

# **Emerging Issues in Organizational Violence**

**Presented by**  
**James S. Cawood, CPP**  
**Factor One**  
**[jcawood@factorone.com](mailto:jcawood@factorone.com)**

# **The Value of Workplace Violence Risk Assessment**

- ◆ Violence risk assessment, like all forms of risk assessment, guides the use of limited resources (time, budget, and personnel) to maximize benefit
- ◆ The benefit to the workplace from violence reduction is:
  - ◆ reduced costs due to employee injuries or deaths, including potential liability for claims of negligence
  - ◆ reduced absenteeism and employee turnover
  - ◆ increased employee productivity and morale

# OSHA Organizational Violence “Types”

- ◆ **Type I:** Violence by an assailant with no legitimate relationship to the workplace who enters the workplace to commit a robbery or other criminal act.
- ◆ **Type II:** Violence by a recipient of a service provided by the workplace, such as a client, patient, customer, passenger or a criminal suspect or prisoner.
- ◆ **Type III:** Violence by a current/former employee, supervisor, or manager.
- ◆ **Type IV:** Violence involving a domestic or personal relationship such as an employee’s spouse, lover, relative, friend, or another person who has a dispute with an employee.

# **Major Organizational Concerns Related to Security and Safety**

- ◆ Liability
- ◆ Productivity
- ◆ Morale
- ◆ Incident Cost
- ◆ Reputation Cost

# Workplace Violence Risk Assessment & Management: In Brief\*

- ◆ **Identify** who *poses* a threat versus those who are *making* threats
- ◆ **Assess** the individuals who appear to pose a threat
- ◆ **Manage** those who are determined to pose a credible threat

\* *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations*, by Robert Fein and Bryan Vossekuil, NIJ 170612

# **Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP): RAGE-V**

- ◆ RAGE-V = Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence
- ◆ Released on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006 after a four year, multi-disciplinary development effort
- ◆ Purpose: Establish a common framework for conducting violence risk assessments and assessing the validity of the process used to provide the results.
- ◆ Comprised of three practice advisories (Psychology, Law, and Information Gathering) and a model violence risk assessment process

## ATAP Model Violence Risk Assessment Process

**Notification of Concerning Behavior/Incident:**  
 Assess source quality and capture quality (e.g., first-hand information?; direct or indirect contact with reporting party)  
 “Three C’s”- Content, Context, Circumstances- What is new/changed?  
 Initial assessment of immediacy of violence and accessibility of target  
 Initial consideration of protective actions- including appropriate initial notifications and explanations  
 (e.g., less savvy recipients=more detail vs. more savvy recipients= less detail)

### Initiate Fact Finding:

Information could be obtained from any or all of the below listed sources:

**Victim(s)**

**Witnesses**

Family members including lovers, intimate partners, spouses

**Friends/Co-Workers**

Law enforcement personnel

**Instigator**

Records- Restricted/Private/Public

Examination of Forensic Evidence

Contact information- direct (verbal or physical contact) or indirect (mail, e-mail, letters, packages, pages,

IM messages, faxes, etc.)

Wiretap and Surveillance

Money Transfers

Other Informants

Behavioral information of interest could include information from direct or indirect sources:

**Process Variables:**

- Approach behavior
- Evidence of escalation- threats, etc.
- Fantasy rehearsal
- Evidence of deterioration- deteriorating mental state, psychosis
- Actively violent state of mind-suicidal or homicidal thoughts
- Command hallucinations, thought insertion/withdrawal, paranoia of imminent threat
- Diminishing inhibitions
- Diminishing or impaired coping
- Inability or limited view or ability to pursue other options
- Obsession
- Evaporating protective inhibitors
- Sense of inevitability (tunnel vision, foregone conclusion)
- Pre-attack or ritualistic preparatory actions (writing of suicide note, suicide video, religious rituals, purchase of camouflage clothing)
- Recent acquisition or preparation of weapons, escalation of practice with no sanctioned reason
- Subject’s response to assessment and inquiries

