VIOLENCE THREAT/RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA)
STAGE I REPORT FORM

It is not a Stage I VTRA if there is imminent danger of the threat is time sensitive (e.g. "they said they were coming back to get her with a knife").

In these types of cases,

Call 911

Note:
The following Stage I Report Form is <u>only for the use</u> of Level I and Level II trained professionals in the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response Violence _Threat/Risk Assessment_ (VTRA) Model.

VIOLENCE THREAT/RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA)
STAGE I REPORT FORM
(Data Collection and Immediate Risk Reducing Interventions)

Violence/Threat Making Behaviours (Examples of high-risk behaviours addressed in this protocol include but are not limited to):

- ◦ Serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill
- ◦ Verbal/written threat to kill others ("clear, direct, and plausible")
- ◦ Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) text messaging, threats to kill others (refer to Appendix B of the National Training Protocol for abbreviations commonly used on the Internet and texting)
- ◦ Possession of weapons (including replicas)
- ◦ Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices)
- ◦ Fire setting
- ◦ Sexual intimidation or assault
- ◦ Gang related intimidation and violence

Student: _____ School: _____

DOB: _____ Student Number: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____

Parents/Guardians Name: _____ Date of Incident: _____

Three Primary Hypotheses in VTRA:

One: Is it a conscious or unconscious "Cry for Help"?
Two: Conspiracy of two or more! Who else knows about it? Who else is involved?
Three: Is there any evidence of fluidity?

Pre-Interview Considerations

i) When possible, interview the Threat Maker(s) or Student of Concern **after** initial data has been collected such as locker check, interviewing the individual who reported the threat as well as the police member doing an occurrence check for prior police contacts. This will help to avoid the "uni-dimensional assessment" and provide the interview(er) with data to develop case specific hypotheses and verbatim questions that can be asked in a strategic VTRA interview to test those hypotheses.

ii) There should **never** be more than two people in the room interviewing the Threat Maker or Student of Concern.

iii) Remember to distinguish between **Assessing the Threat** versus **Assessing the Threat Maker**.

Step 1:

School Administrators: Make sure you know the whereabouts of the target(s) and threat maker(s) and address any immediate risk factors if they exist.

- ➢ **If necessary, appropriately monitor and/or detain the student(s) of concern until the police member of the team is present.**
- ➢ **Do not allow "student(s) of interest" access to coats, backpacks, desks, or lockers.**
- ➢ **Determine if the threat maker has immediate access to the means (knife, gun, etc.).**

Step 2:

School Administrators: If appropriate, check the locker, backpack, desk, etc.

Step 3:

Call the "trained" VTRA police member; share initial data and police will determine if a history of weapons possession, use, or violence is noted in police accessible records.

Step 4:

School Administrator will notify the District/Divisional VTRA Team contact of the Stage 1 Team activation.

Step 5:

Principal (V.P.) and VTRA Police member, in collaboration with the counseling member will determine who will strategically interview sources of data including all participants directly and indirectly involved as well as "hard" data collection as outlined below.

Immediate data may be obtained from multiple sources including:

- ➢ **Reporter(s)**
- ➢ **Target(s)**
- ➢ **Witnesses**
- ➢ **Teachers and other school staff (secretaries, teacher assistants, bus drivers, etc.)**
- ➢ **Friends, classmates, acquaintances**
- ➢ **Parents/caregivers (Call both parents)**
- ➢ **Current and *previous* school records (Call the sending school)**
- ➢ **Police record check**
- ➢ **Check the student(s), locker, desk, backpack, recent text books/assignment binders, cars, etc. for data consistent with the threat making or threat-related behaviour.**
- ➢ **Check/Search or question parents/caregivers about the student(s), bedroom, etc.**
- ➢ **Activities: internet histories, diaries, notebooks**
- ➢ **Other**

<u>**Step 6**</u>:

The Semi-Structured Interview Format

Series I Questions (The Incident)
1. Where did the incident happen and when?

