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Threat Assessment Glossary

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Threat Assessment Glossary

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This document represents the joint work efforts to date of a work group from the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals in partnership with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center. (©Association of Threat Assessment Professionals; CRC Press, A Taylor Francis Group; University of Nebraska Public Policy Center.) The definition of those terms without a specific source reference is based on the common usage in the field of threat management.

Threat Assessment Glossary

Administrative Action

A threat management intervention involving the use of disciplinary action within an organization or structure to manage problem individuals (e.g., firing, withholding services, suspension, barring from a particular location or activity; Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Affective Violence

Affective violence, sometimes called impulsive, emotional or reactive violence, is an unplanned act of violence that occurs in response to a perceived threat in the immediate environment (Meloy, 2006).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 established comprehensive legislation covering civil rights for people with disabilities. It is published in the United States Code and is often referred to by the titles and chapters of the code that contain the law. More information about the ADA is available at http://www.ada.gov

Anchors

Anchors are factors that provide stability; in threat assessment, anchors could be used to provide support or stability to a subject who is struggling or represent reasons that an individual would not engage in targeted violence (de Becker, 1997).

Approach Behavior

This refers to the type, frequency and intensity of the subject's attempts to be physically proximal (close) to the target. Approach behavior includes successful and unsuccessful attempts to approach the target.

Arrest

An arrest can be a threat management intervention. It is the act of detaining someone in legal custody, usually bya law enforcement officer. The actual deprivation of a person's liberty can be physical detention for a short or prolonged period of time in response to a criminal charge. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011)

Attack

Carrying out (or attempting to carry out) the intended violence against the target (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Attack Related Behaviors

Specific behaviors that are needed in order to launch a physical assault on a target. These behaviors are displayed as steps on the pathway to violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Behavioral Indicator

An observable action that provides evidence of an underlying element that may be relevant to a threat assessment and management case; for example, a subject's actions (e.g., talking to himself or herself) might lead the threat assessor to believe the person has a mental health disorder that influences the level of threat posed by that individual (Bulling et al., 2008).

Behavioral Threat Assessment

Threat assessment orientation based on the idea that the subject will exhibit identifiable behaviors indicating the intent to commit an act of targeted of violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Behaviors of Concern

Behaviors of concern are the observable, identifiable behaviors that an individual exhibits while he or she is progressing on the pathway of violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Black Swan Event

An event that is rare, predictable only in retrospect, with extreme impacts (Meloy, 2011; Talib, 2007).

Breach

The word breach is commonly used when referring to a gap or break. In threat assessment contexts, this commonly refers to a situation where usual security measures have been circumvented (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Bunkers

The use of the term "bunker" is linked to the common use of the phrase "bunker mentality," in which an individual or group becomes defensive and surrounded by fortifications (real and virtual) to keep information in or detractors out. Adopting a bunker mentality in threat assessment can lead to under- or overestimation of risk (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Case Dynamics

The continuous interaction between what is known and unknown in a particular case, and the evolving assessments used to determine the appropriate protective response at any given point in time (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Chain of Custody

This is a process used to document the chronological history of evidence to maintain the security, integrity and accountability of its handling.

CirCon Factors

"CirCon" is an acronym for "circumstances, content and contextual factors" related to a subject's inappropriate communication or contact (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Civil Action

Civil actions are orders issued by a court to convince the subject to stop threatening behaviors or stay away from the target and are periodically employed as a threat management intervention (e.g., restraining, stay-away, protective orders) (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Code of Ethics

Refers to the ethical code developed by the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals outlining appropriate behavior and decision making in threat assessment and management (Association of Threat Assessment Professionals, 2010).

Cognition

The simplest definition of cognition is thinking; in more complex terms, it is the processes in the human mind involved in acquisition, storage, retrieval and processing of information. Individuals with poor cognition may have difficulty visualizing alternatives to violence and receiving assistance for grievances.

Cognitive Complexity

This is a psychological construct that refers to a person's ability to perceive nuances or subtle differences. A person who has high cognitive complexity is sensitive to small changes in a task, activity, behavior or the environment; someone with low cognitive complexity is less likely to detect these differences. Sometimes this is referred to as intuition or street smarts. A person may have high cognitive complexity but little formal education (Scott, 1962).

