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Threat Management in Wisconsin Higher Education

Universities of Wisconsin BIT/CARE/TAT Session

February 26, 2026

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Information Security

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Foundational Concepts for Practitioners

- *Topic – Principle – Example**
- Want more?
  - Higher Education Threat Assessment Alliance (HETAA)
  - Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP)
  - Van Ess Visit
- Additional resources
  - NCITE, Operational Components Related to the Development, Implementation, and Sustainability of Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Programs (Sep. 2024)
  - FBI-BAU, *Making Prevention a Reality*
  - "University Policy Support for Threat Assessment: A Case Analysis of Public Higher Education Institutions in One U.S. State", *J. Threat Assessment and Management* (2024).

Program, Practices, Key Questions

1. Need-Authority-Oversight
2. Purpose-Goal-Deliverables
3. Process
4. Assessments*
5. Management

1. Need-Authority-Oversight

Enduring Challenges about Danger, Hindsight

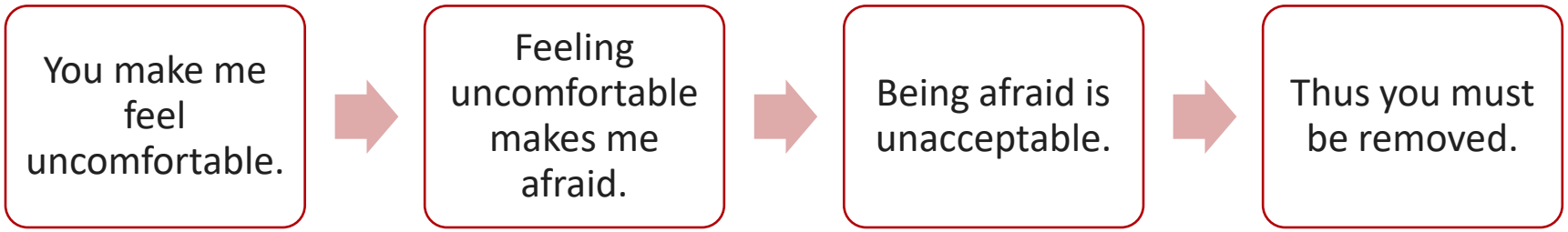
University of Arizona missed chances to stop professor's fatal shooting on campus, review finds