**Risk Factors:**

- Weapons-use connected to emotional release, fascination with destructive power
- Motivational factors-what is driving the individual- delusion, fanatical beliefs, revenge, entitlement, grandiosity, need to force closure
- Drug use- methamphetamine, cocaine, alcohol, steroids
- Head trauma
- History of criminal, violent, homicidal, stalking, threats, or assaultive behavior, violation of conditional release
- Prior involuntary or voluntary mental health commitments
- Documented homicidal or suicidal thoughts, psychotic violent thoughts
- Past suicide attempts
- Ordinary response to authority and limit setting
- Reference groups, heroes, affiliations, and community attachments
- Perception of injustice or insoluble problems
- History of mental problems that compromise coping, or enhance appeal of violence- may include:
  - o Depression
  - o Paranoia
  - o Psychopathy
  - o Bipolar
  - o Personality disorders (narcissistic, paranoid, borderline, antisocial)

**Inhibitors/Stabilizers:**

- Consideration of available inhibitors and the persons’ access and utilization of them
- Treatment availability, utilization, and past receptivity
- Family
- Other social support
- Spiritual beliefs opposing violence
- Connectedness and healthy affectional bonds

**Triggers: (Past, Present, and Future)**

- Pending perceived negative job event
- Rejection and abandonment
- Increased psychosis
- Disruption of support system
- Financial problems
- Civil and criminal justice system events

### Analysis Guidelines

**Consideration of multiple behavioral and risk factors:**

- \*Must involve consideration of contextual factors, mitigation factors or inhibitors to risk-as well as risk factors, potential stressors-as well as resiliency factors
- \*Access to sufficient credible, first-hand collateral data sources
- \*Must assess the impact of gathering information and investigative/threat assessment process itself upon risk
- \*Avoid over-reliance on single factors (factors considered must be scientifically relevant or those considered within the field based upon empirical and published literature)
- \*When conceptualizing risk level, must recognize professional limitations pertinent to the threat assessment- seek out relevant consultation or expertise when necessary
- \*Qualify assessment when necessary (e.g., availability of information, recognize assumptions, potential changes in relevant context, time limited nature of assessment)
- \*Assessor must be aware of the complex contextual, legal, ethical, and regulatory issues that impact the violence risk assessment process

**Categorize the Level of Risk**  
 (e.g., Low, Moderate, or High, 1-5)

**Provide assessment results to appropriate parties:**  
 (e.g., Individual Victim, employer, Incident Management Team, Law Enforcement, Court, Correctional System, Probation, Parole)

# Profiling vs. Violence Risk Assessment

“Profiling is designed to reduce the number of possible suspects within any given population by sketching the “type” of person who may have committed a certain category of crime. Threat assessment [violence risk assessment], on the other hand, concentrates on determining the *seriousness* of a threat [or threatening behavior] that has already been made and—if the assessment suggests it is serious—setting up procedures and strategies to protect the intended target.”

*Introduction to Forensic Psychology: Research and Application, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Bartol and Bartol, p. 248*



# Ideal Outcome of Violence Risk Assessment Process

The ideal violence risk assessment process would not only identify the level of potential risk for violence (low, moderate, or high), but would address the additional facets of the violence that could be involved, including:

- ◆ Severity - trivial, moderate, maiming, lethal
- ◆ Density - frequency- daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)
- ◆ Imminence - day, week, month, after event X, etc.
- ◆ Target - single, multiple, organizational; family, co-workers, others
- ◆ Nature - affective vs. predatory/targeted

Douglas, K. S., & Ogloff, J. R. (2003). Multiple facets of risk for violence: The impact of judgmental specificity on structured decisions about violence risk. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 2(1), 19-34.

## **ASIS/SHRM WPVI.1-2011**

- ◆ Released on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 after a four year, multi-disciplinary development effort.
- ◆ Purpose: Establish an American National Standard (ANSI) for workplace violence prevention and intervention.
- ◆ Provides new definitions (e.g. violence risk screening), as well as creating a standard for everything from how you plan a program to involving law enforcement.

