment Coordinator for monitoring the implementation and outcome of a plan, but not the Student Affairs Case Manager as the policy indicates. The largest concern for

the campus community is that new members were not being trained within a 90-day time frame and annual training for team members was not provided for professional development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to gather information from TAM chairs and current committee members to assist with revision of the current policy at the study institution to create and implement a more effective and reflective policy. I asked direct questions related to a TAM team's: (a) threat assessment procedures, (b) financial support of the TAM team, (c) specialized member training(s), and (d) the use of risk assessment tools to appropriately assess and manage a posed threat to a university campus community. These items were identified as information necessary to revise the threat assessment policy for the study institution.

In 2008, NaBITA (National Behavioral Intervention Team Association) and SIGMA Threat Management Associates began recommending various threat assessment models (Nelson-Moss, 2015). Based on the available information related to the models, it can be determined that a best practice would be to maintain a university threat assessment team to prevent, assess and manage campus and workplace violence (Nolan et al., 2011). In past discussion via phone with the Director of Campus Safety from a southeastern public university system, it was confirmed that all institutions within a system do not have the same process for threat assessment and management. Each campus had a different approach to threat assessment, access to threat assessment tools, and budgets for member trainings.

Regarding the intention to update the current policy at the study institution, it was important to create a baseline related to the experiences of the current team members for further comparison following the collection of relevant initial data. In order to establish this baseline,

survey data was collected from the current members of the TAM team at the study institution. Additional qualitative data was collected through interviews with three individuals responsible for the direction of TAM teams from institutions within the southeastern public university system. I intended to conduct the interviews face-to-face. The collection of the information from both the current team members and the chairs from other institutions allowed for the creation and implementation of the most relevant plan for the study institution. Following implementation of the updated policy, the plan is that the committee members at the study institution will be surveyed again and the newly-collected data would be compared to the initial baseline data.

Research Questions

The following research questions were identified to guide the study and data collection:

1. What is involved in the development of a formalized threat assessment program?
 - a. What processes are necessary to create a successful team that focuses on threat assessment?
 - b. What financial support is required for the implementation and on-going support of the team?
 - c. What specialized member trainings utilized by a university team will effectively assist in reviewing and managing threat assessment cases?
 - d. What best-practice threat assessment tools utilized by a university team will effectively assess and manage campus threat cases?
2. What is the perception of threat assessment team members related to their role on the team and the part they play in campus safety?
3. What factors related to threat assessment and a threat assessment policy ensure successful implementation, as well as improved safety on a college campus?

Conceptual Framework

According to the Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams by Deisinger et al. (2008), a threat assessment team should have a public written statement. The statement will include a threat assessment team's goal and purposes for a campus community. The team should also have a visible strategic plan stating how the team plans to accomplish its mission (Deisinger et al., 2008). The plan should mirror the institution's campus-wide safety plan; and the threat assessment team should consider principles that will assess a posed threat, as well as options related to managing the threat (Deisinger et al., 2008). Deisinger et al. identified 12 guiding principles that a team can utilize to guide threat assessment and management. The 12 principles are described in further detail in Chapter 2's Conceptual Framework (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Definition of Key Terms

Assessment - is the process of gathering information for use in making decisions. Assessment should clearly state information that needs to be gathered to address if, why, and how a person has formed violent intentions, goals and behavioral plans. An assessment should include the extent to which these intents, goals and plans are stable and coherent and how best to interrupt a person's likely future circumstances (Meloy & Hoffmann, 2014, p. 4).

Certified Threat Manager – The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) Board of Directors identified a need for a certification program for threat assessment and management professionals. This certification allows an individual to prove that they have the knowledge, experience, and skills to perform a certain task. Individuals who have a Certified Threat Manager certification have a solid knowledge of the core competencies tested by an

examination, but continue to maintain current on trends, research and policies through continued education to maintain the certification (Association of Threat Assessment Professionals, 2021).

Institution of Higher Education - The U.S. Department of Education (2003) defined an institution of higher education describes an educational setting in any state that (a) admits as regular students that have completed a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education or a recognized equivalent of such certificate, (b) is authorized within the state to provide an educational program beyond secondary education, (c) awards bachelor's degrees or will provide a minimum of a 2-year program that will allow for full credit towards such a degree, (d) a non-profit or public institution, and (e) accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency. If not accredited, it is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such agency or association that is recognized by the Secretary for the grant of the pre-accreditation status. The secretary examines if there is suitable assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards within a realistic amount of time (U.S. Department of Education 2003).

Threat - An individual makes a threat when he/she expresses an intent to harm a target (Deisinger et al., 2008, p. 30).

Threat Assessment Instrument - A threat assessment instrument will gather data on a specific victim, or group of victims, while considering situational, environmental, and contextual variables (Meloy & Hoffmann, 2014, p. 12).

TAM (Threat Assessment & Management Team) - "is 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).

Violence - any attempted, actual or planned injury to harm other people, including communication or behavior that caused other people to reasonably fear for their safety; and is intentional and without lawful authority (Meloy & Hoffmann, 2014, p. 3).

Assumptions

Throughout the course of the study, it was assumed that the team members at the study institution would provide honest feedback. It was possible that the seasoned members would provide more information to the survey than newer members. It was also assumed that the TAM team members and the TAM team Chairs would have different expectations of the results prior to participating in this study. Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews with TAM team chairs from southeastern public universities, I assumed that all participating institutions have an established threat assessment team. Additionally, it was assumed that participants would provide honest responses about the processes at their institution, specifically what was successful in regard to safety and their threat assessment teams and potential ways to strengthen collaborations with other institutions.

It was also assumed that following the revision of the policy, other institutions may decide to participate in future studies based on the data provided by the universities in the study. The three institutions provided insight on how they are mitigating and managing threatening behaviors on their campus. The additional institutions, who may not have an effective process or lack experience with implementing management strategies, could gain knowledge about and instructions for utilizing a more formalized protocol.

Limitations

This study included participants from the study institution and a southeastern public university system. The participants from the public university system were limited to three

institutions in the specific university system. This presented a control on the sample size but created a limit on the amount of information collected. Additionally, the participants may have not provided accurate or honest information if they felt that their participation could impact their career or current job performance. The TAM team members at the study institution may have been hesitant to provide honest feedback as a result of the size of the current team and their concern for confidentiality regarding their responses. Team members may have been concerned about sharing their feelings knowing that the chair of the team would review the material and that it could be presented to the team during meetings.

Participants involved with this study may have felt that they were unable to make comments related to their viewpoint on strengthening a team's performance. The study was asking participants to provide opinion-based information, and some participants may have been cautious of answering openly and honestly. Participants were assured their information remained confidential throughout the study, including in the analysis of the collected data.

Significance of the Study

In conducting this study, I sought to advance threat assessment team policy and effectiveness in higher education, but more specifically for the study institution. The results included a set of revisions that other universities may choose to adopt in an attempt to align threat assessment procedures with other identified institutions. Safety on college campuses continues to be an important issue in the successful functioning of the university. In addition, 2020 has brought on many racially motivated attacks that will linger onto college campuses if TAM teams are not appropriately trained from a multicultural perspective.

As a result of the data analysis, the intention was to implement a revised threat assessment policy that could reflect success at the specified institution and be shared with and

modeled by other threat assessment teams in the southeastern public university system. The study can help universities that are assessing and managing threatening behaviors in comparison to other schools in a southeastern public state system. Following the completion of the study, the results were provided to the university system office, as well as other institutions within the system, that may be seeking opportunities to review their current policy and implement identified best practices.

As a result of my professional experience in the field of threat assessment and campus safety, I was able to easily identify the specific need for additional information related to threat assessment committee member training, effective threat assessment instruments and the budgetary needs of a team. Additional information and the opportunity to conduct advanced planning ultimately could result in fewer violent incidents at universities and an increase in safety across the campus community.

Summary

The subsequent chapters provide information related to the background of the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature review, and Chapter 3 includes the research design and methodology. Additional information on the sample and data collection procedure is also provided. Chapter 3 discusses the data analysis technique used to analyze the data collected. Chapter 4 discusses participant demographics, collected data, the data analysis and results. Chapter 5 provides the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The 1999 Columbine and 2007 Virginia Tech are two of the deadliest school shootings and occurred within a span of eight years. Perpetrators who are committing acts of violence, including those in educational settings, are often misunderstood. Administrators on campus have an opportunity to identify, assess and intervene before the issues rise to a level of concern for the campus community. Intervening before an attack is critical to prevent harm to the individual of concern and to the campus community at large (Deisinger et al., 2008). To conduct a successful study related to campus safety and threat assessment teams, background research will be provided in Chapter 2 related to the theoretical foundation and applicable literature. Contingency theory is discussed as a relevant theory indicating that there is not one way to best structure and lead an organization (Kessler, 2013).

This chapter will also provide information related to procedures and situations where a behavioral intervention team may be involved in preventing a violent attack or other campus safety issue before it takes place. Although there may be several conceptual frameworks related to threat assessment that could be identified as relevant, this study discusses the 12 guiding principles identified by Deisinger et al. (2008) that can be utilized to evaluate an individual or situation. Chapter 2 will also provide information on the appropriate composition and leadership of a behavioral intervention team that will ensure success and continued campus safety. Finally, the chapter will conclude with information on different types of attackers and attacks that may take place on college campuses, along with historical examples as references.

Theoretical Foundation

In evaluating possible theoretical frameworks that may provide contextual background related to the study topic, one recognized that contingency theory provides a possible theoretical

foundation for the study. Contingency theory focuses on organizational effectiveness and the comparison of characteristics that impact the organizational structure with contingencies that reflect the structure of an organization. Contingencies may include the size of the organization and the environment. The identification of appropriate organizational contingencies leads to a better fit and higher performance. Organizations ultimately attempt to avoid misfits and adopt new organizational characteristics that impact higher levels of contingency (Donaldson, 2001).

The administrative level of those on threat assessment teams ensures that they are in a role that possesses the knowledge required to make informed decisions while maintaining efficiency. Lower hierarchical levels distribute the required information which results in the decentralization of decision-making. As a result of the organizational structure, the size of an organization does impact the overall bureaucracy. The main idea of contingency theory is that there is not one way to design or lead an organization (Kessler, 2013). Contingency theory is not like other universalistic theories, as it does not have a “one size fits all” way to organize a unit (Donaldson, 2001).

Contingency theory has been used to work through organizational issues and has now become a framework for understanding managerial and organizational issues (Kessler, 2013). Fiedler indicated that one way leadership style is revealed related to organizational issues is by how a leader views their least preferred coworker (see Figure 3) and thus is assessed as a relationship oriented or a task-oriented leader (Kessler, 2013). When all factors are taken into consideration, the effectiveness of the individual related to a high or low score on the scale may be based on the situation. Figure 4 illustrates how group performance and a low or high result on the least preferred coworker scale may impacts leader- member relation, the task structure, and positional power. Leaders are normally most effective when their style fits the context of the

Negative	Score	Positive
Unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Pleasant
Rejecting	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Accepting
Tense	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Relaxed
Cold	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Warm
Boring	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Interesting
Backbiting	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Loyal
Uncooperative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Cooperative
Hostile	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Supportive
Guarded	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Open
Insincere	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Sincere
Unkind	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Kind
Inconsiderate	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Considerate
Untrustworthy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Trustworthy
Gloomy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Cheerful
Quarrelsome	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Harmonious

Figure 3. Contingency theory leadership assessment.

Fiedler's Contingency Theory

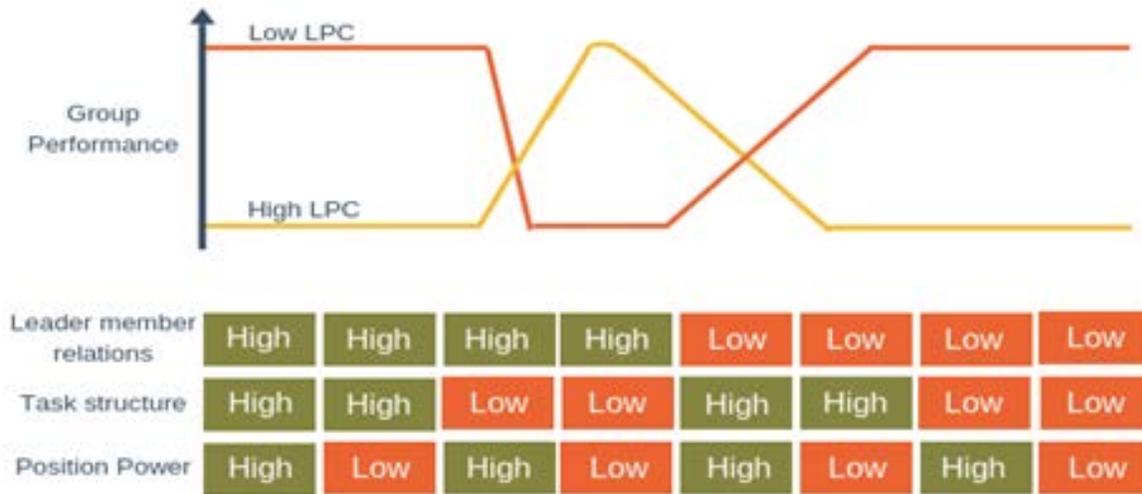


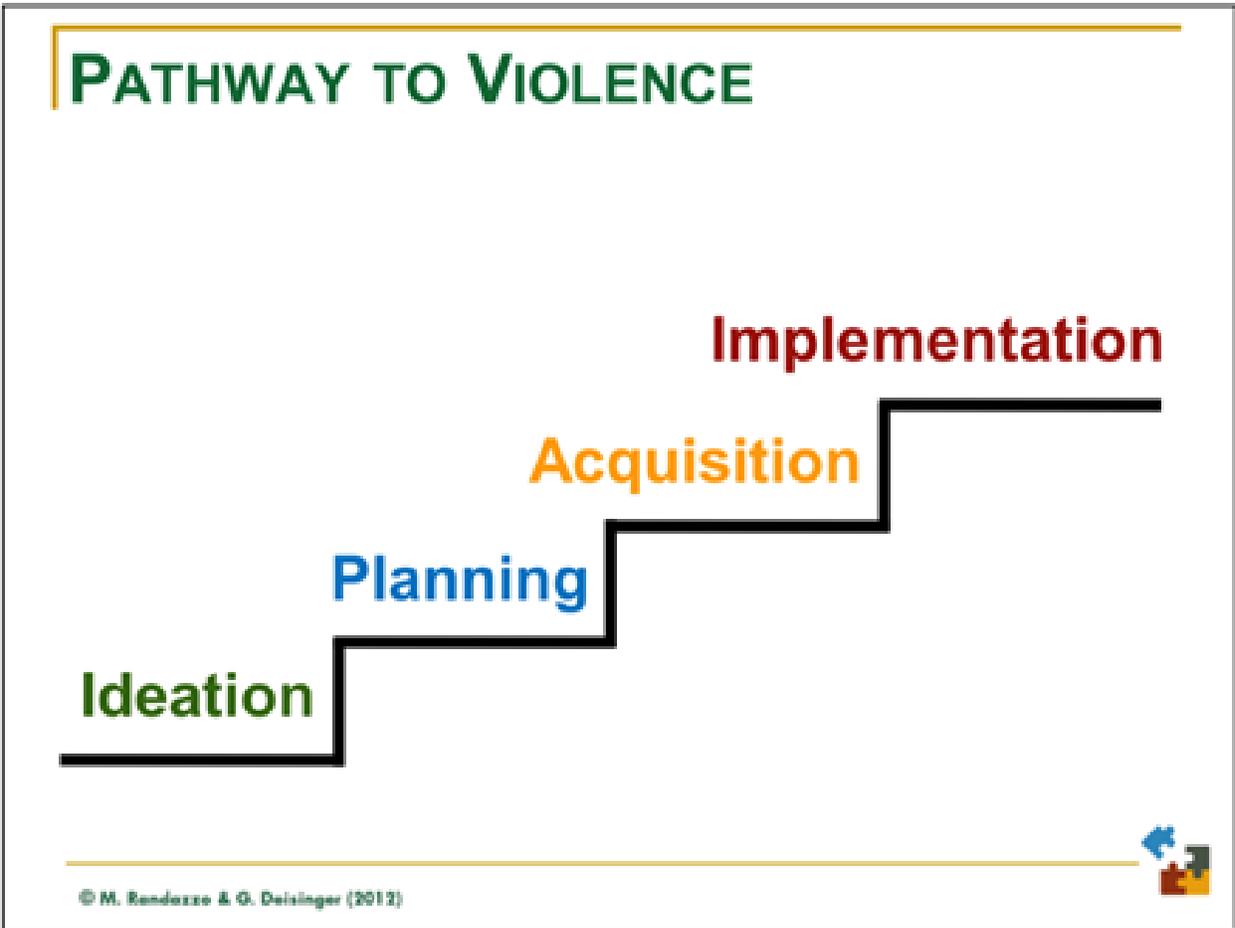
Figure 4. Fiedler's Contingency Theory.

situation (Kessler, 2013). A leader should direct and coordinate task-related group activities. How the leader and member abilities relate are the most important predictors of group performance (Fiedler, 1964). A leader is a representative of a larger group, was elected by the group and can be identified as most influential on task-related functions. The group's effectiveness will be defined by the leader's effectiveness on the assigned task at hand (Fiedler, 1964).

Conceptual Framework

As discussed in Chapter 1, Deisinger et al. (2008) identified 12 guiding principles that a team can utilize to guide threat assessment and management of threat-related cases. A perpetrator oftentimes engages in a pattern of concerning behaviors or thought processes prior to becoming violent. Ideation occurs when an individual is establishing a plan to harm others. Secondly, the planning phase occurs when the individual develops a plan to carry out an action to harm others. During the preparation stage, individuals may be gaining access to weapons or ammunition. Lastly, the individual of concern implements a plan to carry out the violent attack on others. Figure 5 illustrates the pathway to violence for an individual of concern (Deisinger et al., 2008).

A threat assessment should not label an individual as "violent," but should evaluate whether the person in question poses a threat to themselves or the campus community. Another factor to consider relates to the individual of concern's upcoming days, weeks and months to assess if the possibility for acting with violent tendencies could increase or decrease. The environment and the target of their grievance can also serve as other factors that may influence violence. A team should consider all factors that could impact the risk of violence. When considering these factors, teams must corroborate the evidence or information provided with



Note. Retrieved from Threat Assessment Resources International (2012).

Figure 5. Pathway to violence.

multiple sources, if that is a possible option. Threat assessment teams should have a skeptical mindset when weighing credibility of each source and utilizing the provided information to assess if the individuals pose a risk. A team should always verify provided information to maintain an objective view of the entire situation (Deisinger et al., 2008).

As noted in research, there is not a specific “profile” of behavior that the team should consider when assessing risks. Instead, a team should focus on certain kinds of behavior that an individual has exhibited and evaluate the situation to determine if those behaviors may result in a risk to self or the campus community (Deisinger et al., 2008). Threat assessment teams focus on the reported facts and behavior, which may prevent the team from profiling the student or situation. Collaboration is key throughout the process of a threat assessment (Deisinger et al., 2008). A team should be able to identify individuals of concern, collect information, determine the risk and develop a case management plan to reduce the threat. A team should coordinate efforts among team members to maximize the implementation of the recommended threat management plan (Deisinger et al., 2008). A threat to campus can be identified as (a) posing a threat, (b) making a threat, (c) posing a threat when an individual engages in behavior that is indicative of a violent act, and (d) an individual who has not clearly made a threat but can still pose a threat to a campus community (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Threat assessment teams must think critically related to the well-being and safety of victims. As a result, considerable time may be devoted to managing fear when no direct threat has been identified (Deisinger et al., 2008). When this occurs, teams should focus on managing the fear instead of the possible risk posed. The earlier a behavior is identified, the easier it is to intervene to reduce possible escalation (Deisinger et al., 2008). Threat assessment teams should have the appropriate reporting mechanisms and consultation should be available, if necessary.

The ultimate goal is safety. Teams can implement consequences of said behavior in order to de-escalate behavior. Although action plans could impact others and could be perceived as a trigger to the individual of concern, teams should consider all facets and impacts the intervention plan could have on the individual of concern and the campus community (Deisinger et al., 2008).

According to the Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams by Deisinger et al. (2008), a threat assessment team should have a written statement that is publicly available. This statement should provide a clear understanding of the team's goals and purposes to the campus community. The team should have a strategic plan of how the team plans to accomplish its mission (Deisinger et al., 2008). The plan should mirror the institution's campus-wide safety plan; and the threat assessment team should consider principles that will assess a posed threat and how to manage the threat (Deisinger et al., 2008).

A threat assessment team is comprised of many individuals representing various departments on campus to maximize team collaboration (Deisinger et al., 2008, p. 35). Representatives from student life, administration, and members of the faculty contribute vital information to the threat assessment team. Members of the team are often in a position to contribute to a case based on their position within the institution and their specific access to the identified individual or situation (Deisinger et al., 2008). A team also should consider using external agencies and continue relationships as these are critical partnerships (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Literature Review

In preparing to conduct this study and collect and analyze the data, it was important to review relevant literature. This allowed for the evaluation of previous studies, contextual information related to the topic, and guidance on the direction of the study. Following a review

of the literature, information is presented in this chapter regarding Behavioral Intervention Teams, including the structure and protocols related to reported incidents or other issues. Information also is provided pertaining to Threat Assessment Teams, including the structure, as well as the team leader. In order to understand the context of the study, it was important to examine campus safety policies, the types of attacks that may occur on college campuses, and the specific system policy relevant to this particular study. Information is provided with regard to the current threat assessment policy at the study institution as compared to the policy at Virginia Tech, an institution which suffered a significant violent incident on their campus.

Campuses established teams focused on safety issues before the mass shooting in 2007, but they mostly functioned to help at-risk students and used only well-known campus services (Van Brunt, 2012). The teams served as a form of “parents” to students of the university. Services also were provided to students who may have encountered a natural disaster, fire or other significant situation that may affect their successful participation as a college student (Van Brunt, 2012). The University of South Carolina established one of the first behavioral intervention teams to identify students who may be moving toward a crisis or self-injurious behaviors (Van Brunt, 2012). Behavioral intervention is a way for university officials to share concern for the individual and intervene before the behavior escalates. Behavioral intervention focuses on intervention strategies to address the concerning behavior (Van Brunt, 2012).

Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

Targeted violence towards self or others in a higher education setting is often preventable (Sokolow et al., 2014). There is not a profile that can predict if an individual will escalate from stalking to physical harm or if a particular campus will be involved in the next active shooter incident (Bennett, 2015). However, a behavioral intervention team can identify and assess the

risk factors that prevent future violence (Bennett, 2015). The purpose of a behavioral intervention team (BIT) is to have concern for the individual, prevent future harm and intervene before the behavior becomes disruptive to the campus community. BIT focuses on identifying behaviors of concern and providing intervention strategies and options to address the behavior (Van Brunt, 2012). The BIT has three functions that are essential to prevention and intervention. The team gathers information, reviews the data collectively and assesses the risk, and develops an intervention plan that is appropriate for the individual of concern (Sokolow et al., 2014).

For a BIT to be successful in receiving reports, the team must be proactive in educating the community by advertising what should be reported to the BIT. Members of the BIT possess critical information for at-risk students and those students who may become at risk (Sokolow et al., 2014). Behavioral intervention teams typically experience a significant challenge in operating a successful pathway of communication to bring in information for committee members. Most referrals are provided by a close acquaintance of the individual, which may include a family member, faculty, or student leader (Bennett, 2015). The team must remain diligent in educating the community to inform them of anticipated or concerning behavior. The BIT will commonly use a threat assessment tool to assess the level of risk posed to the individual and the campus community (Sokolow et al., 2014).

Part of the team's responsibility includes responding to the individuals who submit concerns to the team. Often, faculty or staff members are looking for guidance on how to address future interactions with the individual of concern. The BIT can provide suggestions and office management techniques to address those concerns (Sokolow et al., 2014). It is also important that team members have the knowledge to recognize potential symptoms when an individual is exhibiting concerning behavior. Members should share all pertinent information with the group,

so the team can compare and analyze incoming concerns and patterns of behavior. Some behaviors of concern must be acted upon immediately, while others can wait as other immediate concerns may take precedence (Sokolow et al., 2014).

Triaging Reports

The behavioral intervention team is tasked with triaging the reports received. The higher level of risk to the student or campus, the more attentive members of the team will be in reacting to and addressing those concerns. For a team to view the whole perspective of a student and any related circumstances, an “investigation” of the student’s life needs to occur (Sokolow et al., 2014). This includes investigating social media, blogs, concerning messages, police reports, admissions records, conduct history, and any other relative details. Collecting this information provides the team with a broader perspective in order to assess the individual of concern. The best way to assess a threat is gathering as much information as possible about the individual of concern. Higher education environments are data rich and the threat assessment team could easily gather information on the student’s age, transcript, location on campus, residence hall room, hometown, organizations, counseling background, parental contact information, social media, etc. (Sokolow et al., 2014; Van Brunt, 2012). Once the data has been retrieved, the team can assess the individual alongside the threat assessment tool to view the overall risk level. Behavioral intervention threat assessment tools are used to evaluate the threat of potential mass violence (Bennett, 2015). The tool will help analyze where the student’s behavior is likely to lead and any patterns that may indicate that a student may be capable of violence (Sokolow et al., 2014).