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2. How did it come to the interviewee's attention?
3. What was the specific language of the threat, detail of the weapon brandished, or gesture made?
4. Was there stated:
    ◦ **J**ustification for the threat?
    ◦ **M**eans to carry out the threat?
    ◦ **C**onsequences weighed out (I don't care if I live or die!)?
    ◦ **C**onditions that could lower the level of risk (unless you take that Facebook post down I will stick my knife in your throat!)?
5. Who was present and under what circumstance did the incident occur?
6. What was the motivation or perceived cause of the incident?
7. What was the response of the target (if present) at the time of the incident? ***Did they add to or detract from the Justification Process?***
8. What was the response of others who were present at the time of the incident? ***Did they add to or detract from the Justification Process?***

Notes

Series II Questions (Attack-Related Behaviours)

1. Has the student (subject) sought out information consistent with their threat making or threat-related behaviour?
2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intentions to attack a target currently or in the past?
3. Has the student (subject) attempted to gain access to weapons or do they have access to the weapons they have threatened to use?
4. Have they developed a plan and how general or specific is it (time, date, identified target selection, site selection, journal of justifications, maps and floor plans)?
5. Has the student (subject) been engaging in suspicious behavior such as appearing to show an inordinate interest in alarm systems, sprinkler systems, video surveillance in schools or elsewhere, schedules and locations of police or security patrol?
6. Have they engaged in rehearsal behaviours, including packing or brandishing fake but realistic looking weapons, air rifles, pistols, or engaged in fire setting (ie: lighting fire to cardboard tubes cut and taped to look like a pipe bomb, etc.)?
7. Is there any evidence of attack related behaviours in their locker (back pack, car trunk, etc.) at school or bedroom (shed, garage, etc.) at home?
8. Have others been forewarned of a pending attack or told not to come to school because "something big is going to happen"?

Notes

Series III Questions (Threat Maker Typology)

1. Do they appear to be more:
   a) Traditional Predominately Behavioural Type?
   b) Traditional Predominately Cognitive Type?
   c) Mixed Type?
   d) Non-Traditional?
2. Does the threat maker (subject) have a history of violence or threats of violence? If yes, what is their past:
   a) **(HTS)** History of Human Target Selection
   b) **(SS)** History of Site Selection
   c) **(F)**requency of Violence or Threats
   d) **(I)**ntensity of Violence or Threats
   e) **(R)**ecency
3. In the case at hand, what is their current:
   a) **(HTS)** Human Target Selection
   b) **(SS)** Site Selection
   c) Does it denote a significant increase in **BASELINE** Behaviour?

   NOTE: In Stage I VTRA, history of violence is a significant risk enhancer but the best predictor of future violent behavior is an **increase or shift** in **Baseline**. This may also include an individual who has become more withdrawn or quiet as opposed to acting out!
   - Do they have a history of depression or suicidal thinking/behavior?
   - Is there evidence of fluidity in their writings, drawings or verbalizations?
   - Does the threat maker (subject) use drugs or alcohol? Is there evidence it is a risk enhancing factor in the case at hand?
   - Is there a mental health diagnosis or evidence of a mental health diagnosis that may be a risk enhancing factor in the case at hand?

Notes

Series IV Questions (The Target Typology)

- Remember that in some cases the Target is higher risk for violence than the Threat Maker with the most common case being where the Threat Maker is the victim of bullying and the Target is the Bully.

1. Does the target have a history of violence or threats of violence? If yes, what is their past?
2. If yes, what is the frequency, intensity and recency (FIR) of the violence?
3. What has been their past human target selection?
4. What has been their past site selection?
5. Is there evidence the target has instigated the current situation?

Notes

Series V Questions (Peer Dynamics)

1. Are others involved in the incident that may intentionally or unintentionally be contributing to the justification process?
2. Who is in the threat makers (subjects) peer structure and where does the threat maker (subject) fit (i.e.: leader, co-leader, and follower)?
3. Is there a difference between the threat maker's individual baseline and their peer group baseline behavior?
4. Who is in the target's peer structure and where does the target fit (i.e.: leader, co-leader and follower)?
5. Is there a peer who could assist with the plan or obtain the weapons necessary for an attack?

