National Association
for Behavioral Intervention
and Threat Assessment

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

SIVRA Training and Certification Course

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Agenda

1. Introduction
   - Determining the Need for a VRA
   - VRA Process
   - VRA Components
2. Conducting an Effective Interview
   - Preparing for the Interview
   - Rapport Building and Active Listening
   - Collecting Information
   - Assessing Credibility
   - Mitigating Bias
3. Using the SIVRA
   - SIVRA Tool and Application Rules
   - Using Assessment Results for Interventions
   - Case Study Application

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Introduction

NOTE: Dangerousness and violence, from a student, faculty or staff member is difficult, if not impossible to accurately predict.

This training topic offers research-based techniques and theories to provide a foundational understanding and improved awareness of the potential risk.

The training or tool should not be seen as a guarantee or offer any assurance that violence will be prevented.

The following cases will be discussed for teaching purposes:
- Isla Vista, California (2014)
- Oxford High School, (2021: Oxford Township, Michigan)
- Columbine High School (1999: Columbine, Colorado)
- Virginia Tech (2007: Blacksburg, Virginia)

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Introduction

This presentation contains graphic language and imagery

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Determining the Need for a Violence Risk Assessment (VRA)

- Three-Phase Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) Process
- Assessment Types
- VRA Process Overview
- Mandating the Assessment

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Three-Phase BIT Process

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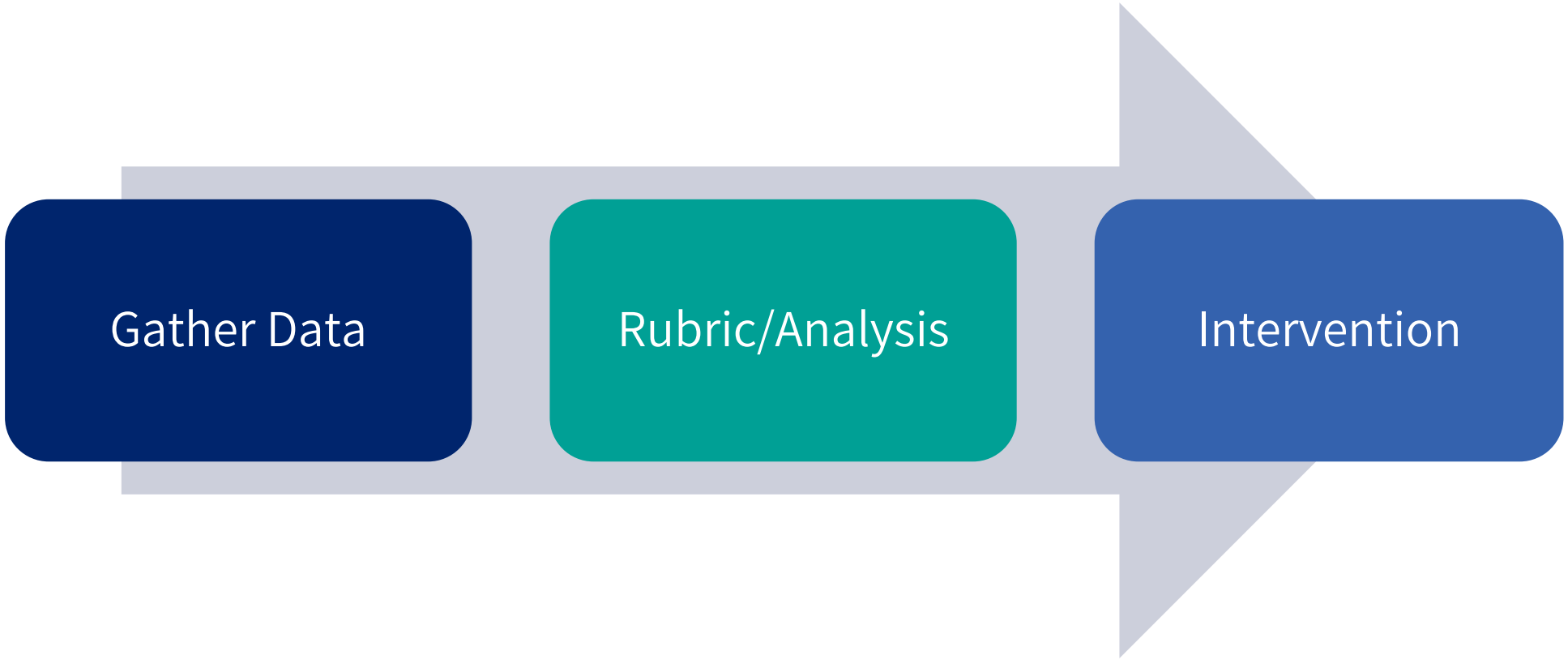
BIT Process



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BIT Process

Gather Data

- Train campus community on indicators of distress, crisis, and threat
- Create a centralized process for referring concerns
- Establish a team for regularly reviewing referrals

Rubric/Analysis

- Train team to use an objective rubric to triage referrals and determine level of risk
- In cases of higher risk or threatening behavior, conduct a violence risk assessment

Intervention

- Interventions respond to risk level
- Connect to resources to address distress or risk
- Restrict means and engage in safety planning
- Skill building (e.g., conflict management, emotion regulation, softening points of view)

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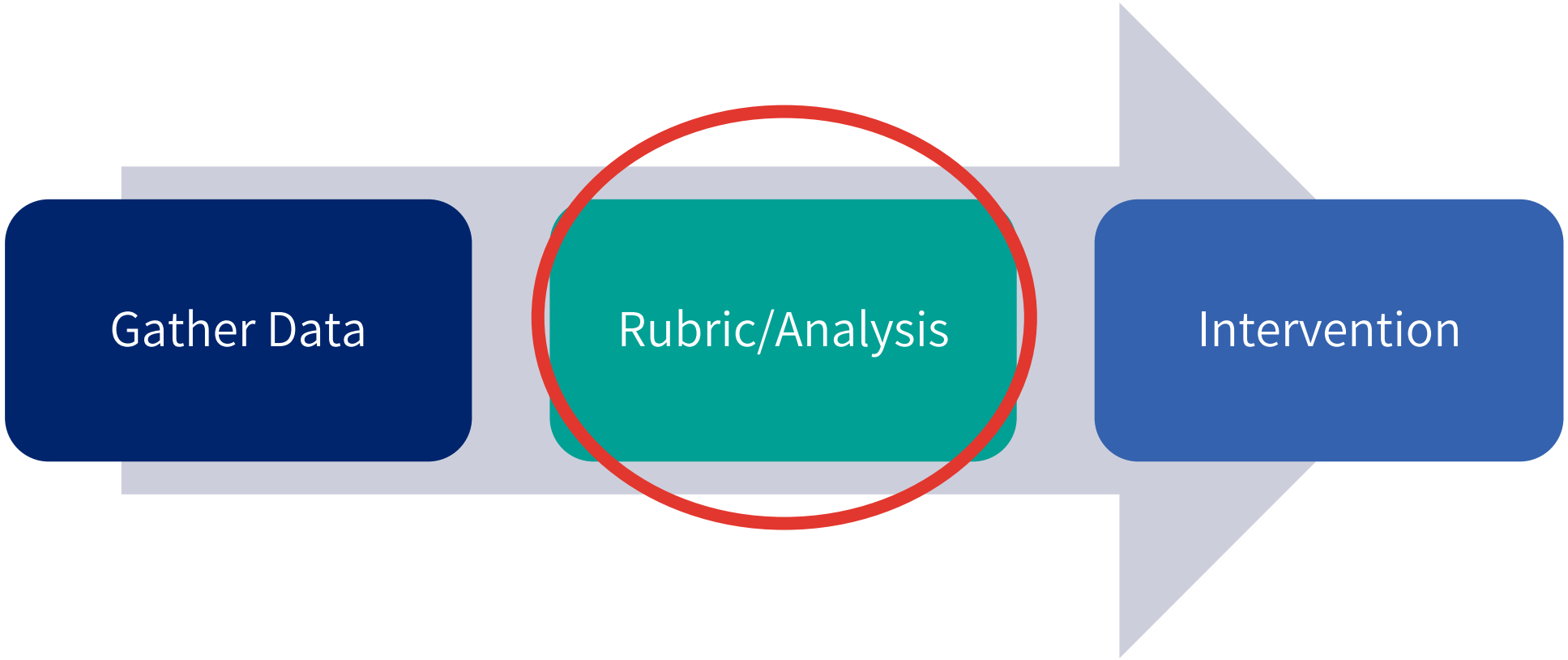
BIT Process: Rubric/Analysis



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Objective Risk Rubric

- **10x** NABITA Risk Rubric
- **25x** Violence Risk Assessment of the Written Word (VRAWW)
- **50x** Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA) **or**
  Non-clinical Assessment of Suicide (NAS)

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NABITA RISK RUBRIC

D-SCALE: LIFE STRESS AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

DECOMPENSATING

- ▲ Behavior is actively dangerous and potentially lethal
- ▲ Impaired ability to engage in basic/essential daily tasks that presents an imminent risk to their safety or the safety of others based on:
  - △ Episodic or ongoing life event or chronic condition
  - △ Communications, thought patterns, and/or behaviors that are illogical, tangential, or based on things others cannot see or hear
- ▲ Unwelcome or repetitive communications/contact that present an imminent safety risk to the recipient
- ▲ Substance use, or other addictive/risky behaviors, that present an imminent risk to their safety or the safety of others
- ▲ Specific and direct threat of potentially lethal violence that is impulsive
- ▲ Potentially lethal physical contact towards others
- ▲ Imminent suicidal ideation or suicidal ideation that includes a potentially lethal plan
- ▲ Life-threatening suicide attempt or non-suicidal self-injury that is life threatening

DETERIORATING

- ■ Destructive or significantly disruptive actions/communications
- ■ Impaired ability to engage in basic/essential daily tasks based on:
  - □ Episodic or ongoing life event or chronic condition
  - □ Communications, thought patterns, and/or behaviors that are illogical, tangential, rapid, or irrelevant
- ■ Unwelcome or repetitive communications/contact that are disruptive and concerning to the recipient
- ■ Substance use, or other addictive/risky behaviors, that:
  - □ Create significant or frequent negative consequences or
  - □ Present significant but non-life-threatening safety risk
- ■ Vague, indirect, or non-lethal threat of impulsive violence
- ■ Minor physical contact towards others
- ■ Suicidal ideation that is not imminent or lethal
- ■ Non-life-threatening, non-suicidal self-injury
- ■ Significant impairment in mood, relationships, academic/work performance, etc.

DISTRESSED

- ● Limited ability to regulate emotions or actions
- ● Struggles to manage or cope with episodic or ongoing life event or chronic condition that does not impact their ability to engage in basic/essential daily tasks
- ● Moderate difficulties with mood, relationships, academic/work performance, etc.
- ● Interpersonal relationship difficulties or difficulties interacting/communicating with others
- ● If a threat to self or others is present, it is vague, indirect, implausible, and lacks detail or focus

DEVELOPING

- ⬣ Healthy or safe coping skills related to an episodic or ongoing life event or chronic condition
- ⬣ Minimal to no difficulties with mood, relationships, academic/work performance, etc.
- ⬣ Has a need for resources or services to address a barrier or stressor
- ⬣ No threat to self or others present

NONE

CRITICAL

ELEVATED

MODERATE

MILD

E-SCALE: HOSTILITY AND VIOLENCE TO OTHERS

EMERGENCE OF VIOLENCE

- ▲ Specific, direct, and potentially imminent lethal threat of violence to others
  - △ Threat to others as retaliation to resolve grievances, or to address ideologically hardened/hate-based beliefs
  - △ Individual, group, organization, or location identified as a target for the communicated threat
- ▲ Behavior, writing, and/or communication indicates attack planning behaviors
- ▲ Unusual/concerning interest in violence/violent content with a clear, articulated plan to emulate/replicate violence
- ▲ References past attacks/attackers that demonstrate a clear, articulated desire to emulate/idolize the past attack/attacker

ELABORATION OF THREAT

- ■ Threat of physical harm to others that is either vague or non-lethal
  - □ Threat or ultimatum as retaliation to resolve grievances or address ideologically hardened/hate-based beliefs
  - □ Individual, group, organization, or location identified as a target for the threat or ultimatum of physical harm
- ■ Unusual/concerning interest in violence/violent content with a potential desire to emulate/replicate violence
- ■ References past attacks/attackers with a potential desire to emulate/idolize the past attack/attacker
- ■ Engages in aggressive or harmful behavior toward animals or individuals perceived as vulnerable

ESCALATING BEHAVIORS

- ● Grievances concerning perceived/actual mistreatment and/or injustices
- ● Clearly non-violent ultimatums/consequences to resolve grievances
- ● Ideologically hardened or hate-based beliefs that create disruption/conflict by shaming, objectifying, or intimidating others
- ● Increased agitation, defiance, or oppositional behavior regarding grievances
- ● Unusual/concerning interest in violence/violent content without a desire to replicate/emulate

EMPOWERING THOUGHTS

- ⬣ Ideologically hardened/hate-based beliefs that create conflict with others but do not disrupt, shame, objectify, or intimidate others
- ⬣ Difficulty taking the perspectives of others or demonstrating empathy
- ⬣ Increased isolation and/or forming new connections centered around shared feelings of being mistreated, excluded, or misunderstood
- ⬣ Narrowing relationships and consumption of information (e.g., news, social media)to only those that share the same perspective
- ⬣ No threat or ultimatum communicated or present

NONE

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Case Study: Oxford High School

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Oxford High School - November 30, 2021

Summary of the shooting incident:

- At approximately 12:51 PM, the attacker exited a bathroom near the 200 hallway and opened fire.
- He moved through two hallways, shooting at fleeing students.
- Attacker then returned to a bathroom, where he executed one victim and threatened another.
- He was apprehended by law enforcement without resistance near a second bathroom, ending the attack.
- In less than nine minutes, he shot 11 people. Four students were killed, and six students and one teacher were wounded.