Intervention Efforts

BIT also coordinates intervention efforts to help students exhibiting concerning behaviors. A range of resources could be recommended to a student, including counseling, an educational conduct meeting, disability support, external agencies or health services (Sokolow et al., 2014). The team selects the most effective and available resources based on the presenting concerns. It is the team's responsibility to follow up and follow through on intervention efforts suggested to the student of concern. The team will then monitor the student to assess if the individual of concern is following up with the appropriate resources as they should, and the behavior is now considered to be at baseline. If the behavior becomes problematic, then the team will have to re-address the new and concerning behaviors within the context of the original behaviors (Sokolow et al., 2014). The individual of concern may need additional supportive resources in order to succeed at the school and the team will continue to monitor a student's behavior to ensure their safety and the safety of the campus community (Sokolow et al., 2014). Threat assessment should be integrated within the work of the behavior intervention team to allow the team to be proactive and preventative. If the behavioral intervention team can assess these concerns proactively and effectively, then the threat assessment team will not have to convene as regularly to discuss the concerns (Sokolow et al., 2014).

Threat Assessment Team Composition

Van Brunt (2012) suggests that campuses make their own decisions about the best suited team members for behavioral intervention teams (p. 53). In 2009, the Campus Safety and Security Project included teams with representatives from campus safety, counseling, campus police, health services, academic affairs and human resources. BITs should have no more than eight members, unless there is a clear justification for expansion (Sokolow et al., 2014).

The membership should remain consistent so that the same group of individuals are meeting regularly and evaluating available information (Sokolow et al., 2014). Teams should typically include an equal number of faculty members and staff who are directly involved on campus and have the ability to make decisions if necessary (Van Brunt, 2012). Sokolow et al. (2014) states that the behavioral intervention team should identify a senior leader in student affairs or the dean of student's office to serve as the permanent chair to increase consistency. The team leader also should be in a position where it would be appropriate for them to encourage students to complete psychological and threat assessments as determined by the BIT (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 54).

In order to maintain consistency and increase success, the behavioral intervention team must continue assessing the individual interventions of students, as well as the overall effectiveness of the team and its members. According to Bennett (2015), a team should not measure its success solely by the absence of violence, but instead by the balance of well-trusted members and the experience of the team. A successful team should be well-connected to campus to allow for the best opportunity to have knowledge of the most significant and relevant issues that are happening around campus. The team would be considered ineffective if the members lacked the ability to act quickly in making necessary decisions based on the information received (Van Brunt, 2012).

Although it may seem counter-intuitive, if a team is receiving a significant number of referrals, the community can rest assured that the team is making knowledgeable assessments and steps are being taken to reduce the risk of violence to campus (Bennett, 2015). In an effort to continue to provide the best opportunities for safety on campus, the team should be provided annual training on current research of risk factors that can lead toward a pathway of violence

(Bennett, 2015). It is recommended also that the team create an annual report to share with the community, allowing them to review their current goals and establish new goals for the upcoming academic year (Sokolow et al., 2014, p. 8).

According to the Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams by Deisinger et al. (2008), a threat assessment team should have a written statement that is publicly available. This statement should provide a clear understanding of the team's goals and purposes within the campus community. The team should have a strategic plan identifying the details and plans necessary to accomplish its mission (Deisinger et al., 2008). The plan should mirror the institution's campus-wide safety plan; and the threat assessment team should consider principles that will assess a posed threat and how to manage the threat (Deisinger et al., 2008).

A threat assessment team is comprised of many individuals from various departments on campus to maximize team collaboration (Deisinger et al., 2008, p. 35). Representatives from different departments on campus, including student life, administration, and academic faculty contribute vital information to the threat assessment team. It is the intention of the specified composition of the team that members are often in positions to contribute to a case based on their role within the institution (Deisinger et al., 2008). Additionally, it would not be out of line for the threat assessment team to consider using external agencies to assist with situations; it is important to continue these relationships as they can be critical partnerships (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Threat Assessment Team Leader

Each threat assessment team should have a leader of the team or chairperson who will be responsible for running team meetings, assigning responsibilities and ensuring the threat assessment and management process is conducted successfully (Deisinger et al., 2008). The

threat assessment team should select a team leader with principles, who may often be skeptical, but also very familiar with threat assessment. Research indicates that the team leader should not be the director of the counseling center as this could result in a conflict of interest (Deisinger et al., 2008).

The team leader should have a good sense of judgement, objectiveness and thoroughness throughout the assessment and case management process (Deisinger et al., 2008). Van Brunt (2012) suggests the leader should possess a certain level of charisma and have earned a certain level of respect from the greater campus community and team members (p. 56). Sokolow et al. (2014) add that the leader should have authority over student conduct, including the ability to impose an interim suspension or the opportunity to mandate a psychological assessment (p. 9). The leader should be the primary liaison between the team and the student conduct office and ultimately determines the team's response (Sokolow et al., 2014, p. 9). The leader will be ineffective if they do not have the ability to persuade and motivate others, while earning trust from team members and the campus-at-large in order to manage the team (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 56).

History of Campus Safety Policies

Congress implemented the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act in 1990 and amended the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016). The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act was a requirement of all postsecondary institutions participating in HEA's Title IV student financial assistance program to disclose of any statistics of campus crime and security information. Title IV includes any postsecondary institution receiving financial assistance programs administered by the Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary

Education, 2016). The Title IV financial programs are Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Perkins Loans, the Federal Direct Loan Program, the Federal Work-Study program, the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership and Pell Grants. In 1998, amendments renamed the Crime Awareness and Security Act of 1990 to the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics. The “Clery” act was named for a student who was raped and murdered in her residence hall room in 1986 (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016).

In March of 2013, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) was introduced. VAWA requires institutions to disclose statistics on dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence, hate crimes, and prevention and awareness programs for students and employees of the institution (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016). Institutions should implement programs to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and awareness programs for incoming students and employees (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016).

Each campus should have a set of procedures for victims to follow if a crime happens on campus and procedures for institutional disciplinary actions of cases involving dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In all instances, victims should be offered a range of protective measures, a description of each disciplinary procedure used by the institution, a standard of evidence used in a disciplinary proceeding, and possible sanctions following the proceeding (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016).

Campus officials who are conducting disciplinary proceedings should receive annual training to ensure equal opportunities are provided for the accuser and accused. The accuser and accused can select an advisor and other individuals to be present for a disciplinary proceeding (U.S.

Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016). The Higher Education Act of 1965 is the law that governs all administration of federal educational programs, however, the HEA only refers to the Clery Act, safety, and security related requirements that fall under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2016).

Types of Campus Attacks (Targeted vs. Random)

According to Langman (2015), college attacks are more distinctly targeted or random. Targeted violence is defined as a situation when the perpetrator and their target(s) are identified prior to the attack. However, intimate partner violence is an anomaly and likely to be spontaneous and the threat assessment team is not likely to intervene (Deisinger et al., 2008). A threat assessment team could intervene if a partner becomes suicidal or depressed after the relationship ends and stalking behavior is involved. If concerns are shared with the university threat assessment team in a timely manner, then it is more likely the threat assessment team will be able to intervene (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Many perpetrators of a targeted attack often raise flags among multiple people they come into contact with, including professors, counselors, or friends (Deisinger et al., 2008). Often times, the information is not shared collaboratively, and individuals only have pieces of the puzzle. These individuals do not communicate, or may not even know each other, so no one person has the full scope of the individual of concern (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Lake (2007) suggests that dangerous people rarely show all of their “signs” to one person or a group of people on campus. A resident advisor may know that the individual of concern is isolated, a professor may read an alarming writing assignment, the campus police may be aware of any criminal activity, and the counseling center may have knowledge related to the individual

missing appointments (Lake, 2007). According to Langman (2015), Gang Lu, Valery Fabrikant and Robert Flores are all identified as examples of individuals who committed acts of targeted campus violence, and they all felt wronged by university authorities. Langman (2015) suggests that Lu, Frabrikant and Flores felt they were all making the world a better place by murdering those who wronged them. These three individuals were also identified as having difficulty accepting failure, disappointment, or rejection.

In some instances, individuals with psychopathic tendencies may fool and charm others; however, the three individuals identified above did not attempt to impress others (Langman, 2015). In a concerning situation, not one person or sole department is typically able to solve the complexity related to the behaviors of an individual of concern. Targeted college shooters may have a long-standing grievance relating to an issue with their school and as a result, target a specific person or people in their attacks (Langman, 2015). Lake (2007) recognizes that colleges must manage a successful team in order to conduct successful collaborate on a multi-faceted level and ensure the safety of the campus community and students.

Langman (2015) suggests the rationale for random attacks may be far less tangible in comparison to targeted violence. In 1966, Charles Whitman killed 15 and wounded 32 people at the University of Texas. Wayne Lo killed two and wounded four people at Simon's Rock College in December of 1992. Whitman was shot by police and Lo contacted the police to report himself and is still in prison serving two life sentences (Langman, 2015). Whitman and Lo possessed the ability to deceive others, which is typically identified as a key element in distinguishing these two individuals as random attackers rather than those who commit targeted violence. Whitman and Lo suggested they both experienced violence in their childhood home that may have been traumatic; however, researchers have indicated that neither Whitman nor Lo

grew up in a low-income family, broken home or experienced relationships with any substance-abusing family members (Langman, 2015).

Seung Cho is another individual who is considered to be a random attacker; one of the quotes from his manifesto is, “Oh the happiness I could have had mingling among you hedonists, being counted as one of you” (Langman, 2015, p. 110). Cho had a grievance with “Professor Bean” at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University but attacked people in a building where he lacked an affiliation and was unrelated to his previously specified grievance (Langman, 2015). Researchers have identified additional reasons that may have resulted in Cho’s random attack, including being rejected by women, harassing women, being removed from a classroom due to misbehavior, and other behaviors that were reported. According to Langman (2015), Cho would be considered a psychotic shooter focused on a random population. Cho was never diagnosed with a specific mental illness; however, Langman (2015) speculates that the severity of the psychosis experienced by Cho may suggest that he was suffering from undiagnosed schizophrenia.

The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force

The Virginia Tech shooting incident in April of 2007 caused the President of a southeastern university system to examine the safety of the schools within the system. The president wanted to ensure the southeastern public state system was doing everything possible to reduce violent crimes on campus. By May 2007, a University Safety Task Force was implemented in the southeastern public university system (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007).

The task force considers the core values of the system: freedom of speech; expression; and the physical openness of our campus communities, while providing safety for our campuses.

A task force in 2005 found that the crime rate of the southeastern public state campus was one-fourth the rate when compared to the rest of the state (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007). The 2007 task force began examining efforts to prevent crime by altering the behavior of university employees and students. Altering behavior would include being responsive to mental health needs; improving the campus infrastructure; and building campus capacity in response to an emergency. The task force recognized how the 17 southeastern public campus were different demographically and geographically. These campus differences could impact the types of threats each campus receives (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007). The task force recommended that each campus utilize its own resources to address threats and challenges that each individual campus faces. The task force understood preventing crime would look different at each campus and that prevention, threat assessment, communication and preparation must be a continual, ongoing process (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007).

The task force recommended that campus leaders establish a culture of concern and caring for others within the campus community. The values of caring and concern should be articulated at the highest level of administration, including the Chancellor and Board of Trustees. The task force deliberated ways to present concerns on campus and grouped them into three primary categories: (a) preventing violent crimes; (b) building the capacity to respond to emergency events on campus; and (c) building the institution's capacity to engage in emergency and disaster planning (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007).

The main category related to this study is preventing violent crimes on university campuses. The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President (2007) suggested that in order to prevent major crimes on campuses, institutions should have adequate resources to address threatening behaviors and to respond to any mental health conditions. Campuses should have threat assessment teams that are trained to differentiate between normal and unusual behavior, as well as behaviors that may lead to a potential threat to the campus community (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007). Team members should have access to training, and counselors should have appropriate credentialing to provide students the mental health treatment they may require. Each threat assessment team should have a case worker assigned to students of concern and the case worker must follow-through with the appropriate referrals for these students (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007).

The task force suggested five other safety related recommendations to each campus outside of threat assessment teams. Each campus should receive crime prevention training, faculty and staff should understand guidelines on sharing concerning student information, safety designs should be created in the residence halls and buildings due to the large concern revolving around drugs and alcohol, and to focus more on increasing campus workplace safety (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007). The southeastern public university system is unable to eliminate all crime on campuses, but it can be diligent in efforts for prevention. The 17 campuses are unique and each one should consider how to address their own challenges. The task force believed that if schools follow the recommendations, the campuses will be safer for students and employees to learn and teach in (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007).

University Threat Assessment Team Policies

The Policy at the Study Institution

The study institution implemented their University Behavioral Concerns Team (UBCT) policy (see Appendix C) in 2011 by order of the Chancellor of the university. UBCT serves as the university's threat assessment team. UBCT was established to review, collect and advise upon information related behaviors of concern exhibited by a group, student, faculty, staff member, or unaffiliated individuals in the campus community. The team serves in an advisory capacity and does not have the authority to impose requirements on groups, student, faculty, staff members, or unaffiliated individuals of concern.

Team members were selected based on their expertise and are trained in threat assessment. Team members include representatives from Student Affairs, Risk Management, Academic Affairs, Office for Equity and Diversity, Residence Life, faculty, University Police Department and the Counseling Center. A representative from the University Attorney's Office may serve in an advisory capacity. Within parameters of confidentiality, team members review all available evidence, speaks with individuals of concern, and makes recommendations to impacted university departments and serves as an interdisciplinary advice to administrators. Based on their training and expertise, it is strongly encouraged for administrators to consider their recommendations are acted upon quickly. The team supports all departments and individuals on campus and evaluates any concerning individuals within the university community.

Virginia Tech Policy

Virginia Tech's policy was implemented by a set of standards from the Virginia General Assembly. The policy is under Title 23.1. Institutions of Higher Education; Other Educational

and Cultural Institutions, II. Students and Campus, and in Chapter 8. Health and Campus Safety under Campus Safety; General Provisions. The title of the policy is 23.1-805. Violence Prevention Committee; threat assessment team. The code indicates that each public institution of higher education shall establish policies and procedures for the prevention of campus violence and should include assessment and interventions with individuals who pose a threat to the safety of the campus community (Code of Virginia, 2019).

The committee includes representatives from student affairs, law enforcement, human resources, counseling services, residence life and others, and consults with the university legal department as needed. Each committee will develop a clear statement of mission, membership and leadership and made available to the campus community (Code of Virginia, 2019).

Committees should “(i) provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a physical threat to the community; (ii) identify members of the campus community to whom threatening behavior should be reported; (iii) establish policies and procedures that outline circumstances under which all faculty and staff are required to report behavior that may represent a physical threat to the community, provided that such report is consistent with state and federal law; and (iv) establish policies and procedures for (a) the assessment of individuals whose behavior may present a threat, (b) appropriate means of intervention with such individuals, and (c) sufficient means of action, including interim suspension, referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment, medical separation to resolve potential physical threats, and notification of family members or guardians, or both, unless such notification would prove harmful to the individual in question, consistent with state and federal law (Code of Virginia, 2019).”

Each team will implement assessment, intervention and action policies set forth by the violence prevention committee. The team should establish relationships and utilize existing relationships with local, and state law enforcement and mental health agencies to expedite the assessment of an intervention with individuals who pose a threat of violence to others. The threat assessment team may obtain criminal history and health record information (Code of Virginia, 2019). No team members should redisclose criminal history or health information outside of the threat assessment team (Code of Virginia, 2019).

The President is responsible for appointment of the TAM team members and the Chair according to the 23.1-805 Code of Virginia policy. The team reports to the University Safety and Security Policy Committee and includes members from the Police Department, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Human Resources and a clinic psychological from the university's counseling center. Legal Counsel serves as an advisor to the team. The team is able to use judgment to assess, mitigate, and follow policies for individuals whose behaviors may present a threat to the safety of the campus community. The team collaborates with law enforcement and mental health agencies to expedite assessment and intervention. The threat assessment team develops comprehensive fact-based assessments of students, employees, or other individuals who may present a threat to the university. The TAM team can take timely and appropriate action that is consistent with the judgement of the team, university policy and applicable law.

Summary and Conclusions

In conducting a study related to campus safety and threat assessment teams, it was important to examine the underlying theoretical context, as well as the relevant literature. In reviewing the available literature, it should be noted that a behavioral intervention team can intervene in situations involving individuals of concern before their behavior may result in a

disruption or safety concern for the campus community (Van Brunt, 2012). Additionally, Deisinger et al. (2008) identified 12 guiding principles that can be utilized to evaluate an individual who may be under review by a threat assessment and management team. Chapter 2 also provided information on the appropriate composition and leadership of the BIT to ensure success and increased safety. A review of the 2007 University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President was provided to give an overview of the southeastern public university recommendations regarding safety. Finally, information related to different types of attackers and attacks that may take place on college campuses, along with historical examples as references was presented.

Chapter 3 provides details regarding the selected methodology and research design, including the specific reasoning for selecting mixed methods research for this study. In addition, Chapter 3 includes additional details regarding the instruments and data collection procedures, along with the intended data analysis technique. Chapter 4 provides the analysis of the data collected and Chapter 5 includes the discussion of the results of the data collection and analysis, as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes information regarding the research method chosen, the participants, the instruments used in the study, how data was collected and analyzed, and methodological assumptions and limitations. In order to complete this study, current TAM team members at the study institution were surveyed and three threat assessment team chairs from other southeast public universities were interviewed via semi-structured interviews. The current threat assessment teams and management processes at the selected institutions were examined, including investigating each team's threat assessment policy, processes, member training, assessment tools and budget. During the interview I had the opportunity to inquire about how they acquired funding, the use of best practice threat assessment tools and specialized member trainings. The data collected was analyzed and used to update the current threat assessment team policy to be implemented at the study institution.

The significance of this study involved the opportunity to revise a threat assessment policy that can reflect success at the specified institution and be modeled by other threat assessment teams in the southeastern public university system. The identified university system is made up of 17 institutions, and following the completion of the study, I will provide the results to the system office and any of the institutions that may be seeking opportunities to review their current practices and implement identified best practices.

Research Questions

The following research questions and sub-questions will guide the data collection for the proposed study:

1. What is involved in the development of a formalized threat assessment program?

- a. What processes are necessary to create a successful team that focuses on threat assessment?
 - b. What financial support is required for the implementation and on-going support of the team?
 - c. What specialized member trainings utilized by a university team will effectively assist in reviewing and managing threat assessment cases?
 - d. What best-practice threat assessment tools utilized by a university team will effectively assess and manage campus threat cases?
2. What is the perception of threat assessment team members related to their role on the team and the part they play in campus safety?
 3. What factors related to threat assessment and a threat assessment policy ensure successful implementation, as well as improved safety on a college campus?

Theoretical Framework

Intended interventions are necessary in order to implement a planned organizational change and achieve success following implementation. It is vital to encourage new practices within an organization as members may be resistant to change (Battilano & Casciaro, 2012). In the 1940s, leadership research shifted from personal characteristics to behaviors of leaders. Fiedler's contingency theory of leadership effectiveness is one of the leadership models considered to be related to organizational structure (Witzel, 2006). Fiedler's model measures the interaction between personality and situation control in predicting leadership performance (Witzel, 2006). A leader's effectiveness is measured by the contingency of the situation or between the leader's favorableness and style, "situational control." Fiedler states that there is no "ideal" leader. Leadership can be effective if it fits the situation at hand (Witzel, 2006).

Three situational components have been identified that determine the situational control or favorableness of a situation, the positional power, task structure and the relationship between the leader and subordinates (Witzel, 2006). Group development can improve the relationships between the leader and subordinates, but the situational components may increase or decrease. Even taking into account situational components that may increase or decrease, Fiedler (1964) suggests that personality is relatively stable. In order for a leader to improve their effectiveness, it requires changing the situation to fit the leader (Witzel, 2006).

Fiedler (1964) suggests that stress is a key determinant of leadership effectiveness. A further distinction is made between the leader's supervisors' stress, stress related to subordinates, or the situation (Witzel, 2006). Furthermore, in stressful situations, leaders tend to dwell on stressful relations instead of performing at their job responsibilities. Intelligence is used more often in less stressful situations. Experience can impair a leader's performance in low stress situations but will increase a leader's performance in low-stress circumstances (Witzel, 2006). Fiedler (1964) suggests that altering the leadership situation can capitalize on a leader's strengths in stressful situations. Fiedler was one of the first to create a leadership model that combines context and personality of a leader (Witzel, 2006).

Study Design and Rationale

The selected research design ensured that information related to the current status of the threat assessment team, as well as best practice information was collected for comparison. The comparison allowed for identification of the changes that should be made to the current threat assessment team at the identified institution.

In order to collect the information necessary to answer the research questions, a mixed method research design was determined to be the appropriate selection. Two instruments were

used to collect the data, a semi-structured interview and an online survey, resulting in both quantitative and qualitative information that could be analyzed. The semi-structured interviews sought to collect qualitative data through open-ended questions. Qualitative research was appropriate for this research study, as it was necessary to collect data that allowed for analysis of the experiences and perceptions of the current team, similarly with the information collected via semi-structured interviews by phone with chairs of other threat assessment teams within a southeastern public university system. Qualitative research provides exploration and understanding of the meaning a group of individuals ascribes to a social or human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research involved asking questions of participants, gathering data, analyzing themes and making interpretations of the data. This allowed for more flexibility when constructing the final written report. Qualitative research focuses more on individual meaning and the importance of reporting all complexities of a situation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research is exploratory, and researchers use this approach to probe topics when variables and theories are unknown (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Table 1 identified the specific components of the study that allowed the collection of data to answer the research questions.

The online survey included both open- and close-ended questions and resulted in the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative research typically involves closed-ended questions, a predetermined approach and numerical data. Quantitative research may or may not include open-ended questions also, as it did in this particular study. Quantitative approaches observe and measure information numerically (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In order to find the relevant information for this study that would allow for answers to the research questions, it was important to collect both rich data and numerical data based on the

Table 1

Corresponding Data Source to Research Question

Research Question	Data Source
1. What is involved in the development of a formalized threat assessment program?	Survey questions: 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 Interview questions: 4, 5, 6, 10, 11
a. What processes are necessary to create a successful team that focuses on threat assessment?	Survey questions: 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 Interview questions: 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11
b. What specialized member trainings utilized by a university team will affectively assist in reviewing and managing threat assessment cases?	Survey questions: 1, 2, 8, 9 Interview questions: 4, 5, 6
c. What financial support is required for the implementation and on-going support of the team?	Survey questions: 11, 12 Interview questions: 12, 13
d. What best-practice threat assessment tools utilized by a university team will effectively assess and manage campus threat cases?	Interview questions: 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13
2. What is the perception of threat assessment team members related to their role on the team and the part they play in campus safety?	Survey questions: 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13 Interview questions: 4, 5, 10, 11
3. What factors related to threat assessment and a threat assessment policy ensure successful implementation, as well as improved safety, on a college campus?	Survey questions: 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 Interview questions: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

relevant information from the July 2019 survey, the team survey, and the semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research allowed for engagement in open-ended questions that permitted the conversation to divert into other sub-topics if relevant, while the quantitative data that was collected provided additional details about the participants and other responses to the research questions.

In a mixed methods research design, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysis results in rationale for combining the two to provide answers to the questions guiding the study. Additionally, a mixed methods approach was appropriate for this research study as the data was collected from two separate populations utilizing a survey and a remote semi-structured interview. The survey data provided a baseline for the current status of the threat assessment team and policies at the study institution. During the interviews, I collected and recorded information based on recordings, as well as took any field notes during the interview as appropriate.

Contingency theory was most appropriate for this study as information was collected from the semi-structured interviews with southeastern public university TAM team chairs and TAM team members from the study institution. The data analysis indicated that the effectiveness of the team may be contingent upon the leader, group size and environment. Contingency theory was taken into account while implementing the updated policy with the threat assessment team at the study institution, as well as reviewing additional data collected from team members following implementation. The effectiveness of the new best practice implementations will be dependent upon the leader (Fielder, 1964). Contingency theory and the appropriate use of best-practice strategies may lead the threat assessment team to higher performance and greater success at the study institution.

Population

The southeastern university system is comprised of 16 universities and a school of science and mathematics. The 16 universities and one high school are diverse in purpose and origin (The University of the North Carolina System, 2019). Five of the 16 universities are historically black institutions, and one college was originally founded to educate American Indians. Some of the 16 institutions began as high schools, while others were created to prepare students for teaching, performing arts or technology (The University of the North Carolina System, 2019).

The southeastern university Board of Governors (BOG) is the policy-making body of the system. The BOG manages, supervises, and governs all affairs of the 17 institutions. Each institution is headed by a chancellor and eight Board of Trustees members elected by the BOG (The University of the North Carolina System, 2019). The Board of Trustees members hold extensive control over academics and other campus operations. The state system has an on-going commitment to public service, research, health education and other programs that reap social and economic benefits for the southeastern state (The University of the North Carolina System, 2019).

