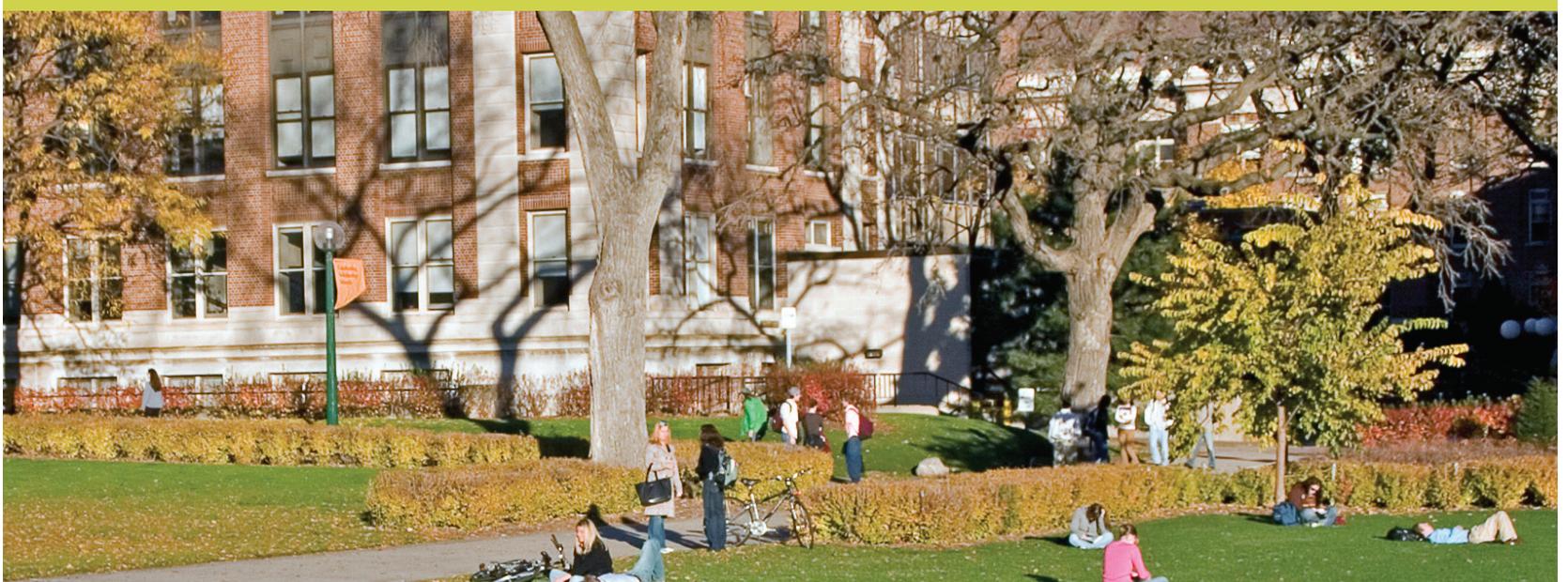




Campus Threat Assessment Training

A Multidisciplinary Approach for Institutions of Higher Education

Participant's Manual



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A Multidisciplinary Approach for Institutions of Higher Education

Participant's Manual

This project was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 2008CKWXX006 awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.



The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concentrates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime-fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$12 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.
- By the end of FY 2008, the COPS Office had funded approximately 117,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.
- Nearly 500,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- As of 2009, the COPS Office has distributed more than 2 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Resources

The COPS Office has many other resources to help you assure the safety of your campus. Below is a list of some of the publications you may find useful. Please visit the COPS Office web site at www.cops.usdoj.gov for more information.

Acquaintance Rape of College Students

Assaults In and Around Bars, 2nd Edition

Drunk Driving

Illicit Sexual Activity in Public Places

National Summit on Campus Public Safety

Panhandling

*Planning and Managing Security For Major Special Events:
Guidelines for Law Enforcement*

Rave Parties

Robbery at Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)

Stalking

Student Party Riots

Thefts of and from Cars in Parking Facilities

Underage Drinking

Understanding Risky Facilities

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Preface

Since the tragic events at Virginia Tech in April 2007 and Northern Illinois University in February 2008 and other recent incidents of campus violence, it is uniformly acknowledged that higher education institutions must develop a behavioral threat assessment capacity. Following the incident at Virginia Tech, more than 20 institutional, state, professional association, and governmental reports have recommended that higher education institutions develop and implement threat assessment and management processes and tools as one way to enhance campus safety and security.

Specifically, the Virginia Tech Special Task Force Report called for institutions of higher education (IHEs) to implement systems that link,

Troubled students to appropriate medical and counseling services either on or off campus, and to balance the individual's rights with the rights of all others for safety.

Furthermore, the report stated:

Incidents of aberrant, dangerous, or threatening behavior must be documented and reported immediately to a college's threat assessment group, and must be acted upon in a prompt and effective manner to protect the safety of the campus community.

The Florida Gubernatorial Task Force for University Campus Safety recommended:

That each college and university develop a multidisciplinary crisis management team, integrating and ensuring communication between the university law enforcement or campus security agency, student affairs, residential housing, counseling center, health center, legal counsel, and any other appropriate campus entities to review individuals and incidents which indicate "at risk" behavior. The team should facilitate the sharing of information, timely and effective intervention, and a coordinated response when required.

Similarly, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), stated in their report from the Task Force on School and Campus Safety:

After hearing from experts and reviewing a number of sources, the Task Force is convinced that schools and colleges cannot rely on unilateral threat assessment by teachers and other school personnel, but rather need to establish a system whereby all disturbing behavior by persons at the school or on the campus is reported to a “vortex” comprised of a central individual or team of individuals with expertise and training in threat assessment.

Following this trend, in early 2008, the Commonwealth of Virginia enacted a law requiring every public college and university in Virginia to establish a threat assessment team and violence prevention committee. Similarly, the State of Illinois has enacted legislation to, in part, develop “an interdisciplinary and multi-jurisdictional campus violence prevention plan, including coordination of and communication between all available campus and local mental health and first response resources....”

As universities and colleges work to develop and implement threat assessment systems in light of these reports and related legislative actions, there has been a noted void for training based on best and promising practices in threat assessment and management. Without standardized training on campus threat assessment procedures, examples of successful threat assessment teams and intervention strategies, and workable solutions for common problems, colleges and universities may fail in their efforts to effectively identify and intervene with concerning situations and persons on campus.