Source: Independent Investigation: Oxford Community Schools and the November 30, 2021, Shooting at Oxford High School. Guidepost Solutions, 30 Oct. 2023. Oxford Community Schools.

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Prior to the Shooting

- In the months leading up to the shooting, the attacker had a growing fascination with violence. He drew disturbing images (e.g., guns, bullets, blood), wrote violent phrases, and watched graphic shooting videos at school.

Some examples include:

- As early as March 2021, the attacker started sending his mother disturbing texts (e.g., claims about demons and ghosts inside the home).
- One of his only friends moved away at the end of October 2021 and the family dog died. The attacker reportedly became depressed after these incidents.
- He filmed videos torturing animals (which were later recovered by law enforcement).

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Prior to the Shooting, Cont.

- Attacker exhibited an interest in school shootings and dark humor about them, which was corroborated in texts and writings discovered after the incident.
- In November 2021, there was an incident in which a severed bird's head was found in an Oxford High School bathroom. It was never formally linked to the attacker by school officials at the time, but post-shooting investigations suggested he may have been responsible due to contextual clues and social media history.
- Despite multiple red flags, the attacker was never taken to therapy by his parents. There is no record of any professional mental health intervention.

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Prior to the Shooting, Cont.

- Attacker's father purchased a 9mm semi-automatic handgun four days prior to the shooting. Attacker was allegedly with his father when the gun was purchased, and posted on social media, "Just got my new beauty today [emoji of a smiley face with heart eye] SIG SAUER 9mm. Ask any questions I will answer."
- Although the gun was purchased in his father's name, it was meant as a gift for the attacker. His mother posted about the gun on social media (i.e., mother and son at a shooting range) prior to the attack as well.
- No information indicates that the attacker faced any disciplinary issues prior to the shooting. However, he allegedly met with school officials the day prior to the shooting, and during the morning of the day of the shooting, to discuss his behavior.

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Prior to the Shooting, Cont.

November 29, 2021:

- Attacker's English teacher observed him viewing images of bullets on his phone during class.
- Attacker attended a meeting with the school counselor, Shawn Hopkins and bullying prevention coordinator, Tiffany Fine.
- Attacker explained that he was interested in shooting sports, which he described as a family hobby. He told staff that he had recently gone to a shooting range with his mother.
- Attacker was calm, cooperative, and did not exhibit hostile or aggressive behavior.

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Prior to the Shooting, Cont.

November 29, 2021:

- Later that day, the English teacher sent a follow-up email to Hopkins and Fine, attaching a drawing the attacker made earlier in the school year. It showed a gunman (the gun had been partially erased), people running away, and the words “The thoughts won’t stop.” This was not acted upon further.
- No threat or violence risk assessment was initiated, and school leadership (e.g., the principal) was not informed.
- A voicemail was left, and an email sent to attacker’s mother. She did not respond to the school’s outreach. She later texted her son saying, “LOL I’m not mad at you. You have to learn not to get caught.”

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The Day of the Shooting

November 30, 2021:

- Geometry teacher found a disturbing math worksheet on attacker's desk that included:
  - Drawings of a gun and a bullet
  - A person shot and bleeding
  - Phrases like:
    - "The thoughts won't stop. Help me."
    - "Blood everywhere"
    - "My life is useless"
    - "The world is dead"
- The teacher immediately reported the drawing to Dean of Students Nick Ejak.

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The Day of the Shooting, Cont.

November 30, 2021:

- Ejak and Counselor Hopkins pulled attacker from class and began an impromptu meeting.
- Attacker had attempted to scribble over the drawings, writing phrases like “OHS Rocks!” to mask the violent content.
- During the meeting, attacker explained that he was upset about:
  - The death of a family dog
  - A friend who had left the school
  - Ongoing tension at home with his parents

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The Day of the Shooting, Cont.

November 30, 2021:

- Attacker's parents were called to the school. During the meeting with both parents, Hopkins strongly recommended immediate mental health support for their son.
- The parents refused to remove him from school, citing work obligations. School officials allowed the attacker to return to class, despite the serious concerns. School officials were not informed about the firearm purchase.
- **Critical Oversights:**
  - Attacker was allowed to keep his backpack (which contained the gun used in the shooting)
  - No search of the attacker or his belongings was conducted
  - No threat assessment protocol was activated
  - The principal was not informed, and the issue remained at the counselor level

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The Day of the Shooting, Cont.

November 30, 2021:

- 1:22 PM: Attacker's mother texted her son: "[Attacker], don't do it."(Sent minutes after news of the school shooting broke).
- 1:37 PM: Attacker's father called 911 to report the Sig Sauer SP 2022 handgun was missing and that he feared his son could be the Oxford shooter.
- Two videos were recorded on the attacker's phone the night before the shooting describing his plan to shoot and kill students at Oxford High School.
- A journal was found in the attacker's backpack with detailed entries expressing a desire to carry out a mass shooting and specific references to murdering students.
- There is no evidence that anyone outside of the attacker was aware of these entries or recordings beforehand.

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Oxford High School Shooting Outcomes

Dec. 3, 2021	Dec. 9, 2021	October 24, 2022	February 6, 2024	March 14, 2024
Both parents charged with involuntary manslaughter for allegedly failing to secure the handgun used in the shooting.	Several lawsuits were filed against the school district alleging negligence by school officials regarding warning signs exhibited by the attacker.	Attacker pleaded guilty to all 24 charges, including murder and terrorism. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole in Dec. 2023.	His mother was convicted of four counts of involuntary manslaughter. She was sentenced to 10-15 years in prison in April 2024.	His father was convicted of four counts of involuntary manslaughter. He was sentenced to 10-15 years in prison in April 2024.

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Oxford High School Shooting – Key Takeaways

- Warning signs must lead to action, not just observation.
- Policies must be known, understood, and followed by all staff.
- Collaboration is critical.
  - No staff member should work in isolation.
- Avoid bias when interpreting student behavior.
- Comprehensive threat and violence risk assessments are essential for establishing safety and early intervention.
- Clear communication channels between staff, leadership, and parents are critical.

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Assessment Types and Process

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Risk Assessment

- The team uses an evidence-based, objective risk rubric to assess every referral
- This is a **Generalized Risk Assessment**, or a triage tool
- When the risk is triaged at a **heightened level** (elevated or critical on the NABITA Risk Rubric), an **additional advanced assessment** is needed

Source: NABITA 2024 State of the Field Survey

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Comparing Advanced Assessments

	Threat Assessment	Psychological Assessment	Violence Risk Assessment
Goal	To establish if a threat (self or others) is credible and actionable	To gain an understanding of an individual's psychological functioning and the presence of a mental health concern	To estimate the factors that make it more or less likely an individual may engage in violence
Outcome	Determination re: arrest or hospitalization	Diagnosis and treatment plan	Comprehensive evaluation of risk factors and strategies for mitigating them
Assessor	Typically law enforcement or a mobile crisis unit	Licensed clinicians	Anyone trained in VRA tool – administrators, clinicians
Engagement	Right to refuse, but could escalate concern	Typically voluntary, mandate with caution	Can be mandated when at Elevated or Critical

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Who Should Conduct a VRA

- No specific educational degree required
- Required training and expertise in using an objective risk assessment tool
- Competency to:
  - Conduct a VRA
  - Gather information
  - Build rapport
- Case Managers, clinicians, BIT Chairs, conduct staff tend to be good at them
- ***NABITA recommends*** training 3-5 people

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Advanced Risk Assessment Practices

Psychological Assessments

tend to be conducted by in-house clinicians (59%)

Violence Risk Assessments

tend to be conducted by institutional staff or team members (91%)

Violence Risk Assessors

tend to be trained and use a specific, standardized tool (89%)

Source: NABITA 2024 State of the Field Survey

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Requiring Psychological Assessments

	Determined with Risk Rubric	Determined w/o Risk Rubric
The team needs to understand the risk an individual poses to themselves due to suicidal ideation, self-harm, disconnection from reality, or other mental health condition	62%*	
The team needs to understand the risk an individual poses to others and how to mitigate it		
The team needs to gain a deeper understanding of an individual's general functioning, emotional health, or well-being based on the riskiness of behaviors	45%*	

*The percentages represented are from the subset of respondents who reported requiring psychological assessments

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Source: NABITA 2024 State of the Field Survey

Requiring Violence Risk Assessments

	Determined with Risk Rubric	Determined w/o Risk Rubric
The team needs to understand the risk an individual poses to themselves due to **suicidal ideation, self-harm** disconnection from reality, or other mental health condition	52%*	
The team needs to understand the risk an individual poses to others and how to mitigate it	84%*	
The team needs to gain a deeper understanding of an individual's general functioning, emotional health, or well-being based on the riskiness of behaviors		

*The percentages represented are from the subset of respondents who reported requiring psychological assessments

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Source: NABITA 2024 State of the Field Survey

Mandating an Assessment

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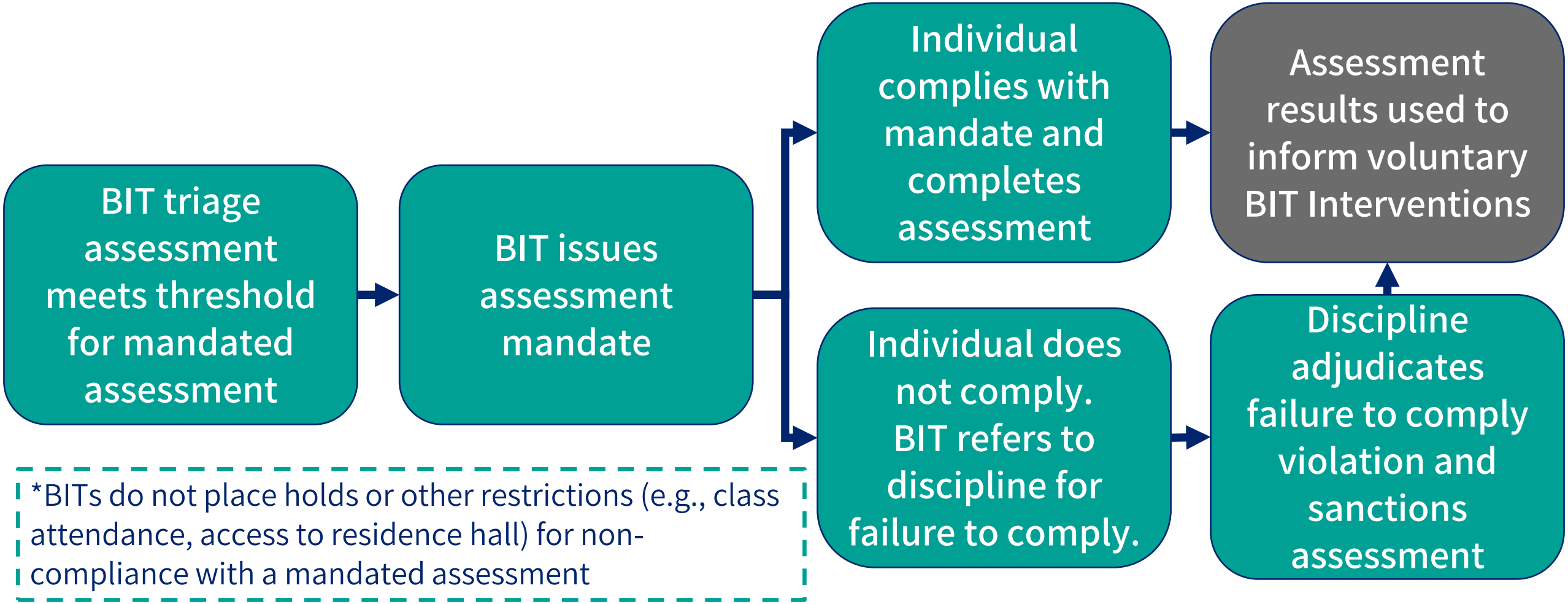
Mandating an Assessment via BIT