Participants involved in the study were from the collegiate-level institutions that make up the southeastern university system. Data was collected from two separate populations, the current members of the threat assessment team at the study institution and threat assessment team leaders from other institutions within the system. Regarding the participants identified for data collection from the assessment team leaders, each held a “Chair” position on a university threat assessment team of their campus. Each participant varied in gender, race, threat assessment certifications, professional background, years of experience in higher education, and years of experience in

threat assessment. Each participant also varied in professional positions held during their careers, including, but not limited to, student affairs, law enforcement, legal, and risk assessment. A sample size of three participants holding a Chair position of a university threat assessment team from a southeastern public university system was able to provide the appropriate amount of information prior to saturation.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

In order to collect the information relative to this identified focus of practice, two distinct populations were identified. Team members at the study institution were asked to complete an online survey and remote interviews by phone were conducted with the TAM team chairs from other institutions. It was also necessary to utilize two data collection techniques to ensure the applicable information was collected. Information regarding the current state of the threat assessment team at the study institution was collected via survey sent to the current team members through their campus email addresses. The information related to successful threat assessment teams and policies was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews.

Convenience sampling allowed for the online survey to be sent to all members of the study institution's threat assessment team. The online survey was sent to all 15 members of the team to complete. Although convenience sampling was less desirable, it was utilized because respondents are selected based on their convenience and availability, and in this case their participation as a member of the threat assessment team (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The semi-structured interview included three participants from the 16 southeastern state public university system colleges. The selection of the participants was based on their professional background in threat assessment, specialized trainings, and the standardized threat assessment processes at their respective universities. Convenience sampling was used to collect

information-rich processes in threat assessment within the southeastern university college system (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Interview-based studies, along with others collecting information via open-ended questions, involving a smaller sample size are more typical in social sciences (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). A smaller number of participants allowed for the creation and facilitation of a closer association with the participants and enhanced validity in a natural setting.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were utilized to collect the data in this study: an online survey and semi-structured interview. The online survey was administered via email to participants as a Qualtrics survey and the remote semi-structured interviews were conducted by phone.

The online survey had a total of 13 questions. The survey first prompted the participant to electronically sign the informed consent before being able to answer question 1. The first question asked the participant to select what role they play on the TAM team at the study institution. The second asked the participants how many years they had served in higher education and question three asked how many years they had served on the TAM team at the study institution. The first three questions were multiple choice. The next questions referred to training. Question four asked participants what type of training they received as a new member of the TAM team. The fifth question asked participants to recall the last training they received as a member of the TAM team. The next question asked each participant their opinion on how often they felt they should be receiving training as a team member.

Questions seven through thirteen asked participants to review the study institution's threat assessment team policy before answering the remainder of the questions. Question seven asked participants if they noticed any discrepancies between the TAM teams' daily practices and

what the policy indicates. The eighth question asked participants to identify strengths in the current standard practice. Next, participants were asked about the team composition based on the indicated policy, as well as who made up the current team. The eleventh question asked participants about their opinions on the appropriate number of representatives on the team. Question 12 asked participants if there were any parts of the policy they believed were not applicable related to the current team, and finally, the last question asked the team members about their overall experience serving as a TAM team member. The survey took no longer than approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The remote semi-structured interview by phone contained a general structure with questions intended to guide the interview. This ensured that all main questions were addressed. The interview included specific open-ended questions but left time for discussion of additional, relevant topics if they were brought up during the interview. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), survey research provided quantitative or descriptive numeric data related to attitudes, trends, and/or opinions of a population by studying a sample. In qualitative research, I conducted face-to-face interviews that are normally open ended and unstructured, and this tends to elicit opinions from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Questionnaires and structured interviews were used for data collection with the intent of generalizing a small sample for a specific population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The interview protocol can be found in Appendix E. The interview began by asking the participant about themselves and their background in the form of an open-ended question. An open-ended question allowed a participant to talk about him or herself and refrain from possible feelings of alienation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The first question asked the participant about their career path to threat assessment. The second question pertained to any prior threat

assessment training before the participant began their current role. At this point, it was appropriate to use probes to ask for more information or an explanation regarding the response related to threat assessment training, as this is an important aspect of the overall study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The third question asked participants to discuss threat assessment trainings they had attended or any threat assessment certifications they had obtained while serving in their current role. Question four gathered information regarding the makeup of threat assessment and behavioral intervention teams at their individual institution and whether or not their institution separates behavioral intervention from TAM. If there was a distinction between the two teams, the participants were asked about the formation process for each team at their institution. The fifth question followed up by asking about the process for referring cases to the applicable team on their campus.

Question six resulted in a very engaging conversation, as it could lead to information regarding institutional policy, protocol or lack thereof. The intent of question six was to gain information about the formality of the participant's current threat assessment and management team processes. The next questions asked participants about the type of "tools" their team has or used for assessing and managing cases. Question seven was related to the use of violence risk instruments before, during or after a TAM team meeting to help gather, assess, and make a recommendation for an individual of concern; and question eight functions as a follow-up attempting to gather information related to the participant's use of threat assessment tools in the past, which ones were utilized, and if they believed the instruments were effective.

Question nine allowed the participants to speak freely about their own institution and situation and asked each participant what they see as necessary for a team to be effective. This

question led to additional questions and further data for the study. Question 10 was directed to participants who have been in the field for a significant number of years and that had experience successfully managing an effective threat assessment and management team. The feedback from this question could lead to a change in the structure of a team. Question 11 was described as opinion-based and asked participants what is necessary to create a successful TAM team. Questions 12 and 13 sought to collect information related to the financial support of the team. Question 12 was related to the receipt of any initial funding upon implementation, and question 13 searched to find information related to annual and ongoing financial support.

Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent

Ethical considerations are important when conducting a research study involving human participants. I submitted the proposed research study for review and approval by the institutional review board (IRB) on the university campus (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is necessary to receive initial IRB approval to conduct the study. The IRB ensured that I considered all possible risks that may affect the participants during or after the study. I filed an application to the IRB that outlined procedures and participant information so the committee can review the extent to which I placed participants at risk during the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants were required to sign informed consent forms (see Appendix B). The participant agreed to take part in the study following the completion of the informed consent form. This document included a set of standardized elements that ensure the protection of human rights (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The focus on the ethical considerations and informed consent began during the next phase with the initial interaction with the possible participants.

TAM team chairs were sent the informed consent and all relevant information regarding the study and their participation via email. If the individual was interested in participating in the

research study after reviewing the information, they were asked to sign the informed consent form (see Appendix B). The informed consent document was signed before any data was collected from the participant. All participants in the study received a copy of the signed consent form and I ensured that each participant was aware of the purpose of the study, what their participation entails, and the opportunity to discontinue participation at any time.

Team members who completed the online survey were assured of their anonymity as it was not necessary to include contact information in order to submit the online survey. The TAM chairs from the other institutions were assured that their information would be kept confidential, and any data reported would use pseudonyms so participants would not be identified during discussion of the results of data collection and analysis.

I conducted the online survey and remote semi-structured interviews by phone differently. I used Qualtrics for the anonymous survey for the TAM team members at the study institution. The entire survey was completed online, so I had qualitative text to review. The remote semi-structured interviews required audio recording and it was important to receive approval to record from the participants. I reviewed audio recordings and field notes at the conclusion of each interview. I signed a confidentiality agreement before submitting audio recordings to a transcribing software. I reviewed the field notes, audio recordings and transcriptions to ensure all data was identical.

It was necessary to censor identifiable information related to the individual participants, as there are less than 20 threat assessment team chairs in the southeast public university system. Information collected from this study may be disclosed during system-wide meetings with TAM chairs and/or TAM representatives. I ensured the participant that their identities remain

confidential throughout the study to relieve them of any concerns. A non-descriptive pseudonym was assigned to each participant in the study and used during data analysis and discussion.

Physical and electronic data were stored in a locked cabinet until the results and data were compiled. Data destruction occurred after transcription occurred. Data was available only to authorized users, including the principal investigator, the IRB and authorized faculty members. The data collection from the semi-structured interviews took place via phone.

Procedures

Phase 1: Selection of Participants for Semi-Structured Interview

In July 2019, the Associate Vice President of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations of the University of North Carolina System distributed a 44-question online Qualtrics survey via email to each of the 17 chairs of a university threat assessment team. Sixteen of the 17 institutions completed the online survey. Upon completion of the 44-question online Qualtrics survey, I requested the opportunity to review the data from the Associate Vice President of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations of the University of North Carolina System. Access was granted and the relevant data from this online survey was reviewed and analyzed.

The participants of the survey varied in gender, race, threat assessment certifications, and years of experience in higher education and threat assessment. Participants had either a professional background in higher education, law enforcement, military or a combination. The questions from the online Qualtrics survey were similar to the questions that will be asked in this study, including: the composition of a team, a chair's department and position at the university, if a university has a combined or separate behavioral intervention and threat assessment teams, the naming of the teams, annual budgets, and specialized training for team members. In this particular study, I searched to collect even more detailed information from chairs who have been

successful in conducting and maintaining threat assessment teams at their institution. The opportunity to collect this data, along with the data from the current team members allowed for the revision and planned implementation of an updated and more comprehensive threat assessment protocol at the study institution.

I utilized the results of the July 2019 survey to identify and ask chairs to participate in the research study. I requested a minimum of three TAM team chairs to participate in the study. I contacted the Associate Vice President of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations of the southeastern state public university system and advised that he is copied on the email communication to the TAM team chairs. I sent the email to the 16 universities and copied the Associate Vice President of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations of the southeastern university system. The email included the description of the study, along with the IRB approval letter and the informed consent form that was attached to the email. I requested in the email that the participant make contact via email to confirm their interest in participation in the study. If three individuals did not respond back to contribute their expertise in the study, I would have reached out to other TAM team chairs via email stressing the importance of the research study and requested volunteers to participate.

Once the three participants who agreed to take part in the study were identified, I followed up with each participant via email. In the email, I asked for participants to sign the informed consent forms and requested to schedule a follow-up phone call for the semi-structured interview by phone with each participant. It is important to ensure that participants recognized that their participation in the study is voluntary and they may leave the study at any time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participant was given the option to discuss the study at length via phone before the semi-structured interview and ensured they meet the eligibility requirements

of the study. The participants were given an option to complete the informed consent via email before the remote semi-structured interview.

Once the phone meeting had been requested and scheduled, I discussed with the participant the eligibility requirements of the study, including being a Chair or Co-Chair of a TAM team. The phone call included further discussion with regard to the study's objectives and goals. I was able to answer any specific, initial questions related to the study at that time. I assured participants that their personal information would remain confidential and information in the study would not be directly linked to the participant or college in the southeastern public state university.

Phase 2: Semi-Structured Interviews by Phone with TAM Chairs

Interviews were conducted within a three-week timeframe after approval from the IRB. Each participant was contacted via email to schedule a phone call determining participation in the study and to identify a time by phone for the semi-structured interview (see Appendix E) to be conducted. The participant was given the opportunity to select the day, time, and location of the remote semi-structured interview. I requested one hour of the participant's time to conduct the interview but recognized that the interview may go over the one-hour mark. In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions tend to elicit opinions from participants which can lead to extended conversations, especially regarding a topic of great interest to the participant (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The semi-structured interviews were conducted one-on-one via phone. I gave an introduction and reviewed the purpose of the research. I explained to the participant that the purpose was an attempt to understand the development and processes of their university threat assessment and management team. Before the interview began, I disclosed to the participant that

I would audio-record and write field-notes during the entire interview. The interview began with an open-ended question that asked the participant to talk about him or herself, in an effort not to make them feel alienated (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Phase 3: Selection of Participants for Online Survey

Phase 3 included surveying current TAM members of a southeastern public university (see Appendix D). The study included participants in Academic Affairs, General Counsel, Student Health Services, Prospective Health, the College of Nursing, the Center for Counseling and Student Development, Disability Support Services, Dean of Student's Office, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Office for Equity and Diversity, etc. The participants in the survey varied in gender, race, professional background and years of experience in higher education and threat assessment.

Participants were contacted via email with the details of the study and an emphasis on the importance of their feedback and how the study can improve the TAM team at the research institution. The email also included the description of the study and the IRB approval letter. I was able to explain the consent form and let the participants decide if they wanted to participate in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the same email, an anonymous Qualtrics link was included that would lead to the survey. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were advised of the security of the collected data and the anonymity of their responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I assured participants that their personal information would remain confidential and information in the study would not be directly linked to the participant.

Phase 4: Data Collection from Survey

Data collected from the survey of the team members was entered into a software program (Microsoft Excel) to assist with organization of the data, as well as to allow for searching within

the text. Software programs are able to store, organize data, and search for the text associated with specific themes for creating queries of the relationship among codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The first step of the data analysis process included organizing and preparing the data for analysis. Next, data was reviewed, and initial coding took place. Data was organized utilizing chunking and themes were identified. The themes were identified from the language in the online survey and the interviews, as well as within the collected data.

The next step involved using descriptions of the data collected and the analysis to generate narrative forms for the qualitative research in order to share the findings. This narrative detailed themes, perspectives, and applicable quotations from the participants. Once theming was completed, additional coding was necessary when analyzing the text transcript (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Phase 5: Data Processing and Analysis

Qualitative data was organized, sorted, and could be searched in a text database using a data analysis program. Software programs are able to store, organize data, and search for the text associated with specific for creating queries of the relationship among codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Software programs can change qualitative data into quantitative data, such as a spreadsheet or data analysis program. It was necessary to review all data line by line (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Although initial data analysis took place following each data collection step, formal analysis took place once data was collected from both the team member survey and the semi-structured interviews. The first step of the data analysis process for this research included organizing and preparing all the data for analysis. I reviewed the transcriptions, survey

responses, and notes taken during the interviews to sort and arrange the data into groups depending on the information. This involved making notes in the margins of the transcripts and recording additional general thoughts about the data. Following the review of all data collected, the information was organized by chunks and included identifying specific words representing categories. The categories were created from the actual language of the participants in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The fourth step included generating descriptions and themes of the data. This involved evaluating the detailed information pertaining to the participant, places or setting of the interview. Themes were analyzed related to each participant and across participants or formed into a general description (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Step five involved utilization of the description and themes as representative in the narrative findings of the qualitative research. A narrative passage was used to share the findings, which included themes, perspectives, and applicable quotations from the participants.

The data and analysis from the surveys and remote interviews were utilized to support the need to follow intended policies after determining best practice strategies of threat assessment teams from three universities. The data from the online survey of team members and the semi-structured interviews from TAM team members was used to create revisions and full implementation to the established threat assessment team policy.

Phase 6: Implementation of Updated Policy Based on Data Analysis

After analysis of the data, I provided the findings to the applicable administrative individuals at the study institution and intended to request the opportunity to implement the identified revisions. The suggested implementations from the study were included in the revised threat assessment team policy at the study institution. It was intended to result in the

implementation of additional threat assessment tools and new-member and consistent training. It was intended for the 3-month implementation to be based on the results from the three TAM team chairs within a southeastern public university system and TAM team members from the study institution. The current TAM policy (see Appendix C) needed revision, updating and implementation, which can be further confirmed based on the results of this study. The study helped revise the policy to ensure personnel are following the appropriate steps that are indicated in the policy. It was intended that a follow-up survey be sent to the team members as a follow-up to determine their perceptions and experiences with the revisions and implemented changes after the 3-month time span of implementation. This survey would have mirrored the initial survey but may have include the necessity to collect further information as in the results from the semi-structured surveys of TAM team chairs.

The results will be shared with the Associate Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the TAM team members at the study institution. The data will also be shared with the Director of Safety at the southeastern university system office to review and consider sharing with other institutions as a baseline TAM Team protocol within the university system. Universities will have the option to consider utilizing recommendations from the study or using parts of the study that will work best at their respective institutions. This study has the potential for other practitioners to use for further research in the field. Based on the theoretical framework, this will allow for each institution to have different experiences incorporating a baseline TAM team protocol. This will ensure that each institution has minimum guidelines in place, while still giving each school the opportunity to adapt the set of procedures to their unique setting and situation.

Methodological Assumptions

In qualitative research, I attempted to collect rich, personal data. Qualitative research allowed a firsthand encounter with the participant (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Although the online survey contained open-ended questions and provided qualitative information, more specific detailed data was available from the remote semi-structured interviews. The interview was audio-recorded while information was continually provided by the participant to ensure that none of the valuable data is missed. Participants may have withheld information as they were audio-recorded about their current role, professional knowledge and job responsibilities for a variety of reasons. Participants also had the option to provide historical information. It was important to give the participants the opportunity to feel comfortable enough to state their personal opinions of what they would like to see changed on their threat assessment teams. It is the intention to interview each participant with some sort of threat assessment process in place; although, it has been acknowledged that one of the 17 southeast public universities in the identified system only recently established their threat assessment team.

Qualitative research allows the researcher to have control over the questions posed to the participants. Additionally, qualitative research documents were conveniently accessed as needed. I saved time and the expense of transcribing when using recording (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Semi-structured interviews included questions prepared before the actual interview, which allowed me to appear confident in the questioning format and interview style (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Preparing ahead of time helped me consider possible responses to questions and how to direct the interview to ensure applicable information was being collected. It is assumed that semi-structured interviews allowed participants to express their opinions freely and resulted in rich, reliable qualitative data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Qualitative interviewing allowed for engaged telephone interviews during the recruiting process. This type of interview involved open-ended questions and intended for the participants to provide direct views or opinions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This allowed the participant to be open about their opinions and capture other pertinent information, since the questions were open-ended. This approach allowed participants to expand their responses, which included relevant topics that were not initially addressed during their semi-structured interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

It was assumed that participants were willing to share what may be working for members of their threat assessment teams. The semi-structured interviews allowed participants to disclose as little or as much as they were willing, which led to emerging data for the research study. Since the participants varied in degrees of threat assessment experience, a wide array of responses was collected for the data analysis. Finally, it was assumed that the participants were willing to share openly given that they had signed an informed consent form and they understood the significance of the study and how this study could positively benefit their campus threat assessment team when the results were analyzed and shared.

Methodological Limitations

Qualitative data collection has its limitations within research studies. As the researcher and the interviewer, I may have been viewed as intrusive to participants. It may have been necessary to obtain private information from the participant that I am unable to report. It is also possible that there was a lack of data that was collected since the semi-structured interviews were conducted via phone rather than in person. This may have also been a challenge when attempting to establish rapport with participants. I conducted the interview and the information obtained is

only filtered through the lens of the researcher. Interviewing participants meant that data was collected in a designated setting and not in a natural environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Another factor to consider was that participants will not perceive and articulate information equally during the semi-structured interview. When conducting qualitative research, information obtained may be protected and unable to use in the study. This required reviewing information in hard-to-find places and scanning before entering and analyzing the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Adams (2015) discusses the limitations of semi-structured interviews and the importance of having a “sophisticated interviewer” for semi-structured interviews. The amount of labor and time spent, and the sophistication of the interviewer are all limitations of conducting semi-structured interviews (Adams, 2015). Appropriate time was spent preparing, setting up, conducting and analyzing the data from each interview. It was necessary to have knowledge on the topic and be sensitive, smart and nimble while obtaining information during the interview.

Regardless of informed consent or explanation of all aspects of the study, participants may have withheld information during the semi-structured interviews as they may have felt the questions were a direct reflection of their work in threat assessment. The semi-structured interviews either gave participants the option to elaborate or only provided limited details. If a participant was not confident in their threat assessment processes and/or abilities, they may withhold procedural information more than other participants. Participants may have been hesitant to openly discuss and share information as it was directly linked to their work-related responsibilities. It was important to reassure the participants that this information was completely confidential and could not be used against them to impact their professional career.

Role of the Researcher

It is important to consider how my experience impacted the information collected. I have been directly involved in the field of threat assessment, specifically at the university-level, for six years. During that time, I have served as a member of a university threat assessment team and began serving as a chair in January 2019. As a result of my experience in the field and at my current institution, participants may have had prior interactions or a direct relationship with me due to attending meetings, threat assessment trainings, and conferences.

Summary

A mixed methods study allowed for the collection of both surface-level quantitative data and in-depth qualitative information. The interviews with TAM chairs provided qualitative details on relevant topics, including team member trainings, financial support and threat assessment tools. The online survey included both open- and close-ended questions, allowing for the collection of additional qualitative data, as well as quantitative details that helped to frame the current situation at the study institution. The data was analyzed and utilized to assist with the development of a revised and fully implemented threat assessment policy at the study institution; but the results may also be applicable at other institutions, so it was important to ensure that the results are shared with the university system office and the other institutions.

Chapter 3 provided a description of the study design and data collection method, along with procedures to conduct the study; whereas the following chapters focus on data analysis and discussion of the results. Chapter 4 provides the analysis of the data collected and Chapter 5 includes the discussion of the results of the data collection and analysis, as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter summarizes the results from analysis of the data collected. This data includes information from multiple stakeholders, including phone interviews with chair representatives from three external threat assessment teams within a southeastern university system and an online survey of member responses from an internal threat assessment team at the study institution. The collected data will assist in the process of creating revised processes related to TAM team funding, new and on-going training, and best practice threat assessment tools. This chapter includes a description of participants, data analysis, summarization of results, and findings from the collected data.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop a formalized set of procedures for a threat assessment program at a southeastern university. I examined the current policy at the study institution and focused on the following aspects based on the information presented in the theoretical framework and the identified issues on the TAM team policy: improvement of current TAM Team structure and protocol, consideration of budget allowance and funding, and training of those involved in threat assessment. The initial design was for the study institution to implement a revised threat assessment policy and set of procedures that would hopefully reflect success at the specified institution and could be modeled as a baseline by other threat assessment teams in the southeastern public university system. The intention is for the results to be shared with the southeastern university system office during Summer 2021. This will include considerations that other universities may choose to adopt in an attempt to establish a baseline threat assessment protocol.

I utilized two instruments to collect the data in this study: a semi-structured interview conducted via phone and an online survey. I adapted the online anonymous survey and semi-structured interview questions from my theoretical framework, the 12 Guiding Principles to Threat Assessment and Management and from the study, “Participatory action research: Threat assessment team training and team membership at universities” by Dr. Tina Nelson-Moss (2015). The semi-structured interview (Appendix E) was titled “Interview Protocol”. Seventeen external TAM Team Chairs were contacted to participate in the study, but I limited the study to three participants. I conducted the semi-structured interviews by phone with three external TAM Team Chairs within the southeastern university system. The anonymous online survey (Appendix D) was administered to 20 members of the TAM team at the study institution via email. Thirteen of 20 TAM team members at the study institution participated in the online anonymous survey. I used Qualtrics to create, distribute, and collect the survey data. I utilized Rev, a recording and transcription service for academic research. Rev was used for the recording and transcription services of the semi-structured phone interviews. Analysis of the collected data will provide answers to the previously identified research questions guiding the study.

The study included three main questions and four sub-questions. The questions guiding the study focused on the development of a formalized threat assessment program and required financial support. Sub-questions included examining best practice threat assessment tools utilized by a university threat assessment team to effectively assess and manage threat cases. Additional research questions focused on the perception of a threat assessment team member’s role on the team and the part they play in campus safety.

Research questions and sub-questions are included as follows for reference:

1. What is involved in the development of a formalized threat assessment program?

- a. What processes are necessary to create a successful team that focuses on threat assessment?
 - b. What financial support is required for the implementation and on-going support of the team?
 - c. What specialized member trainings utilized by a university team will effectively assist in reviewing and managing threat assessment cases?
 - d. What best-practice threat assessment tools utilized by a university team will effectively assess and manage campus threat cases?
2. What is the perception of threat assessment team members related to their role on the team and the part they play in campus safety?
 3. What factors related to threat assessment and a threat assessment policy ensure successful implementation, as well as improved safety on a college campus?

The mixed methods approach used in this study provided both qualitative and quantitative data that allowed for a more accurate analysis of the results. The semi-structured interview questions are listed in Appendix E, and the survey questions are included in Appendix D. This chapter includes a description of participants, details on data collection, analysis of the data, and a summary of the results.

Coronavirus Disease/Covid-19 Pandemic

The world was impacted by the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in 2020. The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined COVID-19 as “an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus” (World Health Organization, 2021). WHO stated that most people who contract Coronavirus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover soon without special treatment. Individuals who are older or have underlying health problems, such as

cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer, are at risk to develop a more serious version of the illness. WHO suggests the best way to slow down the spread of the virus and eventually prevent it is to be informed of the disease and how it spreads. WHO encourages individuals to protect themselves by frequently washing hands and keeping hands away from the face. The virus spreads from saliva or discharge from the nose when a person coughs or sneezes (World Health Organization, 2021).

