

## **STUDENT THREAT ASSESSMENT**

### **Step #1: Gather Information.**

As soon as a threat or threatening behavior is reported, a threat assessment team should gather all necessary information about the student involved and the threatening situation. The team should gather the following information from school records and interviews with the student, teachers, parents, witnesses, and other students:

- Details and facts of the situation;
- Information about the student, including background, behavioral history, academic performance, access to weapons, personal difficulties, grudges, and current relationships;
- Information about specific threats, including whether the student would injure himself or others;
- Motives of the student in making the threat.

### **Step #2: Review Questions to Determine Whether Student Poses a Threat**

After the threat assessment team gathers information about the student's threat, it should use the following questions to help decide whether the student poses a real danger:

1. What were the student's motives and goals for making the threat or engaging in threatening behavior?
2. Has there been any communication suggesting intent to attack?
3. Has the student shown excessive interest in other school attacks, weapons, or mass violence?
4. Has the student engaged in attack-related behaviors, such as developing a plan, rehearsing, or getting weapons?
5. Does the student have the capacity to carry out an act of violence?
6. Is the student experiencing hopelessness or desperation due to a failure or loss, such as a breakup of a romantic relationship or has he or she experienced a perceived loss, such as a loss of status among peers? Does the student appear to be suicidal?
7. Does the student have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?
8. Does the student see violence as an acceptable way or the only way to solve problems?
9. Are the student's interview responses consistent with his or her actions and reality?
10. Are other people concerned about the student's potential for violence?
11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood that the student will attack?

**Step #3: Decide Whether Student Poses an Actual Threat**

Once the team has reviewed answers to the above questions, it must evaluate the information to decide whether the student poses a threat. If the team decides that the student does not pose a threat, it should not close the inquiry right away. In such a case, the team should consider whether the student needs help coping with the problems or behavior that originally brought on the threatening situation and refer the student to counseling and contact his/her parents, if necessary.

**Step #4: Law Enforcement if Team Determines that Student Poses a Threat.**

If the team concludes that the student may pose a genuine threat, refer the matter to the police for further investigation, which can involve such measures as a search of the student's home. Keep in mind that you must act quickly to help prevent violence.