# Major Areas of Coverage

- ◆ Establishing Multidisciplinary Involvement
- ◆ Planning a Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention Program
- ◆ Implementing the Program
- ◆ Threat Response and Incident Management
- ◆ The Role of Law Enforcement
- ◆ Post Incident Management
- ◆ Integrating the Issue of Intimate Partner Violence into Workplace Violence Prevention Strategies

# Several New Items of Specific Interest

- ◆ 5.2.5: Union Leaders are encouraged to actively participate in prevention and intervention efforts
- ◆ 5.2.6: Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) are mentioned as possible violence risk *screeners*, but only with specialized training
- ◆ 6.2.1: Policy should be a “No Threats, No Violence” policy, not a “Zero-Tolerance” policy
- ◆ 6.2.2.1: Process should have access to outside experts in the area of violence risk assessment, law, and security
- ◆ 6.2.7: Process should include a system of centralized record keeping for both recording and tracking of cases.
- ◆ 8.7: “...when formal violence risk assessment is warranted, the organization should engage an external threat assessment professional to assist...”
- ◆ 8.10.2: “Studies show that once violence begins, actions with the greatest impact on outcome will be taken by persons already at the scene, before law enforcement arrives. For that reason, emergency responders should be considered as merely one element of a broader violence response plan.”

# Several New Items of Specific Interest

## 8.3.1 The Incident Management Process in Non-Urgent or Non-Emergency Situations

If a reported situation does not appear to present an immediate threat to physical safety, the Incident Management process should include the following components:

- a) Conduct an initial gathering of information from readily-available sources;
- b) Perform a preliminary violence risk screening, based on information known at the time;
- c) Develop a plan for early actions based on the initial risk screening;
- d) Conduct a deeper, continued investigation and re-evaluate risk based on new information learned;
- e) Implement further needed Incident Management actions, such as a formal violence risk assessment and other needed interventions;
- f) Develop recommendations for appropriate responses to resolve an incident and assist relevant management with implementation;
- g) Perform continued monitoring and follow-up actions as appropriate; and
- h) Debrief to evaluate the effectiveness of Incident Management and identify required process improvement.

# Several New Items of Specific Interest

## 8.4.3 Evaluating Information for the Initial Risk Screening

Once it gathers initial information, the Threat Management Team should conduct a preliminary risk screening with a view towards ascertaining, in a gross or general manner, the urgency presented by the situation in question. The team should consider all information it has gathered consistent with Section 8.4.1 and 8.4.2 above that indicates or mitigates a risk of violence and then assess, from a lay person's perspective:

- a) Is a concern for violence unwarranted, so that the incident can be handled (when involving an employee) within normal human resources, disciplinary, or employee relations protocols, as opposed to by the Threat Management Team?
- b) Is some concern for violence warranted but not significant or urgent, so that the Team can continue with additional fact-gathering and its Incident Management process?
- c) Is a concern for violence urgent, so that emergency or urgent action should be taken, such as immediate consultation with a violence risk assessment professional or law enforcement?

# Several New Items of Specific Interest

## *8.7 The Importance of Setting Appropriate Limits to Internal Violence Risk Assessment*

Many organizations' Threat Management Teams, through training and accumulated experience, will be adept at screening cases for potential risk and at developing risk mitigation strategies. However, when the Team lacks that training and experience, or when a formal violence risk assessment is warranted, the organization should engage an external threat assessment professional to assist with Incident Management. The Team should acknowledge the limits of its expertise and experience, and obtain external assistance when needed.

Outsourcing a violence risk assessment to a qualified threat assessment professional can enhance the quality of Incident Management; in addition, it can help to mitigate the organization's liability by ensuring that the organization has allowed a qualified person, not the organization's own employees, to assess violence risk.

In selecting an external threat assessment professional, the organization should consider such factors as the person's:

- Education, training, and experience in violence risk assessment, especially in the workplace context;
- Licensing, credentialing, and insurance;
- Reputation;
- Experience in the industry;
- Availability, flexibility;
- Style, approach, and sophistication; and
- General familiarity with relevant criminal, civil, and employment law.