The study institution began remote learning and services immediately on March 17, 2020. The southeastern university system schools closed face-to-face activities until further notice due to the uncertainty of the virus. As a result, it was necessary to modify the study from what was initially proposed due to social distancing mandates. The original study called for semi-structured interviews to be conducted face-to-face; however, the decision was made to host the interviews virtually to decrease the amount of in-person contact. Additionally, I was unable to travel to conduct the interviews due to quarantine and travel restrictions recommended at the national, state, and local levels. The study institution restricted travel in March 2020, regardless of the destination and size of the gathering, and travel remained suspended while conducting this study. All university-related meetings, travel, and events also must remain in compliance with the state's gathering limits and university southeastern system office and university guidelines (ECU News Services, 2021).

Each campus within the southeastern university system took steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission on campus. They communicated the concerns to the community in a variety of ways. Each of the precautionary efforts was in accordance with the CDC and the State's Department of Health and Human Services and the Governor's executive orders (UNC

System Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021). The actions from the southeastern university system office addressed four areas: community standards of behavior, instruction, services/activities, and the facilities and environment. Protective barriers were strategically placed to protect individuals in high traffic areas on campus. Classrooms were reconfigured or seating occupancy was reduced to maximize distance between individuals in the classroom. Public areas were cleaned in accordance with CDC guidance. Hand sanitizer and other materials were readily available on campuses, and the occupancy level in restrooms, public spaces, and study areas was reduced (ECU News Services, 2021).

The study institution continues ongoing monitoring efforts, and it receives continual updates from the CDC, U.S. State Department, and the State's Division of Public Health. Instruction at the study institution was remote/distanced learning beginning in March 2020 through January 2021. As a result of changes and preparations made on campus, the spring semester of 2021 will have a mix of hybrid, face-to-face, and online classes. The study institution continues to inform students, staff, and faculty with guidance and news updates about the pandemic as it relates to the campus. The southeastern university encourages faculty, staff, and students to monitor email, the institution's website, and social media platforms to stay informed with the latest developments pertaining to COVID-19 (ECU News Services, 2021).

The study institution understood the impact of COVID-19 on the academic community and continues to take the appropriate steps to reduce the spread of the virus. The southeastern university system is continuing to work with local, state, and federal health authorities to coordinate efforts, monitor trends, and provide overall guidance regarding COVID-19 (UNC System Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021).

Participant Demographics

A description of the participants for both phases of the study is provided in the following sections. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with the Chairs of the TAM teams, and both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through the use of the online survey with the members of the study institution's TAM team. Details of the participants, including prior experience in higher education, years of experience in higher education threat assessment, and geographical location of their respective university are provided to establish an important overview of the experience and educational information of the participants. The study included two groups of participants: internal participants from the TAM team at the study institution and Chairs of TAM teams from the southeastern university system.

Participants in Semi-Structured Interview Phase

The participants in the semi-structured interview phase were Chairs of TAM teams from a southeastern university system. Qualitative data were collected during this phase through the use of the semi-structured interviews. In order to maintain confidentiality, participant details and responses are reported utilizing a pseudonym. Participants were asked for their permission to report the information in this way when they completed the consent form during the interview process. As a result of the intention to maintain confidentiality, specific details, other than that which follows, are not provided within the results of the study. Susan is from a southeastern university located in the piedmont region of the state. Richard is from a southeastern university located in the southern portion of the state. Karen is from a southeastern university located in the central piedmont region. All participants are in a leadership position on a TAM team at a southeastern university within the system.

Participants in Survey Phase

Participants in the survey phase of the study included members of the Threat Assessment Team at the study institution. The participants indicated that they represented a variety of departments across campus, including Academic Affairs, General Counsel, Student Health Services, Prospective Health, Human Resources, the College of Nursing, the Center for Counseling and Student Development, Disability Support Services, Dean of Student's Office, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and Office for Equity and Diversity. The participants can be broken into three groups: faculty, law enforcement, or staff/administrator (see Table 2). Each participant on the TAM team has a different set of responsibilities when it comes to serving on a southeastern university threat assessment team. The data indicate that 77% (n=10) of the team is serving as staff or administrators. Individuals serving as a staff/administrator may include representation from student conduct, counseling, academic advising, case management, dean of students, Title IX, university counsel, disability support, and housing. Two of the members who completed the study are faculty members, and one representative is from law enforcement at the southeastern university.

The participants in the survey varied in gender, race, professional background, and years of experience in higher education and threat assessment. Almost half of the team members who completed the study have at least 20 or more years of higher education experience (see Table 3). Almost 30% of the participants had 10-20 years of experience, and only three participants had 10 years or less experience in higher education. Additionally, the TAM team members' experience serving on the team at the study institution varies (see Table 4).

A total of five members have been serving on the TAM team for more than five years. Five members had served less than five years, and three members had served less than two years.

Table 2

TAM Team at Study Institution – University Role

University Role	n	%
Faculty	2	15%
Law Enforcement	1	8%
Staff/Administrator	10	77%

Table 3

TAM Team at Study Institution - Experience

Years in Higher Education	n	%
Less than 5 years	2	15%
5- 10 years	1	8%
10-20 years	4	31%
20+ years	6	46%

Table 4

TAM Team at Study Institution – Years on Team

Years Served as a Team Member	n	%
Less than 2 years	3	23.0%
Less than 5 years	5	38.5%
More than 5 years	5	38.5%

According to the data, the team members are less experienced in threat assessment, but they had more years of experience in higher education. In an effort to collect a variety of opinions, the goal was to collect information from a variety of stakeholders within the TAM team at the study institution.

Data Collection

Data collection began on May 12, 2020. The online survey was made available to the TAM team members of the study institution on May 12, 2020, and the survey closed on June 2, 2020. The online survey for the TAM team members at the study institution was available to complete for a total of 15 business days. In regard to collection of qualitative data, I contacted the Chairs of the TAM teams via email on May 12, 2020 and conducted the three semi-structured interviews by phone within 13 business days. I took a total of 15 days to collect the data for this study.

Qualitative Data: Semi-structured Interviews

I contacted the Associate Vice President of Campus Safety and Emergency Operations of the southeastern university system on October 5, 2019 via email about the idea of the proposed research. The Associate Vice President agreed that this research would be helpful for TAM teams and was approved to contact the Chairs from the southeastern university system to participate in the study.

Via email, I contacted 19 chairs of the southeastern university system on May 12, 2020. I provided details of the study and attached a copy of the informed consent and the IRB approval letter. The content within the email included the name of the study, the goal, and the purpose of the study. I indicated that I intended to interview a minimum of three Chairs of TAM teams within the system. I suggested the interview would take no longer than 1.5 hours to complete. I

explained the hope of this research is to help better understand the procedures, tools, and financial support of threat assessment teams in higher education. The ultimate intent is to gain information that could assist in revising team policies, implementing new procedures, and learning best-practice intervention strategies. I stated in the email that their responses would remain confidential and their participation in this research would be voluntary. Participants were given the option not to answer any or all questions and could stop at any point.

The original plan for the semi-structured interviews was to go to each participant's campus to conduct a face-to-face semi-structured interview. Each participant would have the option to choose the meeting location, and I planned to use a voice recorder and write field notes. I was going to ask each participant to allow up to 1.5 hours for the interviews. Due to COVID-19, I was unable to conduct the interviews face-to-face and decided to conduct the semi-structured interviews by phone. I contacted the dissertation committee and asked if they had any concerns with the modification of the semi-structured interviews. The committee agreed to move forward with conducting interviews by phone due to COVID-19. I contacted IRB and took the necessary steps to submit the appropriate changes needed for conducting phone interviews with the participants.

Susan

The Chairs of the southeastern university system were contacted via email on May 12, 2020. Susan contacted me on May 12, 2020 around 6pm agreeing to participate in the research. I asked for a brief meeting before the interview to discuss next steps, informed consent, and using Rev for the audio recording of the interview. The phone meeting was conducted at 11am on May 17, 2020. Immediately following the phone meeting, I sent the informed consent via email to Susan. Susan signed and returned the informed consent via email to me on May 18, 2020. Susan

was interviewed by phone on May 21, 2020 at 1:30pm. The duration of the interview was 45 minutes. The length of the transcription with Susan was 15 pages.

Richard

Richard contacted me via email on May 13, 2020. Richard scheduled a phone call on May 18, 2020 at 11:30am to discuss the informed consent, position on the TAM team, and to set up the phone interview. Richard sent the signed informed consent back to me on May 21, 2020 at 10am. Richard was interviewed on May 22, 2020 at 10:00am. The duration of the interview was 39 minutes, and the length of the transcription was 17 pages.

Karen

Karen contacted me on May 14, 2020 volunteering to participate in the study. A phone call was scheduled for May 18, 2020 at 10am to discuss the audio recording, informed consent and to schedule the phone interview. The signed informed consent was sent back to me after the phone call on May 18, 2020. Karen was interviewed a week after the other two participants on May 29, 2020 at 2pm. The duration of the interview was 35 minutes, and the length of the transcription was 13 pages.

Qualitative Data with a Component of Quantitative Data: Online Survey

An online survey was utilized in this study to collect qualitative with a component of quantitative data. The online survey was administered to the members of the TAM team from the study institution via email as a Qualtrics survey. The online survey to members of the TAM team from the study institution included a total of 13 questions. The online survey first prompted the participant to read and electronically sign the informed consent before proceeding to question 1.

I selected Qualtrics as the platform for the survey for several reasons, including, but not limited to, the ability for participants to remain anonymous and the opportunity to skip questions if the participants' response to a question is "N/A." The consent for the online survey was shown prior to the first question and would not allow participants to "skip" to the next question before "agreeing" to the consent to participate. If participants did not agree to the information found in the consent form, the survey would immediately end. After participants agreed to participate in the study, the survey would proceed with full access. The survey also included the study institution's TAM team policy embedded within the online survey so participants would be able to easily access the document for reference while completing the survey.

I was able to easily access and communicate with the team members of the TAM team. I contacted each member of the TAM team, a total of 20 members, including members of the student and employee teams. The TAM team was contacted on May 12, 2020 via email with information regarding the study, an IRB-approved correspondence letter, a copy of the consent for the online survey, and a link to the anonymous survey. I allowed participants to have access to the survey for up to three weeks beginning May 12, 2020. Following the closing date of May 29, 2020, I converted the Qualtrics data from the online survey to an Excel format. I cleaned up the data and reviewed the information via Excel. I was able to organize, graph, and report the findings using Excel.

The original email correspondence to the members of the TAM team at the study institution suggested they would be contacted by me in exactly three months for a follow-up survey. Due to COVID-19, updates to the study institution's policy could not be reviewed due to the on-going changes on campus. As of spring 2021, the policy is still in active review at the study institution. I was unable to send the policy back to the TAM team for review within the

original 3-month deadline. The policy is still in review by administration at the southeastern university.

Data Analysis

This section provides a summary of the analysis of the data. I created a semi-structured interview and an online survey for two sets of participants. The online survey began by asking background questions of the participants. The next questions led into team training, the TAM team policy, and team member experience. The semi-structured interview began with questions regarding prior experience, roles, training, behavioral intervention vs. threat assessment, assessment tools, needs of the TAM team, what creates a successful team, and financial support of the team. I used a service provider called “Rev” to record and transcribe the semi-structured interviews. I utilized Qualtrics for collecting the data for the online survey and analyzed the data through Excel. I hand coded the semi-structured interview and online survey. I will discuss the process I used from reviewing the raw data to codes, from codes to patterns, and patterns to themes. I utilized emergent coding to identify the comprehensive themes from the study. This section will also include a summary of the details regarding the analysis of the data collected utilizing the described instruments.

For the online survey data, I initially read through the text data in Excel before printing and hand coding the collected data. I began by jotting down phrases or words on paper from the Excel file. Next, I printed and began hand coding the text into segments. I began coding the information by labeling the text to form descriptions and broad themes of the data collected. This process allowed for me to examine the codes for any overlap or redundancy and collapse the codes into broader themes. I began with six emergent codes from the data; new-member training, on-going member training, lack of consistent training and TAM Team meetings as needed. I then reduced

the emergent codes to three final codes, member training, inconsistent training and meetings. I was able to reduce the three final codes to three themes; inconsistent new and on-going member training at the study institution, discrepancies found between TAM team practice and TAM policy at the study institution, and TAM Team composition and member experience at the study institution (see Table 5).

Qualitative Data: Semi-Structured Interview

I hand coded the qualitative data for the analysis of the study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) encourage researchers to review qualitative data analysis as a process that requires sequential steps and multiple levels. I began pre-coding as I was collecting and preparing the data. This included circling, highlighting participant quotes that felt “codable” at this stage (Saldana, J., 2021). I began by jotting down preliminary words or phrases for codes from the field notes and transcripts. I ensured these code jottings were distinct on the document by underlining. Next, I formatted the pages of data into three columns as displayed in Table 5.

The theoretical framework presented codes within the semi-structured interviews related to TAM Team Chair leadership. The theoretical framework did not further relate to any additional codes; however, the conceptual framework related to codes regarding behavioral intervention, threat assessment teams and the utilization of threat assessment tools and team resources to help collect additional information related to a case. The three columns included emergent codes, final codes and themes.

The study included a total of 25 emergent codes. The first group of emergent codes included TAM team chair training, TAM team chair experience, certifications, and higher education experience. The final code was TAM team chair training/experience, which led to the

Table 5

Qualitative Analysis with a Quantitative Data Component: Codes and Themes

Emergent Codes	Final Codes	Themes
TAM Team Chair Training TAM Team Chair Experience Certifications Years of Higher Ed. Experience	TAM Team Chair Training/Experience	Prior Experience and Training Shape Perceptions of Value
Behavioral Intervention Threshold Rubrics Team Tier Levels Threat Assessment Teams Implementation of Teams	Behavioral Intervention/TAM Teams	Institutions had a clear delineation between behavioral intervention and TAM teams
TAM Team Processes Workplace Violence Policy Interdisciplinary Rubrics Standard Operating Procedure Threshold Documents TAM Team Collaboration	TAM Team processes	TAM Team processes were important, but varied across institutions
Cawood Assessment & Response Grid Danger Assessment Tool Interdisciplinary Rubrics FBI Rubrics NaBITA WAVR-21 SHARP SBI Rubrics	Threat Assessment Tools	Varied Threat Assessment Tools across institutions
Funding Timing Type of Training	TAM Team training	Varied TAM Team funding for training across institutions
Funding at Implementation Annual Funding Lack of Funding	TAM Team funding	Varied financial support at the implementation and annually of TAM Teams
New Member Training On-going Member Training (Online survey)	Member Training	Inconsistent New and On-going Member Training at the study institution
Lack of consistent training As needed meetings (Online Survey)	Inconsistent training/meetings	Discrepancies found between TAM Team Practice and TAM Policy at the study institution

Table 5 (continued)

Emergent Codes	Final Codes	Themes
Positive Member Experience Enough Team Members Team too large	Member Experience/Team Composition	TAM Team Composition and Member Experience at the Study Institution

theme: prior experience and training shape perceptions of value. The next group of emergent codes included behavioral intervention, threat assessment teams, threshold rubrics, team tier levels, and implementation of TAM teams. From the identified emergent codes, the final code was reduced to behavioral intervention/TAM teams. The theme identified from this final code is: institutions had a certain delineation between behavioral intervention and TAM teams.

The next group of emergent codes included TAM team processes, workplace violence policy, interdisciplinary rubrics, standard operating procedures, and TAM team collaboration. Based on the emergent codes, the final code for this group is reduced to TAM team processes. Based on the coding the following theme was identified: TAM team processes were important but varied across institutions. Upon further examination, the Cawood Assessment and Response Grid, the Danger Assessment tool, interdisciplinary rubrics, FBI rubrics, the NaBITA rubric, SBI rubrics and WAVR-21 emerged as codes that could be reduced to a final code of threat assessment tools. These codes led to the following theme related to this grouping: varied threat assessment tools across institutions.

Additionally, funding, timing and type of training were identified as emergent codes and were reduced to one code, TAM team training. Analysis allowed for the identification of the following theme related to this code: varied TAM team funding for training across institutions. Lastly, funding at implementation, annual funding and lack of funding were emergent codes that were reduced to one final code, TAM team funding. The theme for this code is varied financial support at the implementation and annually of TAM teams. Information related to the identification of each theme follows in the next sections.

Theme 1 – Prior Experience and Training Shape Perceptions of Value

A TAM team should have a leader of the team or a Chair who is responsible for running team meetings, assigning responsibilities and ensuring the case management process is conducted successfully. The leader of the team should have a good sense of judgement, objectiveness, and thoroughness throughout the threat assessment and management process (Deisinger et al., 2008). The leader should be the primary liaison between the team and the student conduct office, and ultimately determines the team's response (Sokolow et al., 2014, p. 9). The leader will need to be effective in persuading and motivating others, while earning the trust of the team members and the campus at large (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 56).

Chair experience and training varied between the three institutions in the southeastern university system. One participant had received training offered by the southeastern university system office, another had received behavioral intervention and threat assessment training prior to their role because of their position, while the other participant had prior risk assessment experience and was currently a Certified Threat Manager.

Susan stated they were given the co-chair responsibility due to having a skillset for the position which included prior work experience in housing, residence life and student code of conduct.

Susan stated:

Professional training comes out of housing and residence life and student conduct, and so as part of my current role, that position chairs the campus behavioral intervention team and co-chairs our threat assessment team along with our chief of police. I'm not sure that I pursued it as much as it sort of evolved in my levels of expertise and professional experience.

Susan stated that part of their interest in pursuing behavioral intervention and threat assessment is their care and concern for students and the greater community. Susan believed that their prior experience as a professional staff member serving on call responding to student concerns, suicidal behavior, and threats in the residence hall prepared them for the position. Susan further stated that while serving as the Director of Student Conduct, they managed threats related to the code of student [University Student Code of Conduct] responsibility and were a part of the campus behavioral intervention team. Furthermore, the participant stated that in the past, some threatening behaviors would fall under their code of student responsibility when they were serving in a previous role as the director of student conduct.

Richard stated they were in the position due to serving on the team as an assigned duty with their position. Richard stated, "I didn't really pursue it [Threat Assessment and Management] as a career. It's kind of one of those 'other duties as assigned' that come about from being in my position at a university." Richard stated that before they were in their current role at the university, threat assessment was a part of that position. Richard goes on to share that many of their colleagues have ended up in similar roles.

Karen advised they had risk assessment experience before entering their role as serving as the chair of the TAM team.

Karen stated:

I've been working with violence-related cases as a social worker for years. And so when I saw this opportunity of a new program that married some of my clinical experience, but also my investigation experience, it just seemed like the best fit. And I liked the challenge of implementing something new at my university.

I asked about prior experience before serving as Chair of the TAM team. Karen stated, “I had more risk assessment experience and investigation experience.” I then asked about trainings since they had been serving as the TAM team chair. Karen attended many threat assessment trainings ranging from an Advanced Violence Risk Assessment by James Cawood, the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals, Advanced Threat Academy through Gavin de Becker, WAVR-21, etc. Karen had attended threat assessment trainings through multiple national organizations and has training in using multiple threat assessment tools such as the Cawood Assessment and Response Grid, the WAVR-21, the SHARP, the Danger Assessment tool, etc.

Karen stated:

I’m a Certified Threat Manager. I’ve had training and certification in the Danger Assessment Tool, which is a domestic violence Risk Assessment Tool. I have training and I just finished the certification for the Stalking Risk Profile [Structured Risk Assessment Guide].

Training was different for each TAM team chair participant. This supports the question related to the consistency of training, not only for team members, but for Chairs of TAM teams. Karen had the most threat assessment training from the collected data. Susan had more years of experience in higher education than the other two participants. When asked about training, Susan stated, “Yes. I had prior threat assessment training when I was director of student conduct and a member of our campus behavioral intervention team.” Susan also indicated that her training was more behavioral intervention verses threat assessment training. This participant stated that they have participated in system-wide training from the southeastern university system, had a nationally recognized organization, NaBITA, come to their campus for group training, and have

attended trainings through the Association of Student Conduct Professionals and NASPA (The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators). In total, the participant has had a couple of trainings related to threat assessment and protocols on college campuses. Susan stated they have no certifications thus far, and they were recently a new member of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals.

Richard stated that since they have been at their current institution, they had attended very few trainings. Richard described having only attended annual system-level trainings that the southeastern university system has offered. Richard stated they did not have any certifications and they had attended the annual state system trainings three to four times.

After reviewing the data collected from the interview with Karen, this participant had the most experience regarding training opportunities. Karen indicated that they had more prior risk assessment and investigation experience. Karen has attended many training opportunities, including the Advanced Threat Management Academy through Gavin De Becker and Associates, the WAVR-21 training several times, and the Advanced Violence Risk Assessment Training by Dr. James Cawood. This participant attended the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) training annually and is a Certified Threat Manager through ATAP. The participant had training and certification in the Danger Assessment Tool, and recently completed the Stalking Risk Profile certification. They have attended trainings through SIGMA by Gene Deisinger and Marisa Randazzo. The participant had attended NaBITA and went through the SIVRA training, and although they have training in it, they do not utilize it. Karen also has training in the Personality Assessment Inventory and Psychopathy Checklist (PCLR).

Theme 2 –Institutions had a Clear Delineation Between Behavioral Intervention and TAM

Teams

Behavioral intervention and threat assessment teams were handled differently at each institution. Some participants had up to three different teams based on tier levels to manage the needs of behavioral intervention and threat assessment at their respective institutions. One institution had a detailed threshold rubric (Appendix G) outlining the behaviors and risk factors that would determine when a case is reviewed by a behavioral intervention team or a TAM team. One participant's institution relied solely on an administrator to determine which cases are reviewed by their teams.

Susan indicated:

We have three levels of care is what we call it, and the first level is called (mascot) care, and that's branded with our university. This care is fist level where students of concern or suicidal ideation, homelessness, housing, and security, those kinds of issues are managed by our student assistants and support services staff in collaboration with case managers across campus. The second tier is called CBIT, the Campus Behavioral Intervention Team. And that includes some members from that first tier, but also other members, police student conduct, housing, academic affairs, the graduate school, legal affairs. We look at behaviors or interactions that rise above the threshold for care or where care interventions are not mitigating the concerns, and the behaviors become more increasingly concerning and threatening. Then the third level is the threat assessment team, and so I co-chair the threat assessment team with our chief of police. That is a smaller group also made up of members of those three tiers, but a much smaller group so we can much more agile in addressing campus threats pretty quickly.

Susan stated that they had a total of six members on their TAM team. The members include representatives from police, student conduct, student assistance support services, legal, and the counseling center. In addition, they will ask external people to attend the meeting depending on the case and the circumstance.

According to Susan, the behavioral intervention team was established after the Virginia Tech shooting. The participant stated this group had been active for a while and within the past five years, they had identified three distinctive levels of care: Care, behavioral intervention as the intermediate level, and the threat assessment team as the top level. They are in the process of writing a standard operating procedure for the team.

Susan stated:

We have been in the process for the past year of writing a standard operating procedure for the team to explain the different levels, and also provide some context to the roles that each level play and the role that staff members within those levels play. For the past two years we have been presenting the three levels of care information to our campus community, so faculty and staff members and RA's and orientation counselors have a more transparent process to the campus community about how we manage threats.

Susan suggested that if there is a direct or immediate threat to the campus community it often bypasses the campus behavioral intervention and goes directly to the threat assessment team. If they receive information from the community or an external police agency, they will engage the threat assessment team. Their processes have evolved over the years. As a result, the state of North Carolina created a state BETA team, which is the Behavioral Evaluation and Threat Assessment team. This team can gather information and investigate behavioral threats. Their threat assessment team will immediately review information if the BETA team identifies a

concern that rises to that level of being a high or severe potential for threat to their campus community.

Susan indicated:

The behavioral intervention team was established as an entity prior to the Virginia Tech shooting actually. That group has been active for a while, and as an offshoot of behavioral intervention for threat assessment was in there. But I would say within the past five years we have really teased out these three distinct levels of care in the sort of pyramid fashion.

Karen suggested they do have a behavioral intervention team (CARE) in addition to their threat assessment team (BAT). Karen stated, "Our threat assessment team was implemented in 2008 and the behavioral intervention team started in 2014." The participant indicated that some of the behavioral intervention case issues in the past were managed by their threat assessment team, such as suicide cases. Karen discussed their institution's threshold document for determining case jurisdiction when it comes to behavioral intervention and TAM.

Karen indicated:

We wanted to make a clear difference. And so really any type of violent behavior is automatically TAM's. Any property damage, anything that falls under our campus regulation related to campus violence concerns, or threatening behaviors, that's what's considered TAM, versus behavioral intervention. Behavioral intervention is suicidal without other risk factors. And so, if it's suicidal, as it relates to domestic violence case stuff, that would be more TAM instead of behavioral intervention. Behavioral intervention has individuals in distress, difficulty, like academic issues housing concerns,

adjustment issues, chronic mental health crisis, general substance use issues that are not related to violent behavior, students missing classes, sexual assault.