We are fortunate that the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) recognized and acted on this need by funding this important project. We are also pleased that the COPS Office has selected Margolis, Healy and Associates to develop and deliver these higher education focused seminars.

This training program, developed by noted campus safety and threat assessment experts, is the first ever “national curriculum” that focuses on a multidisciplinary approach to threat assessment. It has been specifically designed for higher education administrators involved in threat assessment on their campuses, including campus public safety and local law enforcement; faculty; staff; student affairs professionals; counseling center staff; campus judicial officers; campus risk management professionals; and higher education attorneys.

This program not only fills the void for a campus-oriented training program, but it also models the ideals of community oriented policing, as it recommends bringing together various constituent groups to act in a proactive manner to prevent potential violence on campuses and provides assistance to campus community members who may be in need of assistance.

To be successful, a highly functioning team must work to eliminate the stovepipes that sometimes plague the routine work on our campuses. We are confident that each seminar participant will glean important lessons to take back to their institutions to enhance campus safety and security. Our communities are relying on us to follow this path.

A multi-disciplinary approach to campus threat assessment epitomizes community policing and when successfully done relies upon collaboration and partnerships in the community. This model of campus threat assessment is based on empirical information about the causes of campus crime and violence.

Acknowledgements

The COPS Office Campus Threat Assessment (CTA) Grant called for a two-phase program development and delivery process. Phase 1 of the grant included the identification of noted campus safety and threat assessment experts and a Curriculum Development Seminar (CDS) to develop the foundations for the CTA Curriculum.

The CTA Curriculum Development Team spent countless hours before the Curriculum Development Seminar conducting research and gathering data, information, and tools that would help facilitate our work during the CDS.

The CDS, held in February 2009 in Alexandria, VA included 2 days of intense discussion, presentation, and adoption of the foundational elements of this curriculum. Without the significant contributions of every member of the team—before, during, and after the CDS—we would not have been successful in developing a program that will ultimately enhance safety on our campuses.

The COPS Office and principles of Margolis, Healy and Associates would like to thank all of the team members and support personnel for their dedication, time, and effort towards developing this first-ever “national curriculum.”

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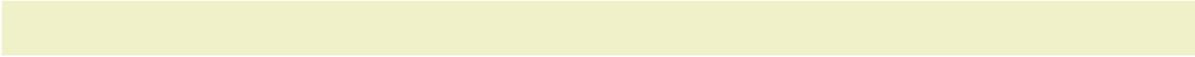
Roomers, Inc., Meeting Planners

Alexandria, VA 22314

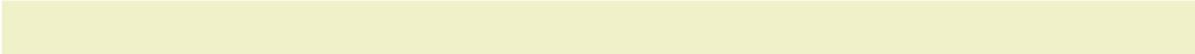
www.roomersinc.us

Seminar Schedule

8:00–8:40	General Session—Module 1: Program Introduction and Overview of the Campus Safety Landscape	
8:45–11:00	Group 1—Module 2: The Threat Assessment and Management Process	Group 2—Module 2: The Threat Assessment and Management Process
11:00–12:15	Lunch On Your Own	
12:15–1:30	Group 1—Module 3: Maximizing the Effectiveness of Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams	Group 2—Module 4: Legal Issues in Campus Threat Assessment and Management
1:30–1:45	Break	
1:45–3:00	Group 1—Module 4: Legal Issues in Campus Threat Assessment and Management	Group 2—Module 3: Maximizing the Effectiveness of Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams
3:00–4:30	General Session—Module 5: Threat Assessment and Management In Action (Case Study) (All)	
4:30–5:00	General Session—Module 6: Program Closing/Assessing Technical Assistance for the CTA Grant	



Module 1
Program Opening and Campus Safety Landscape



Module 1: Program Opening and Campus Safety Landscape.

Time: 40 minutes.

Time Breakout by Lesson: Lesson 1: Program Opening (10 minutes); Lesson 2: Campus Safety Landscape (20 minutes); Lesson 3: Housekeeping Instructions (10 minutes).

Summary and Rationale (Abstract): This is the opening module for the program, including housekeeping instructions for the participants. The primary purpose of this module is to set the stage for the seminar by providing information about the nature of threats and challenges faced by institutions of higher education.

Overall Module Objective: Ensure participants know what to expect during the program and discuss the campus safety landscape.

Introduction: Open the Program and Set the Stage for the Day's Activities

- Welcome participants to the program and discuss the overall objectives of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) CTA Grant.
- Review the agenda and provide a breakdown of the various activities for the day.
- Provide housekeeping instructions.

The Higher Education and Campus Safety Landscape

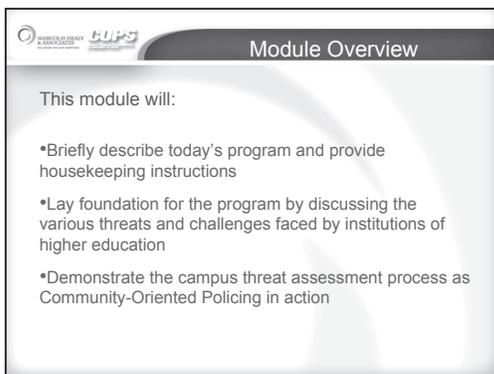
- Provide an overview of the various types of safety challenges faced by institutions of higher education.
- Discuss the nature of violence in the higher education environment.
- Emphasize that while campuses are generally safe places, there is a need to take proactive measure to prevent, prepare, respond to, and recover from low probability/high impact events like violent criminal episodes.
- Introduce the concept of Collaboration/Communication/Cooperation as a “best practice” to address a wide range of critical incidents on campuses.
- Emphasize how the Community-Oriented Policing philosophy provides a conceptual framework for eliminating departmental stovepipes and creates an environment of trust and cooperation.

Closing: Review Instructions for the Day's Activities

- Explain that participants are pre-assigned working groups;
- Provide opportunities for participants to ask questions before breaking into groups.

Additional Resource Materials: “The IACLEA Blueprint for Safer Campuses.”