Published March 28, 2023

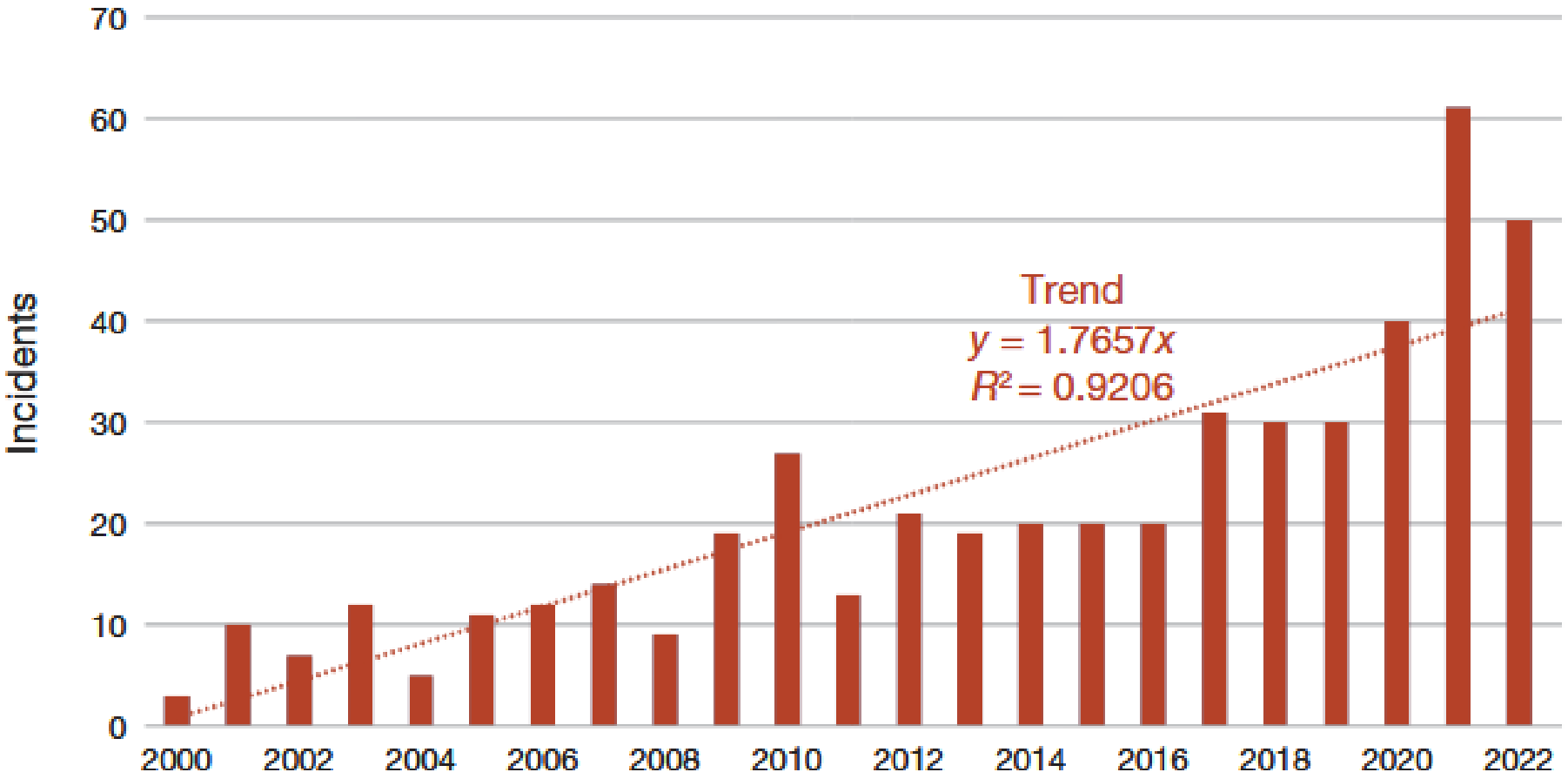
Provost, Police Chief Gone in Wake of Arizona Prof's Murder

University of Arizona Police Department and other parts of the university failed to effectively respond to indications well before the shooting that the ex-student was dangerous.

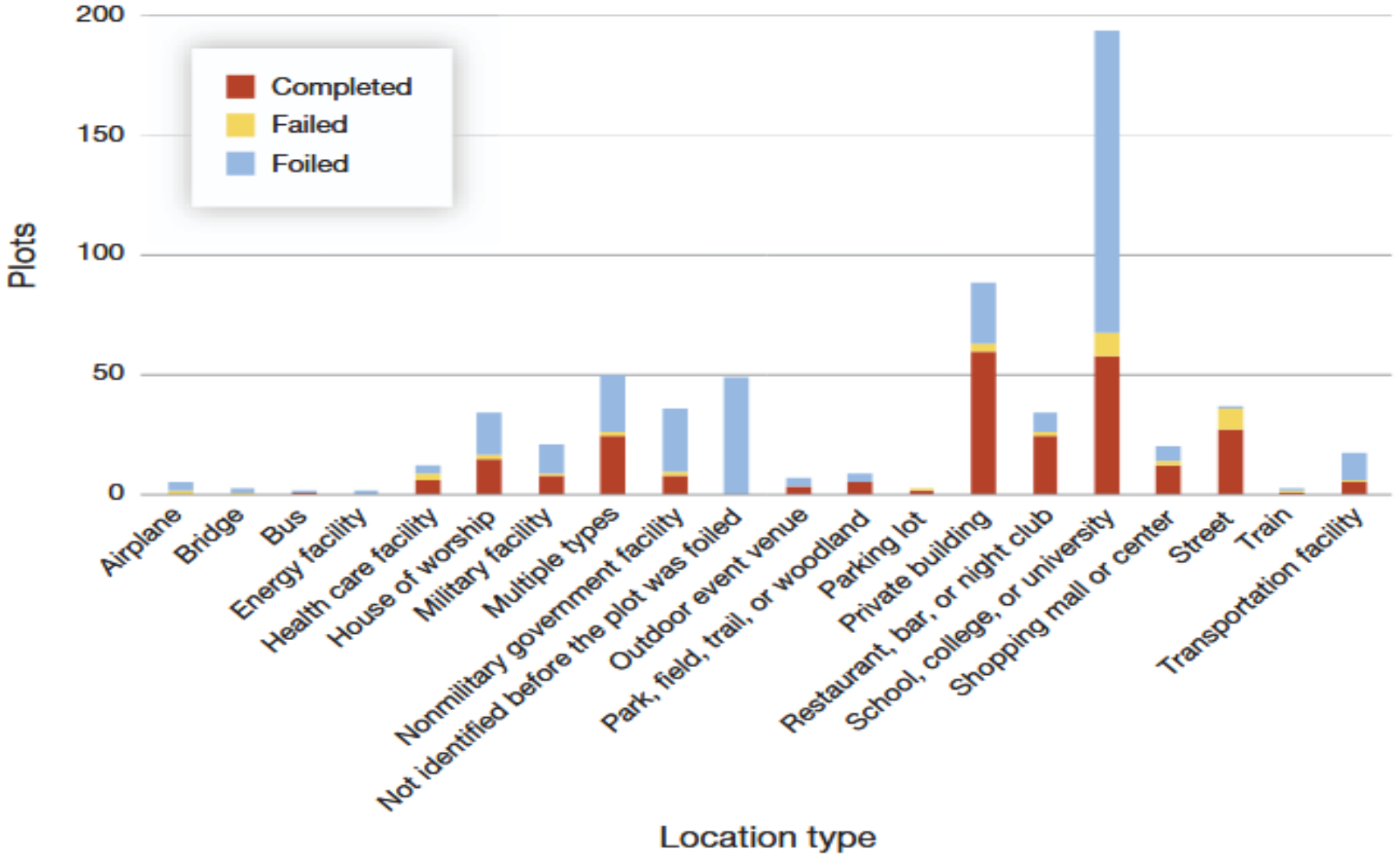
Community Expectations
Dangerous or Uncomfortable?