Karen advised that if a student had a protection order in place, had made a threat towards self or others, or demonstrated a historical pattern of violence, agitation, socially inappropriate or bizarre behaviors, they will be reviewed through their threat assessment team. Karen stated, "If behaviors are indicative of psychosis, such as disorganized speech, behaviors, delusions, hallucinations, especially if hallucinations are more targeted towards paranoid thinking or command hallucinations, that's more of a TAM related issue." In addition, Karen stated, "Any type of aggressive behavior, sexual assault, if we have concerns as it related to predatory behavior and ongoing threats." The participant suggested these types of behaviors would go to their TAM for review.

Richard indicated they do have separate teams for behavioral intervention and threat assessment. Richard stated, "Those are focused among student affairs, particularly the counseling center and the Dean of Student's Office." Richard is not an active member on their behavioral intervention team. Richard stated: "What I would say is that the behavioral intervention team is a much more hands-on day-to-day operation. Meaning, our Dean of Students Office is pretty good about keeping tabs on students who might be at risk."

Richard suggested their student behavioral intervention team has more of a day-to-day operation in comparison to their threat assessment team. The student behavioral intervention team addresses and monitors students experiencing mental health challenges, classroom concerns and social issues.

Richard stated:

There's plenty of times when you'll have somebody who wasn't even on that radar, who pops up and it's like, someone has made a potential threat or has indicated behaviors that could be a threat to themselves or others. But, often that comes on the radar through the behavioral intervention team. The Dean of Students at their respective institution determines the level of concern if a student will be assessed by their threat assessment team or behavioral intervention team. If it was employee related, Human Resources would take the lead in calling a meeting to assess the level of threat.

Theme 3 – TAM Team Processes were Important, but Varied Across Institutions

TAM Team processes vary across the three institutions that were examined for this study. One team has a formalized protocol and procedures, while the other two institutions are in the process of formalizing protocols.

Richard suggested they are working on a formalized threat assessment and management process. They do have a workplace violence and protocol policy that they are updating. Richard stated, "We're working on it. We do have a workplace violence policy that we're updating, and we've had that for years. Honestly, I think part of it is it hasn't been fleshed out completely." Richard shared that that the TAM team is very collaborative, open to sharing information and has good relationships within the team. The participant stated that their team has operated well on an ad-hoc basis, with a "skeletal structure."

Susan's campus does not have a formalized threat assessment and management process. They, collectively, as a team have decided to meld some of those materials together. Susan indicated that their university had engaged in an external review of their processes. According to Susan, the external review indicated that their threat assessment protocols, while they were

interdisciplinary, they were outdated. In addition, Susan indicated they would be requesting additional money to review best practices and protocol.

Susan indicated:

We're going to be requesting money to look at different, I guess, more modernized protocols and training both our behavioral intervention and our threat assessment teams on those types of protocols. So right now, we use interdisciplinary rubrics. We haven't landed on one solid process or management rubric that we are happy with.

Karen's team had a formalized threat assessment and management protocol. Karen's institution has developed and revised their Standard Operating Procedure (Appendix H) and a Threshold Rubric (Appendix G) for their TAM team. The Standard Operating Procedure outlines the TAM team's mission, goals, purpose, composition of membership, roles and responsibilities for each member of the team, risk screening for individuals of concern, student and employee intervention, case status, team member training, outreach and prevention. The Threshold Rubric assists team members in determining if a case meets behaviors to be managed through the TAM team or the behavioral intervention team. The Rubric entails information pertaining to reporting structure, how reports are reviewed and disseminated for further assessment. The rubric outlines behaviors that would be on a TAM team versus a behavioral intervention team. The threshold rubric describes risk factors, such as suicidality, bizarre behavior, sexual assault, property damage, and substance use issues. The rubric provides additional risk factors to consider when working with individuals of concern.

Theme 4 – Varied Threat Assessment Tools Across Institutions

TAM Team threat assessment tools varied among the three institutions in the southeastern university system. Some teams utilized a plethora of tools, while others may be in the process of solidifying a best-practice threat assessment tool.

Karen stated they used the Cawood Assessment and Response Grid in every case. In addition, Karen indicated the tool that they are currently using and past tools have allowed them to review core issues.

Karen stated:

In every case. And it's throughout, because the reality is, is with new information, that risk level will change. And we use other assessment tools, depending on the case. So if there's a case that has stalking, then I might use the stalking risk profile, or the stalking and harassment, it's called SHARP. If there's domestic violence specifically, I might use the danger assessment tool. We have experience and training in using Mosaic and the WAVR-21, as well. It's not a requirement to use all of those tools, but it's encouraged to use additional tools if needed. But the Cawood Grid, we use every single time for every case.

Karen suggested they used other assessment tools in addition to the Cawood Response Grid:

We use other assessment tools, depending on the case. So if there's a case that has stalking, then I might use the stalking risk profile, or the stalking and harassment, it's called SHARP. If there's domestic violence specifically, I might use the danger assessment tool. We have experience and training in using Mosaic and the WAVR 21 as well. It's not a requirement to use all of those tools, but it's encouraged to use additional tools if needed.

Karen indicated their TAM team utilizes the Cawood Assessment and Response Grid for every case. In addition, they may consider using other threat assessment tools based on the presented information in a case. Susan stated they used a combination of tools when assessing threats to their respective campus.

Susan stated:

We have basic thresholds that we look at with regard to whether the student's behavior is mild or moderate or severe or high risk to the campus. Then we make some consultation with some of our professional judgment protocols, whether that's from a national organization rubric or Deisinger's types of rubrics. Then we'll take those professional judgment protocols in combination with our professional experience and our gut sometimes about what we need to do in order to move forward through with either a full threat assessment or maybe some care and intervention action items to scope out what we need to do with the student.

In addition, Susan suggested they would use those tools when they had a student whose behavior seemed at a high level of concern. Susan's team would review those tools to refresh their memory on where certain behaviors fall onto the rubric such as writing threatening communication, access to weapons, or expressed ideation. Susan indicated that their Chief of Police on their team has many years of experience and able to decipher what appears to be a viable threat. Susan indicated that when the concerns seem less black and white, they will review different rubrics, their recollection of information and their gut instinct on how to proceed.

Susan stated they have looked at numerous tools but have not yet landed on one management rubric with which they are satisfied. Susan said they use the rubrics before and during their team meetings. The participant suggested that they will mostly use rubrics as Chair

of the team. The team rarely has a conversation about reviewing the rubric with the group and going down the checklist. It was suggested that the expectation is on the Chair of the committee to handle those things and use the team members as a consultative process. Many rubric discussions are only discussed between the co-chairs and a few others, but not the entire committee. The chair has recognized this and expressed concerns to their supervisor. They have even mentioned hiring a professional specifically for threat assessment.

Richard stated that their police representative had participated in a state-level training and their team has followed that analysis and approach to assessing risks to campus for the last two to three years.

Richard stated:

I've been satisfied that we at least had some form of formal analysis or informal analysis of the factors for why we made a particular determination one way or the other. But we could standardize better. And we certainly could do better as far as when we're updating our policies as far as who is the sort of repository for those particular analysis. Whether it's a student, is that with the Dean of Student's Office that keeps those records. And with the employee, whether that's Human Resources. We could do better in that area.

Richard indicated they were interested in implementing a stronger day-to-day policy and training on threat assessment. Karen utilizes a threat assessment tool for every case and may use additional tools depending on the case. Susan uses a combination of rubrics to review cases and Richard has a trained law enforcement TAM team member to assess TAM team cases.

Theme 5 – Varied TAM Team Training Across Institutions

TAM Team training varied across three southeastern university system schools. In fact, one institution provides multiple training opportunities to TAM team members, while other schools lack funding and time for consistent member training.

Susan suggested:

There are so many layers and pieces of information that I think could be considered or brought into the conversation that more training could help us shed light on or think about. Or have access to information that we don't currently have. One of the dilemmas that I have as the chair and co-chair of these teams is timing and budget around trainings. They're not cheap trainings. But also being participants in a campus behavioral intervention team or a threat assessment team is an additional duty for people who already have busy, full time jobs, who are already trying to manage their area of discipline and keeping up with that knowledge. So, yes, our group does need additional training, does need additional tools, but it's been difficult to navigate how and when to get that training and tools to a group of people who are basically this is a 1/8th of a full-time job that they are doing.

In addition, Susan stated the TAM team has encountered a timing and budget issue around trainings.

Susan stated:

Finding the type of training and the timing of the training and the modality of training that could fit into the schedule for all of these people who have basically been volunteered by the university by way of their position that they're on this team, has been a challenge to navigate and figure out.

Susan stated that their Chancellor does not appoint individuals to their behavioral intervention or TAM team. The appointments of individuals to their teams are based upon their involuntary protective withdrawal policy. Susan stated that there is a symbolism around the Chancellor indicating the importance of serving on threat assessment policy verses an individual being placed on a team due to policy. Susan said that consistent training provided by the southeastern university system would be helpful.

Susan stated:

But I also think there needs to be consistency in how campuses staff and make threat assessment a priority within each campus organization. So I think that system training would be helpful, but I also think that there needs to be funding provided either centrally by the system, or from the university, specifically put aside to pay for national training and national certifications and memberships for each team member to participate in threat assessment organizations so they can keep up-to-date on rubrics, on tools.

Susan suggested that this would allow their team to remain up to date on trends and have access to resources. Susan understands that there are recommendations for national training, but they would need funding to help support those opportunities. Susan expressed concerns about funding when they participated in trainings or webinars.

Susan stated:

Whenever we do have webinars or any kind of trainings, I'm pulling my offices' funds in order to train a university-wide committee. That hasn't really seemed fair in the past, but I don't like the idea of not doing it at all and not using my offices' money to train those people.

Richard indicated they had sent their employees within their office to trainings specific to their discipline, but not to any threat assessment training.

Richard indicated:

We have been to national organizational conferences. They put on conferences all the time. And as part of that conference, I've attended, and I know my colleagues have probably attended as well, sessions perhaps on threat assessment. But that hasn't been the whole thrust of the training.

Karen stated that their TAM team receives regular monthly training. Karen suggested that everyone on their team had training on the Cawood Response Grid. The participant stated:

One, it helps in our assessment of it, because there are certain categories that even the police have their own process for threat assessment. And the concerning behavior reports that they submit to us hits all of the criteria that we look at in our team process, in our threat assessment process.

Karen said it helped their team think more broadly and be more intentional in their assessment and management strategy of a case. The participant stated it is much easier when all of the team members have training.

Karen stated:

It just makes it a lot easier when all the members have training on it. They bring their expertise to the table, but they also have this experience and knowledge, so they can ask anyone that's the direct case manager questions and relating to any of those categories.

And our intake forms have all of that information in there, so it helps.

Karen indicated they had a recent change to their psychologist on the team. This is the only training "need" they suggested during their semi-structured interview.

Karen indicated:

In the past we had a psychologist that had training, that we trained on those different violence risk assessment tools. And, so our new psychologist needs training in those things, to be able to do a violence screening for us, if we needed that additional assessment, instead of sending them outside the university. I mean, that's the only thing I would say we need additional. But the reality is as long as they're getting their ongoing training that we have established, I think as long as we don't become complacent and think what we had last year is sufficient for this year – I think we'll be okay. I already have two or three members that are studying to get their certification to be Certified Threat Managers.

I asked a follow-up question about the risk assessment tool for their Psychologist. Karen stated a violence risk assessment is performed by a forensically trained clinician is extremely expensive. The TAM team may not need a full evaluation, but instead additional understanding of what is going on with the individual. They had a past psychologist trained in different risk assessment tools; the HDR-20, Psychopathy Checklist, and others for clinicians. Karen said they developed a process that if they needed additional information from an individual of concern, they did not have to send the individual of concern outside of the university. The psychologist on the TAM team will complete the violence risk screening.

Karen indicated:

A violence risk assessment done by a forensically trained clinician is extremely expensive and sometimes we don't need a full violence risk assessment. We just need some additional understanding of what's going on with an individual that has more of a clinical basis to it. And so in the past, we had a psychologist that we trained in the

different violence risk assessment tools, like the HDR-20, the Psychopathy Checklist, and a couple of others that really primarily clinicians would use.

Karen said they used this screening on specialized cases; perhaps, three or four of them have been performed on campus. Karen suggested this allowed for the TAM team to refer the individual of concern to the appropriate provider for testing and clinical support related to the presented issues.

Theme 6 – Varied Financial Support at the Implementation and Annually of the TAM Team

Financial support of TAM teams from a southeastern university system varied tremendously across the board with information only from 3 out of 17 institutions.

Karen's TAM team is the only team who receives annual funding. "We had a \$20,000 startup training budget. And then every year after that it was \$15,000. \$10-15,000 was our training budget and then a \$5,000 operational budget." In addition, Karen indicated a change in their future funding request, "But that's going to change because I've requested additional funding because my staff has grown. And so that'll allow for extra available training and support to other offices."

Susan suggested they did not receive any financial support at the implementation of their TAM team. Susan said they do not have an annual budget from the university for their TAM team. They do not receive annual financial support from the university but do have the ability to make one-time requests per year.

Susan indicated:

Every year we have the ability to request one-time funding from the university, from the chancellor's bucket of money. So we'll throw in some request for behavioral intervention

trainings or forensic, the cost of potential forensic assessment into that one-time money.

We have never been denied, but it is not a continual funding stream that comes in.

I asked Susan if there was an average amount of money they would request annually from the university.

Susan stated:

It's hard from a year-to-year basis to quantify that we might need \$7000 for a forensic assessment if the year before we didn't have a forensic assessment. So, what did you do with the \$7000 we already gave to you? But at the end of the fiscal year all that money goes away if we don't use it. That's been a challenge.

I asked Susan how much funding they received last year from the university. Susan indicated the amount was \$10,000. Richard suggested they were unfamiliar with any financial support at the startup of their TAM Team. Richard stated, "I don't know. I assume there was some financial support. I'm just not familiar. Because that was before my time." Richard stated the team was implemented before their employment at the university.

Richard indicated:

Any of the funding, my guess would have come through funding for Human Resources or Student Affairs. Now, granted funding has occurred for a department at the university, a member trained with the SBI and to be engaged with that. But I don't know the original sort of seed money that may have taken place.

Richard was asked about any current financial support of the team from the university or outside resources. Richard indicated, "My guess is no. Other than what's already budgeted for human resources, or budgeted for Student Affairs, or the Police. I know I don't get any [TAM Team] money in my office."

Quantitative Data: Online Survey

The online anonymous survey was offered to the entire TAM team members at the study institution. The online survey was the most appropriate instrument to utilize for this portion of the data collection due to the amount of TAM team members at the study institution. The online survey sample included a total of 13 threat-assessment team members from one southeastern university. The entire TAM team at the study institution included a total of 20 members. As a result, this does not include all perspectives from a TAM team at a southeastern university. The threat assessment team at the southeastern university comprises representatives from multiple offices to create a multidisciplinary approach. Participants are representatives from academic affairs, campus living, the counseling center, student conduct, attorneys, prospective health, human resources, faculty, campus law enforcement, dean of students, disability support, and student health. All participants from the online survey identified their university role as a staff/administrator, faculty, or law enforcement.

Based on survey responses, 77% (n=10) indicated that they served as a staff/administrator at the university, 15% (n=2) stated they were a faculty member, and 8% (n=1) listed they were law enforcement. The survey collected information pertaining to TAM Team members years of experience in higher education. 46% (n=6) indicated they had 20+ years, 31% (n=4) suggested they had 10-20 years of experience, 15% (n=2) less than 5 years, and 8% (n=1) had 5-10 years of experience. In addition, the survey collected data regarding the amount of time members have served on the TAM team. 38.5% (n=5) indicated they had served for more than 5 years, 38.5% (n=5) suggested they had served less than 5 years, and 23% (n=3) stated they had served on the team less than two years.

Theme 7 – Online Survey - Inconsistent New Member and On-Going Training at the Study Institution

In an effort to ensure the level of safety of our community and campus, it was important to examine the consistency or lack thereof in new member and on-going training from the TAM team's perspective. Representatives of the TAM team were asked to indicate what type of training opportunities they received as a new member of the team. The responses varied from "None" to "In-person training on two separate occasions." The responses were inconsistent based upon the timing of becoming a new member of the team. Two members stated "none," one member stated, "Nothing specific," and some participants selected, "Threat Assessment Training". One participant stated they received a book and a short tutorial on using the database. One participant suggested they participated in an online training. Two participants indicated they received an in-person training, and two other participants stated they attended a system training at the onset of their new membership.

In addition, representatives were asked to share what types of training opportunities they had received recently from the study institution's TAM team (see Table 6). Consistent training is not occurring for TAM team members at the study institution. From the data collected, 61% (n=8) completed a one-day threat assessment training in March 2019. Eight percent (n=1) received training outside of what the TAM team has offered, and 8% (n=1) has attended a university system office level training. Eight percent (n=1) attended a TAM training over three years ago and 15% (n=2) members could not recall the last time they attended a TAM training.

Table 6

TAM Team Training Participation (Online Survey)

Last TAM Team Training Attended	n	%
March 2019 (1-Day training)	8	61%
Outside Training	1	8%
University System Training	1	8%
Over Three Years Ago	1	8%
Unknown	2	15%

Theme 8 – Online Survey - Discrepancies Found Between TAM Team Practice and TAM Policy at the Study Institution

The identification of discrepancies between TAM team practice and TAM policy was another topic referenced by many participants. 54% (n=7) participants stated they did not notice any discrepancies between TAM team practice versus policy at the study institution. Some participants commented on the discrepancies they noticed between TAM team Practice versus TAM policy. One participant stated, “Sometimes I don’t feel we are only an advisory group. I think we process and strongly recommend action.” Another participant indicated:

Nothing glaring, all members of Employee Relations serve and not just the Director; it says Associate Provost for Personnel & Resource Administration in the Division of Academic Affairs and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel Administration in the Division of Health Sciences should rotate but they do not; there is no longer a Risk Manager and it doesn’t mention a representative from Perspective Health.

Some participants noticed specific discrepancies in TAM team training at the study institution stating, “Lack of training opportunities as a team. Some members are, at times, unobjective.” Another participant commented, “Training is not standard and does not occur within 90 days; UBCT does not meet regularly, only as needed.” Lastly, one participant suggested, “We do not always assess each case as some are not threats but concerns, we hear concerns that may be better suited in the behavioral intervention team.” In conclusion, there are discrepancies in practice versus policy at the study institution regarding training, regular vs. as needed meetings and member composition.

Theme 9 – Online Survey - TAM Team Composition and Member Experience at the Study Institution

Some participants from the study institution's TAM Team indicated discrepancies with team composition and expressed concerns on the number of members serving on the team. Sixty-nine percent (n=9) Of participants from the study institution's TAM team, 69% (n=9) stated that they believed the team composition was appropriate based on the university policy.

One participant stated:

The current team is larger than what is listed, and the large size of the team sometimes interferes with communication in the team; sidebars may occur. More frequent meetings with a smaller team might build stronger relationships and more consistency similar to what exists on the CARE team. I think that it might be fine to add members ad hoc on a case-by-case basis - maybe for sharing information and then letting the team deliberate the information without the person present.

Another participant stated, "It seems to work as is. I do not believe some contribute to discussions and don't just "need to be there." Fifteen percent (n=2) of the participants commented on university counsel serving on the team stating, "University counsel presence is particularly heavy-handed and at times, redundant" and "I think one attorney would suffice, sometimes there are two or three at a meeting." One participant had no opinion, and another stated that it does not follow policy.

The study institution's TAM team varied in years of member experience. Participants were asked to describe their experience serving on the TAM team. Overall, the participants stated their experience has been positive serving on the team. One participant stated they

appreciated the opportunity to bring forth recommendations and another stated that they felt this team was helpful to our students.

Another participant commented:

I have been impressed with the chair's willingness and the team's readiness to come together on short notice to review a case--sometimes meeting multiple times in a week. I believe the members take their responsibility on the committee seriously. I think that the committee is much more structured than it was when I sat on it first many years ago. This new structure has led to a more comprehensive review of data, increased consistency and more confidence in the intervention plan, I believe. At times, I have wondered if everyone in the room needs to be present. To protect the students' right to privacy, I believe the bare minimum of staff/faculty should be present. Thus, maybe a core team should exist and then others are added just as relevant.

One team member shared about their member experience of serving on the team since the implementation of the TAM Team at the study institution.

A TAM team member participant indicated:

I have been on the team pretty much since it started out of the Chancellor's office meetings. I feel like it is a great depository for concerns and though used for less than threatening situations, offers good conversation but it also allows opinions sometimes that are not based on the facts. I would like to see fact-based discussions.

Some participants discussed strengths they associated with serving as a member of the TAM team. One participant stated, "I have found my overall experience on the team to be good. The partnerships and relationships with other departments on the team have only strengthened over the years." Also, one participant commented that the team does well using their database and

documenting plans, follow-ups and new information pertaining to the cases. Another participant stated, “The team convenes to debate the case at hand while balancing the individual’s rights and safety with that of the campus; the committee does this enthusiastically but at times may struggle with consistency.”

Results

The results section includes discussion and evidence of the data collected as it pertains to the research questions. Data collection included phone interviews with Chair representatives from three university-wide system universities and an online survey with the study institution’s threat assessment team representatives. The findings in this section will include a variety of information pertaining to the goals of this research and the identified lack of information to help guide universities when it comes to mitigating threats of violence. Weisenbach Keller et al. (2010) stated there is limited guidance regarding the composition of a team and tools that should be used for assessment purposes and training for the team members.

Analysis of Research Question #1

As seen in the following, research question #1 focused on the overall development of a formalized threat assessment program: What is involved in the development of a formalized threat assessment program?

Analysis of the data showed that there are multiple components that are involved in the creation of a successful team that focuses on threat assessment. Financial support at the implementation and on-going support of the team, new member and on-going training for the team, a standard operating procedure, and best-practice assessment tools all contribute to the success of the development of a formalized threat assessment program.

Karen's institution has developed and revised their Standard Operating Procedure and a Threshold Rubric for their TAM team. The Standard Operating Procedure outlines the TAM team's mission, goals, purpose, composition of membership, roles and responsibilities for each member of the team, risk screening for individuals of concern, student and employee intervention, case status, team member training, outreach and prevention. The Threshold Rubric assists team members in determining if a case meets behaviors that need to be managed through the TAM team or the behavioral intervention team. The Rubric includes information pertaining to reporting structure and how reports are reviewed and disseminated for further assessment. The rubric outlines behaviors that would be reviewed by a TAM team versus a behavioral intervention team.

In order to implement a baseline TAM team, funding is required at the onset and annually. According to Karen, they received funding at the implementation and continue to receive annual support for their TAM team. "We had a \$20,000 startup training budget. And then every year after that it was \$15,000. \$10,000-\$15,000 was our training budget and then a \$5,000 operational budget." I asked Susan if they received any funding at the implementation of their team and their response was, "No, we were not." Richard indicated they were not employed by their university during the implementation phase and was unaware if they received funding for their TAM team. Each institution is not offered the same funding opportunities at the onset and annually for their TAM teams resulting in varied baseline team protocol.

Karen said that training helped their team think more broadly and be intentional in their assessment and management strategy of a case. Karen stated that it is much easier to assess and intervene with individuals of concern when all of the team members have training in threat assessment and management tools. This allows for team members to bring their expertise to the

table, so they are able ask the case manager direct questions related to those categories on the best-practice threat assessment tool. Karen stated that their TAM team receives monthly training.

Analysis of Research Sub-Question #1(a)

Research question #1(a) focused on the necessary processes to create a successful TAM Team: What processes are necessary to create a successful team that focuses on threat assessment?

The development of a TAM team has many parts related to the success of a formalized threat assessment program. Analysis of the research shows that funding, operating procedures, on-set and on-going training for team members, strong Chair leadership, a multidisciplinary representation of members, team collaboration, a database for record keeping, and best-practice threat assessment tools develop a formalized threat assessment program in higher education.

Based on the analysis, an important factor of the success of a TAM team is that they should have a multidisciplinary approach and team collaboration. Richard stated, “I think more than anything else, I think it is a willingness to roll your sleeves up and gather all the information you need to gather. And then, I think it’s listening to each other and collaborating.” Susan commented on the multidisciplinary aspect, “I think it needs to be a multi-divisional team. A successful threat assessment team needs to have different levels of thought patterns that can help the group think through behaviors and mitigation and action steps.” Richard indicated, “I do feel like it’s most effective if you have a group of folks who have a level of expertise but are committed to divvying up the work that needs to be done and working together to get it done in a timely and thorough fashion. That to me that is what’s crucial.”

In addition, chair leadership is important to the success of the team. Karen stated, “To be successful you have to have support from the top-down. You need to have a strong Chair that is able to bring people together.” In addition, Susan commented on the leadership of the team.

Susan indicated, “I definitely think in today’s day and age having campus police presenting either as co-chair of that team or part of that team is very, very important for us.”