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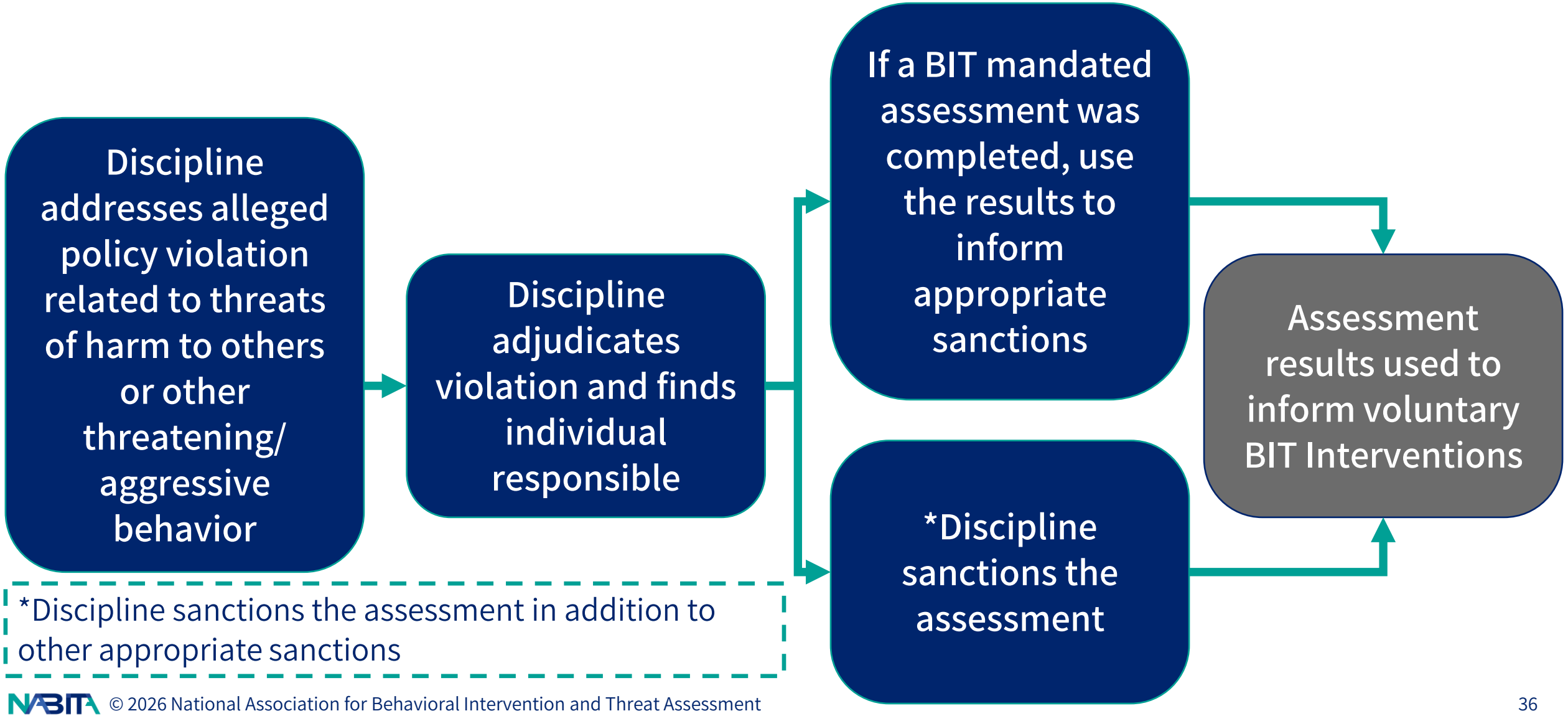
Mandating an Assessment via Discipline



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Encouraging Compliance and Participation

Approach

- Highlight that the assessment is about promoting care, ensuring campus safety, and fostering collaboration
- Balance the need to address the well-being of individual and the community

Delivery

- Deliver the mandated assessment letter in person
- Offer a warm introduction to the Assessor

Transparency

- Helps build rapport and eases potential concern
- Explain the process and how the results will be used

Partnerships

- Balance student privacy and need to share information with parent/guardian or emergency contact

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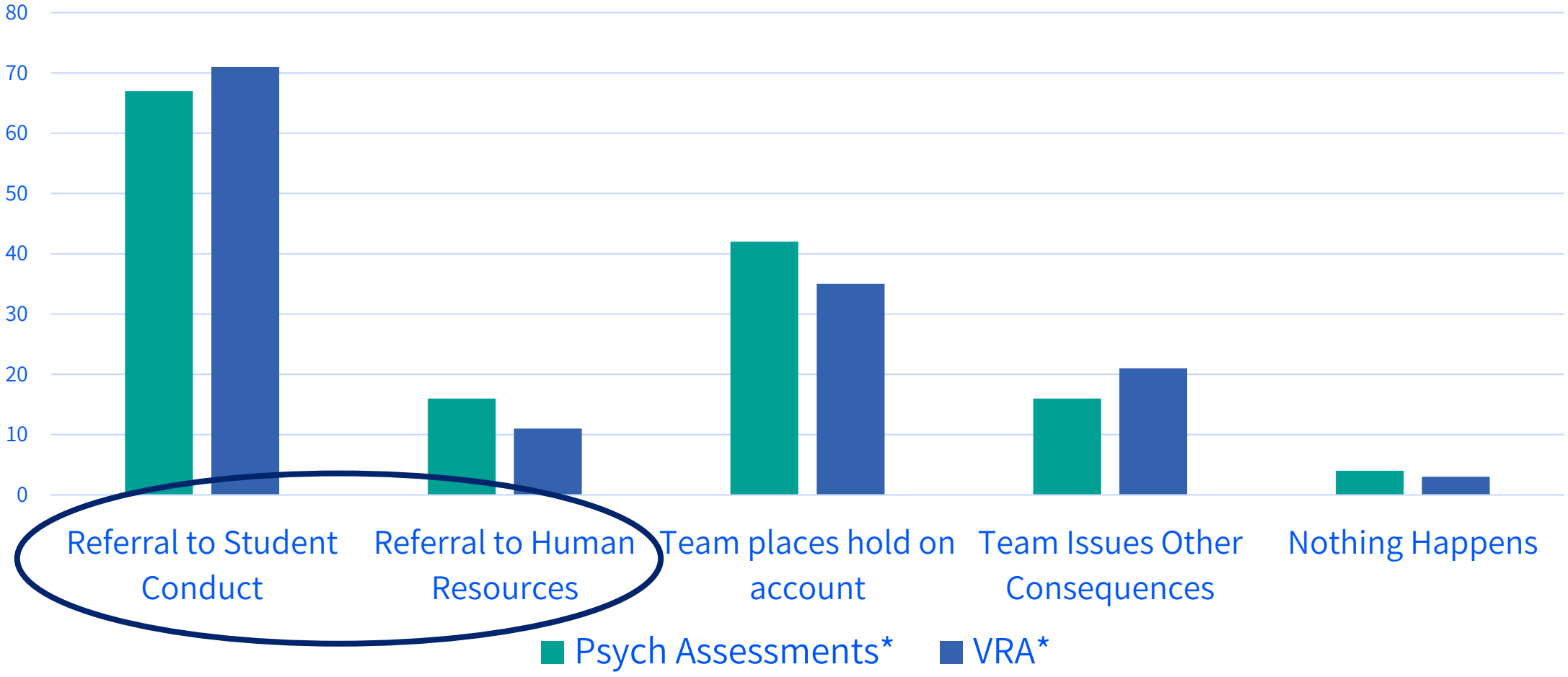
Consequences of Non-Compliance



*The percentages represented are from the subset of respondents who reported requiring assessments

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Source: NABITA 2024 State of the Field Survey

Using the Results

- Violence Risk Assessment (VRA) results guide the **voluntary** interventions from the BIT
  - Cannot require compliance with assessment recommendations
  - BITs/Case Managers should not place or recommend interim restrictions, place holds, etc.
- VRA results DO NOT indicate whether a student should be suspended, remain on campus, or remain enrolled
  - Decisions lie within the student code of conduct or Title IX process
  - Although VRA results can inform these procedures, the student's behavior must warrant a separation or restriction under either the code of conduct or Title IX
    - Interim or permanent suspension or expulsion
    - Emergency Removal under Title IX

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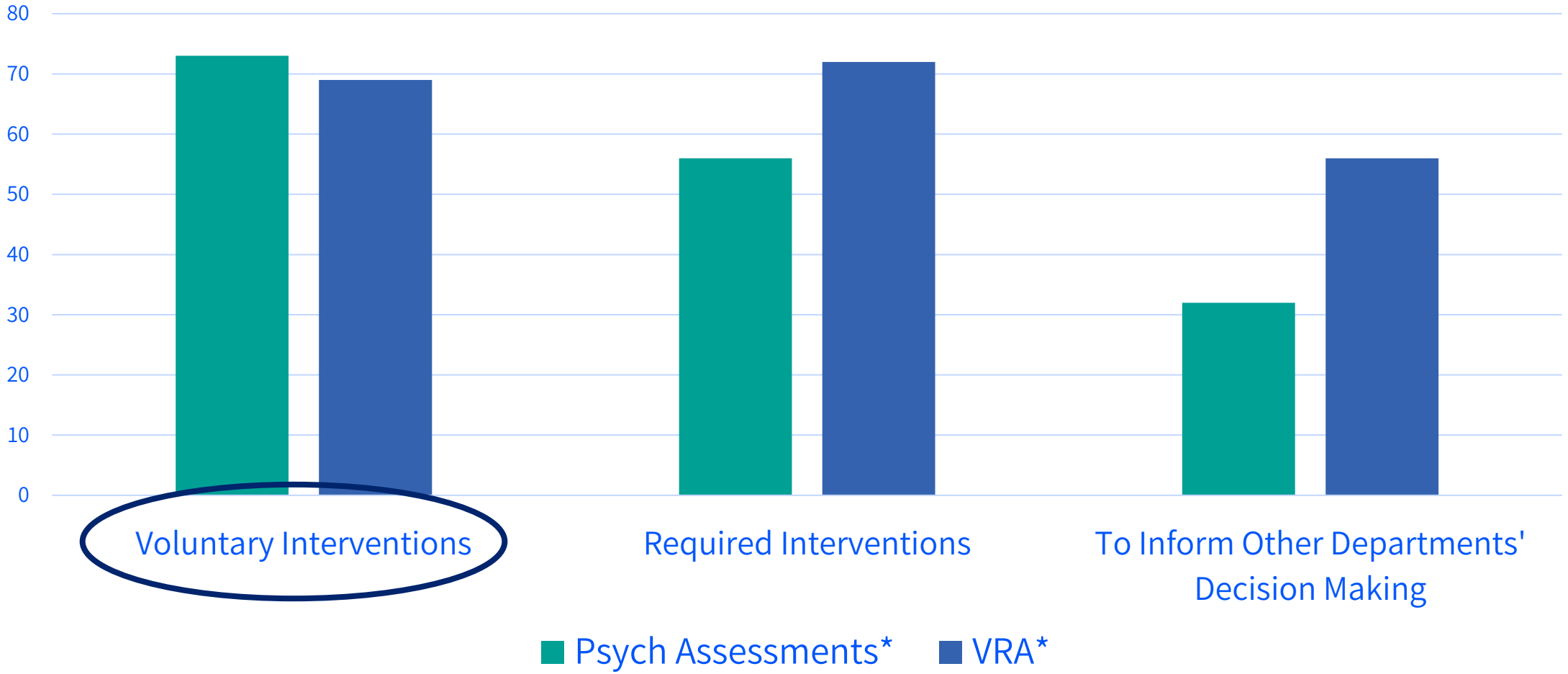
How the Results Are Used



*The percentages represented are from the subset of respondents who reported requiring assessments

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Source: NABITA 2024 State of the Field Survey

Preparing for the Assessment

- Effective VRA Components
- Assessment Preparations
- Question Development

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Components of an Effective Violence Risk Assessment

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Developing a Violence Risk Estimate