Communication Channels

The media used to transmit messages are referred to as "communication channels." Threat assessment uses this phrase when referring to the ways that information about threatening individuals can be gained by threat assessment teams (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to the process of safeguarding sensitive information, usually involving case intelligence or personal information. Confidentiality is sometimes framed as an individual's right to have his or her personal information kept private.

Content Factors

The information contained and conveyed in the words, style and method of a threat (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Contextual Factors

Sometimes referred to as situational factors. In threat assessment, the context refers to the situation and environment surrounding the subject or the target. These can be personal, organizational, or on a larger scale (e.g., economic climate, world news, etc.) (Scalora & Bulling, 2007).

Credible Threat

A threat, direct or veiled, that is thought to be real, not just hypothetical. One test of whether a threat is credible is the ability and intent of the entity posing the threat (de Becker, 1997).

Criminal Intelligence

This phrase refers to any information which is collected, analyzed, or distributed for use in inhibiting or monitoring criminal activity (International Association of Chiefs of Police National Law Enforcement Policy Center, 1998).

Cultural Competence

Organizationally, this is a set of behaviors, attitudes, and policies that make it possible for people to work effectively across cultures. In threat assessment, it is having knowledge of culture differences and the ability to foresee how those differences may impact the investigation, analysis, or management of a case (US Department of Health & Human Service, 2005).

Directly Communicated Threat

This is an unambiguous statement of threat to either the target or law enforcement detailing intention to commit an act of targeted violence (Meloy, 2011).

Domino Effect

This phrase is used generally when referring to the cumulative effect an event can have when it initiates a succession of similar events. In threat assessment and management, it is often used to describe the tendency for the loss of one inhibitor to affect other aspects of a subject's life and create a downward spiral where other inhibitors are compromised as well (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Duty to Warn/Protect

Legal directive to mental health professionals in most states: If they have knowledge of a possible act of harm by someone in their care directed at a third party, they are required to act reasonably to protect the potential victim from the threat. This stems from a U.S. Supreme Court decision in the 1970's (*Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California*) that established the professional's duty to provide warning as a way to protect the third party from danger.

Empathy

In mental health, empathy typically means being able to recognize and feel what another is feeling, usually in a therapeutic context. In threat assessment, empathy is often used as a way to build rapport with the target or subject.

Energy Burst

A subject may have what is termed an energy burst as part of the pathway to violence. This is a preattack increase in intensity (frequency and/or duration) or variety of warning behaviors, usually indicating an attack is imminent (Meloy, 2011).

Environmental Influences

The sum of background factors (peer group, security, access to weapons, etc.) affecting the situation of both the subject and the target. This includes organizational or cultural factors that impact tolerance or reporting of behaviors on the pathway to violence (Kiilakoski & Oksanen, 2011).

Evidence Collection

The process of gathering, maintaining, and preserving evidence for use in investigation and prosecution.

Evidence Preservation

Ensuring that evidence is collected and maintained in a proper manner that will preserve the forensic value of the evidence.

Extremist Violence

Violent action for which the impetus of the attack is born out of an ideological system, usually intended to enact some change or disrupt activities deemed unacceptable by followers of that ideology (Gerwehr & Hubbard, 2007).

Fact Finding

Process of acquiring information and evidence (about the target, the subject, contacts, communication, past and present behavior, context) to support accurate and complete assessment of risks and the best way to defuse them (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

FERPA

Acronym for Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. This federal law (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) governs the gathering, maintenance, and accessibility of educational records. Schools need written permission from the student to release educational records to anyone other than the student. Schools may disclose records, without consent, to certain parties under specific conditions, including complying with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, to appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies, and to state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Final act behavior

Prebreach preparations made by the person(s) posing a threat right before the threat is carried out. This can include acts like disseminating reasons for the attack or executing a last will and testament (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Fixation

A fixation is generally an extreme preoccupation with something, be it another person, an activity, or an idea. It can be adaptive in the form of romantic love, parental love, or loyalty, but can also cross into pathology when it involves a grievance, personal cause, or a public figure (Meloy, 2011).