In regard to operating procedures, Karen stated from experience, “You need to have a regulation and policies in place that helps support your process.” Additionally, Richard stated, “We’re working on it [policy]. We do have a workplace violence policy that we’re updating. A workplace violence protocol. And as part of that have a policy for threat assessment teams and we’ve had that for years.” Susan indicated they were revising their protocols and policy due to an external review committee suggesting they were outdated. In addition to a policy, some southeastern institutions are utilizing multiple levels of care or a threshold document indicating a clear description of cases between behavioral intervention and TAM teams. Susan stated, “We have three levels of care is what we call it.” In addition, Susan stated, “We look at maybe behaviors or interactions that rise above the threshold for care or when the care team’s interventions are not mitigating the concerns, and the behaviors become more increasingly concerning and threatening.” Karen indicated, “We have a threshold documented that we developed when the behavioral intervention team was first developed. So, that way it would be a clear delineation of what we are doing.”

Another important factor to consider in the development of a successful threat assessment program is a training budget for team members to properly assess TAM cases. Karen indicated from experience, “You need to have a training budget and you need to be intentional of how you spend that money.” In addition to teams receiving funding for training, it is important for TEAM members to pursue regular training.

Susan commented on training,

The kinds of things the professionals on that training talked about made me realize I don't have enough experience in managing threat assessment with just myself and my chief of police and maybe a couple of consultative people. We really do need to look at expanding our scope of rubric and training for the entire team because it's potentially a risk and a liability for only a couple of us to be managing this campus process."

Training for new members and ongoing regular training is important for team members. Karen stated, "I think everyone needs to have training on specific instruments that are validated and shown to be helpful in threat assessment." In addition, Karen indicated, "I think regular training is important. I do introductory training with every team member." Karen stated that having a trauma informed and multicultural training is important for team members as well.

Analysis of Research Sub-Question #1(b)

As seen in the following, research question #1(b) focused on specialized member trainings: What specialized member trainings utilized by a university team will affectively assist in reviewing and managing threat assessment cases?

Participants from TAM teams in a southeastern university system discussed threat assessment organizations, certifications, and relevant trainings. An important factor for TAM teams to consider is the consistency of member training. Karen stated that TAM team members should have on-going threat assessment and management training. In addition to training, Karen shared that it was important to have at least one experienced certified threat manager on the team. Karen stated:

I think they [TAM Team Members] have to have some understanding and involvement in a professional threat assessment organization, because that helps, one, in developing a better understanding of their roles. But also what's evidence based, what's shown to be

effective, and they need to be able to roll it out and use the tools that they're being trained on. And, apply what they're learning.

Some participants shared concerns about the inability to pursue training for their TAM teams. Richard did not comment on the type of training their TAM team has received, but suggested it was difficult for their TAM team members to attend trainings due to limited time. Additionally, Susan expressed concerns about the additional responsibilities of employees serving on a TAM team who are limited in time. Furthermore, Susan advised that it is difficult to find the type of training and the modality of training that could fit into their TAM team members' already busy schedules.

Susan:

Yes, our group does need additional training, does need additional tools, but it's been difficult to navigate how and when to get that training and tools to a group of people who are basically this is a 1/8th of a full-time job that they are doing.

Karen indicated the TAM team at their respective institution had training on the Cawood Grid, the WAVR-21, the SHARP, and the Danger Assessment Tool. Karen went on to discuss the types of training TAM team members should consider, "They need to have trauma-informed training. And it's not just when they interview an alleged victim, but also when they interview an alleged offender or respondent, everybody comes with their own experiences and traumas." Karen said that because of the large number of international students on their campus, their TAM team members have at least one annual multicultural training. Karen goes on to say that members should have training on additional tools to help better understand different perspectives and what individuals present with at times. Some participants were unable to provide many details regarding training. Susan served as co-chair, and Richard did not have an identified chair at their

institution. The two aforementioned participants had positions at their universities that were not solely focused on threat assessment and management, but an additional duty.

In conclusion, it is recommended that TAM Teams receive baseline and consistent training on a specialized threat assessment tool, such as the Cawood Response Grid, the WAVR-21, the Danger Assessment Tool, the SHARP, FBI or SBI rubrics, or the NaBITA rubric. From the analysis, this does not mean the team should have training in each of these tools, but it helps teams better assess the individual of concern and create a successful management plan. At minimum, southeastern universities should have an identified specialized threat assessment training they are annually attending to help the TAM team better assess and manage the level of threat to campus.

Analysis of Research Sub-Question # 1(c)

Research sub-question #1(c) focused on the financial support of a TAM team: What financial support is required for the implementation and on-going support of the team?

One out of three southeastern university TAM teams did not receive money, one team received funding, and it was unknown if one team received funding at the implementation of the team or annually. One of the institutions can request one-time funding for their TAM team. This money can be used for TAM team training or when individuals assessed by the team need a forensic evaluation. Karen stated they received \$20,000 at the implementation of their TAM team to be used for training. Annually, they receive \$15,000 for training and \$5,000 for operating expenses. Karen also indicated they will be requesting additional annual funds for training due to additional staff within their department.

Susan requests an average of \$10,000 for their annual one-time funding request; however, a forensic evaluation could cost up to \$7,000 per individual. The number of forensic evaluations

necessary during the year is not known at the start of the year and this funding does not allow for guaranteed team training for this institution.

Richard stated that there may have been financial support at the startup of the team, but they were unsure since they were not employed at the university during the TAM team implementation. Richard also indicated that a law enforcement team member has attended training, but it was paid for out of their department's budget, so the cost of the team member's training was not covered by money allocated for the TAM team.

TAM teams should have funding at the implementation and continual funding annually to pursue necessary training to mitigate and manage posed threats to their campus. Two out of the three TAM teams within a southeastern university system interviewed in this study do not have designated annual funding to pursue further training and assessment tools. This would suggest that southeastern university TAM teams are not fully trained to properly assess and mitigate campus threats without the appropriate training and threat assessment tools.

Analysis of Research Sub-Question # 1(d)

Research sub-question #1(d) focused on best-practice threat assessment tools: What best-practice threat assessment tools utilized by a university team will effectively assess and manage campus threat cases?

Based on the data collected, the following threat assessment tools can effectively assess and manage campus threat cases: the Cawood Response Grid, WAVR-21, the Danger Assessment Tool, the SHARP, the Mosaic, SBI rubrics, FBI rubrics, the NaBITA Risk rubric or a combination of tools. Karen stated their TAM team uses a primary threat assessment tool, the Cawood Response Grid, and additional tools if needed depending on the case. Karen stated, "It's not a requirement to use all of those tools, but it's encouraged to use additional tools if needed.

But the Cawood Grid, we use every single time for every case.” Based on data collected during the interview with Karen, they indicated that their team used the following tools: the Stalking and Harassment Assessment and Risk Profile (SHARP) if the case involves stalking and/or harassment and the Danger Assessment Tool if the case involves domestic violence. Their team also has experience and training in using the Mosaic and WAVR-21.

Susan suggested they have yet to decide on a specific threat assessment tool and have used a combination of tools that they collectively as a team have melded together.

Susan indicated:

The team has grown larger, different people’s opinions have come in, so we’ve looked at NaBITA, we looked at WAVR-21, we’ve looked at the information Gene Deisinger [The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams] has provided, we’ve looked at some of the FBI rubrics. We have decided up until this point to meld some of those things together.

Susan stated they had an external review of their threat assessment protocols, and while they are interdisciplinary, the external review committee indicated the protocols were outdated.

Richard stated they have used rubrics from the SBI for assessment purposes because one of their team members had received training. They also advised that they were interested in learning more about best practice threat assessment tools to assess TAM team cases.

The analysis of the data indicates that the Cawood Grid, the WAVR-21, the Danger Assessment Tool, the SHARP, the Mosaic, SBI rubrics, FBI rubrics, the NaBITA risk rubric or a combination of tools can effectively assess and manage campus threat cases. An identified specialized threat assessment tool should be consistently utilized by a TAM team. In addition,

TAM team members should be trained in multiple threat assessment tools to assess additional concerns presented in a case.

Analysis of Research Question #2

As seen in the following, research question #2 focused on the perceptions of TAM Team members: What is the perception of threat assessment team members related to their role on the team and the part they play in campus safety?

To provide information regarding the perception of the TAM team members related to their role on the team and the part they play in campus safety, I reviewed the data from the online survey regarding an individual's experience serving on the team. This was completed by members of the study institution's TAM team. Evaluation of the survey responses showed that many participants commented on their overall experience of serving on the team. A total of seven participants stated they had a positive experience on the team and some of the participants stated they enjoyed working with the TAM team. One participant stated they felt the partnerships and relationships with other departments on the team had only strengthened over the years. One participant stated that the TAM team was helpful to students.

Four participants included comments about their personal contributions to the team. One participant stated they wished they contributed more to the team; although, one participant stated they appreciated the opportunity to share recommendations to the team. One participant stated they were unsure as to how they saw their position fit in on the team, but they have learned in discussions with other directors on the team that the most important factor is learning about the individuals they serve. The participant went on to share they are not always able to share information that is held within their office due to confidentiality. One participant stated that they

felt some opinions are alienated in the room because some team members may dominate the conversation based on how they felt about the topic that was discussed.

One participant shared a concern about fact versus opinion dialogue within the TAM team meetings. They participant stated:

I have been on the team pretty much since it started out of the Chancellor's office meetings. I feel like it is a great depository for concerns and though used for less than threatening situations, offers good conversation but it also allows opinions sometimes that are not based on the facts. I would like to see fact-based discussions.

Two participants discussed the number of cases the TAM team reviews. One participant stated they wished to see more streamlining of cases to complete the work more efficiently. One participant discussed their satisfaction with how quickly the team could review and assess cases, stating:

I have been impressed with the chair's willingness and the team's readiness to come together on short notice to review a case--sometimes meeting multiple times in a week. I believe the members take their responsibility on the committee seriously. I think that the committee is much more structured than it was when I sat on it first many years ago. This new structure has led to a more comprehensive review of data, increased consistency and more confidence in the intervention plan, I believe.

Multiple participants commented on the team composition. Overall, 62% (n=8) of the study institution's TAM team felt the team had just enough members, 31% (n=4) felt there were too many members, and one participant did not provide a response (see Table 7).

One participant stated, "At times, I have wondered if everyone in the room needs to be present. To protect the students' right to privacy, I believe the bare minimum of staff/faculty

Table 7

TAM Team Membership (Online Survey)

Question # 11: Amount of Team Members	n	%
There are just enough members	8	62%
There are too many members	4	31%
Refuse to Answer	1	7%

should be present. Thus, maybe a core team should exist and then others are added just as relevant.”

One participant discussed the size of the study institution’s TAM team. The participant suggested that the team is larger than what was indicated in the policy. The participant suggested that the large size of the team interferes with team communication and side conversations may occur. In addition, the participant suggested that more frequent meetings with a smaller team may build a stronger relationship among team members and more consistency, similar to that experienced by the behavioral intervention team. The participant suggested having some members serving as ad-hoc on a case-by-case basis.

The research question regarding threat assessment team members related to their role on the team and the part they play in campus safety was not fully answered based on the questions and responses in the online survey. I don’t feel the participants adequately responded to the question and/or the instrument did not provide enough information to answer the question. This portion of the student needs improvement to provide answers for this topic. Members provided input regarding composition of the team, how the TAM team functions, and the efficiency of handling TAM team cases. The data analysis suggests that members of the TAM team have differing opinions of the number of members serving on the team and composition of team membership. The data includes discrepancies of team member perceptions to the role they play as a member of the TAM team.

Analysis of Research Question #3

Research question #3 focused on the factors ensuring a successful TAM team implementation and improved campus safety: What factors related to threat assessment and a

threat assessment policy ensure successful implementation, as well as improved safety, on a college campus?

Analysis of the data collected in the study showed that overall, a successful threat assessment team includes many factors related to the success of the implementation of the TAM team to improved safety on a college campus. First, a TAM team should create a university policy and receive funding to support the start-up of the team for training and threat assessment tools. As Karen indicated, “You need to have a training budget and you need to be intentional of how you spend that money. And, you need to have a regulation and policies in place that helps support your process [TAM Team].” Secondly, the team should have consistent new-member and on-going training on specific tools. The study institution’s TAM team had a discrepancy between practice versus policy. TAM team members at the study institution advised they had not been receiving consistent new and on-going member training. One participant from the online survey noted a “lack of training opportunities as a team.” Another participant from the online survey commented, “Training is not standard and does not occur within 90 days.” Karen from the semi-structured interview suggested that TAM team members should have on-going threat assessment and management training. Karen indicated, “I think regular training is important. And so like for me, I do introductory training with every team member.” Susan suggested they wished to see more consistent TAM team training from the university system office. TAM teams should be receiving consistent training opportunities.

Training in specialized threat assessment tools is a significant factor for ensuring improved safety on a college campus. Karen indicated, “I think everyone needs to have training on specific instruments that are validated and shown to be helpful in threat assessment. I think

they need training and understanding and what their own processes are going to be.” In addition, Karen indicated:

It just makes it a lot easier when all the members have training on it. So, they bring their expertise to the table, but they also have this experience and knowledge, so they can ask anyone that’s the direct case manager questions and related to any of those categories.

TAM team members should receive training in specialized tools so they are able to assess an individual with best-practice tools and provide a management plan to lessen the risk to the campus community. In addition to assessing and managing campus threats, a TAM team should have strong collaboration, multidisciplinary representation, and members invested in their role. Richard indicated, “I think more than anything else, I think it is a willingness to roll your sleeves up and gather all the information you need to gather. And then, I think it’s listening to each other and collaborating.” Susan stated that a successful TAM team should be multi-divisional and have members with different levels of thought patterns that can help the group think through behaviors and action steps towards mitigation. Additionally, Karen indicated, “You need to have members of the team that are invested in the process, that have the ability to not only think within their own professional lens but be able to think of things from a broader multidisciplinary standpoint.” Furthermore, Karen indicated that it is important to have dedicated individuals to serve on the team, because the more responsibilities a team member has, the less of a priority it is for them to be serving on the team. As Susan and Richard indicated previously, it is difficult to find time for all TAM team members to be trained in specialized threat assessment tools.

The success of implementing a TAM team to mitigate campus threats is multi-faceted. There is not one solution to improve campus safety, however; implementing a TAM policy,

receiving an annual budget to purchase best-practice threat assessment tools, and new and on-going member training are factors related to improved campus safety.

Summary

This chapter provided the results for the study analyzing the data collected via semi-structured interviews with TAM team chairs within a southeastern university system and the online survey completed by the TAM team members at the study institution. There are many factors related to the success of implementing a TAM team and ensuring campus threats are assessed and managed by trained members through best-practice threat assessment tools. TAM teams should develop a policy, receive funding at the start-up phase and annually for members to pursue specialized training. TAM team members should be trained on specialized assessment tools, such as the Cawood Response Grid, WAVR-21, the Danger Assessment Tool, the SHARP, the Mosaic, SBI rubrics, FBI rubrics, the NaBITA Risk rubric or a combination of tools. The fifth and final chapter will provide a summary of the study and discuss the results. In addition, limitations of the study and implications of the findings for practice will be included. Finally, recommendations for further research will be shared in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the data that were provided in the results section of Chapter 4. I identified that a southeastern university lacked a fully revised and implemented threat assessment protocol to evaluate threats posed to the campus community, lacked consistent specialized team trainings, and lacked university financial support and access to various specialized threat assessment tools. In addition, I wanted to gain additional information about possible responses related to protocols at the study institution. I explored the study institution's TAM team protocol, new member and on-going member training, the use of threat assessment tools, the current TAM team policy, and university financial support. The data identified concerns with TAM teams within a southeastern university system and at the study institution. It was evident that both the study institution and the southeastern university system lacked formality when it involved TAM team protocol. The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze information related to the TAM teams: (a) formalized threat assessment procedures, (b) financial support of the TAM team, (c) specialized member training(s), and (d) the use of threat assessment tools to appropriately assess and manage a posed threat to a university campus community in order to create a protocol for a TAM team at the study institution based on best practices from the southeastern universities reviewed.

Summary of the Findings

TAM team protocols varied in funding, threat assessment tools, and specialized member training at three campuses within a southeastern public university system. TAM team chairs from three southeastern public universities were interviewed remotely by phone and TAM team members at the study institution were provided an online survey to complete. Data collected

from the online survey and remote interview provided information to implement a revised threat assessment and management protocol at the study institution.

Southeastern Universities TAM Teams

Based on data collected and analyzed in this study, three TAM teams from a southeastern university system are inconsistent in TAM policy, funding, specialized member training, and best-practice threat assessment tools. The experience of TAM team chairs and members varied across the board as well. Only one chair suggested they had pursued threat assessment as a career, while the other two were either put in the position because of their prior experience or it was part of their position at the university. One institution identified a specific Chairperson (Karen), another institution co-chairs (Susan) their team with the campus Chief of Police and one university does not have an identified chair and the members of the team collectively share the responsibility (Richard).

TAM team protocols from three institutions within the same southeastern university system varied tremendously. One institution had a formalized protocol, one institution was in the process of working on a protocol and the other institution was revising their protocols. Recently, one institution had their procedures reviewed by an external committee and it was suggested that their processes were outdated. The Chair of the TAM team who had a formalized process had a standard operating procedure in place that outlined the team's mission, goals, team composition, team member expectations, possible interventions, and resources. The other southeastern universities who participated in the study are working towards a standard protocol for their TAM team. One may find it concerning that only one out of three southeastern university system universities who participated in this study has a formalized TAM team policy or protocol in place to evaluate and manage campus threats. Data was only collected from the three institutions

described in the study, so it is not possible to comment accurately on TAM team protocols at the other universities within the system.

One consistency I identified was that each of the institutions had both a behavioral intervention team and threat assessment team. One institution stated they had an additional team that would address lower-level behaviors before the concerns would be reviewed by a behavioral intervention team. The southeastern university who developed a TAM team standard operating procedure also established and implemented a threshold/rubric document that outlined the types of behaviors and risk factors that would determine if a case would be reviewed by the behavioral intervention team or threat assessment team. Two of the three TAM teams interviewed from the southeastern university system do not have a formalized TAM team protocol. Although the institutions may have varied approaches to the TAM teams, it is important to note that each of the three institutions is documenting, reviewing, and evaluating threats to their respective campuses.

One institution had multiple best-practice threat assessment tools that team members had been trained on and used regularly during team meetings. The most common tool utilized for each case was the Cawood Assessment and Response Grid. If a case presented with specific risk factors, such as domestic violence, stalking/harassment, personality concerns, etc., it was advised that this particular team uses an additional best-practice threat assessment tool to better understand the individual, assess the situation, and provide the best intervention for the specific case. This institution had trained their members on multiple specific threat assessment tools and, at minimum, had one Certified Threat Manager on their team. This institution encourages their TAM team members to become Certified Threat Managers through the Association of Threat

Assessment Professionals. This institution consistently trained their TAM team members on specialized threat assessment tools, in addition to their best-practice tool.

Funding for TAM teams from the southeastern universities varied across the board. One institution was provided an initial \$20,000 during the implementation phase of their TAM team and then received \$15,000 annually to provide the appropriate new member and on-going training to team members. Another institution had to request funding at the beginning of each fiscal year and may use some of those funds for forensic evaluations for individuals of concern. The funding for this TAM team was used for team member training; and if individuals who posed a threat to campus needed a forensic evaluation, it would be funded from the one-time yearly funding request. This institution was not able to plan for purchasing threat assessment tools or team member training due to the uncertainty surrounding the number of individuals who posed a significant threat to campus and may need an evaluation within the next year. The other institution is not aware of specific funding for their TAM team but believed their institution would support recommended training efforts their TAM team may need. This institution had not requested specific funding as they have not determined an appropriate database for record keeping, member training and best-practice threat assessment tools.

TAM Team Members at the Study Institution

Following a review of the data and subsequent analysis collected from the survey of the Tam team members at the study institution, I identified a few concerns related to the study institution's TAM team. I found that the TAM team had inconsistent new-member and on-going member training. Some members were provided adequate training at the start of their membership while others did not receive any training. Some on-going team members attended recent trainings offered for TAM team members, while others have not attended training within

the past three years. This is very concerning that new members and on-going members may not be receiving consistent, up-to-date threat assessment and management training.

TAM team members were asked if they noticed any discrepancies between the TAM team practice and the TAM team policy. Seven team members suggested they did not notice any discrepancies between the study institution's practice and policy. Regarding the makeup of the team, more than half of the members stated they felt the study institution's TAM team had just enough members serving on the team. Several participants made comments regarding the number of members serving on the team. One member stated there are more individuals attending the TAM team meetings than what is indicated in the TAM team policy. Two additional TAM team members identified the same concern and suggested the team could be smaller. They also recommended exploring the option of a core functioning group of members. Some members made comments about their personal contributions to the TAM team and suggested they wished they contributed more. Although team members indicated they would like to contribute more to the team effort, another member suggested that there are TAM team members who dominate the meeting, which can limit the ability for other team members to share their perspective. The majority of the TAM team members said that their overall experience serving on a southeastern university threat assessment team had been positive.

In conclusion, southeastern universities are lacking a baseline TAM team protocol at the system or institutional level when it comes to policy, member training, best-practice threat assessment tools and financial support. Two out of three southeastern TAM teams, who contributed information to this study, do not have a formalized protocol, consistent member training, have not identified a best-practice threat assessment tool and do not have annual specific funding for their TAM teams. In addition, I identified at the study institution that the

TAM team could benefit from changes in following policy regarding team composition and consistent new and on-going member specialized training.

Interpretation of the Findings

The interpretation of the findings from the study are directly related to the conceptual framework, Contingency Theory of Leadership, and the theoretical framework, the 12 Guiding Principles of Threat Assessment and Management. The Contingency Theory of Leadership discusses the importance of a flexible leader and being adaptable to the situation at hand. The 12 Guiding Principles of Threat Assessment and Management discuss prevention efforts, such as a behavioral intervention team and TAM team collaboration for information gathering, assessment and case management (Deisinger et al., 2008). The interpretations of the findings will discuss the Contingency Theory of Leadership, TAM team policy, behavioral intervention and threat assessment and management.

Contingency Theory of Leadership

The findings of the research study are directly related to previous research studies discussed in Chapter 2. When considering the design of TAM teams, as well as the duties of the team chair, Donaldson (2001) stated that contingency theory does not have a “one size fits all” approach. As previously discussed, Kessler (2013) indicated that leaders are most effective when their style fits the context of the situation at hand. One of the most important predictors of group performance is how the leader and members relate to one another. According to contingency theory, a leader is a representative of a larger group that can be identified as the most influential on task-related functions. The overall effectiveness of a group is defined by the leader’s effectiveness on the assigned tasks (Fieldler, 1964).

A TAM team leader will be ineffective if they are unable to persuade and motivate others, while earning trust from team members and the campus at large (Van Brunt, 2012, p. 56). All threat assessment teams should have a leader of the team or chairperson that is responsible for running meetings, assigning tasks and ensuring the threat assessment and management process is successful (Deisinger et al., 2008). TAM team chairs who model a contingency theory-based leadership style must be influential, have a certain level of respect from team members and the campus, and have the ability to persuade others while ensuring threats to campus are handled appropriately. TAM Team chairs must also be adaptable based on various situations they may encounter.

One of the three chair participants in the study demonstrated a contingency theory-based leadership style as the TAM team chair at a southeastern university. Karen stated, “You need to have a strong Chair that is able to bring people together.” According to Fielder (1964), one of the most important predictors of how a group performs is how well the leader and members relate to one another. In addition, the leader must be the most influential on task-related functions (Fieldler, 1964). Karen played an influential role on their campus as they were part of the established and formalized threat assessment protocol. In addition, Karen’s institution created a threshold rubric for determining what types of behaviors are addressed by certain teams at their southeastern university. Karen had the ability to lead their team towards the use of best-practice assessment tools due to their increased knowledge and prior experience in threat assessment. Karen’s team has received multiple training opportunities.

Karen stated:

I’m a certified threat manager. I’ve had training and certification in the Danger

Assessment Tool, which is a domestic violence risk assessment tool. I have training and just finished the certification for the stalking risk profile [SHARP].

Karen was the only participant whose team was provided known initial and annual funding and recently requested additional funding due to increased staff members. Karen had consistent on-going specialized member trainings and best-practice risk assessment tools for their TAM team. Additionally, some of Karen's TAM team members had either become Certified Threat Managers or were in the process of preparing for the exam.

Susan stated that they are in the process of finalizing their protocol and have made three levels of concern teams to address students' needs. Richard indicated they are working on a formalized threat assessment and management process. Richard stated, "We're working on it. We do have a workplace violence policy that we're updating, and we've had that for years. Honestly, I think part of it is it hasn't been fleshed out completely." It was evident that the participants in the study had either implemented policy with appropriate protocols regarding funding, specialized training, and best practice tools or they were working toward completing a TAM protocol.

Threat Assessment Teams

In 2007, The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force recommended that each campus within the system utilize its own resources to address threats and concerning behaviors that each campus faced (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007). Furthermore, the Task Force stated that to prevent major crimes, campuses should have adequate resources to address threatening behaviors and the ability to respond to any mental health conditions. In addition, the Task Force suggested that campuses should have threat assessment teams that are trained to differentiate between normal and unusual

behavior, as well as behaviors that may lead to a potential threat to a campus community.