Active Shooter Incidents since 2000



Mass Attack Plots by Location Type (2002-24)



SOURCE: Derived from data in Hollywood et al., *Mass Attacks Defense Toolkit*.
NOTE: The analysis incorporated all cases ($n = 628$).

Targeted Violence

People don't "snap" – they decide

Any premeditated act of violence directed at a specific individual, group, or location, regardless of motivation

- Preparatory Behavior
- Chance to Prevent

Def: 2024 Department of Homeland Security, NTER TERC.

Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management (BTAM)

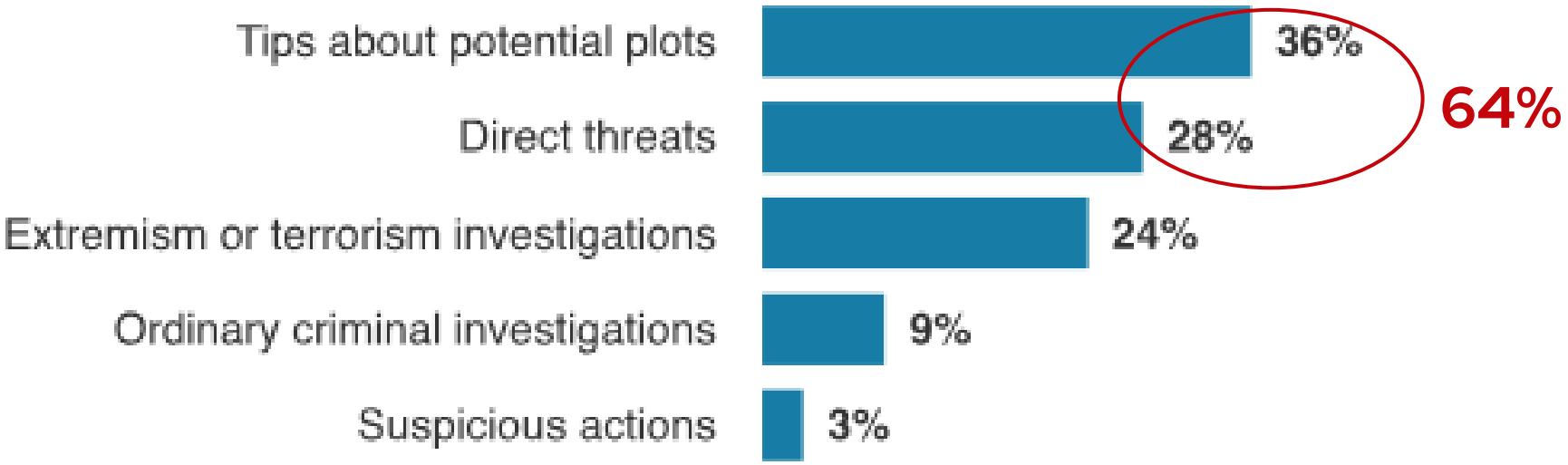
An interrelated process used to determine potential threats.