Grievance

A grievance is generally defined as the cause of someone's distress or reason for complaint/resentment; in threat assessment contexts, it takes on additional meaning to include a highly personal meaning for the subject, often fueling a feeling of being wronged and translating into behaviors related to a sense of mission, destiny, loss, or desire for revenge (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

HIPAA

Acronym for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. The HIPAA Privacy Rule requires covered entities to protect individuals' health records and other identifiable health information. Of primary importance to threat assessment professionals are the security, accountability, and confidentiality of medical records covered by this act. The Privacy Rule permits use and disclosure of protected health information, without an individual's authorization or permission, for national priority purposes to law enforcement officials under specific circumstances (See 45 C.F.R. § 164.512). Disclosure must also be made to someone believed to be able to prevent or lessen a threat or to law enforcement if the information is needed to identify or apprehend an escapee or violent criminal.

Howlers (AKA Barkers)

Howlers are individual who, though they have inappropriate, bizarre or threatening contact with the target, never intend on following a path to violence (Calhoun, 1998; Calhoun & Weston, 2003, 2009).

Howler Types (Calhoun & Weston, 2009):

Binder Howlers

Individuals who threaten to facilitate a personal relationship with the target.

Celebrity-seeking Howlers

Individuals who are motivated to threaten individuals because of their high public profile.

Controller Howlers

Individuals who threaten as means of control over the target, usually a partner or family member.

Copycat Howlers

Individuals who threaten as a reaction to other threats or reports of violence.

Crusader Howlers

Individuals who threaten as a means to further a personal cause.

Deluded Howlers

Individuals who threaten as a result of delusional relationship (or potential relationship) with the target.

Delusional Howlers

Individuals for whom delusional content plays a direct role in their threats.

Dirty-trickster Howlers

Individuals who threaten in order to implicate a third party as the perpetrator of the threats.

Habitual Howlers

Individuals who make threats on a continual basis, much like a hobby.

Impersonal Howlers

Individuals who threaten someone they do not know.

Intimidator Howlers

Individuals who threaten as a way of intimidating the target, who is typically a member of one of their social circles (e.g. supervisor, coworker, teacher, classmate).

Maintainer Howlers

Individuals who threaten as an attempt to continue a relationship that the target wishes to end.

Personal Howlers

Individuals who threaten someone they know.

Seeker Howlers

Individuals who threaten as a means to establish an intimate relationship with the target, even when the target has repeatedly rebuffed them.

Self-defender Howlers

Individuals who threaten as a defensive reaction to a perceived threat or attack from the target.

Sinister Howlers

Individuals who threaten in order to scare the target.

Human-on-Human Violence

Deliberate actions taken by a human against another human with the intention of causing harm.

Hunters (AKA Biters)

Hunters are individuals who intend to follow a path toward violence and behave in ways to further that goal (Calhoun, 1998; Calhoun & Weston, 2003, 2009).

Ideation

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines ideation as "the capacity for or the act of forming or entertaining ideas." In threat assessment contexts, this term takes on the added meaning of entertaining ideas specific to the utility and acceptability of violence as a means to address the subject's particular grievance (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Identification

Thoughts of the necessity and utility of violence by a subject that are made evident through behaviors such as researching previous attackers and collecting, practicing, and fantasizing about weapons (Meloy, 2011).

Impromptu Violence

This is an act of spontaneous violence often sparked by situational or contextual triggers (Calhoun & Weston, 2003, 2009).

Inappropriate Communication or Contact

Contact or communication with the target that is unwanted and intended by the subject to further the motives behind the threatening behavior. Contact can be written, verbal, or behavioral in nature and delivered in a variety of ways. These may be perceived by the target as intimidation, harassment, threatening, or out of context (abbreviated as IC&C) (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Information Analysis

Careful consideration of converging evidence in a case to ascertain the level of threat posed and progress toward violence.

Information Gathering

Process of obtaining information from all available sources to inform the analysis and decision making in a threat assessment (Fein & Vossekuil, 1998).

Information Sharing

Facilitation of the flow of information among entities responsible for a case so that all parties have access to current, relevant information on which to base decision making (Department of Defense, 2007).

Information Silos

Information that is not shared across disciplines or agencies is sometimes referred to as being in a silo. The word silo originates from the towers or pits used to store grain. The term is also used to refer to information or knowledge that is kept separate, is tightly controlled, and is not shared. When information about a threat or potentially threatening situation is not shared appropriately it can inhibit attempts to assess or manage it (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Inhibitors

In threat assessment, this is anything that serves to decrease the likelihood that a subject's behavior will escalate to an act of targeted violence (e.g., familial bonds, strong friendships, or employment); sometimes referred to as buffers (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Insider threat

An individual with access to a facility or organization who uses that access to disrupt or cause harm to the organization or others involved with that organization (Cappelli, 2005).