Bennett (2015) suggested that a team should be provided annual training on current research of risk factors that can lead toward a pathway of violence to provide the best opportunities for campus safety. Also, team members should have access to training, and counselors should have appropriate credentialing to provide individuals the mental health treatment they may require (The University of North Carolina Campus Safety Task Force Report to the President, 2007).

TAM team members across the southeastern university system varied in training. Not all chairs or team members had access to prior or current trainings. Susan stated:

I had a prior threat assessment training when I was director of student conduct and also a member of our campus behavioral intervention team. I think actually maybe it was more behavioral intervention training than pure threat assessment training. We had NaBITA come in many years ago to the university and provide, I guess an assessment of our process as well as some training for our group. In addition to that, I participated in some system-wide training from the system, also through the Association for Student Conduct Professionals and NASPA. So here and there I've had a couple of different trainings related to threat assessment and protocols and, I guess, rubrics that could be used on college campuses.

When asked about prior training, Susan stated, "No certifications, and actually just recently applied to ATAP." Susan said she had attended behavioral intervention and threat assessment trainings. Richard stated, "I've attended training like the system trainings they've done. But I have not attended any other trainings."

Additionally, Karen stated:

I went to the Advanced Threat Management Academy or Threat Assessment Academy through Gavin de Becker and Associates. I've had WAVR-21 training a couple of times. I think its Advanced Violence Risk Assessment training through James Cawood. I think I had the initial one in 2008, and then I've had refreshers since then. I've gone every year to the ATAP conference, pretty much. I have the certification, the training and certification in, I'm a certified threat manager. I've had training and certification in the Danger Assessment Tool, which is a domestic violence risk assessment tool. I have training and I just finished the certification for the stalking risk profile.

Regarding their TAM team training, Karen stated, "I do regular trainings for my team every month." Susan recently joined ATAP and Karen is a certified threat manager through ATAP. It appeared that, depending on the institution, some chairs and team members are more equipped and trained to address behaviors that may lead to a potential threat on campus, while others are lacking.

Additionally, the Task Force suggested in 2007 that all mental health conditions be evaluated by a credentialed counselor from the university. Southeastern universities are not able to evaluate every mental health condition and have referred cases to outside resources. Susan stated:

We do forensic assessments, but we contract out with an outside provider because we don't want the perception that the university is using its own personnel to do an assessment and the perception that we're swaying that counselor or psychologist in one way or another.

Karen mentioned they had a new psychologist on their team stating:

And so in the past, we had a psychologist that had training, that we trained on different violence risk assessment tools. And, so our new psychologist needs training in those things, to be able to do a violence risk screening for us, if we needed that additional assessment, instead of sending them outside the university.

In some instances, Karen's team has referred individuals off-campus for a forensic evaluation. Karen advised that "those are typically when we referred out, there's usually a conduct violation attached to it. And, so that ends up being a part of like an interim measure or a requirement for them under whatever sanctions that they have." In regard to funding for the necessary forensic evaluations for individuals, Karen stated, "Typically, they [the student] have to pay for it" and Susan indicated that "that's another funding issue that I take from my budget." Southeastern universities are utilizing different resources to evaluate individuals of concern. In addition, one university pays for the forensic evaluation and the other attempts to assess in house, but if the student is sanctioned for further evaluation as part of their interim measure, the student must pay for the forensic assessment. Unfortunately, not all campuses are equipped with adequate resources to address all threatening behaviors and cannot respond to every presented mental health condition.

Policy

A threat assessment team should have a publicly written statement that provides an understanding of the team's goals and purposes within the campus community (Deisinger et al., 2008). Likewise, a threat assessment team should have a strategic plan to identify the plans necessary to accomplish the team's mission. The team's strategic plan should mirror the institution's campus-wide safety plan, and it should consider principles to assess and manage a posed threat to the campus community (Deisinger et al., 2008). Only one of three southeastern

university system institutions who participated in the study had implemented a standard operating procedure for their threat assessment team.

Regarding standard procedures, Susan stated:

But I would say within the past five years we have really teased out these three distinctive levels of care in the sort of a pyramid fashion. So within the past five years we have specifically designated the care level, the behavioral intervention level as the intermediate level and the threat assessment as the top level. We have been in the process for the past year of writing a standard operating procedure for the team to explain the different levels, and also provide some context to the roles that each level play and the role that staff members within those levels play.

Karen's threat assessment team standard operating procedure was implemented in August of 2010 and has been continually revised as necessary. The standard operating procedure included their mission statement, goal, introduction of the team, composition of the team, roles and responsibilities of its members, the processes of a student vs. an employee concern, inactive case designation, documentation, team member training, outreach and prevention. The study institution had a public threat assessment team interim policy that provided an understanding of their team, reporting structure, processes, procedures after received reports, intervention plans, case management, resources for students and employees, confidentiality, and team composition. Based on the findings, not every participating institution in the southeastern university system has a threat assessment team standard operating procedure or regulations in place. As a result, not all institutions participating in this study from the southeastern university system are following best-practice recommendations according to the Handbook of Threat Assessment and Management (Deisinger et al., 2008).

A threat assessment team should be comprised of individuals from various campus departments to maximize collaboration. Representatives such as faculty, administration and student life contribute key information (Deisinger et al., 2008). Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Van Brunt (2012) suggested that campuses should make the individualized decisions about the best suited team members (p. 53). Furthermore, in 2009, the Campus Safety & Security Project included representatives from campus safety, counseling, police, health services, academic affairs and human resources (Sokolow et al., 2014) The specific composition of team members is designed to contribute to a case based on their role at the institution (Deisinger et al., 2008).

Each southeastern university in the study, as well as the study institution, had a threat assessment team comprised of members in a position who can contribute to a case. The study showed that the teams were comprised of different members at each institution. The three southeastern university TAM teams had between 6-12 members, while the study institution team included more than 17 members. As previously noted, team members at the study institution suggested the TAM team was too large and could benefit from a smaller group of individuals.

Behavioral Intervention vs. Threat Assessment Teams

Each of the participating southeastern universities and the study institution had an active behavioral intervention team and a threat assessment team. A behavioral intervention team can identify and assess the risk factors that may prevent future harm to others or disruption of the campus community (Bennett, 2015). Behavioral intervention teams work to be proactive and preventive in nature. If a behavioral intervention team can address concerns proactively and effectively, then a threat assessment team will not have to convene as regularly (Sokolow et al., 2014).

Overall, the study indicated that the majority of the participating universities within a southeastern system do not have a standard operating procedure or are not following best practices regarding threat assessment and management protocol. Some institutions have not yet implemented a formalized protocol and are not being provided adequate resources to pursue specialized member training or the ability to purchase best-practice threat assessment tools. One of the participating institutions is more closely following best practices regarding TAM team policy, funding, specialized member trainings, and varying threat assessment tools depending on the presented case.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are to be expected in research studies; and in this particular study, limitations included a change in the delivery method of the semi-structured interview as a result of COVID-19 protocols. Additionally, participant responses may have been impacted if participants were concerned with possible negative effects of their participation on their current position at their respective institution. I was familiar with each of the participants at some level from prior university system threat assessment trainings. I was more familiar with one participant in the semi-structured interview portion of the study than the others; however, I recognized the possibility of researcher bias and remained consistent with processes throughout the study with each participant from impacting the results of the study.

Originally, the semi-structured interviews were to be conducted face-to-face with participants on their respective campuses at their convenience. Due to COVID-19 protocols, the semi-structured interviews were changed from face-to-face to phone interviews. I believed that each participant provided honest information even when responses were not in favor of formalized TAM team procedures. The participants were forthcoming with information and

shared honest opinions about their protocols, budgets, threat assessment tools, and member training. Each participant openly responded to any additional questions.

Another limitation to the study was identified when a participant expressed concerns about how this could impact their respective role and/or institution. In addition, concerns were raised regarding university liability if a critical incident occurred on campus and the study had showed that the particular institution did not have a formal threat assessment and management protocol in place. I guaranteed participants anonymity; as, they would be given pseudonyms and the descriptions of the participants would be kept to a minimum.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

The findings from this study suggested that some southeastern universities do not have a formalized protocol to evaluate and manage threat assessment cases. I did not conduct a study on the entire system of schools, but based on the data collected in this study, it was quite probable that other institutions within the southeastern university system lack formalized procedures for their TAM teams. This does not infer that southeastern universities are unable to assess and manage threat assessment cases, but they are lacking formal protocol when it comes to policy, funding, best practice threat assessment tools and specialized member training. Unfortunately, some southeastern universities are not provided annual funding to keep up with best practices in threat assessment and management.

If institutions are not receiving funding at start-up or annually, this makes it difficult for TAM teams to follow best practices with specialized member training and threat assessment tools. Currently, the study institution is receiving funding specifically for the TAM team to purchase a best-practice threat assessment tool and an annual virtual specialized member training. It is unknown at this time if budget cuts from COVID-19 will impact the study

institution's TAM team. The TAM team at the study institution has not consistently received funding since implementation and throughout its existence, but the Chair and other staff have created a safety fund agreement to be allocated for the needs of the TAM team. The Executive Director of Business Administration of Student Affairs, the Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Students and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs approved the safety fund agreement in March 2020 for the study institution's TAM team.

It is important to note that all TAM Team members across the southeastern university system are not provided the same opportunities to pursue training and best-practice threat assessment tools to assess posed risks to their respective campuses. This could infer that some campuses are assessing possible threats, while others are lacking the necessary components to assess and address risks to campuses. In addition, individuals of concern who have parted from the universities due to concerning behaviors may not have adequate funding for mental health programs in their community to address their concerns. In addition, students, staff and faculty are entrusting that they are working in a safe environment that will attend to campus risks as they see fit. It is important from the aspect of campus safety to ensure that all southeastern university campuses are addressing risks/threats to campus with, at a minimum, a baseline protocol.

The results of this study will have an immediate impact on the current practice at the study institution. The study institution revised their threat assessment team policy to include changes to the composition of the threat assessment team. Once the internal university committee reviews and approves the recommended updates to the team, the chair of the TAM team will implement the necessary changes. The study institution decreased the number of team members due to the findings of the study. The study institution also incorporated ad-hoc members to include on the team on an as-needed basis. The members of the student TAM team will now

include representatives from the counseling center, campus police, risk assessment, a faculty member, an academic counselor, student health and residence life. Ad-hoc members will include the representatives from academic affairs, disability services, and Title IX/equity Office. The members of the employee TAM team will include representatives from disability services, Title IX/equity Office, human resources, campus police, prospective health, a faculty member, and risk assessment, and personnel administration will rotate annually between a representative from academic affairs and health sciences. University Council will still serve in an advisory capacity and an Associate Dean from the Dean of Student's Office will remain as Chair of both the student and employee TAM teams. Additions included a Risk Assessment Coordinator and a representative from Title IX/equity Office for both teams. The Enterprise Risk Manager position at the university was recently eliminated, and the Student Affairs Case Manager was taken off the committee. The Risk Assessment Coordinator will now fulfill the responsibilities of the Student Affairs Case Manager.

The policy had not been updated in many years, so this will be the first change to member composition since the TAM team was established in 2011. The study institution has made changes and will adhere to best practice recommendations from threat assessment and management research and the findings from this study. The study institution's TAM team is now receiving funding to pursue consistent new and ongoing member training and specialized risk assessment tools to better assess and manage campus threats. In addition, the study institution has created a formalized threshold/rubric for their behavioral intervention and threat assessment teams. The rubric was adapted from the Workplace Assessment for Violence Risk, (WAVR-21) and a threshold rubric from one of the southeastern universities (see Appendix F).

Based on the data collection and analysis, it is obvious that one of the participating institutions in the southeastern university system has an established baseline protocol in place for their TAM team. This does not suggest that every campus should follow this TAM team protocol, but it could provide a baseline of what campuses within a southeastern university system could mirror and adapt to fit their respective campuses. In addition to the southeastern universities, institutions outside of the system could review and adapt aspects of the suggested recommendations for TAM teams in higher education.

Recommendations

Additional research is needed to further examine the lack of funding for TAM teams at southeastern universities. TAM teams would have an option to pursue opportunities such as specialized member trainings and best practice threat assessment tools if all universities within a system received annual funding for their teams. Additionally, I would suggest that further research should be conducted on the TAM team chair's role at the university, including their prior threat assessment experience and training. I would suggest that the role of serving as a TAM team chair would be their primary role, not an additional duty to their current position. Future research efforts could involve collecting semi-structured interview data from the other system institutions to get a better idea of the TAM team protocols across the system.

I would recommend that the study institution mirror best practices from the research and findings of the study. The study institution does have a regulation in place that was implemented in 2011, and utilizes a best practice threat assessment tool, the WAVR-21. The Chair of the TAM team will incorporate consistent new member training and annual training of TAM team members, dependent upon funding. I would recommend that the TAM team at the study institution pursue training in specialized areas such as stalking and/or domestic violence, and

multicultural threat assessment tools, in addition to their regular threat assessment training, dependent upon funding. In addition, I would recommend that the study institution create a revised set of new-member training procedures. I would also recommend the study institution add specific expectations of each member of the internal TAM team on the revised regulation. I would suggest that some TAM team members at the study institution consider studying and taking the examination to become Certified Threat Managers.

In hindsight, I would have approached the semi-structured interviews differently with a larger sample size and an online survey to broaden the collection of information across a southeastern university system. The semi-structured interviews collected a significant amount of rich data on TAM team strengths and weakness not specifically related to this particular study. The online survey could have included specific questions related to only three major areas of research in this study: funding, threat assessment tools and member training. Overall, it would have been interesting to collect data from institutions in a southeastern university system to see if the system as a whole is following a baseline TAM team protocol.

Role of the Scholarly Practitioner

As a TAM team chair and educational leader, I believe this research allowed me an opportunity to expand my knowledge in the TAM field, while becoming a more effective leader for the TAM team at the study institution. The study provided me the opportunity to grow as a leader in higher education, while increasing knowledge in the field of threat assessment and management. I had the opportunity to speak with eight Congressmen about the TAPS Act on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC through the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) in June 2019. This study could result in providing a safer campus community for the study institution, as that is the ultimate goal of the TAM team and its members. I gained

perspectives from other leaders in the field who had either multiple years of experience in threat assessment and management or higher education. Each participant, including the TAM team chairs and the TAM team members at the study institution provided valuable input that increased my leadership skills as a TAM team chair.

This study positively impacted my leadership at the study institution and within my work with other TAM team members. I believe a Contingency style leadership approach to serving as a TAM Team Chair is critical to continue in my role. Contingency Theory of Leadership believes that there is no ideal leader, and leadership can be effective if it fits the situation at hand (Fieldler, F., 1964). This type of leadership will help me better understand the importance of being adaptable when working with students of concern and managing a TAM team at a southeastern university. I believe this study increased my knowledge in appropriate threat assessment tools and the importance of offering more training opportunities for TAM team members. The TAM team at the study institution will be encouraged to attend the recommended specialized member trainings. In addition, some members of the TAM team will be encouraged to become a Certified Threat Manager. This study improved my leadership skills as a TAM team chair by learning of best-practice threat assessment tools and specialized member trainings.

In addition, I hope this study will provide a baseline to a southeastern university system of colleges. It is my intention to help establish this baseline protocol regarding policy, funding, TAM Team new member and ongoing member training and best-practice threat assessment tools. It is important to note that Contingency Theory of Leadership does not have a one-size fits all approach, and this would be a critical acknowledgment when working with 17 schools that would not be able to adopt every policy, but could establish a baseline TAM team protocol.

Conclusion

This study examined threat assessment and management protocols, budgetary needs for tools and member training in higher education. The purpose of this study was to gather information from TAM team chairs and current TAM committee members to assist with revision of the current policy at the study institution to create and implement a more effective and reflective policy. I asked questions related to a TAM team's: (a) threat assessment procedures, (b) financial support of the TAM team, (c) specialized member training(s), and (d) the use of risk assessment tools to appropriately assess and manage a posed threat to a university campus community. These factors were identified as information necessary to review the threat assessment and management policy at the study institution.

It is evident that universities are inconsistent in their formalized protocol regarding threat assessment procedures, funding, specialized member training and best practice threat assessment tools. As seen in this study, many TAM teams are not adequately funded to pursue recommended member training or to purchase best practice threat assessment tools to assess and manage threats posed to the campus community. Some southeastern universities are assessing and managing threats posed to their university with limited to no funding for member training and best practice threat assessment tools.

Each of the TAM Team chair participants included in this study suggested that their TAM teams worked efficiently and collaborated as best as they could to assess and lessen the risk to their respective campuses. Each TAM team followed best practices according to Deisinger et al. (2008) with participation by multidisciplinary representatives on the team. Even though each campus does not handle TAM cases the same way, they all agreed that their TAM team collaboration and efficiency is one of the most important steps in mitigating risks of

potential violence on campus. As Richard suggested, each of their TAM team members are willing to collaborate quickly to address the case at hand.

In addition to interviewing external TAM team Chairs, I explored the perceptions of TAM team members at the study institution. Training at the study institution was inconsistent from new to on-going member training. Some members had received new member training, while others may have only been provided the TAM team policy and an overview of the team. Some members were in favor of the team composition remaining the same, while others were concerned with the large number of members serving on the team. Overall, TAM team members described a positive experience serving as a member on the team. TAM team members at the study institution suggested that the TAM team convened quickly to assess cases and intervene. In addition, it was noted that the internal TAM team collaborated to address the concerns presented to the team. After further review of the external TAM teams, I made recommendations for a revised team composition and more consistent new member and on-going trainings for members based on best practices from the study.

In addition, the study institution will further review recommended best practice threat assessment tools to offer training to the revised committee of TAM team members. I will share the results with the Associate Vice Chancellor/Dean of Student's Office to develop a more formalized threat assessment and management program and policy at the study institution that will include more consistent threat assessment training for new and on-going members and additional training in the SHARP and Danger Assessment tool. I will recommend that the TAM Team at the study institution have at minimum one Certified Threat Manager on the team. Lastly, I will put forth these recommendations to the southeastern university system office in hope that other TAM teams will have a baseline of how to successfully implement and manage a

TAM team. Each southeastern university will not be able to implement every aspect of the recommended protocol, but it is important to consider that a baseline TAM team protocol could be shared with southeastern universities for TAM teams to consider aspects they can adapt at their respective campuses. Working together with others focused on threat assessment and campus safety can help ensure the future safety of educational institutions and hopefully prevent another institution from having to respond to the devastation from an event like the one at Virginia Tech. It is important that we remember those affected by this type of situation, but also learn about what can help make other campus communities safer for faculty, staff, and students.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284
rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Patricia Barfield](#)
CC: [Heidi Puckett](#)
Date: 5/11/2020
Re: [UMCIRB 20-000352](#)
Threat Assessment and Management

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 5/9/2020. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 2b.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

Document	Description
Consent for UBCT Members (Online Survey)(0.04)	Consent Forms
Consent for UNC System Chair's (Phone Interview)(0.03)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Consent for UNC System Chair's Phone Interview(0.05)	Consent Forms
ECU UBCT Members Email(0.04)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Threat Assessment & Management(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
UBCT Members (Online Survey)(0.01)	Surveys and Questionnaires
UNC System Chair's Phone Interviews(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions

For research studies where a waiver of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(2)(ii) has been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and

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2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: Threat Assessment and Management: The Lack of Procedures, Tools and Financial Support for Specialized Training of Teams in Higher Education

Principal Investigator: Patricia Barfield
Institution, Department or Division: East Carolina University, College of Education: Department of Educational Leadership
Address: East 5th Street, Greenville, NC 27858
Telephone #: 252-217-25-28
Study Coordinator: Dr. Heidi Puckett
Telephone #: 252-328-6131

Participant Full Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

Why am I being invited to take part in this research?

The purpose of this research is to create a standard of threat assessment procedures for 17 UNC-System universities. You are being invited to take part in this research because you are the chair of the threat assessment team at _____. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn about your threat assessment tools, team trainings and budgets of your respective threat assessment team. If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about three people to do so.

Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?

I understand I should not volunteer for this study if I am not chairing a threat assessment team of a UNC-System university.

What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?

You can choose not to participate.

Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?

The research will be conducted at each participant's location of choice. The Principal Investigator will travel to each participant's location of choice at a convenient time for the participant. The face to face interviews will be audio-recorded. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is less than 5 hours over the next year.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to do the following:

- The study will include data from an online survey that was submitted to the Director of Safety at the UNC System Office in July 2019.
- Participant will be contacted via email for the Primary Investigator to share information about the study.
- The researcher will audio record the face-to-face interview. The audio recordings will be destroyed once the recordings have been transcribed.
- If the participant agrees to the study, an informed consent will be sent to the participant to complete before a participant completes the online demographic survey.
- A total of 13 questions will be asked of each participant at their location of choice for the study.
- Field notes will be conducting throughout the entire interview. Field notes will be locked in a university desk for three years.

What might I experience if I take part in the research?

We don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you, but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?

The Principal Investigator will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

Will it cost me to take part in this research?

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.
- If you are a patient at ECU or Vidant, a copy of the first page of this form will be placed in your medical records.

How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?

Security measures for physical data and identifying information will remain in a locked cabinet until destroyed. Electronic data will be stored on transportable media that will remain in a locked cabinet and handled only by authorized users. The Principal Investigator will use audio-recording information about the participant and the data will be destroyed after transcription.

What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator at [252-737-5175] (Monday-Friday, between [8am-5pm]).

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director for Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914.

Is there anything else I should know?

Most people outside the research team will not see your name on your research record. This includes people who try to get your information using a court order.

I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

Participant's Name (PRINT)

Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Informed Consent: I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above and answered all of the person's questions about the research.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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Principal Investigator (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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APPENDIX C: THE STUDY INSTITUTIONS' TAM TEAM POLICY

1. Introduction.

The [REDACTED] Team is established to receive, collect, consider, and advise upon information on behavior of concern exhibited by a student or group of students, faculty or staff member, or unaffiliated persons to the campus. The Team is advisory only and does not have authority to impose requirements on students, faculty, staff or other persons of concern. The Team members are selected for their expertise and are trained in threat assessment. Within strict parameters of confidentiality as explained in this regulation, the Team reviews all available relevant evidence, speaks with the individual of concern as appropriate, and makes recommendations to affected University departments and thereby serves as a source of interdisciplinary advice to administrators. Based on their training and expertise and the serious nature of the concerns and potential outcomes, their assessments and recommendations must be strongly considered and promptly acted upon. The Team supports all departments and individuals on campus and evaluates any individual of concern, including undergraduate and graduate students of the University, faculty, staff and other persons of concern.

2. Reporting.

Members of the university community should report any situation involving a member of the campus community that could result in harm to anyone at the University.

2.1. Imminent Threat.

If such a situation appears to be an imminent threat to safety and security (such as violence to others) it should be reported immediately to the university Police Department by calling 911.

2.2. Other Threats.

Any situation of concern not deemed to be imminently dangerous, yet still of concern, should be reported to Cares at ###-####, through the online reporting form located at website or to the [REDACTED] Chair at ###-####.

3. Objective, Process and Resources.

3.1. Objective.

The Team will use investigation, reasoned risk analysis and recognized threat assessment techniques, and recommendations for the provision of supportive intervention services through the development and proposal of individual action plans, when needed, to maintain a safe environment for the University community.

3.2. Referrals and Intake.

Information about individuals of concern that does not rise to the level of an imminent threat should be forwarded to the [REDACTED] Chair by faculty, staff, and students.

3.2.1. The Team encourages referrals by phone, by email, in person or through the Cares website from any individual or group of individuals who has concern about a member of the campus community.

3.2.2. If the Team receives information that is more appropriately addressed and processed by another campus entity, the Team will not conduct a risk analysis, but will forward the information to that entity.

3.3. Materials and Reports.

In addition to drawing on the knowledge of the Team members, the Team may utilize the opinions and reports from other University personnel or outside independent professionals, such as physicians and licensed psychologists or psychiatrists, in an effort to obtain a better understanding of an individual situation.

3.3.1. Examples of members of the campus community that the Team may seek out for interviews or reports include roommates, close friends, family, past and current instructors, coaches, Residence Advisers (RAs), supervisors, and colleagues.

3.3.2 At times the Team may request permission from the individual of concern to review past medical or psychological records or care providers' reports as part of its evaluation process.

3.3.3 The Team may recommend independent and/or on-campus medical or psychological assessment by licensed professionals in an effort to obtain the most complete information on which to base its recommendations.

3.3.4 The Team may recommend ongoing or interim reports by such professionals as an essential monitoring aspect of the individual action plans.

3.4 Procedures.

3.4.1 The Team meets regularly during the Fall and Spring semesters and as needed in the summer.

3.4.1.1 The Team will also meet on an emergency basis as needed to review reports concerning disruptive, inappropriate, and/or threatening behavior exhibited by individuals of concern.

3.4.2 Upon receipt of a referral or report about an individual of concern, the Team conducts a risk analysis to determine if it will recommend a finding that the individual poses a threat to the University community. The Team considers:

3.4.2.1 the reported behavior (including any communications about intent to harm or plans for an attack, access to or interest in weapons)

3.4.2.2 the individual's past performance, including history of violence and past disciplinary/behavioral problems

3.4.2.3 contributing factors such as: past and ongoing medical or psychological conditions; documented disability; known existing stressors, and if there is an existing support system

3.4.3 The Team determines the level of risk presented by the behavior of concern by assessing the initial concern, and a review of additional corroborating evidence, any history of concerning behavior, and other relevant information as deemed appropriate.