- Fact- based
- Individual **behavior**
- **Active prevention of targeted violence**



Def: 2024 Department of Homeland Security, NTER TERC.

Foiled Plots from Warning Signs
RAND Data



Plots with **initial warning sign reported** were foiled more than **80%** of time.

Source: RAND, *Mass Attacks Defense Toolkit*, available at https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TLA1613-1/toolkit/prevent/initial-detection/warning-signs.html; Initial Detection, fig. 1 – Warning Signs and Reporting.

"Threats" and "Warning Signs"

Threat: Intent to harm **and** Capability to do

Warning Signs: Motivation **or** Preparation



Source: RAND, *Mass Attacks Defense Toolkit*, available at https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TLA1613-1/toolkit/prevent/initial-detection/warning-signs.html. Findings published in RAND, *Improving the Security of Soft Targets and Crowded Places: A Landscape Assessment* (RAND Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center, 2024).

Multi-Disciplinary Team as Best Practice

Specifics Vary





Source: NCTC, DHS, FBI; TATM toolbox series, 13 FEB 2023

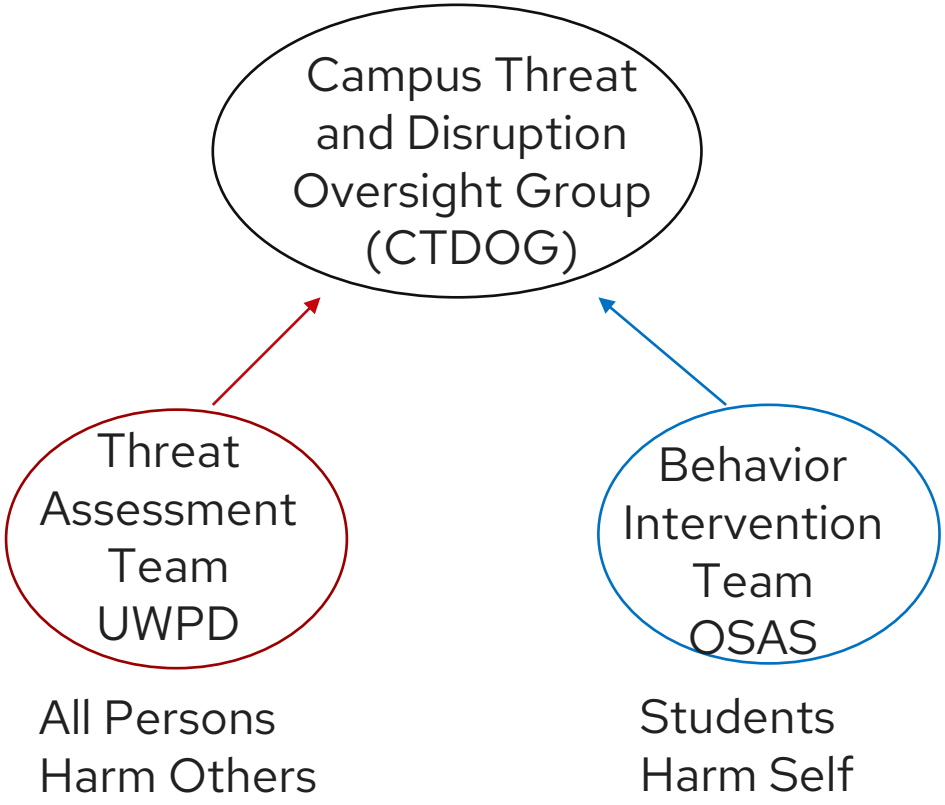
Campuses Vary

Law Enforcement – HR – DoS – Safety Dept.