Intended Violence

Violent acts that meet the following criteria: intent to commit the act; selecting an attack mode that ensures injury, death, or property damage; and a motive that does not profit the attacker (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Interrogation

Purposeful questioning of a subject to obtain accurate, useful, and timely information relevant to an investigation (Boetig & Bellmer, 2008).

Intervention

An action or process that has the effect of modifying behavior, thinking, or emotions. In threat assessment, an intervention is the action taken in implementation of a threat management strategy (e.g., interviewing, monitoring, etc.) (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Intervention/Inhibitor dichotomy

Disciplinary actions toward a subject are often required in threat management to ensure a target's safety; however, confrontational interventions can also negatively affect a subject's well-being. The relationship between the target's safety and the subject's well-being can be described as a dichotomy in some situations because each impacts the other and often suggest different threat management decisions. Both should be considered and continuously assessed after intervention (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Intervention Synergy

The case dynamic intensified by the stimulus of what the threat manager or target does or does not do in response to the threat situations (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Intervention Vectors

Similar in concept to intervention strategies, this is the range of levels of confrontation with the subject of a threat management case (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Interview Approaches

Strategies to engage a subject in the interview in order to elicit information (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Interview Strategy

Plan for the goals and approaches to an interview (e.g., deciding what information will be sought, how the subject will be redirected, where the interview will take place, etc.) (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Intimacy

Real or perceived close personal relationship, sometimes accompanied by physical or sexual contact (Jenkins, 2009).

Intimacy Effect

The closer the interpersonal relationship (degree of intimacy) between the threatener (subject) and the threatened (target), the greater is the likelihood of threats being carried out. This intimacy is based upon the subject's perception of the relationship, which may be delusional and completely unknown to the target (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Investigation

This is an active process of seeking out and finding information relevant to a threat assessment case.

Investigative Interview

Any verbal interaction between a law enforcement officer and a civilian for which the purpose is gathering information (Boetig & Bellmer, 2008).

JACA

JACA is an acronym for justification – alternatives – consequences – ability. This acronym suggests four questions that can help determine level of threat posed by a subject: J: Does the person feel justified in using violent means? A: Does the subject perceive that he or she has alternatives to rectify the grievance? C: How salient are the consequences of this activity to the subject? A: Does the subject believe that he or she has the ability to carry out the intended violence (de Becker, 1997)?

Last Resort

The subject's decision to end his or her life can lead to an act of targeted violence as a means of attaining fame or martyrdom in addition to their suicide attempt (Meloy, 2011).

Leakage

Leakage is an accidental or gradual escape. In threat assessment it is used to describe when a subject shares information with a third party that reveals clues related to his or her thinking, planning, or execution of an act of targeted violence (O'Toole, 2000).

Liability

Legal responsibility or obligation related to professional actions or inactions.

Mental Health Commitment

Sometimes referred to as civil commitment, this is a legal action that forces an individual into mental health care. Jurisdictions differ in the legal definitions and criteria for commitment, but generally two criteria must be met: (1) the person must have a mental disorder and (2) the mental disorder contributes to dangerousness that the subject exhibits by actions or threats to himself or herself (suicide or inability to care for self) or others (homicidal or actively threatening harm to another person).

Mental illnesses

Mood Disorders

Disorders that include prolonged excessive emotion. Threat assessors should be aware that symptoms can include clouded judgment along with other symptoms:

Depression

Depression can be a major mental disorder or a short term, reactive state. A major depressive episode includes symptoms that occur over two weeks or more. Symptoms of depression include sadness, loss of interest/pleasure, sleep disturbance, weight change, psychomotor disturbance, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness, cognitive disturbance, and recurring thoughts of death. Suicide is associated with major depression and is of great concern to threat assessors.

Mania

Clinically, mania is a period in which an individual experiences elevated, expanded, or irritable mood and grandiosity; decreased sleep; increase in verbal communication; distractibility; increase in activity or psychomotor agitation; and excessive involvement in pleasurable activities.