## **Elements of Threat Assessment Team Development**

- ◆ Team mission and purpose- Choosing a scope and emphasis for your team
- ◆ Naming of the team to accurately reflect mission and purpose
- ◆ Team composition, size, and leadership
- ◆ Team functions- forming a team, developing policies and procedures, determining ongoing team functions
- ◆ Common pitfalls and obstacles

(adapted from (Higher Education Mental Health Alliance (HEMHA), 2012)



# Common Potential Obstacles and Weaknesses in Threat Management Teams

- ◆ Different levels of personal commitment to the group process
- ◆ Differing status given to various disciplines and/or team members
- ◆ Subgroup dynamics within the team that reduces cooperation and communication
- ◆ Unequal benefits given to certain team members for participation (i.e. education, promotion metrics, training, etc.)
- ◆ Role confusion, including role of team leader
- ◆ Heavy time commitment for interdisciplinary approach
- ◆ Regular turnover in team members, impacting training, communication, and team bonding
- ◆ Inconsistent application of assessment, intervention, and monitoring processes, including variations in information gathering, use of assessment tools, and applications of intervention methodologies
- ◆ Ineffective and inconsistent communications between team members and between the team and organizational stakeholders

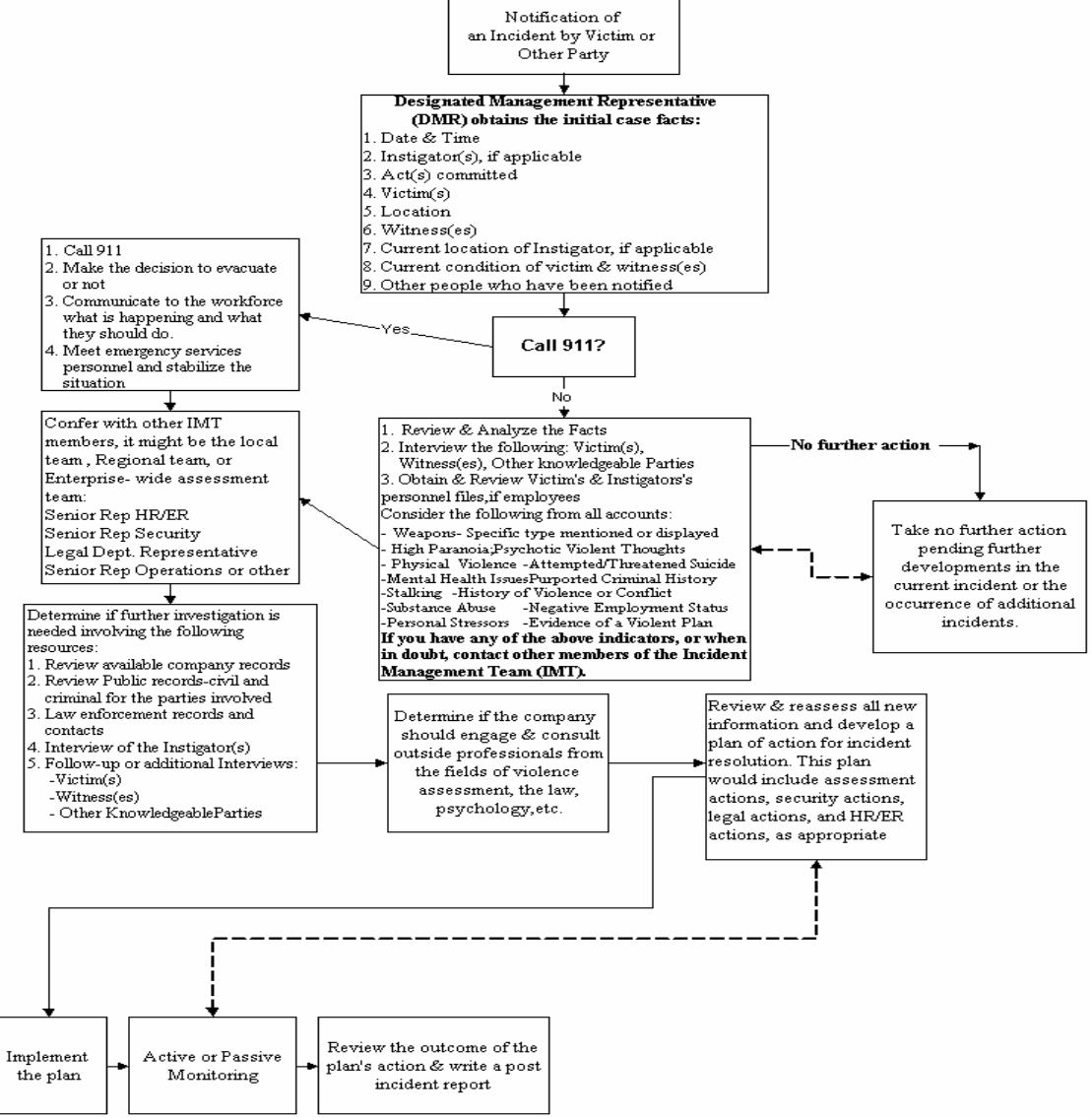
## **Current Types of Relationships which can Cause Concern and Require Assessment**