Program Agenda	
8:00 - 8:40	General Session - Module 1: Program Introduction and Overview of the Campus Safety Landscape
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1:30 - 1:45	Break
1:45 - 3:00	Group 1 - Module 4: Legal Issues in Campus Threat Assessment and Management Group 3 - Module 3: Maximizing the Effectiveness of Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams
3:00 - 4:30	General Session: Module 5: Threat Assessment and Management In Action (Case Studies) (All)
4:30 - 5:00	General Session - Module 6: Program Closing/Assessing Technical Assistance for the CTA Grant

Performance Objectives

- Understand the nature of campus threats
- Understand the nature of violence on college and university campuses
- Identify the Four Phases of Emergency Management
- Understand how the concept of Collaborate/Communicate/Cooperate supports Community-Oriented Policing and enhances campus safety
- Review the day's schedule and group assignments

The Higher Education Landscape

- Approximately 4,400 Institutions of Higher Education in U.S., countless others internationally
 - ✓ Community colleges represent largest, fastest growing sector in higher education
- Serving 15 million students and several million faculty, staff, and visitors

The Higher Education Landscape

- Campuses are small-scale cities, many supporting:
 - ✓ Vital research, large-scale public events, high-profile faculty, medical facilities, and large international communities
- At-risk populations, 18- to 21- year olds
- More than 20,000 campus police and security officers protect the nation's campuses
- Coordination among key stakeholders varies greatly

 **Campus Safety Landscape**

- High-risk drinking
- Illegal and prescription drug use and abuse
- Violence
 - ✓ VAW
 - ✓ Criminal intrusions, including rampage shooters
- Natural disasters
- Fire and life safety
- Mental illness and suicide
- Food poisoning, food-borne illness, pandemic
- Terrorist threats



 **Campus Safety Landscape**

The high-risk drinking problem persists:

"Researchers at the NIAAA found that serious problems persist, as indicated by the **increase in drinking-related accidental deaths among 18- to 24-year-old students**. In addition, the researchers found the proportion of students who reported recent heavy episodic drinking—sometimes called binge drinking, defined as five or more alcoholic drinks on any occasion in the past 30 days—rose from roughly 42 percent to 45 percent, and the proportion who admitted to drinking and driving in the past year increased from 26.5 percent to 29 percent."

http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/NewsEvents/NewsReleases/college_drinking_strategies.htm

Campus Safety Landscape

"Our investigations suggest," Mueller told the Senate Select Committee (February 2003), "that al-Qaeda has developed a support infrastructure inside the U.S. that would allow the network to mount another terrorist attack on U.S. soil. Multiple small-scale attacks against soft targets—such as banks, shopping malls, supermarkets, apartment buildings, schools and universities, churches, and places of recreation and entertainment—would be easier to execute."

Context of Campus Violence

- Virginia Tech most lethal, but not the first
 - ✓ 14 campus rampage shootings since 1966
- Homicidal violence on campus is not new, nor is it exclusive to students
- The state of mental health on campuses

Context of Campus Violence

- Aug 1, 1966: UT Austin
- May 4, 1970: Kent State
- Nov 1, 1991: University of Iowa
- Jan 26, 1995: UNC Chapel Hill
- Aug. 15, 1996: San Diego State
- June 28, 2000: University of Washington
- Aug. 28, 2000: University of Arkansas
- Jan. 16, 2002: VA Appalachian School of Law
- May 17, 2001: Pacific Lutheran University
- Oct. 28, 2002: University of Arizona
- May 9, 2003: Case Western Reserve
- Sept. 2, 2006: Shepherd University
- April 2, 2007: University of Washington
- April 16, 2007: VA Tech
- Sept. 21, 2007: Delaware State University
- Oct. 1, 2007: University of Memphis
- Dec. 13, 2007: Louisiana State University
- Feb. 8, 2008: Louisiana Technical College
- Feb. 14, 2008: Northern Illinois University

 **Context of Campus Violence**

“Violent crime rates on campuses were far lower than the U.S. violent crime rate of 466 per 100,000 residents. Between the 1994 and 2004, violent crime rates on campuses decreased by 9%.”

Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report February 2008, NCJ 219374
Campus Law Enforcement, 2004-05

 **Post-Virginia Tech Surveys**

“The first ‘ripple effect’ of the Virginia Tech tragedy occurred when colleges and universities around the country convened committees and task forces to answer these questions through comprehensive reviews of policies, procedures, and systems related to campus safety and security. A remarkable 87% of respondents indicated that their institution had conducted such a review.”

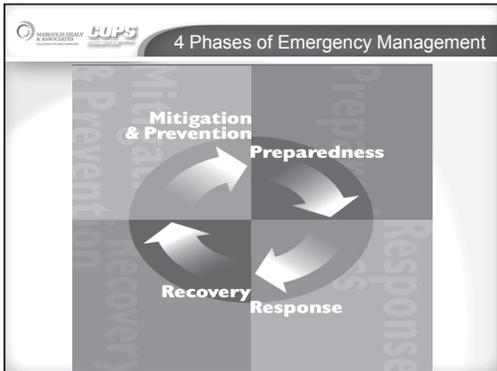
Midwestern Higher Education Compact Campus Safety Survey, May 2008

 **Post-Virginia Tech Surveys**

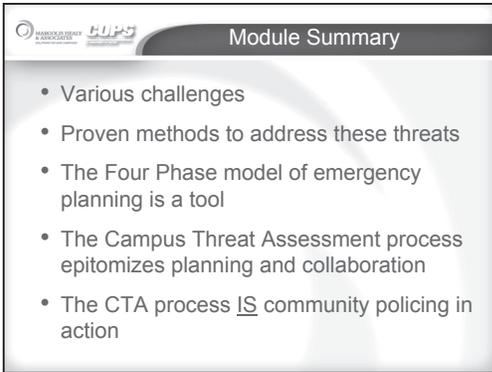
“A threat assessment team (TAT) assists in assessing threatening situations and developing risk abatement plans that minimize the potential risk for violence. Fewer than half of the respondents reported that their campus has a TAT—ranging from 37 percent of public 2-year colleges to 60 percent of public 4-year institutions. An additional 19 percent of respondents said a TAT was under development.”