- ***Personality Disorders***

  Mental disorders characterized by unhealthy patterns or thinking and behavior. There are several types of personality disorder, but three symptoms are of most concern to threat assessors:

Borderline

Often characterized by desperate attempts to avoid abandonment (real or perceived), a pattern of frequent, unstable relationships, unstable self-image, impulsive behavior across multiple domains (including, sexual activity, spending money, substance abuse, driving recklessly, eating dysfunction) (American Psychiatric association [APA], 2000; Meloy, 2001).

Narcissistic

Clinically characterized as having a grandiose sense of importance; a belief in being special or unique, fantasies of excessive intelligence, power, beauty, wealth etc.; sense of entitlement; exploitative of those around them; need for admiration; arrogance; envious of others or believes that they are envious; lacking in empathy; and arrogance or superior attitude/behavior (APA, 2000; Meloy, 2001).

Paranoid

Unwarranted suspicion that others are harming them in some way, questioning of loyalty of those around them, bearing of grudges, reluctance to trust or confide in others for fear of exploitation, and perceiving of threats or sleights when none are present (APA, 2000; Meloy, 2001).

- ***Thought Disorders***

  Mental disorders that include a variety of symptoms related to a disruption in the ability to communicate or think clearly. Two key symptoms of thought disorders are of concern to threat assessors:

Delusion

A delusion is an incorrect belief that is caused by a thought disturbance; it can be of a number of different types including grandiose, jealous, persecutory, somatic, and erotomanic (APA, 2000).

Hallucination

In clinical terms a hallucination is any sensory experience that is perceived by someone to be occurring externally for which there is no stimulus present. These can take the form of any perceptual experience from any of the five senses (APA, 2000).

Monitoring

Monitoring falls into one of two types, active or passive, delineated as follows:

Active

Threat management interventions that are dynamic and involve real-time observation of a subject's behavior and/or movements through means such as surveillance or wiretapping.

Passive

Threat management interventions that involved the use of nonintensive methods of tracking subject's behavior, such as having a third party report on conduct (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Multidisciplinary Team

A group of professionals from different disciplines assembled to provide their perspectives and expertise in the fulfillment of a function such as threat assessment and management (BusinessDictionary.com, 2011).

Myopic management

Myopia is a difficulty viewing distant things due to nearsightedness. Myopic management refers to the style of management that focuses on short-term goals with immediate payoffs at the expense of strategies with superior but distant payoffs (Mizik, 2010; Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Novel Aggression

In threat assessment, this refers to new acts of violence committed by the subject that are unrelated to his or her planned act of targeted violence (Meloy, 2011).

Opportunistic Violence

These are acts of intended violence involving general or nonspecific selection of victim (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Overt Threat

Threat of a direct nature, describing a possible future act against the target (e.g., I will kill you) (O'Toole, 2000).

Pathway to Violence

A series of sequential steps – from its beginning with a felt grievance, to violent ideation, research and planning, specific preparations for violence, critical breaches of security or other boundaries, to a concluding attack –indicating that an individual is progressing towards an act of targeted violence (Calhoun & Weston, 2003; Fein et al., 2002).

Physical Security

Physical security is the sum of the physical protective measures (e.g., key locks, security guards, security cameras, etc.) designed to detect, mitigate, or eliminate a threat (Reddy et al., 2001).

Predatory Violence

Predatory violence is an act that is planned for by the attacker and does not involve reactive emotional components or an imminent threat to the attacker. It is sometimes referred to as instrumental, premeditated, proactive, or cold-blooded violence (Meloy, 2006).

Preparation

After deciding on a course of action and conducting the necessary background work, the subject must prepare for the actual attack. Behaviors associated with this include acquiring weapons, assembling equipment, arranging transportation, observing significant dates, rehearsing, conducting final act behaviors, or costuming (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Proportionate Responses

The principle of "proportionality" refers to the balance that is struck between achievement of a goal and the cost to achieve it. Legal use of proportionality usually refers to a legal punishment being equivalent to the severity of the crime. Military use of the phrase is often related to use of force in response to aggression. Proportionate responses in threat assessment and management refer to strategies that employ measures comparable to the level of risk presented by the subject (Calhoun & Weston, 2012, Gardam, 1993).

Protective Fact Finding

Process of gathering detailed information surrounding an inappropriate communication or contact, including background on the subject, current behaviors, links to the target, and triggers for the communication. This information is used to create safety plans for the target (Calhoun & Weston, 2006).