- ◆ Employee and Employee
- ◆ Employee and Student/Client/Visitor/Claimant
- ◆ Student/Client/Visitor/Claimant and Same on Organizational property
- ◆ Employee and Manager or Supervisor
- ◆ Employee and Supplier or Vendor
- ◆ Employee and Family Member or former Family Member
- ◆ Non-associated individuals who come on school property (e.g. stalkers, criminals, vandals, mentally or emotionally destabilized persons, community members, others, etc.)

**Summary: All relationships with organizational personnel and between parties on property owned or controlled by the organization can be sources of concern and cannot be ignored.**

# Violence Assessment Flow Chart

## Violence Risk Assessment & Resolution Process



2005 Factor One, Inc.

# Policy

- ◆ An essential element in this policy is that all employees are responsible for notifying the designated management representative (DMR) of any threats, or perceived threats, they receive or have perceived. Employees should also notify the management representative if they have been told that another employee has received or perceived threats. Additionally, they should alert the representative when they witness threatening behavior that could be job related, carried out on a company-controlled site, or connected to company employment. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the person who initiated the threat or behavior and the person who was threatened. The emergency phone system should be used to report any threat or perceived threat that has immediate life threatening consequences.

## Policy (Cont.)

- ◆ This policy also requires all individuals who apply for -- or obtain -- a restraining order listing company locations as protected areas, to provide a copy of the petition, temporary restraining order, or permanent restraining order to the designated management representative. (Company) has an obligation to provide a safe workplace and protect employees from threats to their safety, and that cannot be done unless (Company) receives information concerning individuals who have been ordered to maintain a distance from company locations.

# Threat Management Program Hoped for 1<sup>st</sup> Evolution

## Before

- ◆ No Policy
- ◆ Varying Knowledge
- ◆ Role Ambiguity
- ◆ Lack of Reporting
- ◆ No Valid Assessment Process
- ◆ Reactive to Incidents
- ◆ No Monitoring
- ◆ Individual Fragmented Approach
- ◆ Inappropriate Use of Resources
- ◆ Uncertainty & Fear

## After

- ◆ Policy
- ◆ Training & Common Knowledge Base
- ◆ Clear Ownership & Roles
- ◆ Mandatory Reporting
- ◆ Threat Assessment Protocol
- ◆ Proactive Response
- ◆ Case Review & Monitoring
- ◆ Multi-disciplinary Approach
- ◆ Proper Use of Specialists
- ◆ Increased Control & Safety