Results of the NACUBO National Campus Safety and Security Project Survey

AASCU Top 10 State Policy Issues for Higher Education in 2009	
January 2009	January 2008
1. States' Fiscal Crisis	1. Affordability
2. Tuition Prices and Tuition Policy	2. States' Fiscal Forecasts
3. State Student Grant Aid Programs	3. College Preparation
4. Enrollment Capacity	4. Accountability
5. Implementation of the HEOA	5. Campus Security
6. Incoming administration	6. Immigration
7. College Readiness	7. 2008 Presidential Election
8. Veteran's Education	8. Affirmative Action
9. Undocumented Students	9. Re-tooling State Financial Aid Programs
10. Sustainability	10. Economic Development



- Collaborating
- Communicating
- Cooperating



The slide is titled "Module Summary" and features the logos for "INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH" and "CUPS" in the top left corner. The main content is a bulleted list of five items: "Various challenges", "Proven methods to address these threats", "The Four Phase model of emergency planning is a tool", "The Campus Threat Assessment process epitomizes planning and collaboration", and "The CTA process IS community policing in action".

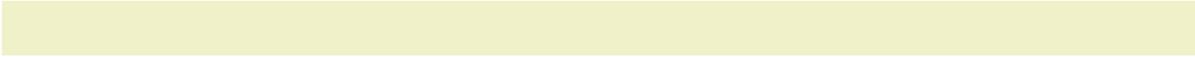
- Various challenges
- Proven methods to address these threats
- The Four Phase model of emergency planning is a tool
- The Campus Threat Assessment process epitomizes planning and collaboration
- The CTA process IS community policing in action



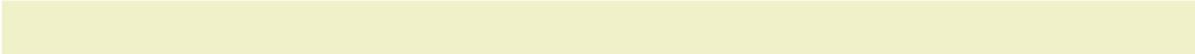
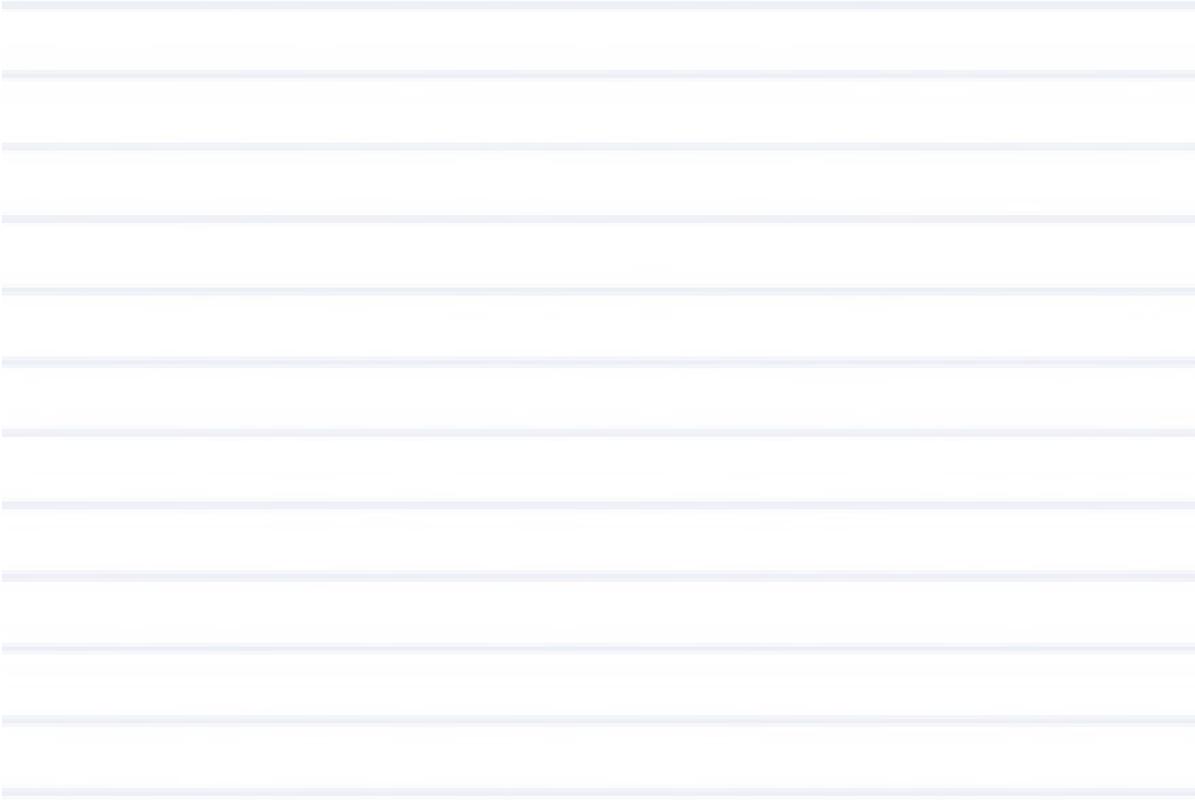
The slide is titled "Participant Instructions" in a large white font on a dark background. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for "MARGOLIS HEALY & ASSOCIATES" with the tagline "SOLUTIONS FOR SAFE CAMPUSES".



The slide is titled "Any Questions?" in a large white font on a dark background. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for "MARGOLIS HEALY & ASSOCIATES" with the tagline "SOLUTIONS FOR SAFE CAMPUSES".



Module 2
The Campus Threat Assessment and Management Process



Module 2: The Campus Threat Assessment and Management Process

Summary and Rationale (Abstract): This module provides the foundation for the campus threat assessment and management process training. It provides an overview of the threat assessment process; reviews the principles involved, and the specific steps of the campus threat assessment and management process. Having an understanding of the fundamental aspects and guiding principles of threat assessment is critical to being able to conduct an effective threat assessment investigation and to manage a person of potential concern.

Overall Module Objective: The objective of this module is to outline the fundamentals of threat assessment and detail the specific steps in the threat assessment and management process.

Performance Objectives: At the conclusion of this module, participants will be able to:

Overview of Campus Threat Assessment

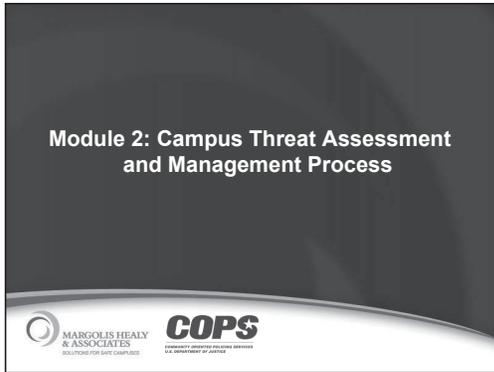
- List the four purposes of the threat assessment process.
- Identify the seven components of an effective threat assessment program.