Notes

Series VI Questions (Empty Vessels)

1. Does the student of concern (subject) have a healthy relationship with a mature adult?
2. Does the student have **inordinate knowledge** versus **general knowledge** or interest in violent events, themes, or incidents, including prior school-based attacks?
3. How have they responded to prior violent incidents (local, national, etc.)?
4. What type of violent games, movies, books, music, Internet searches, does the student (subject) fill themselves with?
5. Is there evidence that what they are filling themselves with is influencing their behavior? (**Imitators vs. Innovators**?)
6. What related themes are present in their writings, drawings, etc?
7. Is there evidence of fluidity and/or religiosity?

Notes

Series VII Questions (Contextual Factors)

1. Has the threat maker experienced a recent loss, such as a death of a family member or friend; a recent break-up; rejection by a peer or peer group; been cut from a sports team; received a rejection notice from a college, university, military, etc.?
2. Have their parents just divorced or separated?
3. Are they victims of child abuse and has the abuse been dormant but resurfaced at this time?
4. Are they being initiated into a gang and is it voluntary or forced recruitment?
5. Have they recently had an argument or "fight" with a parent/caregiver or someone close to them?
6. Have they recently been charged with an offence or suspended or expelled from school?
7. Is the place where they have been suspended to likely to increase or decrease their level of risk?

Notes

Series VIII Questions (Family Dynamics)

1. How many homes does the student (subject) reside in (shared custody, goes back and forth from parent to grandparents home)?
2. Is the student (subject) connected to a healthy/mature adult in the home?
3. Who all lives in the family home (full-time and part-time)? Has anyone entered or left the home who may be influencing level of risk?
4. Who seems to be in charge of the family and how often are they around?
5. Has the student engaged in violence or threats of violence towards their siblings or parent(s) caregiver(s)? If so, what form of violence and to whom including Frequency, Intensity, Recency (FIR)?
6. What is the historical baseline at home? What is the current baseline at home? Is there evidence of evolution at home?
7. Are parent(s) or caregiver(s) concerned for their own safety or the safety of their children or others?
8. Does the students level or risk (at home, school, or the community) cycle according to who is in the home (i.e. the student is low risk for violence when his/her father is home but high risk during the times their father travels away from home for work)?
9. Does the student have a history of trauma? Including car accidents, falls, exposed to violence, abuse, etc..
10. Has the student been diagnosed with a DSM IV diagnoses?
11. Is there a history of mental health disorders in the family?
12. Is there a history of drug or alcohol abuse in the family?

Notes

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Step 7:

Notify the Threat Maker(s) and Target(s) Parent(s) or Guardian(s) at the earliest opportunity.

> ➢ Parents/guardians have been notified of the situation and this Stage I data collection phase.
> ➢ Parents/guardians have NOT been notified because: _____
>
> _____

Step 8:

Other Agencies:

As per the formal signed protocol, other agency partners may be involved in the Stage I VTRA process as consultants to the school/police team and sources of initial data relevant to the case at hand such as past or current involvement by other agencies that once they are informed of the initial school/police data may release necessary information or physically join the team.

➢ **Call Children's Services (Child Protection) VTRA Member for record check relevant to the case at hand.**
➢ **Call Mental Health VTRA Member for record check relevant to the case at hand.**
➢ **Call Youth Probation VTRA Member for record check relevant to the case at hand.**
➢ **Others**

Upon receipt of the Stage I data, partner agencies check to see if the student in question is or was a client and then the agency determines if they are in possession of information that in conjunction with the Stage I data requires them to "disclose". General Stage II VTRA Team designates will report that a record check has been completed and:

1) **There is nothing to report.**
2) **There is information relevant to the case that needs to be disclosed as per the VTRA Protocol (significant risk of harm to the health or safety of others is present).**
3) **The risk is not immediate but a Release of Information Form should be requested to allow for a full disclosure of the contents of the file relevant to the case at hand.**

Note:

At this point of the Stage I process, some initial data may not be available to complete this form but enough information is usually available to determine if 1) an immediate risk is posed and 2) if a Stage II evaluation is required.

Step 9:
VTRA Team members collate the data and discuss all relevant information regarding the student. As a team, ask the question: "*To what extent does the student pose a threat to school/student safety*?" "Do they pose a threat to themselves or someone outside the school (i.e. family)?" The Stage I Assessment is an overall assessment of current level of risk and is a precursor to (if necessary) a more comprehensive Stage II Risk Evaluation.