Protective Response

Actions taken in response to a criminal act or imminent threat to secure the target and ensure the target's safety (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Psychopathy

In its clinical interpretation, psychopathy is generally conceptualized as a condition in which a specific combination of personality and behavioral factors exist. These factors include a superficiality and charming aspect, unreliability, lack of remorse, insight or affective reaction, dysfunction in interpersonal relationships, antisocial and dangerous/risky behavior, and lack of life planning (Meloy, 2001).

Radicalization

Conversion of a follower of a legitimate belief system to an extremist ideology based on that system, often with the intent of using them to commit or support a future act of violence (Silber & Bhatt, 2007).

Rapport Building

Establishing a sense of connection between the interviewer and the interviewee to facilitate communication and information sharing (Keats, 1993)

Redirection

Technique of refocusing the subject's attention away from the target and toward another person, organization, or activity (e.g., toward the threat assessment professional or law enforcement agency) (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Referral

Process of sending an individual to another professional with the proper expertise to address the particular situation.

Research and Planning

Seeking information about a target to facilitate an attack. This can include any number of dimensions, including surveillance of the target, Internet searches, testing security around the target, and researching methods of attack (Calhoun & Weston, 2003).

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment began in systems engineering. In threat assessment, it is used as a phrase that encompasses a process through which options for decreasing risk are considered along with the potential outcomes associated with their implementation, both positive and negative (Haimes, 2004).

Scope of Practice

Recognizing the limits of knowledge, experience, and capabilities that one possesses and performing only functions within the boundaries of professional training and duties (American Psychological Association, Inc., 2002).

Stalking

A cluster of behaviors, including unwanted communication, approach, or other contact, usually intended to threaten, harass, coerce, or intimidate the target into meeting the demands of the perpetrator (Kopp, Hart & Lyon, 2002). (It is important to review stalking laws in your jurisdiction to ensure you know the legal definition and specific behaviors listed in the law)

Subject Interview

A threat management intervention that involves direct contact with the subject. The subject interview can have many different purposes, including information gathering, refocusing or redirecting the subject, and warning or confronting the subject (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Substance Abuse

A maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as manifested in one (or more) of the following: failure to fulfill obligations (family, work, school, etc.), use of substances in hazardous situations, recurrent substance-related legal troubles, or continued use despite frequent interpersonal difficulties related to this use. In threat contexts, substance abuse often has an impact on the subject's impulse control and may contribute to an erosion of inhibitors.

Surveillance

Actively but unobtrusively observing a subject to gather information about their activities and whereabouts (Webster's New World Law Dictionary, 2010).

Tail Risk

Probabilities of risk at the extreme ends (tails) of a normal distribution. In threat assessment, this pertains because targeted violence has a very low rate of occurrence; however, the risk should not be underestimated based on statistical probability that it will or will not happen (Meloy, 2011).

Take No Further Action at This Time

A deliberate, justified decision to assign a case inactive status (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Target

The general definition of a target is a person, object, or place that is the aim of an attack. In threat assessment and management, it is the point of fixation for intended violence. This can include people, buildings, or more general concepts (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Targeted Violence

Violent incidents involving an identifiable subject (perpetrator) who possesses the intent and potential to cause harm to an identifiable target (Borum, Fein, Vossekuil, & Berglund, 1999; Fein & Vossekuil, 1998; Fein, Vossekuil, & Holden, 1995; Reddy et al., 2001).

Terrorism

Act of violence or threats of violence used to further the agenda of the perpetrator while causing fear and psychological distress (Schmid, 2006).

Third Party Control or Monitoring

Using a reliable third party to exercise control over the subject or unobtrusively monitor his or her behavior (Calhoun & Weston, 2009).

Threat Assessment

A fact-based method of assessment/investigation that focuses on an individual's patterns of thinking and behavior to determine whether, and to what extent, he or she is moving toward an attack on an identifiable target (Borumet al., 1999).

Threat/Control Override

A condition in which the individual believes he or she is not in control of his or her actions, but instead is being commanded by an outside, usually malevolent force (Link & Stueve, 1994).

Threat Management

Managing a subject's behavior through interventions and strategies designed to disrupt or prevent an act of targeted violence.