Guiding Principles of Threat Assessment Management

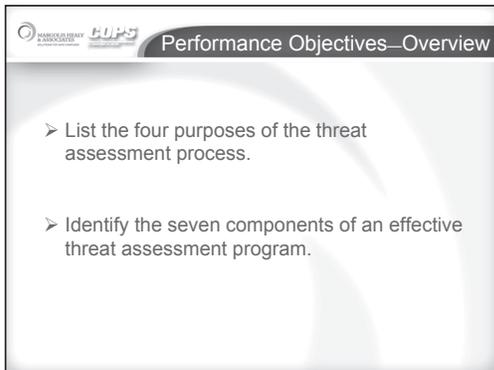
- Discuss the principles of threat assessment.
- Identify two principles that need to be strengthened on their campus.

Steps in the Threat Assessment and Management Process

- Create a model threat assessment program for their institution.
- Develop a process flow chart for implementation of their model program.







 Performance Objectives—Guiding Principles of Threat Assessment Management

- Discuss the principles of threat assessment.
- Identify two principles that need to be strengthened on their campus.

 Performance Objectives – The Process

- Create a model threat assessment program for their institution.
- Develop a process flow chart for implementation of their model program.

 Overview of Threat Assessment Process

Threat assessment is a four-part process that is designed to:

- 1) • Identify persons of concern
- 2) • Gather information/investigate
- 3) • Assess information and situation
- 4) • If necessary, manage the person and situation to reduce overall threat and get person needed help

 **Assessment Approaches**

- Mental health violence risk assessment
- Profiling
- Automated decision-making

 **Mental Health Violence Risk Assessment Approach**

- Also known as a clinical assessment of dangerousness
- Evaluates a person's risk for more general/prevalent types of affective violence
- Not effective for evaluating risk of a targeted attack on campus

 **Profiling**

- Most commonly used as an investigative tool to describe the person or type of person who committed a particular crime
- It is retrospective in that it uses clues from a crime that has already occurred to narrow down possible suspects
- When used with respect to evaluating risk of violence, profiling is prospective, not retrospective

Prospective Profiling

```
graph TD; A[Composite View] --> B[Common characteristics or traits]; B --> C[Compares the person in question with the composite]; C --> D[Closer the match, the greater the cause for concern];
```

The flowchart illustrates the Prospective Profiling process. It starts with a 'Composite View', which leads to identifying 'Common characteristics or traits'. This is followed by a comparison: 'Compares the person in question with the composite'. The final step is a conclusion: 'Closer the match, the greater the cause for concern'.

Profiling – Two Major Failings

- It identifies far more people that match a profile but do not pose a threat
- It fails to identify a person whose behavior suggests real concern but whose traits or characteristics do not match the profile

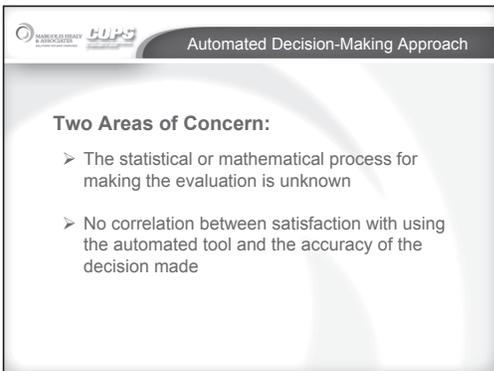
Workplace Shooter “Profile”

An employee comes to you with concerns about his co-worker.

- His characteristics are:
 - White male
 - Over 40 years old
 - Experience with weapons
 - Has some control issues
 - Very interested in and talks about violent incidents
- Employee states he is worried and believes the individual fits the profile of a workplace shooter

What do you think?







Efforts to Promote Safe Campuses

These efforts include a commitment to:

- Prevent violence
- Identify persons of risk
- Intervene with developing concerns
- Respond to acts of violence
- Recover from an event

Components of a Threat Assessment Process

- Threat assessment team
- Administration support
- Policies and procedures necessary for functioning
- Legal counsel input on information sharing
- Incident-tracking and other record keeping
- Multiple reporting mechanisms
- Effective case management resources and strategies

12 Guiding Principles of Threat Assessment

1. Prevention is possible
2. Violence is a dynamic process
3. Targeted violence is a function of several factors
4. Corroboration is critical
5. Threat assessment is about behavior, not profiles
6. Cooperating systems are critical resources
7. Does the person pose a threat?
8. Keep victims in mind
9. Early identification/intervention helps everyone
10. Multiple reporting mechanisms enhance early identification
11. Multifaceted resource can provide effective intervention
12. Safety is a primary focus

 12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

1. Prevention is Possible

- Research on targeted violence has shown that acts of targeted violence—whether on campus, in the workplace, or in school—are rarely impulsive

 12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

2. Violence is a Dynamic Process

What does this mean?

- Not asking whether this is a “violent” or a “nonviolent person.” All of us are capable of becoming violent
- Looking at the conditions under which a particular person—may become violent

 12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

3. Targeted Violence is a Function of Several Factors

Research further shows that targeted attacks stem from an interaction between several factors

- The attacker’s situation or circumstances
- His or her setting and possible targets

12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

4. Corroboration is Critical

A threat assessment case is an *investigation* - a process to gather information and facts to understand the:

- Person in question
- Situation or setting
- Potential targets

12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

- Corroboration is Critical
 - How info from one source confirms info from another source
 - Possible to get one story from one person and a different one from someone else
 - Critical to check the facts and determine which is more reliable

12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

5. Threat Assessment is About Behavior, *Not* Profiles

Threat assessment differs from profiling:

- Emphasizes a person's behaviors and communications—what they are doing and saying—rather than on their traits or characteristics
- Gathers bits and pieces of information from different people who know the person in question, and then draws conclusions from those facts

 12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

6. Cooperating Systems are Critical Resources

Systems are the different "silos" that can exist on campuses and in surrounding communities, such as:

- Administration
- Counseling and health services
- Support and service staff
- Community social service agencies
- Faculty
- Campus law enforcement or security
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Criminal justice agencies and others

 12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

7. Does the Person *Pose* a Threat?

- Many people threaten and they do so for many different reasons
- Most never go on to do harm
- Just because someone makes a threat, it doesn't necessarily mean they will do something harmful
- Most shooters involved in school/workplace shootings never made threats before harming or killing
- Just because someone DOESN'T make a threat, it doesn't mean we can rest easy

 12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

8. Keep Victims in Mind

Victims are **key** to the threat management process. Victims are:

- Anyone the person in question has threatened, stalked, or otherwise made fearful
- Interested in threat management—what the threat assessment team is doing to intervene—rather than the team's overall assessment

  12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

9. Early Identification/Intervention Helps Everyone

- A threat assessment team cannot investigate—and intervene—if it's not aware of the problem in the first place
- The earlier a team learns about a potential problem, the greater the range of tools and options the team will likely be able to use to intervene, if necessary
- Early intervention makes severe measures such as the involvement of law enforcement or the need to expel a student less likely

  12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

10. Multiple Reporting Mechanisms

Early reporting is enhanced by having multiple reporting mechanisms in place to include:

- Traditional reporting channels, such as a faculty member's department chair or dean
- Anonymous reporting
- Phone numbers, web sites, email addresses, and online forms

  12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

11. Multifaceted Resources Can Provide Effective Intervention

- Intervention strategies vary and based on case:
 - Academic accommodations
 - Mental health counseling
 - Voluntary leave for a semester
 - Mentoring
 - Arrest
 - Psychiatric hospitalization
 - Residential changes
 - Behavioral contracts
- No two case management or intervention strategies will ever look exactly alike

12 Guiding Threat Assessment Principles

12. Safety is a Primary Focus

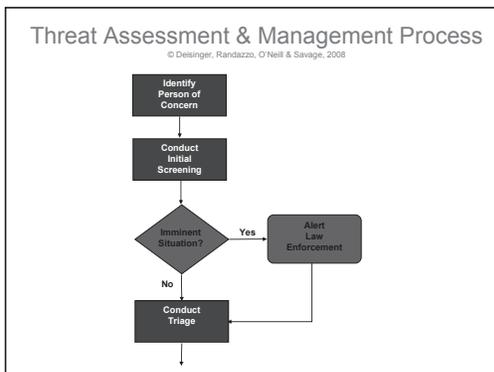
- Campus and broader community
- Person who raised concern

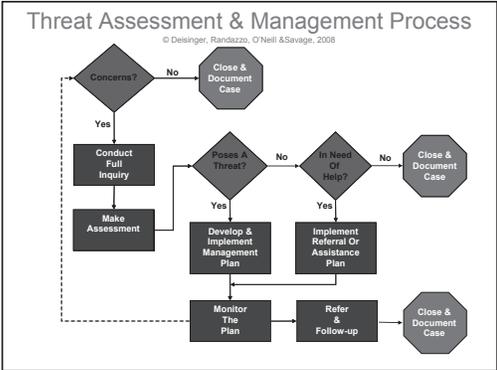
Lessons 2 & 3 Review

The previous lessons described the four components of the threat assessment process.

We learned how to:

- Identify a person who has raised some concern or threatened
- Gather information from people who know or have observed the person, as well as from other sources
- Evaluate the person and situation to determine whether they pose any threat
- Manage or reduce the threat posed by the person of concern





Learning about People of Concern

The team can learn about people of concern by:

- Using reports that come into the team from people on campus or elsewhere
- Soliciting information throughout campus

Encourage Reporting

Identification of persons of concern depends on:

- Willingness and ability of campus community to communicate with the threat assessment team

A critical element of the threat assessment process is to:

- Encourage the campus community to look for and report any warning signs

 **Educate the Campus**

Campus students and personnel should be encouraged to report any threats or other behavior that they find troubling or upsetting

It should be communicated that:

- There aren't any penalties for reporting incidents or persons of concern
- The team wants to hear about behavior that causes worry or concern, even if behavior seems low-level or unclear
- Efforts are oriented around assistance, not primarily (or solely) punitive actions

 **Reporting Mechanisms**

Reporting can be accomplished through various mechanisms such as:

- Providing general awareness training for the entire campus
- Providing multiple ways to report a concern to the team
- Notifying parents

 **Checking Around Campus**

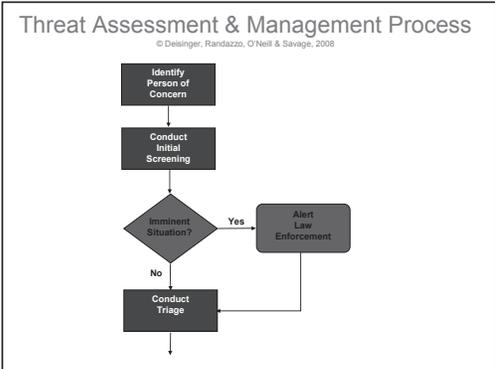
Departments where the threat assessment team can (and should) "check in" include the following:

➤ Student judicial process	➤ Residential Life conduct boards
➤ Faculty grievance/conduct boards	➤ Honor boards
➤ Staff grievance review committees	➤ Greek Council/fraternity and sorority system (or other student social organizations that may or may not be formally linked to campus)
➤ Equal opportunity and diversity offices	➤ Community entities such as hospitals
➤ University legal counsel	➤ Others?
➤ Campus police or security departments	
➤ Local law enforcement	

Conduct Initial Screening

When the team first learns about a person who has acted in a threatening way or otherwise raised concern, they should conduct an initial screening to determine:

- First and foremost—whether there is an imminent danger or emergency situation



Imminent Danger?