What is the role of law enforcement on your team?

2. Purpose – Goal - Deliverables

UW-Madison Configuration & Charge (2014)



UW Threat Assessment Team, est. 2014

"Core Team" in accordance with Best Practices

Threat Assessment Team

Student Affairs OSCCS	**Housing University Apartments**	**Housing Residence Life**
Investigative Services UWPD	**University Communications**	**Health Services** UHS
Human Resources OHR	**University Legal** OLA	**Employee Assistance** EAP

Threat Intervention
UWPD

Campus Threat & Disruption Oversight Group

- **University Legal**
- **University Health Services**
- **University Human Resources**
- **Chief of Police**
- **Dean of Students**

Customer Deliverables

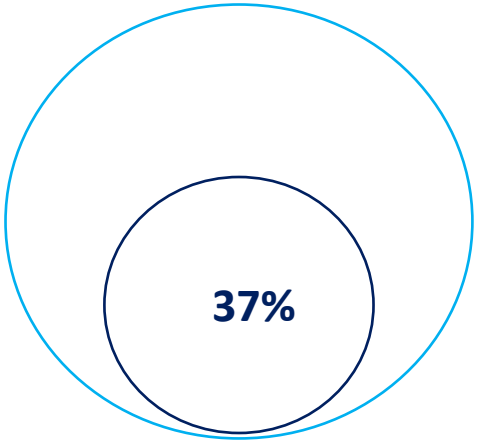
Advise – Assist - Align

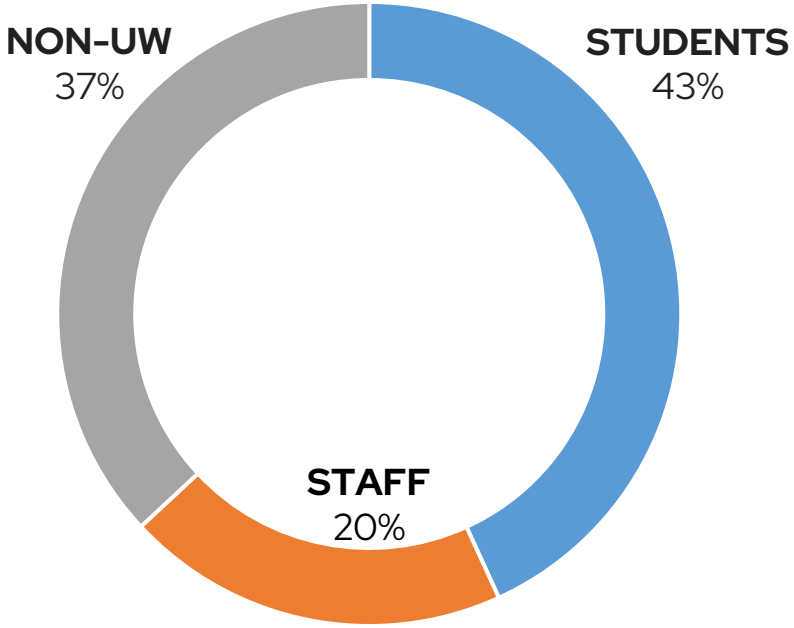
Intake	Assessment	Management
As requested	As justified	As needed

Cases

July 2022- Sept. 2025

- >**390** items reviewed
- > **147** team reviewed





6 weeks average duration in team review.

Data: Sept. 2022 – Sept. 2025

Key questions: is your team the first contact for data?

Process: is it a deliverable?