Threat Management Process

The threat management process is the entirety of the steps taken to identify, assess, and manage a threat assessment case. This includes developing, implementing, and monitoring a thorough plan unique to each subject and situation that includes protective measures for the intended target (Feinet al, 1995, 2002).

Threat Management Strategy

A coordinated plan of direct or indirect interventions with the subject that, based on current information regarding level of threat posed, is designed to defuse the risk in a given situation at a particular point in time.

Threat Management Team

A cross functional, multidisciplinary team approach to assist in assessing threatening situations and developing threat management plans. The team meets regularly and as needed in crisis situations to review potential and active threat cases (Deisinger, Randazzo, O'Neill & Savage, 2008).

Threat Manager

The person who has primary responsibility for initiating, investigating, assessing, and managing threat cases. This person should have experience and training in threat assessment/management before assuming the role of manager (Calhoun & Weston, 2003, 2009).

Triggers

A trigger is an event or action that initiates a response of some type. In threat assessment, a trigger initiates action on the part of the subject, moving him or her along the path to violence. Identifying potential triggers is part of the threat assessment process (Drysdale, Modzeleski, & Simons, 2010).

Types of Targeted Violence

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior in which one intimate partner uses physical violence, coercion, threats, intimidation, isolation, and emotional, sexual, or economic abuse to control the other partner in a relationship (American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence, 1999).

Workplace Violence

Targeted violence, threats, bullying, harassment, intimidation, etc. that occurs in the workplace – by someone within the organization (e.g., disgruntled employee) or outside the organization (may or may not be associated with an employee of the organization) (Rugala, 2004).

- ***Public Figure***

  A target with high public profile, such as a government official, politician, or entertainer.

- ***Organizational***

  An act of violence in which the target is an organization or group, rather than an individual person. Though individuals may be harmed during the act, they are not the primary objective of the attacker.

Veiled Threat

Threat of an indirect nature, vaguely describing the possibility of negative consequences for the target (e.g. "Someday you will get what is coming to you") (O'Toole, 2000).

Venues of Violence

Locations in which violence occurs or could potentially occur, including (but not limited to) workplaces, residences, and schools (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Victim Interview

Interview involving the target of the threatener (subject).

Victim Management

Working with the target to determine what a potential victim knows and needs to know, and how he or she finds out about the subject's behaviors. Providing too much information can unnecessarily cause distress for the victim, while not presenting enough can lead to unsafe situations (OSHA, 2004).

Victim Selection

The process by which a subject focuses on a target for his or her intended violence. This can include specific selection or opportunistic victims that happen to be at the location of an attack or included in some broad group which the subject has a grievance (Calhoun & Weston, 2012).

Violence

An intentional act of harm.

Violence Content

The nature and intensity of violent rhetoric included in inappropriate contacts and communications (Meloy, 2011).

Violence Risk Assessment

A continuous investigative and analytical process of evaluating an individual's probability of committing an act of violence based on personal and situational variables by an individual qualified (through training, experience, or education) to make risk determinations and recommendations for response, management, and mitigation of that risk (Hart, 1998; Rogers, 2000; ASIS International [ASIS] & Society for Human Resources Management [SHRM], 2011).

Violence Risk Factors

Reliable factors that have an established correlation with violent crime (Meloy, 2001).

Violence Risk Screening

A broad determination by a threat management team as to whether individual's behavior shows cause for concern and thus threat management procedures should be initiated (ASIS & SHRM, 2011).

Violent Ideation

The process of forming and entertaining thoughts about violence as an acceptable means to address a grievance (Bruns, Disorbio & Hanks, 2007).

Vulnerability

Vulnerability has many meanings depending on context. According to Homeland Security definitions, it refers to degree to which a target is at risk for attack or disruption; in mental health circles, vulnerability is an innate propensity for a disorder or symptom cluster, which may only manifest given certain triggers. In threat assessment, vulnerability typically is closer to the Homeland Security definition, referring to the target's vulnerability to the subject's violent intent or threats (Department of Homeland Security [United States], 2006).

Watch and Wait

Unobtrusive monitoring of the subject while waiting to see if he or she will take additional actions in relation to the target (Calhoun & Weston, 2009)

Witness Interview

Interview involving a third party, usually to inquire about information concerning threatening behaviors or contacts by the subject, or background information on the subject's past or current behavior or mental status.

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