Conduct an effective 1:1 interview to gather robust information

Use an objective tool to weigh the factors that increase AND reduce risk

Gather background information, exploring all aspects of the person

Consider the context in which the dangerous or threatening behavior occurred

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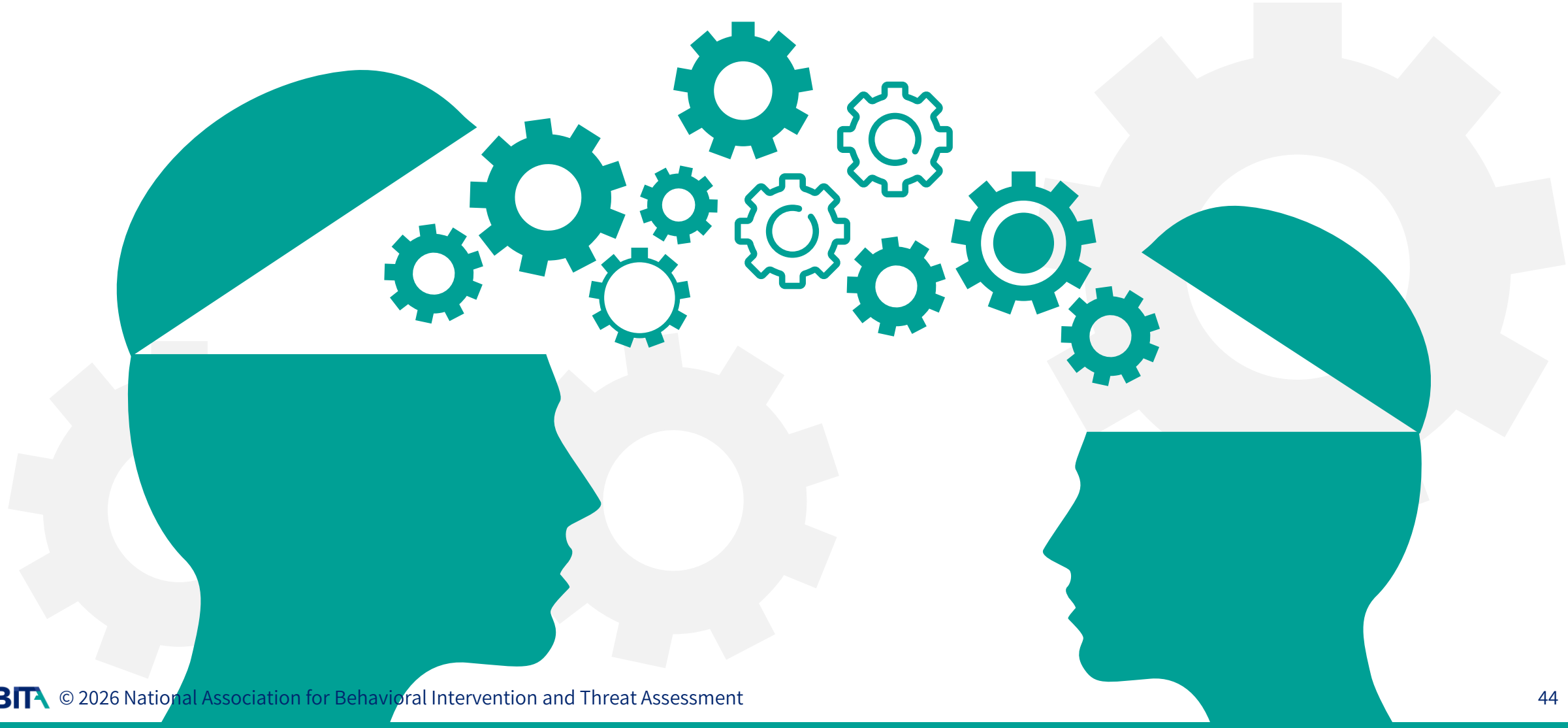
Maintain an open mindset to encourage inquisitive, creative, and “outside the box” thinking



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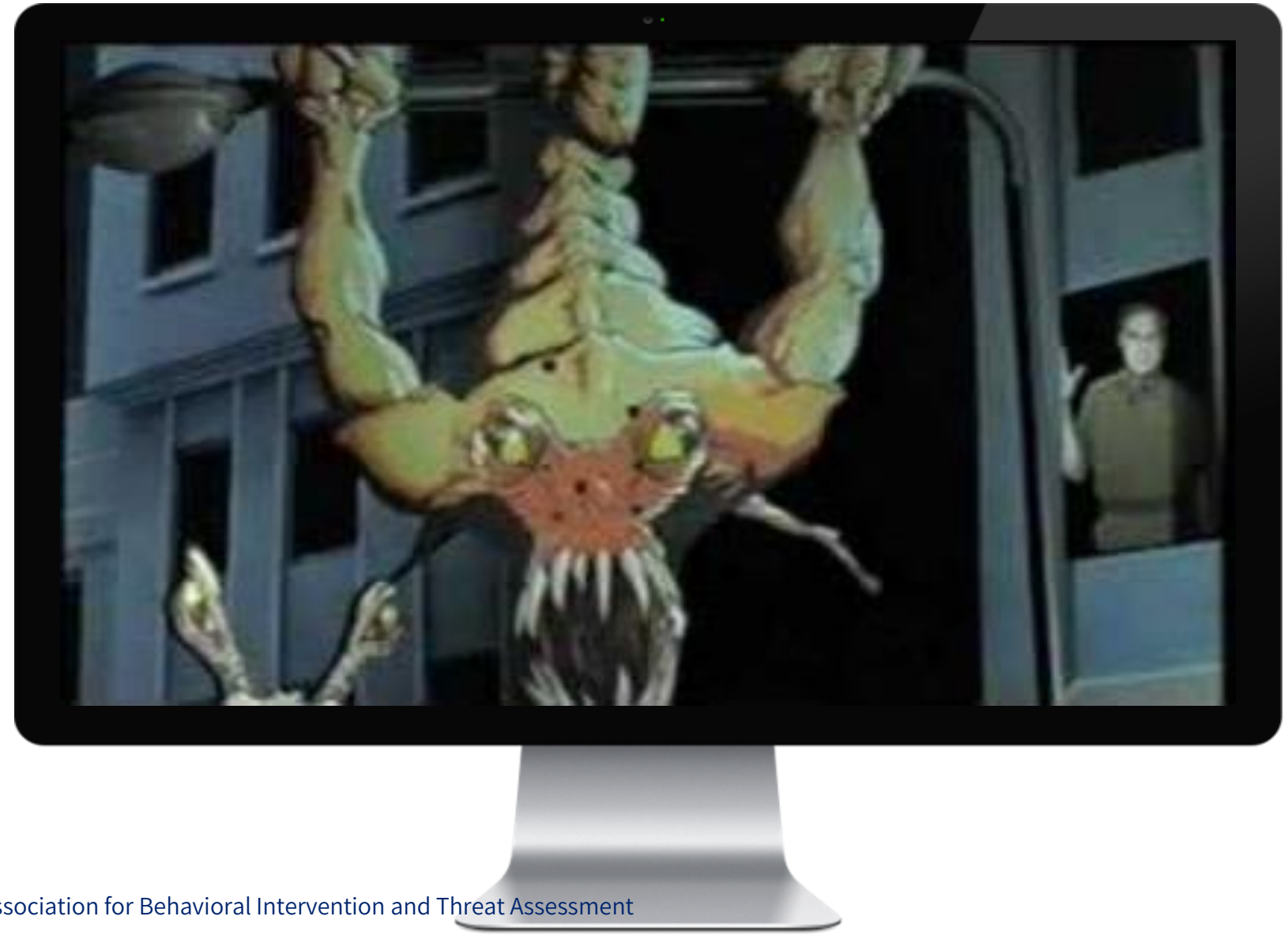

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What can you do with a paperclip?

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What Can You Do With A Paperclip?

- Set the clock in the car
- Clean the Keurig
- Hold papers together
- Change bra into halter type
- Clean the headphone jack
- Pick a lock
- Test cake for doneness
- Unlock those doors with the little holes
- Push reset buttons
- Clean frosting tips and other small holes
- Straighten it to use as a weapon
- Use it to be picked up by magnets
- Weigh down something
- Measure other things to be weighed (how many paper clips?)
- Conduct electricity
- Heat and sterilize a wound
- Sharpen and use it as a dart

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What Can You Do With A Paperclip?

- Throw a pile up in the air to make noise
- Break down into pieces and make glitter
- Metal shavings to put in a gas tank
- Sharpen into metal pieces for a bomb
- Wrap around a pencil as a decoration
- Magnetize and put on water to make a compass
- Deflate a tire
- Use as a fulcrum in a slingshot
- Freeze it in an ice cube (art)
- Shape into a dinosaur for art
- Turn into letters to signal someone
- Tie to together to make a rope
- Make into a ball as a projectile to be shot
- Lay it down as a bridge for a gerbil to walk across
- Use in a training tool for a group of threat assessment professionals
- Turn it into a question mark
- Melt it and make a ring or jewelry
- Poke someone

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Assessment Considerations

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Preparing for the Interview

Assessor Considerations

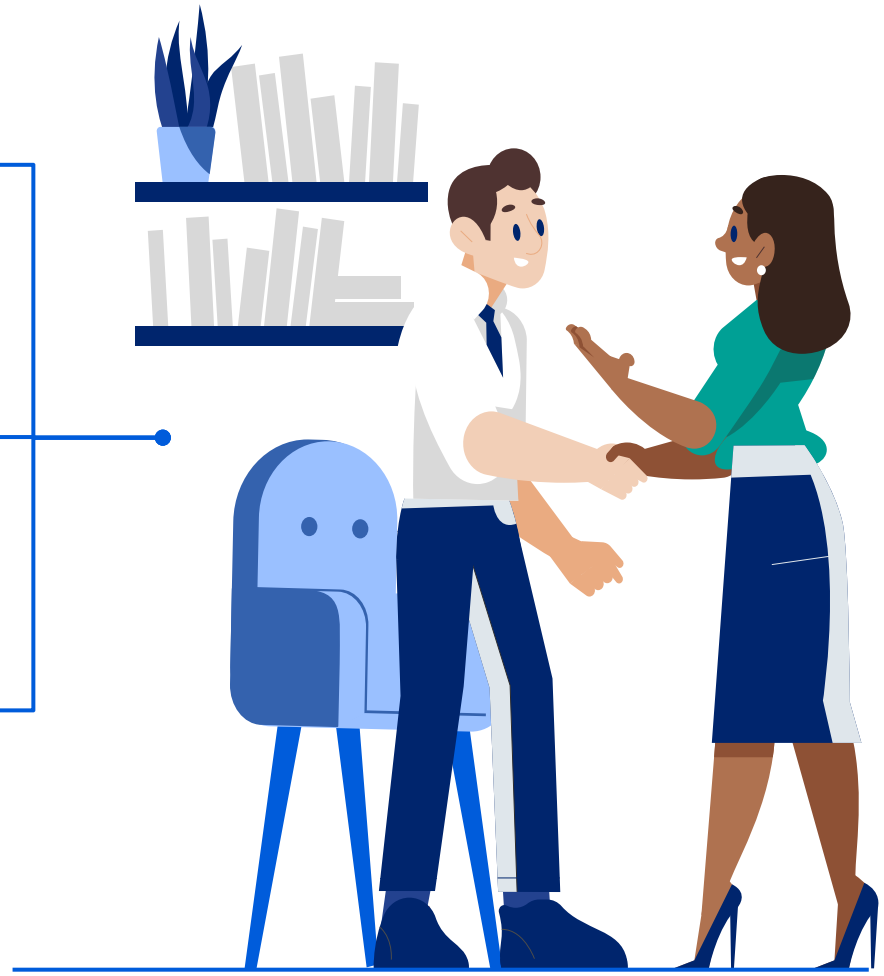
What can the Assessor(s) in the room do to facilitate an effective interview?

Environmental Considerations

How can we create an environment that promotes an effective interview?

Content Considerations

How can the Assessor prepare the content in order to conduct an effective interview?



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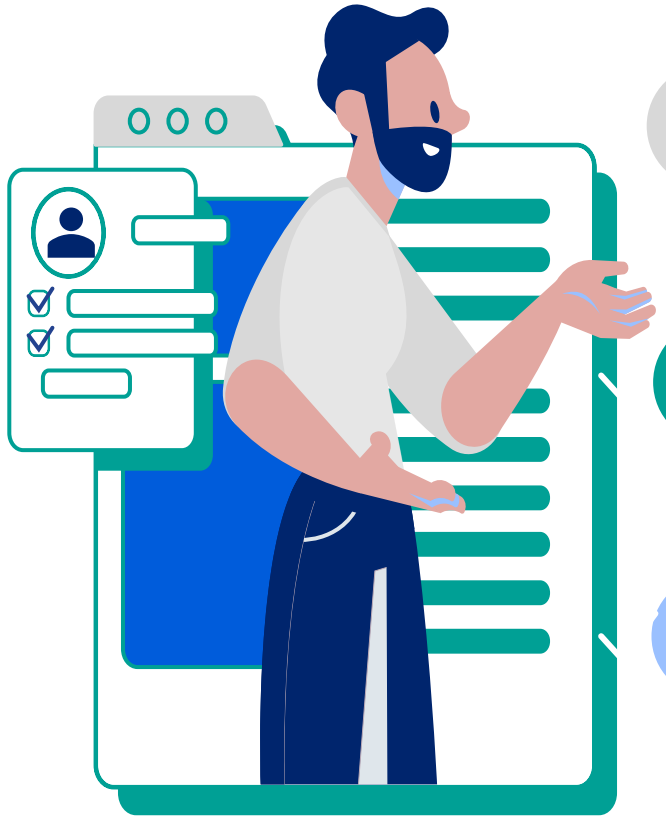
Assessor Considerations



Presentation

Consider attire (e.g., professional attire, more casual, uniform, badge)

One vs. Two

How many interviewers?
How will you ensure content is documented well? What is the role of each?