If there is an emergency situation or imminent danger, the team should:

- Immediately contact campus or local law enforcement to initiate steps that can:
 - Contain the person
 - Effect an arrest
 - Get emergency psychiatric evaluation, if circumstances allow

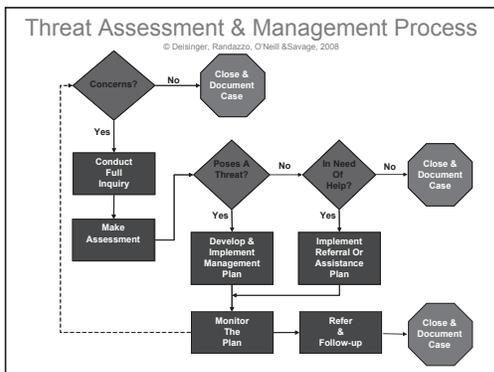
Understanding Initial Sources of Information

If the team determines that there is **not an emergency or imminent situation** they should:

- Determine whether there is a need for a full inquiry

Places to Search

- Google.com
- MySpace.com
- Facebook.com
- YouTube.com
- Cuil.com
- Technorati.com (searches blogs)
- Twitter.com
- MiGente.com
- Bebo.com
- Xanga.com
- Craigslist.com (search the relevant city/town)
- Thehoodup.com
- Blackplanet.com
- Others?



 **Triage Questions**

Five Triage Questions

1. Has there been any mention of suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts?
2. Has there been any mention of thoughts/plans of violence?
3. Have there been any behaviors that cause concern for violence or the person's well-being?
4. Does the person have access or are they trying to gain access to a weapon?
5. Are there behaviors that are significantly disruptive to the campus environment?

 **Triage Questions**

A "YES" response to any of the five triage questions:

- Should initiate a full inquiry
- May indicate an imminent risk as well as a need for further assessment

 **Triage Questions**

No further inquiry is necessary if:

- The answer to all five questions is "NO"

AND

- The team gathered sufficient information to answer those questions fully

Nevertheless, the incident that brought the person to the team's attention should be:

- Entered into the team's case database and
- The initial inquiry results should be documented and kept

 **Conduct a Full Inquiry**

- Figure out who might have a piece of the puzzle
- Ask those people what they know about the person in question
- Assemble all of the pieces of the puzzle
- Determine whether the person poses a threat or otherwise needs help or intervention
- Gather information

 **Gathering Information**

- Faculty and staff members
- Student judicial process
- Faculty grievance/conduct board
- Staff grievance review committees
- Equal opportunity & diversity offices
- University legal counsel
- Campus police or security
- Residential Life conduct boards
- Honor boards
- Greek Council/fraternity and sorority system (or other student social organizations)
- Local law enforcement
- Previous schools/employers
- E-mail/Internet information
- Health/Counseling Center
- Person of concern
- Others?

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

Inquiry Question 1: What are the person's motive(s) and goals?

The purpose of asking this question is to better understand:

- The overall context of the behavior that first brought the person to the attention of the threat assessment team
- Whether those conditions or situation still exists

Key Inquiry Questions

Inquiry Question 2: Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?

If the team finds that the person in question has:

- Communicated an idea or plan to do harm

AND

- The source of that information is credible (i.e., it was not reported by someone trying to get the person in trouble)

THEN

- There is a strong indication that the person may be on a pathway toward violence and therefore poses a threat

Key Inquiry Questions

Inquiry Question 3: Has the person shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?

Inappropriate interest examples may include:

- Workplace, school, or campus attacks or attackers
- Weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon)
- Incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murderers)
- Obsessive pursuit, stalking, or monitoring others

Key Inquiry Questions

Inquiry Question 4: Has the person engaged in attack related behaviors (i.e. any behavior that moves an idea of harm forward toward actual harm)?

Attack-related behaviors might include:

- Developing an attack idea or plan
- Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons or other material to support an attack
- Surveying possible sites and areas for attack
- Stalking or surveying potential targets
- Testing access to potential targets
- Rehearsing attacks or ambushes

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

These attack-related behaviors will give the team an indication of:

- How far along the pathway of violence the person has progressed
- How quickly the person is moving forward toward an attack
- How imminent a threat may be

Any of these attack-related behaviors should:

- Prompt the team to corroborate or confirm these behaviors through other sources (or confirm the reliability of the source reporting these behaviors)
- Be seen as a serious indication of potential violence

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

Inquiry Question 5: Does the person have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?
It is important for the team to ask whether the person in question has access to weapons and ammunition.

The team should focus on the combination of the person:

- Owning or having access to weapons

AND

- Indication that the person has an idea or plans to do harm

Similarly, the team should be concerned:

- If the person develops an idea to do harm

AND THEN

- Starts showing an interest in weapons

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

Inquiry Question 6: Is the person experiencing hopelessness, desperation and/or despair?

Many persons who have engaged in targeted violence have been:

- Suicidal prior to their attacks
- Actively suicidal at the time of their attacks
- Hoping to kill themselves or be killed by responding police

Key Inquiry Questions

If team determines that the person in question is experiencing:

- Desperation, hopelessness, or thought of suicide
AND
- Also has thought or plans to harm others
THEN
- The person poses a threat and the team should develop and implement an intervention plan

Key Inquiry Questions

Inquiry Question 7: Does the person have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible person?

If the team decides that the person poses a threat, having someone that the person already trusts and who is a responsible person may:

- Be a protective factor in itself
- Already be a good influence on the person
- Be able to assist in developing and implementing a management plan, if the team decides to solicit their help

Key Inquiry Questions

Inquiry Question 8: Does the person see violence as an acceptable, desirable, or only way to solve problems?

A "YES" response should lead the team to consider what options they may have to:

- Help the person solve their problems
OR
- Improve their situation so that the person no longer looks toward violence as a solution

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

Inquiry Question 9: Is the person's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?

- An interview can be used to determine how forthcoming or truthful is the person of concern
- The less forthcoming the person is, the more work the team may have to do to develop an alliance if a management plan is needed

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

Inquiry Question 10: Are other people concerned about the person's potential for violence?

The team should recognize that some people such as:

- Parents, significant others, or
- Anyone else who is very close with the person in question may not see the potential for violence even if others do

Those in close relationships with a person may be too close to the person/situation to admit violence is possible or even likely.

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

Inquiry Question 11: What circumstances might affect the likelihood of violence?

This question can help the team identify:

- What factors in the person's life might change in the near- to mid-term

AND

- Whether those changes could make things better or worse for the person in question

 **Key Inquiry Questions**

Inquiry Question 12: Where does the subject exist along the pathway to violence?