Structured, Fact-based Steps for Threat Evaluation

- Contact
- Intake
- Research
- Assess
- Manage

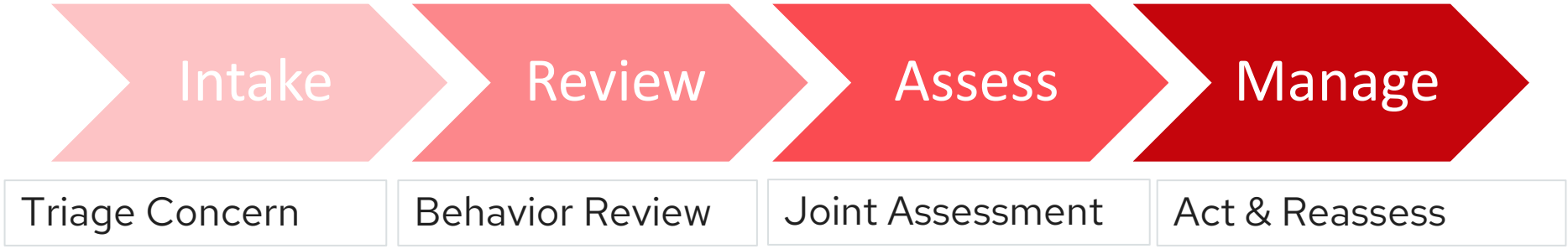
3. Process

Structured, Fact-based Steps for Threat Evaluation

Contact	• Get facts • Articulable concern?
Intake	• Intake databases • SAR/NTER justification?
Research	• Additional databases • Team review?
Assess	• Coordinate info, actions • Danger mitigation plan?
Manage	• Implement, re-assess • Inactive

Four Key Steps to Threat Managment

Should be structured and fact-based.



Key Questions: How do you treat your data?

- Data intake? Existing processes.
- Data Storage? Police server.
- Software? Desirable but unnecessary.
- Data Collaboration? Box files.

Case Management

Subject: Brett Van Ess, UW-Staffer, DOB 01/01/2000

Current Status_

Active – Intake
Active – Monitor
Active – Intervention

Inactive – Referred
Inactive – Halted
Inactive – Info only
Inactive – Long Term Awareness

Threat Concern Assessment:

Low
Moderate
Elevated
High
Imminent

What is an...

Intake

As requested.

Get facts and determine necessary next steps

Contact

Intake | Review | Assess | Manage

Triage Concern | Behavior Review | Joint Assessment | Act & Reassess

1. What happened
2. (How do you know)
3. What concerned about / why now
4. What do you want, ideally?
5. What do you want to happen next?

Articulable behavior that is problematic or concerning

Measuring Behaviors of Concern:

Triage Concern

Measuring Behaviors of Concern:
Intake Triage Research

Intake | Review | Assess | Manage

Triage Concern

Key Question: Do you have justification an authority to proceed, and how is that determined?

What are you measuring?



- Behavior
- Pathway is one guide

What are you measuring?



Primary realm of UW threat assessment

Grievance: Five (5) Common Categories

The formation of a deeply held personal grievance or humiliation based upon **real or imagined** injustices.

- **Revenge** for a **perceived** injury or grievance
- Quest for **justice** (as defined by the offender)
- Desire for **notoriety** or recognition
- Desire to **solve a problem** perceived to be unbearable
- Desire to **kill or be killed**

Source: 2024 Department of Homeland Security, NTER TERC.

How to consider “ideation”?

National Threat Evaluation and Reporting

Fixation

Increasing **preoccupation** or **negative** characterization

Leakage

Third party communication of intent to do harm

National Behaviors of Concern

NTER Behaviors



WI DoJ 1-hour eLearning module, available https://speakup.wisdoj.gov/BTAM-page

National Behaviors of Concern

ISE-SAR and NTER Behaviors

Defined Criminal Activity
Breach/Attempted Intrusion
Misrepresentation
Theft/Loss/Diversion
Sabotage/Tampering/Vandalism
Cyberattack
Expressed or Implied Threat
Aviation Activity
POTENTIAL CRIMINAL OR NON-CRIMINAL ACTIVITY
Eliciting Information
Testing or Probing of Security
Recruiting/Financing
Photography
Observation/Surveillance
Materials Acquisition/Storage
Acquisition of Expertise
Weapons Collection/Discovery
Sector-Specific Incident

	End of Life Planning
	Directly Communicated Threat
	Expressed or Implied Intent To Harm
	Novel Violence/Aggression
	Unusual Acquisition of Weapons or Weapons Expertise
	Fixation
	Interest in Past Attacks
	Preparatory Behavior
	Changes in Behavior
	Deepening Desperation / Despair

4. Assessment

[Assessment]

As justified.