Documentation

Will you record or take notes?
How will records be stored and shared?

Introduction

How you will introduce yourself and explain your role at the institution and in the interview?

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Assessor Safety

1

Security Measures

May be necessary, to have security personnel nearby or use remote tools (e.g., video conferencing) if in-person interaction is too risky

2

Emergency Protocols

Assessor should be briefed on emergency protocols (e.g., how to exit the situation quickly, contact security)

3

Identity

If the Assessor's identity raises safety concerns or biases in the process, consider assigning a different Assessor to ensure their safety and the integrity of the process

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Environmental Considerations

Timing

Identify the best time for the interview. Consider how long it will take, the Assessor and interviewee's schedule. Allow for time after the interview to process and assess with the team.

Location

Where on campus is the best location for the interview? Consider the implied message of the location, safety, accessibility, etc.

Setup

How can the room be arranged? Consider comfortability, safety, and functionality.

Advisor/ Support Person

How might you respond if a individual requests an Advisor, support person, or lawyer to be in the room with them?

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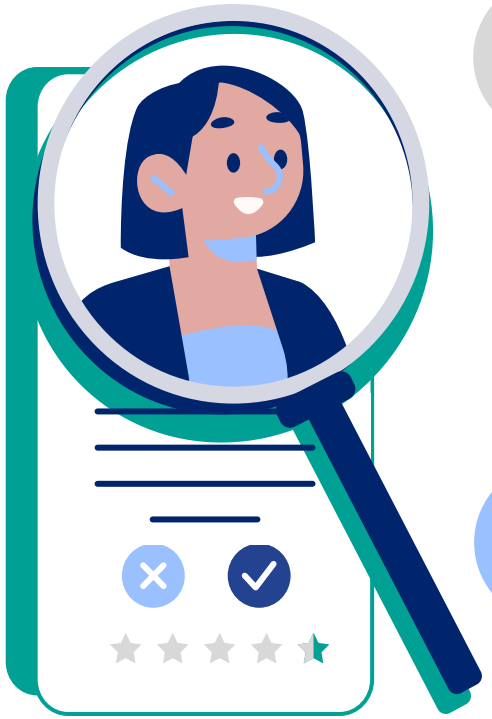
Content Considerations



Review Materials

Review the incident report and collateral information

Disclosure

Decide how much you will share about what you already know

SIVRA

Prepare questions/prompts to address the risk items but be flexible

Questions

Consider how you will respond to questions –
“Who reported me?” or
“Am I in trouble?”

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Collecting Information

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Gather Background

Incident Report

Referral or incident report detailing current events that prompted VRA

Relevant BIT/Conduct History

Background information from BIT, case management, conduct, or other disciplinary files

Collateral Sources

Information from parents/guardians, advisors, professors, etc.

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Gather Background

- **Academic Records**: Review grades, attendance records, academic disciplinary history, and faculty/advisor notes
- **Mental Health or Counseling**: With appropriate consent under state and licensure exceptions, request information from an individual's treatment professional
- **Disciplinary History and Records**: Review disciplinary history, including prior incident reports, prior discipline cases, and discipline findings or outcomes
- **Employment Records or Interview with Employer**: For students or individuals who are employed, review available work history, performance reviews, and any disciplinary actions
- **Criminal or Law Enforcement Records**: If applicable and legally accessible, request records related to past encounters with law enforcement, registered weapons, criminal charges, or court rulings
  - In many instances, this information may be available via a public records search

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Gather Background

- **Disability Records or Interview with Disability Support Services Staff**:
  - Provides key insights into any physical, mental, or emotional conditions that may be affecting an individual's behavior
  - These records may include accommodations provided and history with disability services, helping to contextualize behaviors within the individual's abilities and challenges
  - Handle this information with care, respecting privacy and legal restrictions
- **Extracurricular Activities and Involvement**: Seek information from coaches, club advisors, or mentors about the individual’s participation in extracurricular activities
  - Can highlight social connections or changes in engagement
- **Security or Surveillance Footage**: If relevant and available, review security footage from campus or public areas to corroborate events or behaviors described by involved parties

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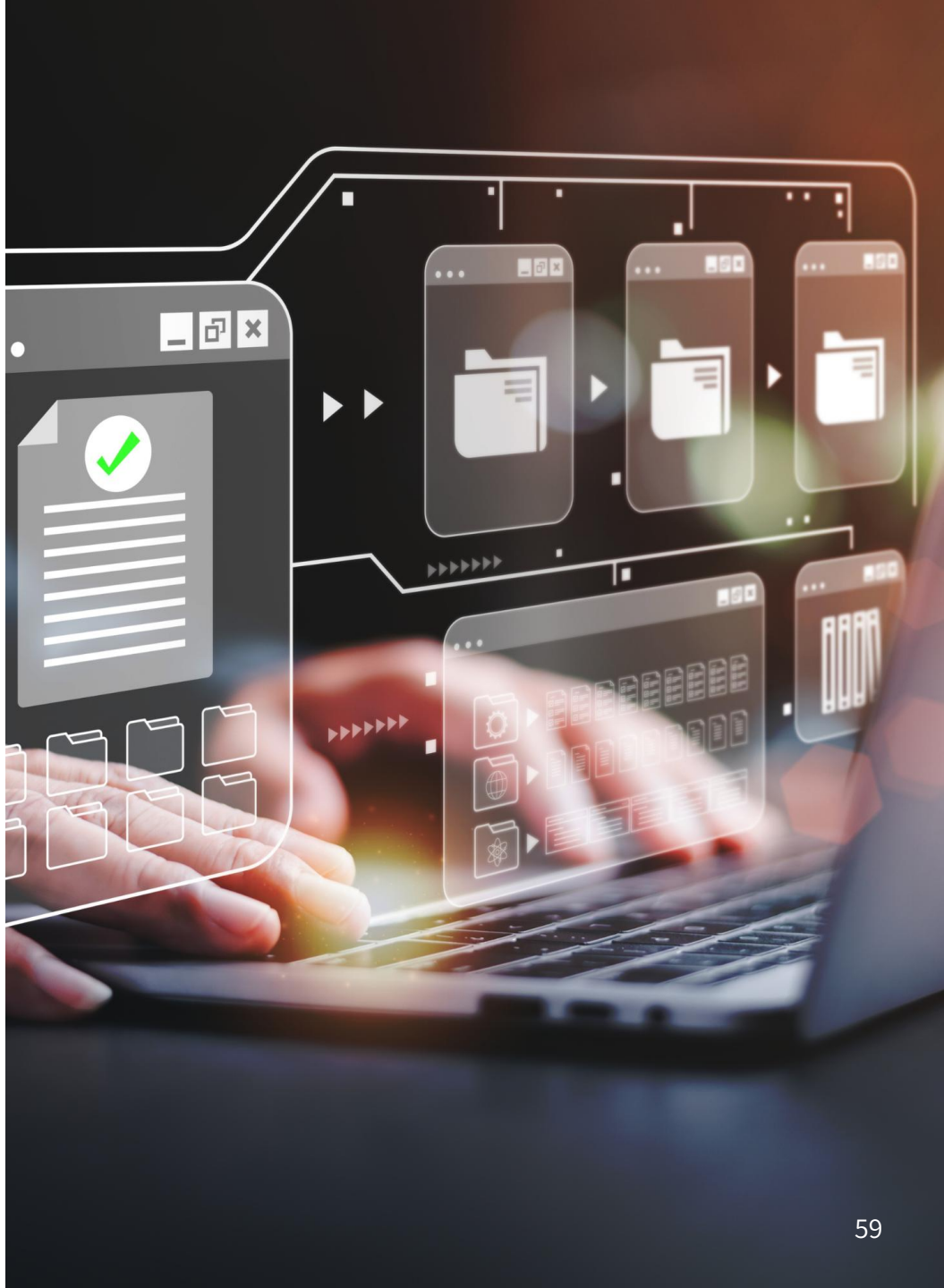
Gather Background

- **Social Media and Online Presence**: Review available social media and participation in online forums, chat rooms, or gaming communication
  - May offer insights into the individual's thoughts, behaviors, interest, and associations
  - Best practices suggest looking for posts, interactions, or affiliations that may indicate risk factors such as grievances, ideation of violence, or connections to extremist groups



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Gathering Background Considerations

- Generally, FERPA allows you to request, gather and share this information
- Consider how much you will share with the collateral information source and how you will answer questions they might have
- Decide the best person to have the conversation
- Establish a plan – general information/perspective gathering, cross-checking information for consistency/credibility, obtaining additional/new information?

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Collateral Interview Considerations

Who to Consider Interviewing:

- Peers, roommates, or close friends
- Family members or caregivers
- Instructors, coworkers, supervisors
- Coaches, advisors, or staff with regular contact

Why Conduct Collateral Interviews:

- Verify or clarify information
- Identify behavior changes or stressors
- Gain insight into interpersonal dynamics or grievances
- Detect concealment, deception, or minimization

When to Conduct Interviews:

- Before: To inform risk formulation or guide your approach
- After: To corroborate disclosures or fill in gaps
- Consider urgency, availability, and privacy concerns in timing

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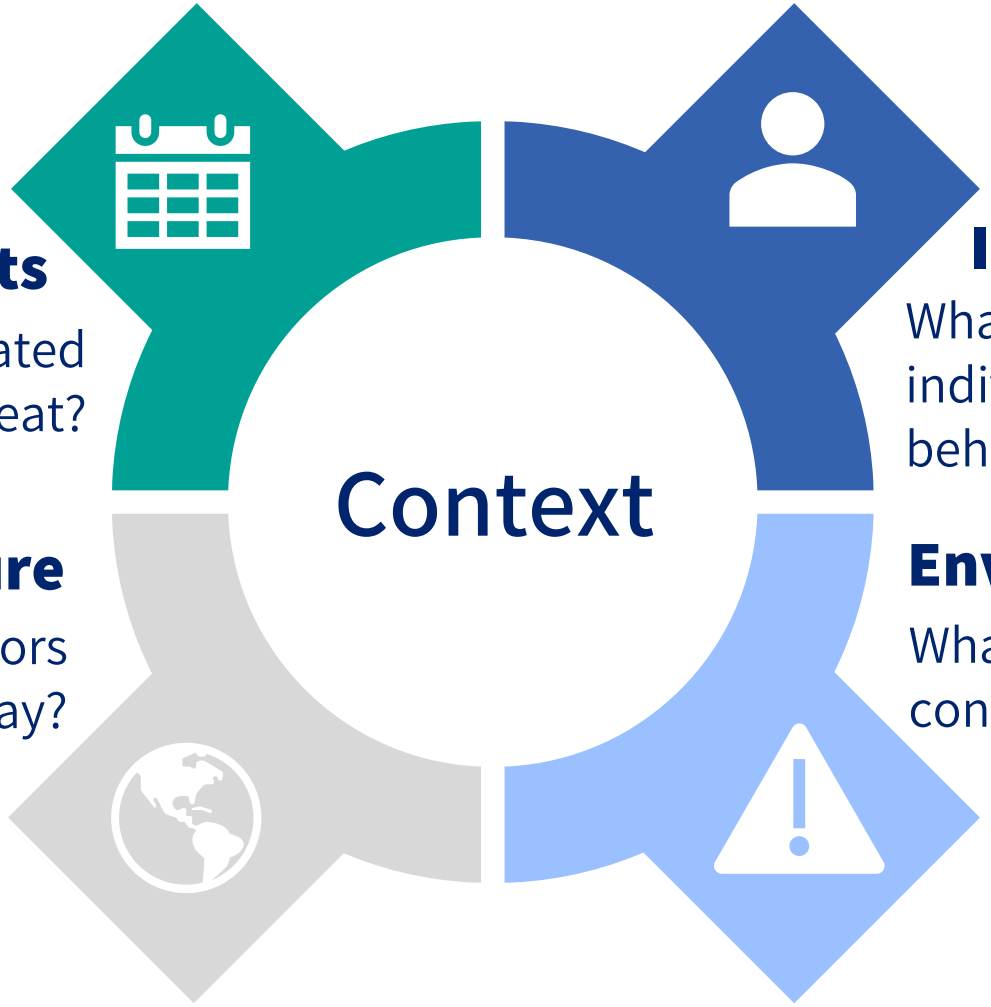
Consider the Context

Precipitating Events

What might have precipitated the behavior or threat?

Culture

What cultural factors might be at play?



Individual

What do we know about the individual and their baseline behavior?