The team should ask if the subject has:

- > Developed an idea to do harm?
- > Developed a plan?
- > Took any steps toward implementing the plan?
- > Developed the capacity or means to carry out the plan?

Team should also ask:

- > How fast he/she is moving toward engaging in harm?
- > Where can the team intervene to move the person off that pathway toward harm?

 **Assessment**

Assessment Question 1: Does the person pose a threat of harm, to himself/herself to others or both? Does the person's behavior suggest that he/she is on a pathway toward harm?

If the answer is "NO," the team documents its response and reasoning and proceeds to Assessment Question 2.

If the answer is "YES," the team documents its response and rationale, and proceeds to:

- > Develop
- > Implement
- > Continually monitor an individualized threat management plan to reduce the risk that the person poses

 **Assessment**

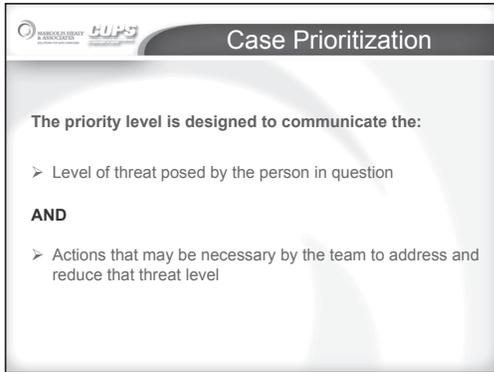
Assessment Question 2: If the person does not pose a threat of harm, does the person show a need for help or intervention, such as mental health care?

If the answer is "NO," the team:

- > Documents response
- > Records the person and incident in the incident database
- > Closes the inquiry
- > There is no need to proceed to Steps 6, 7 or 8

If the answer is "YES," the team:

- > Documents response and rationale
- > Develops, implements, and re-evaluates a plan to monitor the person and situation
- > Connects the person with resources to assist him/her with solving problems or addressing needs



Case Prioritization

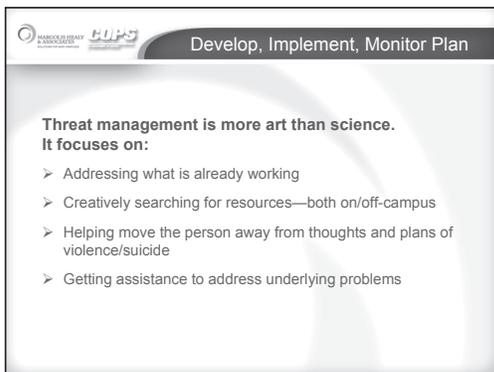
The priority level is designed to communicate the:

- Level of threat posed by the person in question

AND

- Actions that may be necessary by the team to address and reduce that threat level

Sample Priority Levels for Threat Cases			
Priority 1 (Extreme Risk)	Priority 2 (High Risk)	Priority 3 (Moderate Risk)	Priority 4 (Low Risk)
<p>Person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward self or others and requires containment.</p> <p>Action Immediately notify law enforcement to pursue containment options, and/or take actions to protect identified target(s).</p> <p>Develop and implement a management plan in anticipation of the person's release or return to campus.</p>	<p>Person/situation appears to pose a threat of self-harm or physical violence, usually to an identifiable target, but currently lacks immediacy and/or a specific plan—or a specified plan of violence does exist but currently lacks a specific target.</p> <p>Action Develop and implement a management plan.</p>	<p>Person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, but does exhibit behaviors/circumstances that are likely to be disruptive to the community.</p> <p>Action Warrants some intervention, referral and monitoring to minimize risk for significant disruption to the community or escalation in threat.</p> <p>Develop a referral and/or active monitoring plan.</p>	<p>Person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence or self-harm at this time, nor is their evidence of significant disruption to the community.</p> <p>Action Warrant some intervention, referral and monitoring to minimize risk for escalation in threat.</p> <p>Develop a monitoring plan</p>



Develop, Implement, Monitor Plan

Threat management is more art than science. It focuses on:

- Addressing what is already working
- Creatively searching for resources—both on/off-campus
- Helping move the person away from thoughts and plans of violence/suicide
- Getting assistance to address underlying problems

Develop, Implement, Monitor Plan

Options of individualized threat management plans:

- Monitoring
- Engage with the person
- Identify an ally or trusted person
- Family/parental notification
- Law enforcement intervention
- Behavioral contract
- Mandated psychological assessment or hospitalization

Develop, Implement, Monitor Plan

Options for leave or separation:

- Voluntary leave
- Interim suspension
- Involuntary leave
- Removal from housing

Develop, Implement, Monitor Plan

Leave, suspension, or termination options that focus solely on controlling the person do not solve the long-term problem of:

- Moving person away from thoughts and plans of violence
- Connecting them to resources
- Providing options once person is no longer connected to campus

 **Closing a Case**

Threat management cases generally:

- Remain open until the person in question is no longer reasonably assessed to pose a threat (as described earlier)

 **Closing a Case**

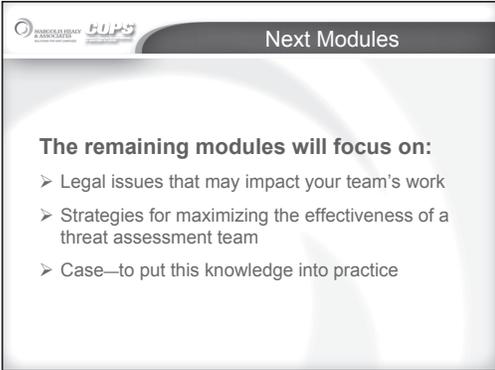
While the case is open the team should:

- Continue to monitor and modify the plan as long as the individual still poses a threat
- Recognize that a person can continue to pose a threat even after he/she ceases to be a member of the campus community
- Continue to monitor the situation through its relationship with local law enforcement agencies and mental health agencies, as well as in direct cooperation with the person, if possible

 **Summary**

This module covered the fundamentals of the threat assessment and management process. With this knowledge you should be able to:

- Draft a model threat assessment program
- Enhance an existing program
- Diagram how a threat assessment case would start at your institution
- Provide steps to follow once the team learns about a concern



Next Modules

The remaining modules will focus on:

- Legal issues that may impact your team's work
- Strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of a threat assessment team
- Case—to put this knowledge into practice



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