Research and evaluate risk of violence

Measuring Behaviors of Concern:
Research Databases – Law Enforcement

Intake → Review → Assess → Manage

Triage Concern	Behavior Review	Joint Assessment	Act & Reassess

Behavior Review
Criminal history
Driver record
Driver image
DNR
DA Protect – Court Events
DOT vehicle
DOC - WileNet
Social media
nDEX
National offline
External states / locations
Portal 100
LPR
External PD
External County
WSIC/STAC

Assessment Process



Triage Concern | Behavior Review | Joint Assessment* | Act & Reassess

Intervention Efforts

Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) Tools

- Recommended standard for evaluating risk

- Workplace (WAVR-21)
- Law Enforcement (NCBIO)
- Cawood Assessment Grid

Status Categories

Current Status_

Active – Intake
Active – Monitor
Active – Intervention

Inactive – Referred
Inactive – Halted
Inactive – Info only
Inactive – Long Term Awareness

Threat Concern Assessment:

Low
Moderate
Elevated
High
Imminent

Assessment: Considering the totality of circumstances according to the intention and capability to harm, subject is assessed to pose [no – low – medium – elevated – high] threat of targeted violence against university personnel or critical infrastructure.

"Levels of Concern" FBI

One Guide for Assessments

Low	**Concern for future violence is low**. Additional data gathering may be desirable and monitoring for any changes in violence risk factors or warning behaviors may be appropriate.
Moderate	**Violence could possibly occur**, although the situation is not urgent. Violence cannot be ruled out. Monitoring and additional actions are necessary or desirable to further evaluate and respond to the situation to a point of resolution.
Elevated	Person of concern is reaching a critical point on a pathway to violence from which the individual perceives it may be **difficult to turn back**. A threat management team and additional resources should focus on reducing susceptibility to violence and the target's vulnerability, through guidance and enhanced security efforts.
High	**Violence is possible and could occur within the near future** following any precipitating events. Immediate and continuing attention is required from the threat management resources to ensure violence does not occur.
Imminent	**Violence is likely** to occur within hours or weeks and all efforts should focus on locating, containing, and neutralizing the threat of violence.

FBI BTAM, *Making Prevention a Reality*, pp. 85-89; https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/reports-and-publications/making-prevention-a-reality.pdf/view

What about interviews?

Recommended differently. We prefer:

- Direct discussions started by office with primary responsibility.
- Threat director may support other offices with questions or presence.
- Threat director may lead interviews as need.
  - Rapport-based model.

5. Management

Management

As needed.

Efforts to reduce danger.

Assessment Process: Intervene, Reassess

Intake → Review → Assess → Manage

Triage Concern	Behavior Review	Joint Assessment	Act & Reassess

SUBJECT

TARGET

ENVIRONMENT

PRECIPITATING

STEP Management Menu: Example

Subject	Target	Environment	Precipitating Factors
De-escalate, contain, or control the subject who may be violent.	**Decrease vulnerabilities to the target.**	**Modify physical or cultural environment to discourage escalation.**	**Prepare for and mitigate against precipitating events that may trigger adverse reactions.**
1. No more action 2. Watch/wait (monitoring – passive or active) 3. Third Party Monitoring 4. Third Party Intervention 5. Direct interview 6. Admin actions 7. Civil Actions 8. Criminal enforcement 9. Set specific boundaries 10. 100% enforcement	1.Pattern of behavior changed 2.Location changes 3. Privacy management, social media 4.Personal safety planning 5. Cease communications with subject	1. Increased vigilance and target hardening 2. Organizational culture considerations.	1.Address the grievance 2. Dual phase termination or expulsions

Ex: Lines of Effort in General Groupings



1. Facilitate departure from area.
2. Criminal violations.
3. Deliver tools to reduce contact.
4. Limit Access to places, events.
5. Increase awareness to warn about changes.
6. Family engagement for next steps.
7. Support options encouraged.

Reminder 1:
External resources

- Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigation
  - Threat Analysis Unit
  - Regional Offices
  - Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center (WSIC) & online suspicious activity reporting
- FBI JTTF
- County threat assessment teams
- Other universities?

Reminder 2:
Remember your Purpose

Intent to harm x Capability to do so

Expressed violence as solution to problem

Weapons (firearms)

Both required to be a threat

Communicating with Customers

- Tell what did
- Tell how measured behavior
- Tell what will do next
- Tell what they can do next
- Remind about options

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"threat brett"

THANK YOU