Environmental

What environmental factors contributed to the event?

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Developing Questions and Prompts

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Question Considerations

- What are the critical issues?
- What do I need to know?
- Why do I need to know it?
- What is the best way to get the information?

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Questioning/Prompt Guidelines

Take the referral from start to finish through a process of broad to narrow questions/prompts and issues that need to be addressed

Prepare an outline in advance

- Ask questions about the allegations/referral and the concerning behavior/statements
- Focus on critical issues or gaps in information
- Drill down on details and specific SIVRA items
- Review your questions/prompts before ending interview

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Questioning Guidelines

Following vs. Leading

Avoid offering leading questions/prompts and instead follow the flow of the conversation

Explaining vs. Defending

Structure the questions/prompts to provide an opportunity for the individual to explain their perspective rather than having to defend their actions

Clarifying vs. Confronting

Focus on clarifying discrepancies rather than confronting misleading information or lies

Curiosity vs. Suspicion

Be curious, open, and exploratory in the phrasing of questions/prompts rather than suspicious and accusatory

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Questioning Tips

TO DO

- Have a purpose for asking every question
- Ask a question, not make a speech
- Listen carefully and adapt follow-up questions
- Keep questions/prompts clear and concise
- Seek to clarify terms and conditions that can have multiple meanings or a spectrum of meanings (e.g., “fight sometimes,” “drunk,” “smoke a little”)

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Questioning Tips

NOT TO DO

- Don’t be accusatory, judgmental, or argumentative
- Avoid compound, multiple choice, and leading questions
- Don’t make evaluative statements like, “that’s too bad,” “I’m glad you said that,” etc.
- Avoid moving toward behavior change, suggesting referrals, or correcting language
- Be cautious with questions that invite parties to second-guess their actions (“why” questions), this may be perceived as blaming

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Conducting the Assessment

- Introduction and Rapport Building
- Structuring Questions and Prompts
- Mitigating Bias
- Assessing Credibility

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Introduction and Rapport Building

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Introduction

1

Transparency

Explain the process, scope, and how information from the assessment will be used

2

Disclosure

Share general information and introduce specifics gradually

3

Establishing Expectations

Set clear expectations for the interview structure and timing

4

Empathy and Care

Show empathy and use rapport to encourage open communication

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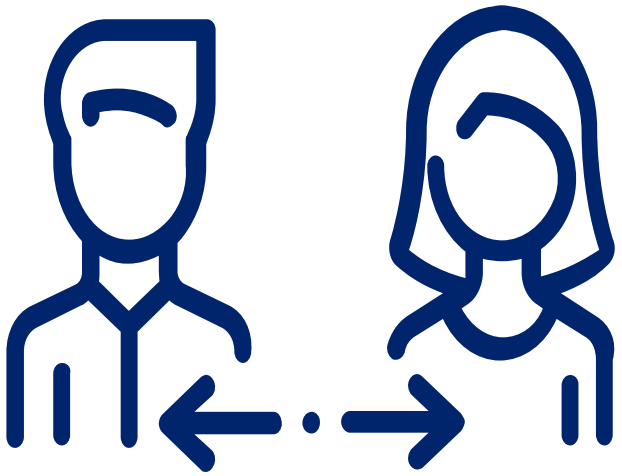
Helping Skills: Building Rapport



- “A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.”
- Replace the word rapport with connection
- How do you build a connection with someone?

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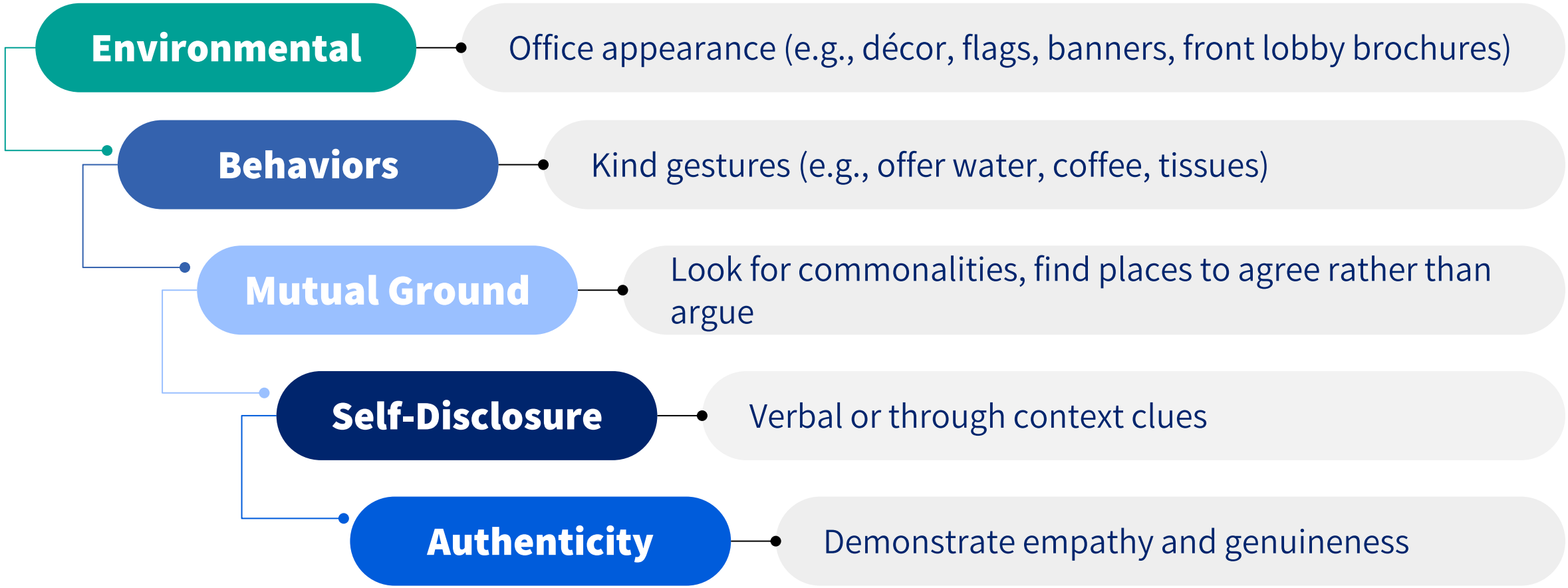
Rapport Building Elements



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Helping Skills: Active Listening

Step One
Attend the individual with "attending" behaviors

Step Two
Consider the message

Step Three
Demonstrate understanding using a sub-skill response

Step Four
Start the process again

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Active Listening Sub-skill Responses

Restate/Reframe:

- **Validates that you are listening and positions back to the individual what they have just shared**
  - "So, you've tried completing the petition for a late withdrawal, but you were told you need a letter of support from a counselor first. Tell me more…"
  - "I hear you saying that you and your friends used to be close but lately you haven't been spending much time together and it seems like they are ignoring you. What has this been like…"
  - "So, you've reached out to your RA about the room change but you're frustrated about the steps you need to take to get the process started. Help me understand your frustration..."

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Active Listening Sub-skill Responses

Reflecting Statements:

- **Focuses the speaker on the feelings behind what the individual is saying. Uses slightly different language and encourages the student to reflect and expand.**
  - "It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed by everything going on."
  - "What I'm hearing is that you feel disappointed and left out because your friends seem to be ignoring you when you used to be close."
  - "It seems like it is frustrating for you that the process for a room change has been unclear."

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Structuring Questions

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Collecting Information

- Understand an “interview” versus an “interrogation”
  - An interview is a conversation designed to elicit information in a non-accusatory manner
  - Shifting to an interrogation approach should not be done lightly; you cannot go back – not recommended
- What are the goals of questioning?
  - Learn the facts
  - Establish a deeper understanding
  - Understand each party’s perception of what happened
- NOT the goals of questioning:
  - Curiosity
  - Chasing the rabbit into Wonderland

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Question Considerations

Closed Questions

- Questions that can be answered with “yes”, “no”, or a short phrase
- Used to gather specific information
- Helpful in risk assessment
- Not helpful for rapport building or exploratory efforts

Open Questions

- Require a lengthier explanation
- Have no “right” answer
- Used to explore and understand
- Promotes reflection and insight development
- Helpful for gaining insight and building rapport

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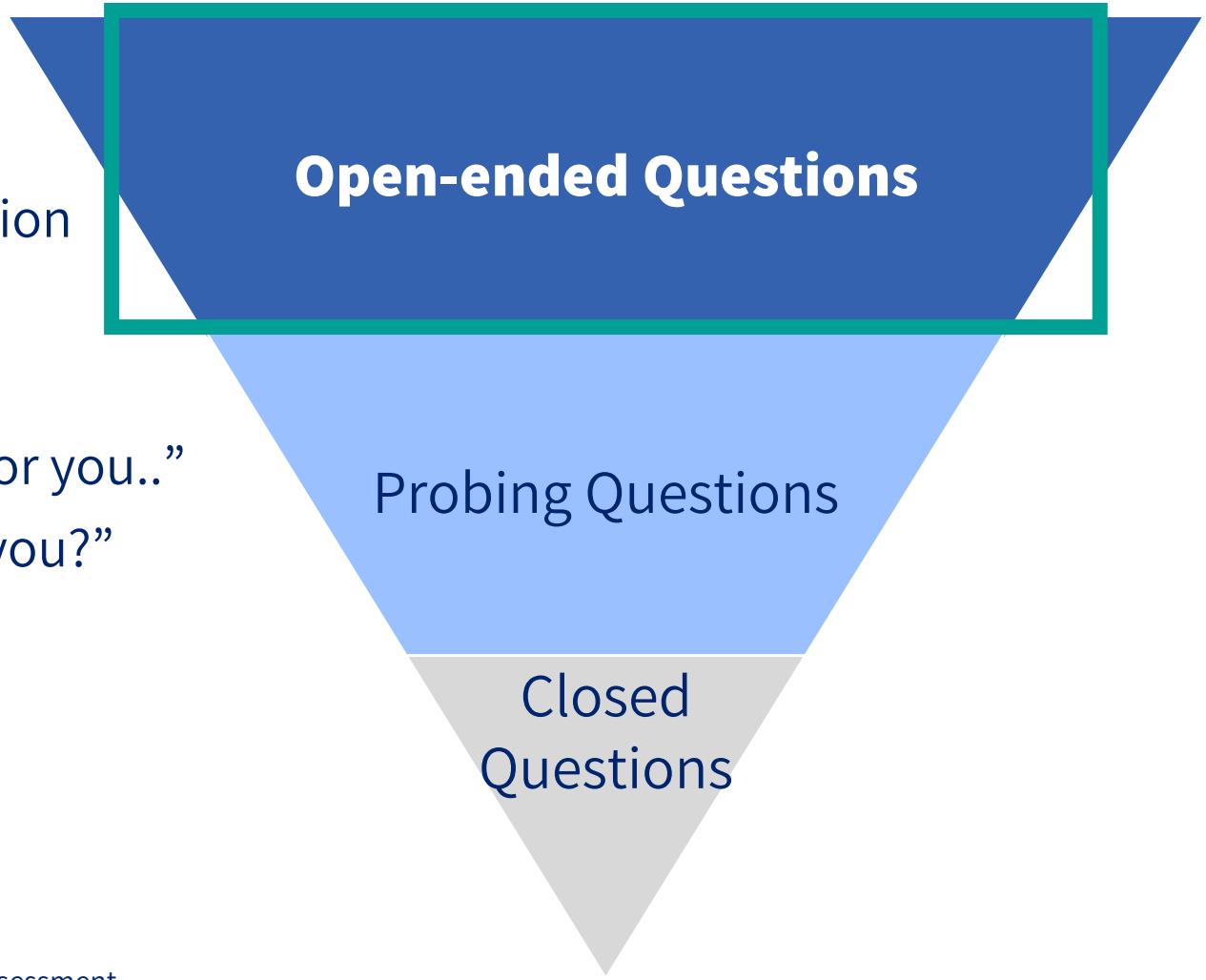
Effective Questioning Techniques

Open-ended questions

- Invite a narrative
- Encourage reflection and elaboration
- Helpful in exploring the situation

Examples:

- “Tell me what has been going on for you..”
- “What outcome would feel fair to you?”
- “How would you describe..”