3.4.4 Based on this determination, the Team develops an intervention plan with strategies to address the identified level of risk, which is recommended to appropriate administrators. The Team will recommend a plan of action based on its judgment and belief that it is more likely than not:

3.4.4.1 that the recommended plan will have a positive effect on the individual of concern, reducing the threat to the University community; and

3.4.4.2 the plan presents the best available option under the circumstances for both the individual of concern and the greater University community.

3.5 Details of Intervention plans.

Intervention plans may include, but are not limited to, recommendations such as the following:

3.5.1 Referrals to resources and appropriate on- and off-campus agencies

3.5.2 Mandates for the Center for Counseling and Student Development or external psychological evaluations (for students)

3.5.3 Meetings with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (for students)

3.5.4 Voluntary or involuntary withdrawal (for students)

3.5.5 Consultation with unit administrator or other appropriate supervisor about effective strategies to address the behaviors of concern

3.5.6 A timeframe for updating the Team on the progress of the intervention plan (i.e. update weekly, in two weeks, in a month, etc.).

3.6 Monitoring and Follow-up.

3.6.1 For student behavior, the implementation and outcome of the plan will be coordinated and monitored by the Case Manager.

3.6.2 For employee behavior, the implementation and outcome of the plan will be coordinated with the appropriate Human Resources/Personnel administrator (e.g., the Associate Provost for Personnel and Resource Administration, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences Personnel Administration) or the Director of Employee Relations and Staff Development) who will assist the ██████ Chair with advising the appropriate supervisor of the employee of concern.

3.6.2.1 The plan will be monitored through communication between the supervisor of the employee of concern and, as designated in the plan, either the ██████ Chair or the Human Resources/Personnel representative on the Team.

4 Confidentiality and Information Sharing.

4.1 Team proceedings, consistent with law and University policy, remain confidential.

4.2 To the extent allowed by and consistent with applicable laws, the Team will also determine on a case-by-case basis who, within the University or external to it, needs to be given information in order to better protect the safety of the individual of concern, the University community, and/or others.

4.3 The Team may inform the individual of concern of the intent to notify those people as a condition of an individual action plan.

5 Available Resources.

5.1 Students.

The Team is only one of several possible resources that are available to provide assistance and support. Others include, but are not limited to

5.1.1 the Dean of Students Office;

5.1.2 Disability Support Services;

5.1.3 the Center for Counseling and Student Development;

5.1.4 Victim Services;

5.1.5 Student Health Service;

5.1.6 the Tutoring Center; and

5.1.7 the Academic Advising Center.

5.2 Faculty and Staff.

The Team is only one of several possible resources that are available to provide assistance and support. Others include, but are not limited to

5.2.1 The Employee Assistance Program, or EAP, provides mental health services and support in conjunction with standard employee benefits through the State Health Plan. More information about the EAP can be obtained by contacting the ██████ Department of Human Resources.

5.2.2 Disability Support Services;

5.2.3 Victim Services; and

5.2.4 Office for Faculty Excellence.

6 Membership

6.1 The members of the Team include:

6.1.1 Director for Student Safety & Services (chair), Office of the Dean of Students

6.1.2 Associate Dean of Students

6.1.3 Associate Provost for Personnel & Resource Administration/Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel Administration

6.1.4 Director, Center for Counseling & Student Development

6.1.5 Director, Disability Support Services

6.1.6 Director, Employee Relations and Staff Development

6.1.7 Director, Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities

6.1.8 Director, Residence Life

6.1.9 Director, Student Health Services

6.1.10 Student Affairs Case Manager

6.1.11 Enterprise Risk Manager, Office of Enterprise Risk Management

6.1.12 Faculty Member, Health Sciences Campus

6.1.13 Faculty Member, East Campus

6.1.14 Public Safety Supervisor, University Campus Police

All members of the team must have expertise in a field related to the Team's purpose, a proven record in maintaining confidentiality and ethical standards and documentation verifying completion of threat assessment training from an approved provider. Threat assessment training must be completed within 90 calendar days of joining the team.

6.2 Faculty members serving on the team will be determined by the Chancellor after consultation with the Chair of the Faculty.

6.3 Personnel Administration members serving on the team will rotate annually between the Associate Provost for Personnel & Resource Administration in the Division of Academic Affairs and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Personnel Administration in the Division of Health Sciences.

6.4 Representatives from the University Attorney's Office may serve in an advisory capacity.

APPENDIX D: TAM TEAM MEMBER ONLINE SURVEY

1. Please indicate your role on the team:
 - a. Faculty
 - b. Staff/Administrator
 - c. Law Enforcement
 - d. Counselor
2. How many years have you worked in higher education?
 - e. Less than 5 years
 - f. 5-10 years
 - g. 10-20 years
 - h. 20+ years
3. How many years have you served as a member of [REDACTED]?
 - i. Less than 1 year
 - j. Less than 2 years
 - k. Less than 5 years
 - l. More than 5 years
4. What training opportunities did you receive as a new member of [REDACTED]?
5. When was the last training opportunity you received as a member of [REDACTED]?
6. How often do you think the team should receive training?

Please review the [REDACTED] policy for questions 7-13.

7. What discrepancies do you notice from [REDACTED] daily practices versus the [REDACTED] policy?
8. What strengths do you notice from [REDACTED] daily practices versus the [REDACTED] policy?
9. Do you think the team composition is appropriate based on the policy?
10. Are there any on-campus departments or off-campus partners that should be represented on the team that are not?
11. Do you feel the number of members on the team is appropriate? What is your opinion on the number of members that comprise [REDACTED]?
 - m. There are too many members
 - n. There are just enough members
 - o. There are not enough members
 - p. Refuse to answer
12. Do you feel any parts of the [REDACTED] policy are not applicable?
13. Describe your overall experience serving on the team.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date: _____

Time of Interview: _____

Interviewer: Patricia Barfield

Interviewee: _____

Place: _____

The purpose of this research is to understand the development of your university threat assessment team, threat assessment procedures, the use of any threat assessment tools, financial support of your team and access to specialized trainings for your team. You are being invited to take part in this research because you previously indicated that you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. By doing this research, the researcher hopes to learn what factors lead to an effective threat assessment team on a university campus.

1. Why did you pursue threat assessment as a career?
2. Did you have any prior threat assessment training before your current role?
3. What certifications or trainings have you completed/attended pertaining to threat assessment since you have been in your current role?
4. Does your university have a separate behavioral intervention and threat assessment and management team? And, when were they both implemented?
5. How do you determine which type of cases go to a behavioral intervention team versus a TAM team?
6. Does your university have a formalized threat assessment and management process?
7. Do you use any current standardized threat assessment tools before, during, or after your threat assessment team meetings?
8. What tools have you used in the past? Were they effective? Please explain.
9. Do you or your team members need trainings, assessment tools, and/or other instrumentations to effectively assess and manage a threat posed to your campus?
10. What tools, processes and training(s) would you recommend for a university threat assessment team?
11. What do you think develops a successful threat assessment team?
12. Was your team provided financial support at the implementation of your threat assessment team?
13. Do you receive any annual financial support from the university or outside resources?

APPENDIX F: BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM/TAM TEAM RUBRIC

This document will serve as a tool to assist the Dean of Student’s Staff, the Behavioral Intervention Team and the Threat Assessment and Management team members in determining if the case meets the criteria for either the behavioral intervention or threat assessment team.

Reporting: Members of the campus community should report any situation involving a member of the campus community that could result in harm to anyone at the University. Incident reports are completed online via Maxient on the Behavioral Intervention website. Each report is sent to DOS and cases are assigned to a designated DOS Staff member. Reports may come from various on/off campus sources, and at times, referrals may filter in via email or by phone.

BIT	TAM
Academic Issues Adjustment Concerns Irrationally suspicious or bizarre beliefs * Change in Behaviors Depression/lack of interest Excessive Anxiety Increased Isolation Mental Health Concerns Missing Students Prior History of Trauma/Abuse Victim of a Crime Sexual Assault/Abuse* Substances Use* Suicide Ideation* (i.e., verbal or written)	Academic/Employment Attachment Assaultive Behavior (i.e., physical or sexual) Angry/Aggressive Behavior Irrationally Suspicious or bizarre beliefs * Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence Homicidal Ideation Motives for Violence (i.e., seeking revenge) Pattern of Violence, Criminality or Conflict Pre-Attack Preparation (i.e., increased weapons) Stalking Substance Use/Dependence* Suicide Ideation* (i.e., verbal or written) Threatening Communication (i.e, verbal or written) Vandalism Violent Preoccupations/Identifications Weapons skill/access (Adapted from the WAVR-21 V-3, 2020)

TAM Team Regulation: _____

The BIT may review the initial assessment of the case and refer to TAM. Items with an asterisk () may be a risk factor in either category. Other risk factors will determine if a student/employee is reviewed at BIT or TAM.

APPENDIX G: KAREN'S BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT TEAM (BAT) THRESHOLD RUBRIC



Behavior Assessment Team (BAT) Threshold Rubric

This rubric is designed to assist BAT members in determining if a case meets the elements to be managed through the BAT or if more appropriately managed through [REDACTED] Cares.

Reporting Structure: [REDACTED]

Reports by 3rd Parties - All incident reports will be reviewed by [REDACTED] (for student cases). The Counseling Center representatives will be included in all reports that include possible mental health related concerns. Office of [REDACTED] representatives will be included in all reports that include Title IX related concerns. Consultation will occur to determine who would take the lead/follow up.

If any office receives a new report directly, notification must occur to [REDACTED] ASAP. The [REDACTED] (for student cases) will determine if a case is referred to the Cares or BAT. If any one member of either team determines the BAT should manage the case, then it will be an automatic assignment.

BAT	[REDACTED] Cares (Students Only)
<p>Includes; but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent Behavior (i.e., stalking, harassment, domestic/dating violence, threats, bizarre behavior*), • Property damage* (i.e., punching holes in the walls), • Assault, • Aggressive behavior (ex. crosses the line from disruptive or frustrating behavior into dangerous and violent), • Sexual assault*, • Suicidal With Other Risk Factors*, • Protective order in place, • Homicidal ideation, • Historical pattern of violence, • Any information presented to [REDACTED]/employment screening/ or other entity where there is known history of significant violence (ex. murder, attempted murder, sexual assault/rape, etc.) • Severe Agitation (ex. pacing, fidgeting, socially inappropriate and bizarre behaviors) • Behaviors that may be indicative of psychosis (e.g., Disorganized speech & behaviors, Delusions (Belief process that does not appear to be connected with reality), Hallucinations (seeing, tasting, hearing, feeling things that are not real), Sense of being controlled by outside sources) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicidal Without Other Risk Factors* • Individuals in distress, • Academic issues, • Housing concerns(ex. homeless), • Adjustment issues, • Chronic mental health crisis', • Substance use issues*, • Students missing classes • Sexual assault*, • Disruptive classroom behavior (violence and potential danger not noted) • Missing students • Other concerns not covered by BAT (that are not related to potential violence concerns)



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any additional concerns that may be similar in nature but is not exactly listed above. <p>(Van Brunt, 2012; ASIS/SHRM, 2011; [REDACTED] Campus/Workplace Violence Prevention Regulation)</p>	
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Suicidality

NOTE - Just suicide attempt or thoughts - without the additional below risk factors - straight to [REDACTED] Cares. Factors based on Eliason, Scott. (2009). Murder-suicide a review of recent literature. Journal American Academy of Psychiatric Law (37), 371-376.

	YES	NO
Recent or Impending Relationship Loss?	CARE	CARE
Domestic/Dating Violence or additional interpersonal violence history?	BAT	CARE
History of violence or recent impulsivity?	CARE	CARE
Present psychosis* and/or command hallucinations?	BAT	CARE
Recent Angry/Hostile/Violent behaviors?	BAT	CARE

* Bizarre Behavior - depends on the context and details

*** Sexual Assault**

- Are there concerns of a predator and/or ongoing violence?
- If there are no concerns regarding an ongoing predator and there is, only a need to provide survivor support and connection to resources - case is managed through [REDACTED] Cares.

*** Property Damage**

- Ex. as it relates to aggressive response

*** Substance Use Issues**

- Could be a contributing factor in a BAT or CARE case. If connected with behaviors listed for BAT, this would be primarily managed by a [REDACTED] Case Manager.

Notes: Initial assessment by the BAT does not necessarily mean that the BAT would provide ongoing management. Ongoing management is dependent on several issues, including but not limited to: potential for future violence, severity of actions, one time incident (no other risk factors), etc.



Risk Factors to Consider (place a checkmark in the appropriate box)

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Unknown
Past history of violence			
Concealed weapon or flashing a weapon			
Odd or veiled threats			
Perception of no options			
Direct or veiled threats			
History of impulsivity and/or low frustration tolerance			
Obsessed with a grudge or beliefs are related to revenge, entitlement, and/or grandiosity			
Drug use (methamphetamines, alcohol, cocaine, steroids)			
History of suicide attempts, thoughts, statements and gestures			
Prior involuntary or voluntary commitments			
Negative response to authority and limit setting			
References to groups, heroes, community attachments and affiliations			
Fascination with weapons, violent themes around revenge, fascination with violent incidents			
Victim mindset - chronic unsubstantiated complaints about injustice			

(ATAP, 2007; USPS, 2010; ASIS/SHRM, 2011; Van Brunt, 2012)

Original Effective Date Dec 2014/Reviewed by [redacted] and [redacted] and updated Dec 17, 2015 Review and Update Aug 2018, Review and Updated on February 2, 2020



**BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT
TEAM**

Standard Operating Procedures

CONFIDENTIAL

**August 3, 2010
Revised June 2013
Revised March 2015
Revised June 17, 2015
Reviewed June 2017
Draft February 2020**



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CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

Mission Statement

The [REDACTED] Behavior Assessment Team (BAT) is committed to improving the [REDACTED] community's safety through a proactive, collaborative, coordinated, objective, and thoughtful approach to the prevention, identification, assessment, intervention, and management of situations that pose, or may reasonably pose, a threat to the safety and well-being of the campus community (i.e. students, employees and others not affiliated with the university) (Deisinger, Randazzo, O'Neill, & Savage, 2008).

Goal

The BAT is composed of a multidisciplinary group of university representatives whose primary goal is to prevent situations from occurring where individuals harm either themselves or others and to assist individuals that are in need of assistance. The team will analyze potentially threatening situations, develop, implement, and/or advise administrators (as needed) to recommended courses of action.

This Standard Operating Procedure Guide outlines procedures for the referral, evaluation, and appropriate disposition of employees, students and others not affiliated with the university who display concerning, threatening, violent or potentially violent behaviors.

Behavior Assessment Team

Introduction: The BAT serves the [REDACTED] community. The BAT meets as needed to review facts relating to a particular situation, assess concerning, threatening, violent or potentially violent behaviors, develop and implement appropriate action strategies when there is concern one or more individuals may pose a threat to themselves and/or others. The BAT is able to make interim decisions to safeguard members of the university community.

Purpose: These teams are composed of representatives from several University departments who have specific expertise and professional training in assessing and managing concerning behaviors, threats and violence. The team members assess and address intimidating, threatening or violent behaviors including; but not limited to, behaviors specified in [REDACTED] **Campus/Workplace Violence Prevention and Management regulation (REG 04.05.2) and relevant portions of the student code of conduct.**

The BAT evaluates actual and/or concerning behavior and potential or actual threats and violence. The team also works to ensure effective follow up. The team will develop and implement strategies to respond to acts of intimidation, threats, and violence. The team convenes regularly to ensure follow-up on moderate to high-risk individuals/situations and may meet whenever an immediate concern is present. To address cases involving employees and/or others not affiliated with the university/non-affiliates, the team will convene monthly to

[REDACTED]

ensure follow-up on moderate to high-risk individuals/situations and may meet whenever there is any immediate concern present. The team helps bring clarity to the management of situations through expertise in security, legal analysis, human resources, student and academic affairs, behavioral issues and psychiatric concerns, and threat assessment/management. The team, when appropriate, may help to coordinate communication and monitor resolution of situations.

Composition of Behavior Assessment Team: The team consists of the Associate Vice Chancellor of Environmental Health and Public Safety, Risk Assessment Case Manager, representatives from Employee Relations, University Police, Office of Student Conduct, Prevention Services Cares, Counseling Center, University Housing, Academic Affairs, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (Title IX), and Violence Prevention & Threat Management may include others as appropriate. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Environmental Health and Public Safety has designated the Risk Assessment Case Manager as the chair.

Roles & Responsibilities: In general, the primary role of each member of the BAT is to bring their individual expertise to the team to ensure a multidisciplinary approach to address concerning behaviors and/or potential or actual threats and violence in a collaborative manner.

Associate Vice Chancellor of Environmental Health & Public Safety: Provides oversight to the BAT.

Risk Assessment Case Manager: This position serves as an integral part of the University's two-pronged initiative to address problematic behavioral issues among the University's student and employee populations – not only identifying individuals that pose a risk of harm to themselves or others, but also identifying interventions and responses to those issues. The Risk Assessment Case Manager is the designated chair of the BAT. The role of the Risk Assessment Case Manager to the team is to collect information regarding individuals with problematic behaviors and maintain such information as the central point of contact; to provide expertise from a risk and threat management perspective and to ensure that continued follow up with individuals or situations occurs until there are no longer concerns regarding risk.

Counseling Center: The role of the Counseling Center to the BAT is to (1) provide clinical expertise and knowledge regarding psychological dynamics in regard to particular cases, (2) exchange information between Counseling Center staff and the BAT, with appropriate releases in place, on students that may be identified within the BAT to enhance standard of care, (3) advise team on risk factors involving individuals with particular mental health issues making recommendations for follow up. (4) When outside assessment is indicated, assist with referral process and interpretation of assessment reports.

Housing: The role of University Housing Representative in the BAT is to (1) provide a context for those students who live on campus and present threats; (2) share information from University Housing staff on residents who present threats; (3) advise the team on what University Housing

[REDACTED]

staff can do to assist victims and perpetrators in any given situation. (4) Facilitate alternative housing arrangements when indicated for safety.

Office of Student Conduct (OSC): In situations involving students, OSC will provide all information to the team on known history involving the student or students, including known collateral information and provide expertise in the Code of Student Conduct. OSC is also able to provide information on educational history and administrative and/or disciplinary options involving a student or students that are engaging in moderate to high risk behaviors. OSC; when appropriate, may impose interim suspensions and/or interim measures.

Prevention Services CARES Coordinator: This position works directly with students in providing them with referrals and resources to assist in addressing their specific needs from the care and support standpoint. They will represent the CARES team and assist in informing the team of additional resources that may be available and assist with the transition to CARES if necessary. This position will further report back to the team on interactions with students including; but not limited to, interviews, assessments, ongoing case monitoring and post hospitalization and any additional collateral data known.

Faculty Representative: This position serves in being the primary contact in working with faculty and advisors. This position has access to and understanding of academic issues and regulations/policies or protocols as it relates to students and provides this expertise to the team as a consultant. Assist BAT by interpreting academic policies and guidelines. Assist in the collection of collateral information related to academic risk factors.

Employee Relations (ER): In situations involving faculty, staff and non-affiliates, ER will provide the Behavioral Assessment Team relevant personnel data, bring together information maintained by members of management, and assist in ensuring that the team remains balanced, and neutral in assessing all conclusions reached before recommending any personnel actions or referrals to supporting resources. ER will contribute key skills to the team, including engaging appropriate management and administration, conducting or assisting with the investigatory process, developing communication strategies with affected or involved members of the workplace and provide guidance to the organization to address and resolve incidents through the imposition of preventative measures, which may include disciplinary action.

Violence Prevention and Threat Management (VPTM) Case Manager: This position provides direct case management services in cases where it involves an employee, student or a non-affiliated individual case without connection to a specific employee or student. This position will further reports back to the team on interactions with individuals including; but not limited to, interviews, assessments, ongoing case monitoring and post hospitalization interviews.

Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED/Title IX): The role of this office is to be able to inform the team on Title IX related issues and cases that may have additional concerns from a

[REDACTED]

safety perspective. They will work collaboratively with team members on issues related to domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault.

University Police: The role of University Police to the BAT is to (1) provide advice and assistance from a law enforcement perspective, (2) advise the team what the police can and cannot do in any given situation, and (3) when permissible, provide available information, including criminal history, history of police involvement and present information to assist with the threat assessment process. (4) Serves as a direct liaison with other law enforcement agencies. (5) May facilitate welfare checks on specific cases where there is concern for safety. (6) May assist in the coordination of safety planning with individuals and/or departments.

Office of General Counsel (OGC): OGC's role is to provide information regarding relevant University policies, regulations and rules, and state, and federal laws and regulations in the course of investigations and response. In addition, the OGC provides legal counsel pertaining to issues that commonly arise during behavior assessment (i.e. records, right to privacy, compliance, discrimination law, due process, etc.) OGC is also available to discuss balancing the risk and liability to the institution with respect to various situations. If necessary, OGC is able to work with University Police and management to obtain necessary court orders to protect the safety of employees and the community.

The BAT Will:

- Review notifications or reports of concerning or threatening behaviors.
- Discuss student and employee cases in separate meetings to ensure privacy rights are maintained.
- Maintain separate lists and agendas (Students and Employees/Non-Affiliates).
- Gather and analyze data to make informed decisions on possible dispositions and identify any additional information needed.
- Any specific case updates will be entered within the electronic record by the BAT member who has collected/been provided with the information.

The BAT May:

- Utilize threat assessment tools to assist in determining the level of risk in a certain case and possible responses.
- Review community resources to ensure appropriate referral is made based on the needs of the individuals involved.
- Initiate appropriate actions and communicate to appropriate offices.
- Reassess individuals based on new/additional information.
- Maintain documentation by the Violence Prevention & Threat Management Program to reflect case review, action items, and recommendations (as appropriate) and follow-up.



**Process Involving a Student of Concern
Initial Actions by Behavior Assessment Team**

Risk Screening

1. Initial assessment of level of risk will be conducted by the BAT member receiving the report. (Low, Moderate or High)

****As additional information is gathered, the team will re-assess the risk when needed.**

2. If necessary, a subset of the BAT will communicate to discuss information gathered, respond and follow up as necessary to ensure the safety of the individual and university community.

The BAT may utilize appropriate and validated assessment tools to conduct a risk assessment.

Student Intervention

Recommended interventions will be based on the specifics of each individual case and should be consistent with any assessment tools (if applicable) that are utilized by the BAT. For cases that involve students as victims or respondents, the BAT may recommend a variety of options.

**Process Involving an Employee
Initial Actions by Behavior Assessment Team**

Risk Screening

1. Initial assessment of level of risk will be conducted by the BAT member receiving the report. (Low, Moderate or High)

****As additional information is gathered the team will re-assess the risk when appropriate.**

2. Employee Relations, University Police, Office of General Counsel, Violence Prevention & Threat Management Case Manager and Risk Assessment Case Manager may initially communicate to discuss information gathered, response and any follow up necessary to ensure the safety of the individual and university community.

The BAT may utilize appropriate and validated assessment tools to conduct a risk assessment.

Employee Intervention

Recommended interventions will be based on the specifics of each individual case and should be consistent with any assessment tools (if applicable) that are utilized by the BAT. For cases that involve employees as victims or respondents, the BAT may recommend a variety of

options. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to recommend placing an individual on investigatory status or administrative leave with pay or that University Police pursue criminal charges.

Inactive Designation

As the cause of concern decreases the BAT may designate the case as inactive. Before designating a case as inactive, the BAT will consider:

1. What in the situation has changed to lessen the likelihood of violence or intimidation?
2. Which components of case management worked best to manage and resolve the situation?
3. What circumstances, if any, might trigger a recurrence of this or a similar situation?
4. Are there supports in place (or that can be developed) that will be known and available to impacted students or staff at a future time if further risk occurs?

Cases designated as inactive will be maintained on an "Inactive List." Should a new incident occur or new information is provided involving a student, employee of concern or non-affiliated individual of concern, the case may be reactivated.

Documentation

1. The Violence Prevention and Threat Management office will be responsible for developing and maintaining brief minutes of the BAT meetings.
2. Appropriate screening/assessment tool results (if utilized) should be incorporated within the electronic record.
3. Documentation may be maintained within an electronic database.
4. Documentation will be maintained pursuant to applicable laws involving confidentiality and privacy of records and records retention.
5. Any specific case updates will be entered within the electronic record by a BAT member who has been provided with the information.

Behavior Assessment Team Member Training

The Behavior Assessment Team will receive mandatory annual training and offered periodic local training. Team members will also be made aware of other educational opportunities or materials known pertaining to roles and responsibilities of the BAT.

According to the American National Standard on Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention (2011) members of the Behavior Assessment Team should receive "detailed and comprehensive training" regarding several topics, including; but not limited to the "behavioral or psychological aspects of workplace violence", violence risk assessment, "investigatory and

