District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties

SCHOOL-BASED BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

Nationwide Outlook

- Following the tragedy of Columbine High School in 1999, U.S. DOE and U.S. Secret Service have worked to try and better understand and help prevent acts of school shootings in America. They examined 37 incidents of targeted school violence.
- This joint study is known as the **Safe School Initiative**.
- Their common goal: to develop accurate and useful information about prior school attacks that could help prevent some future ones from occurring.
- Safe Schools Initiative examined incidents and suggest that there are productive actions that can be pursued in response to the problem of targeted school violence.
- Safe Schools Initiative suggested **Threat Assessment Teams** can assist to develop strategies to prevent potential school attacks from occurring. These suggestions are supported by their 10 key findings:

District Five Outlook

- Threat Assessment Manual Process
  - Replica behavior after Parkland, Florida incident in 2018
  - After-Action reports from previous incidents
  - District Five served as a member to develop the South Carolina Department of Education School Based Behavioral Threat Assessment Manual for SC

School Threat Assessment Teams

Core Members: Lead Screening & Full Assessment

- STAT Case Manager
- Administrator
- School Psychologist, Counselor, and/or Social Worker (at least one)
- School Resource Officer/Law Enforcement (Moderate – High/Imminent)

* *Minimum of 3 members on core team*

Other Members with Knowledge:

- Teachers, Mentors, Coaches, Nurse
- Persons with Expertise:
  - Human Resources
  - Legal
  - Special Education
- External Consultant (i.e. threat management specialist, independent medical/psychological examiner)

District Five Threat Assessment Structure

School Threat Assessment Teams (STAT):

1. *Identify:* Prevent targeted violence through completing the threat assessment process in order to analyze the facts and evidence of behavior in the given situation

2. *Assess:* Use an integrated systems approach to assess a student's risk for engaging in violence or other harmful activities.

3. *Support:* Identify intervention strategies to manage that risk and/or concern.

Identifying Threats When They Occur:

- Expression indicating an intent to harm someone
  - Verbal
  - Written/Social Media
  - Artistic
  - Symbolic (gestures)
- Pattern of escalating pathway behaviors suggesting violence may be possible
- Weapon possession
  - presumed to be a threat unless circumstances clearly indicate otherwise

How are threats reported?

- School personnel observes the threatening behavior and/or hears the statement and reports the concern to administration
- Student experiences and/or observes the threatening behavior and/or hears the statement and reports to an adult on campus
- Utilization of the STOPit app
- Parents/Guardians contact the school to discuss concern

Transient vs. Substantive Threats

Low Level - TRANSIENT THREATS	High Level-SUBSTANTIVE THREATS
• Made a threat but does not pose a threat. • No “true” threat. • Do not express a lasting harm to someone. • Intended as figures of speech or • Reflect feelings that dissipate in a short period after reflection. • Can be resolved or managed through problem-solving process or existing supports. ***Transient threats can be easily resolved.***	• Context and meaning support legitimate safety concern. • Threat communicated intent to harm. • Person(s) on receiving end feel threatened. • Needs further assessment to determine level of concern and actions to be taken ***Substantive require additional assessment and supports.***

District Five Threat Assessment Structure

District Threat Assessment Team (DTAT):

Comprised of administrators and school counselors at every level, across each area

- *Refresh and Remind:* By the end of 2021-2022 school year, provide at least 10 Refresh and Remind videos to identified audiences that will cover relevant and timely topics for STAT teams.
- *Training:* Provide at least five professional development workshops for identified audiences that support the Threat Assessment process.
- *Support and Serve:* Provide “Chick-Fil-A” - like customer service to our School Threat Assessments Teams regarding communication, accessibility, and support.
- *Data Collection:* Review monthly threat assessment data to drive our support, professional development opportunities, and services provided to our STAT teams.