➢ **Low Level of Concern**
    Risk to the target(s), students, staff, and school safety is minimal.
    - Threat is vague and indirect.
    - Categorization of low risk does not imply "no risk" but indicates *the individual* is at little risk for violence.
    - Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail; threat lacks realism.
    - Available information suggests that the person is unlikely to carry out the threat or become violent.
    - Within the general range for typical baseline behavior for the student in question.
    - Monitoring of the matter may be appropriate.

➢ **Medium Level of Concern**
    The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible.
    - Threat is more plausible and concrete than a low level threat. Wording in the threat and information gathered suggests that some thought has been given to how the threat will be carried out (e.g. possible place and time).
    - No clear indication that the student of concern has taken preparatory steps (e.g. weapon, seeking), although there may be an ambiguous or inconclusive references pointing to that possibility. There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty: "I'm serious!".
    - A moderate or lingering concern about the student's potential to act violently.
    - Increase in baseline behaviour.
    - Categorization of risk indicates *the individual* is at an elevated risk for violence, and those measures currently in place or further measures, including monitoring, are required in an effort to manage the individual's future risk.

➢ **High Level of Concern**
    The threat or situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.
    - Threat is specific and *plausible*. There is an identified target. Student has the *capacity* to act on the threat.
    - Information suggests concrete steps have been taken toward acting on threat. For example, information indicates that the student has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance.
    - Information suggests strong concern about the student's potential to act violently.
    - Significant increase in baseline behaviour.
    - Categorization of risk indicates the individual is at a high or imminent risk for violence.
    - Immediate intervention is required to prevent an act of violence from occurring.

*Sources for the above categorizations represent the work of the FBI, Durham Regional Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police Threat Assessment Unit, and the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response.

<u>**Step 10**</u>:

Decide on a Course of Action

Are there risk reducing interventions that need to be put in place immediately?

With the input of <u>*all*</u> Threat Assessment Team members, decide on a course of action. If there is a low to medium level of concern, the student can likely be managed at school with appropriate (increased) supervision.

- ➢ **Low to Medium Level of Concern**
  - • Implement the Intervention Plan (*Most students can be managed at school with interventions*).

- ➢ **Medium to High Level of Concern**
  - • The Threat Assessment Team has determined that a Stage II Threat Assessment is needed.

Step 11:

Develop a Stage I Intervention Plan and Determine if Stage II Risk Evaluation and Longer Term Treatment Planning is Required

Use the following Intervention Plan to address all concerns identified during the Stage I Assessment.

Stage I Intervention Plan (attach additional pages as needed)	
➢ Disciplinary action taken:	
➢ Intended victim warned and/or parents or guardians notified.	
➢ Suicide assessment initiated on:	By:
➢ Contract not to harm self or others created (please attach).	
➢ Alert staff and teachers on a need-to-know basis.	
☐ Daily or ☐ Weekly check-in with (Title/Name):	
➢ Travel card to hold accountable for whereabouts and on-time arrival to destinations.	
➢ Backpack, coat, and other belongings check-in and check-out by:	
➢ Late Arrival and/or Early Dismissal.	
➢ Increased supervision in these settings:	
➢ Modify daily schedule by:	

➢ Behaviour plan (attach a copy to this Threat Assessment).
➢ Identify precipitating/aggravating circumstances, and intervene to alleviate tension. Describe:
➢ Drug and/or alcohol intervention with:
➢ *Referral to IEP team to consider possible Special Education Assessment.*
➢ *If Special Education student, review IEP goals and placement options.*
➢ Review community-based resources and interventions with parents or caretakers.
➢ Obtain permission to share information with community partners such as counsellors and therapists (See District Release of Information Form).
Other Action:

PARENT/GUARDIANS (attach additional pages as needed)
➢ Parents will provide the following supervision and/or intervention:
Parents will:

Monitor this Intervention Plan regularly and modify it as appropriate.

V-TRA Team Members	**Date:** **Signature:**
Principal or Vice-Principal	**Date:** **Signature:**
Clinician	**Date:** **Signature:**
School Liaison Officer (Police)	**Date:** **Signature:**
Other	**Date:** **Signature:**
Other	**Date:** **Signature:**