# Threat Management Team Current Challenges

- ◆ Policy may not reflect current expansion of behaviors (i.e. stalking, cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, connection with sexual harassment, etc.)
- ◆ Updating knowledge, given the explosion in the empirical literature involving violence risk assessment, intervention, and legal decisions
- ◆ Stability of team membership
- ◆ Role re-examination & cross-training for unifying team methodology
- ◆ Frequently meeting and interacting to maintain relationships, share new information, and decrease the tendency to defer responsibilities to others or develop sub-groups
- ◆ Maintaining team authority to act independently, using appropriate resources of the organization
- ◆ Continuous adherence to an agreed upon assessment process, requiring adequate information gathering (inside and outside the organization), full sharing of the information with all team members, individual assessment before team analysis, and use of a valid and appropriate assessment tool
- ◆ Maintenance of intervention tools including current knowledge of employee benefits programs; strong relationships with community resources (i.e. mental health, law enforcement, victim services, courts, etc.); current understanding of the relevant civil and criminal laws, restraining order procedures, regulations, standards, etc.; interviewing skills; and current security hardware and new methodology
- ◆ Maintenance of adequate case monitoring (i.e. frequency of checking for new behavior, documentation and communication of new behavior to the team, reassessment of new information, application of appropriate additional interventions)
- ◆ Centralized record keeping, possibly separate from all other organizational systems; with multi-point access, monitoring of assignments and results, notification of changes; encrypted and accessible on multiple platforms and devices

# Threat Management Program Actual Evolution

## Current

- ◆ Policies, but fragmented in many organizations
- ◆ Multi-disciplinary approach, but various teams and team compositions per organization; rarely are all members fully engaged and participating
- ◆ Common, expanded, knowledge base- but varying levels of knowledge improvement
- ◆ Clearer roles, but differing levels of engagement in the process
- ◆ Mandatory reporting expectations, but not consistent
- ◆ Various degrees of reactivity to incidents
- ◆ Valid assessment processes, but various degrees of use, primarily at the low use end
- ◆ More appropriate use of intervention resources, but with wide variations of engagement of outside expertise and community resources
- ◆ Monitoring, but of various durations and with varying effectiveness

## Future Areas of Continual Improvement

- ◆ Policies that continue to evolve to address emerging violence risks
- ◆ Granting of team budget and organizational support and control for case assessment and management
- ◆ Expectation and delivery of proactive response
- ◆ Multi-disciplinary approaches with a strong, committed, leadership and member commitment to full participation, and collaboration, including full information review and individual analysis
- ◆ Cross-training for all members for a more comprehensive insight into all roles
- ◆ Connecting behavioral reporting to performance and promotion metrics
- ◆ Increasing adherence to empirically based violence risk assessment methodology, appropriately validated- if available
- ◆ Expanded intervention options, including enhanced community coordination
- ◆ More consistent case monitoring with better case documentation and case change communications to team members



# Violence Assessment/Management Reading List

- ◆ *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman: Bantam Books, 1995
- ◆ *On Killing*, Lt. Col. Dave Grossman: Little, Brown, and Company (Back Bay Books), 1996
- ◆ *Contemporary Threat Management: A Practical Guide for Identifying, Assessing and Managing Individuals of Violent Intent*, Frederick S. Calhoun & Stephen W. Weston, Specialized Training Services, 2003
- ◆ *International handbook of threat assessment*. (2014) (J. R. Meloy & J. Hoffman, Eds.). NY, NY: Oxford University Press
- ◆ *The Psychology of Stalking: Clinical and Forensic Perspectives*: Edited by J. Reid Meloy, Academic Press, 1998
- ◆ *Managing clinical risk: A guide to effective practice*. (2013) (C. Logan & L. Johnstone, Eds.). *Issues in forensic psychology*. New York, New York: Routledge.
- ◆ *Snakes in Suits: When Psychopaths Go to Work*, Dr. Paul Babiak & Dr. Robert D. Hare, Regan Books (Harper Collins), 2006
- ◆ *Violence Assessment and Intervention: The Practitioner's Handbook-2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, by James S. Cawood, CPP and Michael H. Corcoran, Ph.D., CRC Press, 2009

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