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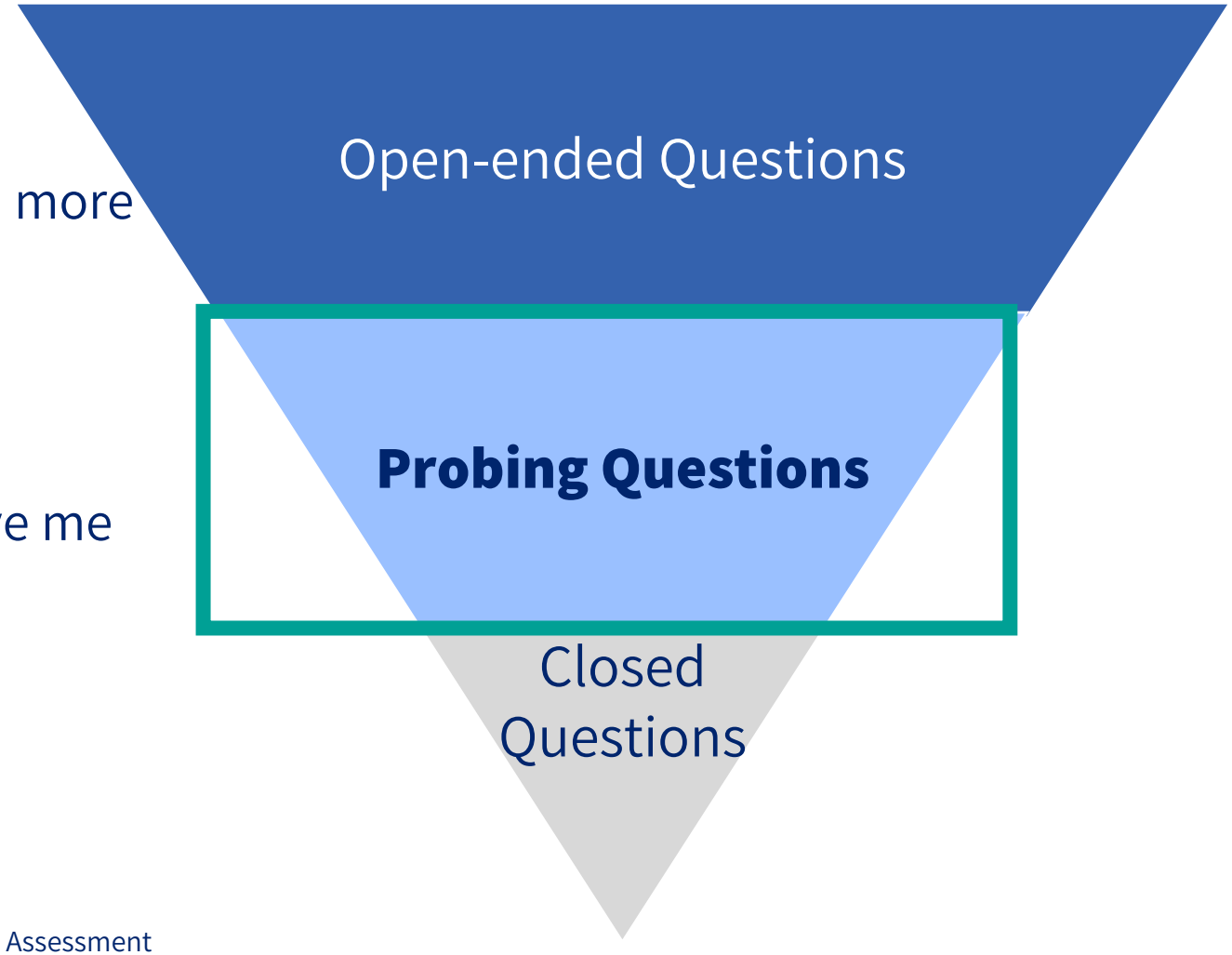
Effective Questioning Techniques

Probing Questions:

- Flesh out extra details
- Explore motivation, context, and more in-depth information

Examples:

- “Tell me more about…”
- “You mentioned ___, can you give me an example?”
- “How often are you…”
- Scaling questions



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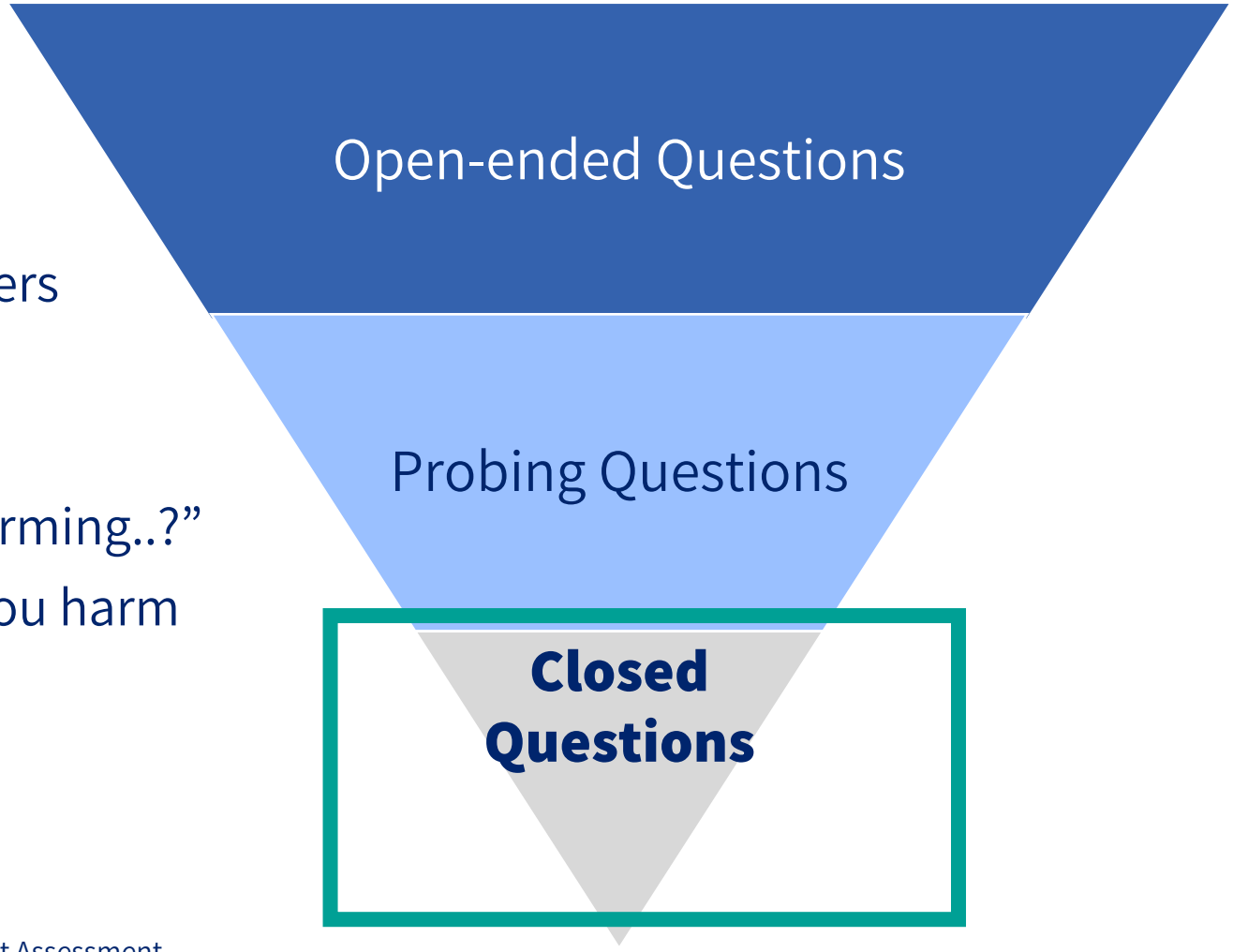
Effective Questioning Techniques

Closed questions:

- Establish and re-establish specific risk
- Require specific, yes or no answers
- Clarify discrepancies

Examples:

- “Are you thinking of killing or harming..?”
- “Have you thought about how you harm them?”
- “Do you have access to..?”



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Sample Questioning Sequence

Introduction

- Develops rapport
- Information about the process
- Establish baseline expectations
- Restate the context

Transfer Control

- Interviewee directs the conversation
- Active participation
- Volunteer information

Probe

- Identify central issues

Explore:

- Stressors
- Triggering events
- Protective factors
- Access to treatment

Gather Specifics

- Confirm information
- Focus on specific, clear answers
- Thoughts of harm to others
- Plans
- Means
- Intent
- Specified target
- Risk factors

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Funneling Questions Examples

Assessing Conflict with Others

- **Open-Ended**: “How would you describe your relationships with the people around you lately?”
- **Probing:** “You said you’ve had some issues with coworkers—can you tell me more about those issues?”
- **Closed-Ended**: “Have any of these conflicts escalated to physical threats or violence?”

Grievances

- **Open-Ended**: “What situations have been frustrating you recently?”
- **Probing**: “You mentioned that your coworker needs to pay. Can you explain to me what you mean by “pay”?”
- **Closed-Ended**: “Are you thinking of killing or harming your coworker?”

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Funneling Questions Examples

Fixation on Violence

- **Open-Ended**: “What topics do you usually read or research in your spare time?”
- **Probing**: “What is it about violent content that interests you?”
- **Closed-Ended**: “Have you been thinking about violence more than you used to?”

Assessing Stress or Emotional Distress

- **Open-Ended**: “Can you describe what’s been going on in your life lately that’s been stressful?”
- **Probing**: “You mentioned feeling overwhelmed—what specific events or situations have been causing that stress?”
- **Closed-Ended**: “Has this stress led you to have thoughts about hurting or killing yourself or others?”

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Mitigating Bias

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Understanding Bias

Bias

- A preference or tendency to like or dislike
- A cognitive process
- A thought process developed over time through repeated personal experience
- Implicit or explicit
- Formed from stereotypes, societal norms, experience, expectations of the people around you

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Common Forms of Bias Within VRAs

Sex Bias	1	Showing favoritism toward one sex over another
Race, Color, or National Origin Bias	2	Showing favoritism toward one race, color, or national origin over another or associating negative traits
Halo Effect	3	The tendency for a person's positive qualities, physical appearance, and general attractiveness to influence a positive impression of their character
Horn Effect	4	The tendency for a person's negative qualities, disheveled appearance, and poor presentation to influence a negative impression of their character

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Common Forms of Bias VRAs

Experience Bias	5	The tendency to interpret a situation, behavior, or comments based on an individual's own experience
Affinity Bias	6	The unconscious tendency to gravitate toward those who have similar identities to us
Confirmation Bias	7	Interpreting ambiguous evidence to support one's own opinions or existing position
Availability Bias	8	Relying on information that is readily and easily available to form opinions

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Bias within VRA Process

- Affect the Assessor's perception of interviewee and witnesses
- Impacts the ability to build rapport, connect, and create safe/neutral spaces
- Creates tension in the process, and in some cases may create a hostile environment
- Creates risk of flawed information collecting and questioning of participants
- Written reports become subjective and include biased language
- Establishes narratives based on assumptions, not on evidence
- Presents risk of discriminatory actions/behaviors toward parties
- Reduces the ability to assess, prevent, and remedy safety concerns
- Creates reticence to ask questions, pursue information, or individuals who should be questioned

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Mitigating Bias in VRA: Pre-Assessment

- Train on understanding bias, ethical boundaries, and use of SIVRA
- Plan the process with a team-based approach:
  - Strategy meetings regarding Assessor, location, timing, etc.
  - Review potential questions and prompts
  - Decide method for documentation (e.g., recording, two Assessors)
  - Determine safety precautions
  - Collect collateral information
- Establish a recusal process
- Insulate against internal or external pressures

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Mitigating Bias in VRA: During the Assessment

- Ensure understanding of privacy
- Document all steps and decisions
- Funnel questions and avoid inappropriate or bad questions or prompts

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Mitigating Bias in VRA: Post Assessment

- Use a team-based approach to:
  - Debrief after interview
  - Interpret information and SIVRA ratings
  - Report review
- Allow parties the opportunity to challenge Assessor
  - Replacement of personnel
  - Redo portions of assessment when needed
  - Anticipate questions about Assessor's credentials/potential bias
  - When bias is disqualifying, address it immediately

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Assessing Credibility

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Assessing Credibility

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Credibility Explained

- Credibility refers to the accuracy and reliability of information
- Source + content + plausibility
- “Credible” is not synonymous with “truthful”
- May be impacted by memory errors, evasion of questions/topics, or misleading information
- Primary factor is corroboration

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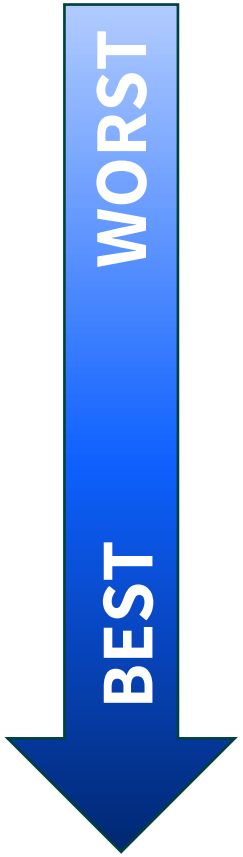
Credibility Elements



- **Demeanor (use caution!)**
  - Do they seem to be lying or telling the truth?
- **Past Record**
  - Is there a history of similar behavior?
- **Motive to Falsify**
  - Do they have a reason to lie?
- **Inherent Plausibility**
  - "Does this make sense?"
  - Be careful of bias influencing sense of "logical"
- **Corroboration**
  - Aligned testimony and/or physical evidence

Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors

EEOC (1999)

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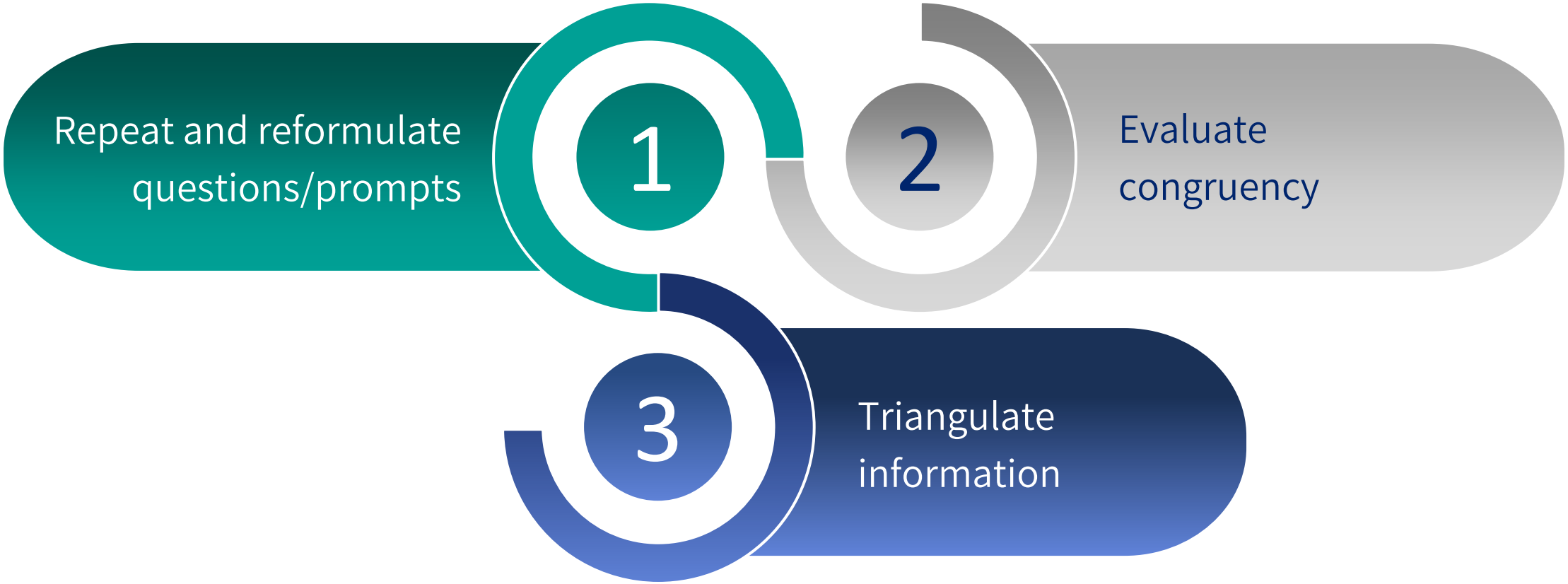
Assessing Credibility



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Assessing Credibility

1

Context Reinstatement

Ask the interviewee to mentally recreate the context of the event (e.g., location, sounds, and surroundings)

2

Order of Recall

Request that the interviewee recall the event in reverse order or from a different starting point

3

Different Perspectives

Ask the interviewee to describe the event from the perspective of others involved

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Assessing Credibility

4

Explore Emotions

Ask the interviewee about their emotional state during the event

5

Five Senses

Encourage the interviewee to recall details involving their five senses (e.g., sight, sound, smell, touch, taste)

6

Visualize the Event

Encourage the interviewee to mentally visualize the event and describe it in detail or draw a visual representation

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Interpreting the Information from the Assessment (SIVRA Tool)

- Using an Objective Tool to Weigh the Risk and Protective Factors
- The Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment Tool

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Using an Objective Tool to Weigh Risk and Protective Factors

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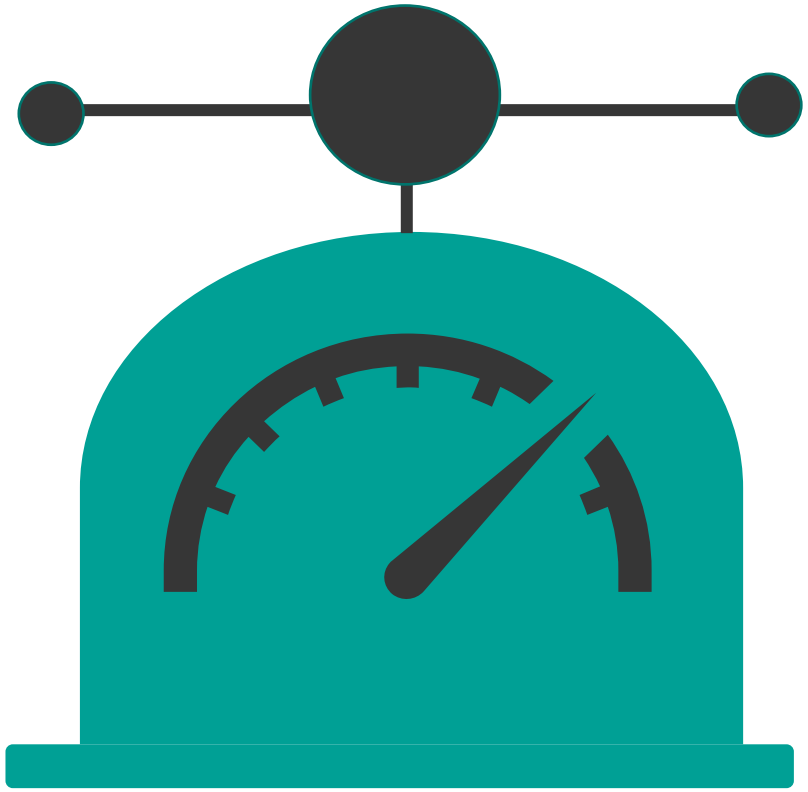
Weigh Risk and Protective Factors

Protective Factors

Elements that mitigate an individual's likelihood of engaging in violence



Risk Factors

Elements that increase an individual's likelihood of engaging in violence

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Risk Factors

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SIVRA

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

1. Communicated a Threat
2. Target
3. Access to Means
4. Planning Behaviors
5. Grievances
6. Hate-Based or Ideological, Hardened Beliefs
7. Interest in Violence, Violent Content, or Causing Harm
8. Researched Past Attacks
9. Suicidality
10. Disconnection from Reality
11. Substance Use
12. Personality Traits
13. Noticeable Behavior Change
14. Access to and Experience with Firearms
15. Homelife Experiences
16. Social Experiences
17. Work/School Experiences
18. Personal or General Stressors
19. Criminal History
20. Disciplinary History
21. Violent Behavior Not Involving Criminal or Disciplinary Action

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Protective Factors

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Protective Factors

Social Connection	**Friends, family, mentors, religion**
Perspective Taking	**Ability to pause and reflect on a situation**
Professional or Academic Engagement	**Goals and/or responsibilities**
Non-violent Outlets	**Therapy, art, writing**

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SIVRA

- Overview of Assessment Items
- SIVRA Application Rules
- Overview of Intervention Ranges

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SIVRA

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

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SIVRA

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

1. Communicated a Threat
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13. Noticeable Behavior Change
14. Access to and Experience with Firearms
15. Homelife Experiences
16. Social Experiences
17. Work/School Experiences
18. Personal or General Stressors
19. Criminal History
20. Disciplinary History
21. Violent Behavior Not Involving Criminal or Disciplinary Action

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SIVRA Application Rules

RULE #1: You must rate the presence of risk for all items

- Presence of risk will fall into one of three categories:

Not Present	Partially Present	Significantly Present

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SIVRA Application Rules

Rule #2: Immediate Need for Critical Intervention

Item #1 **AND** Item #2 are significantly present

AND

Either Item #3 is partially/significantly present

OR

Item #4 is significantly present

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SIVRA Application Rules

General Application Rules, following Rule #1 and #2:

# of Risk Elements Present (Either Partial or Significant)	Intervention
0-7 Risk Elements	**Standard Need for Intervention**
8-15 Risk Elements	**Elevated Need for Intervention**
16-21 Risk Elements	**Critical Need for Intervention**

- Standard Need for Intervention does not mean the individual will not hurt others
- Critical Need does not mean they will engage in violence

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Standard Need for Intervention

- 0-7 Risk Elements (partial or significant): Standard Need for Intervention
- Individualized interventions should include:
  - Direct services aimed at increasing distress/frustration tolerance and impulse control
  - Case management
  - Connection to resources
  - Reduction of risk factors and increase of protective factors

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Elevated Need for Intervention

- 8 – 15 Risk Elements (partial or significant): Elevated Need for Intervention
- The risk elements may indicate the presence of a plan and/or a set of behaviors, attitudes, or personality traits that could lead to future violence
- The BIT should work directly with the student to:
  - Reduce the risk factors that prompted the risk ratings
  - Increase the individual's protective factors and connections to non-violent, positive, social outlets
- The BIT should work directly with the potential target/victim, and other parties impacted by the student's behavior to safety plan and provide support
- The BIT should coordinate with conduct and law enforcement on their determined conduct/legal responses and assist in coordinating appropriate safety measures (e.g., restrictions, no-contact orders, academic/housing changes, interim suspensions)

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Critical Need for Intervention

- 16 – 21 Risk Elements **OR** Immediate Intervention Rule: Indicate the individual has made a direct threat and has the means and/or intent to carry it out
- The Assessor may need to immediately contact law enforcement regarding the potential threat and/or an individual qualified by the state to conduct an evaluation for a behavioral health hospitalization
- The BIT should convene an emergency meeting to collaborate with areas that may implement safety measures, interim suspension, hospitalization and/or arrest
- The BIT should work directly with the potential target/victim, and other parties impacted by the student's behavior to safety plan and provide support
- Efforts should be made to notify and work with those who can help mitigate the risk
  - Example: parents/guardians, emergency contacts, extended family, other supports

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Immediate Need for Critical Intervention

- If an individual has a SIGNIFICANT risk rating on Item# 1 **AND** Item #2, **AND**
- Item #3 is partially/significantly **OR**
- Item #4 is significantly present
- The Assessor needs to contact law enforcement and initiate emergency response procedures regarding an imminent and/or lethal threat directly following the interview
- The Assessor should initiate emergency response procedures while the student is still in the office, if possible
- Depending on the information presented on these first four items, the Assessor may need to contact law enforcement immediately

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Threatening Communications and Behaviors

Items 1-4

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Potential Information Sources: Items 1-4

- Referral information
- Interviews with:
  - Witnesses or referral sources
  - Individual of concern
- Review of:
  - Any written materials, including journals, manifestos, schematics, etc.
  - Information related to a search of the individual's home, vehicle, or other areas, if available
  - Law enforcement information re: weapons access
  - Social media

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Item 1: Communicated a Threat

This item assesses the specificity and lethality of a communicated threat of physical harm in either written, verbal, or visual communication, regardless of intent, means, and opportunity

NOT PRESENT	The individual has not communicated a threat of physical harm
PARTIALLY PRESENT	The communicated threat lacks specificity or references a threat to carry out non-lethal physical harm
SIGNIFICANTLY PRESENT	The communicated threat includes specific references to carry out potentially lethal physical harm

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Item 1: Communicated a Threat

Communicated threats that are **partially present** lack specificity or contain references to carry out non-lethal physical harm

These types of communications may include:

- **Vague comments** about making an individual pay, getting revenge for harm that has been done, or exacting payback on a group of people that lacks clarity around what type of action this may include
- **More specific statements** about non-lethal physical harm may also be considered partially present
  - For example, statements about punching someone, threats to harm their belongings (e.g., slash car tires, destroy their computer), or threatening to beat someone up

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Item 1: Communicated a Threat

Communicated threats that are **significantly present** include increasingly specific references to carry out potentially lethal physical harm

These types of communications may include:

- **A clear articulation** that the action will be physically harmful and potentially lethal
- Statements such as making an individual pay by spilling their blood, getting revenge for harm that has been done by raining down vengeance and bloodshed
- Threats to kill someone, or references to carrying out a Columbine-style attack

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Item 2: Target

This item assesses how a potentially threatening individual has identified a specific individual(s), group(s), organization(s), or location(s) as the target for physical harm

NOT PRESENT	There is no individual(s), group(s), organization(s), or location(s) identified as a target for physical harm
PARTIALLY PRESENT	The individual has identified an individual(s), group(s), organization(s), or location(s) as a target but the threat of physical harm is unclear or vague
SIGNIFICANTLY PRESENT	The individual has identified an individual(s), group(s), organization(s), or location(s) as a target for an act of future physical harm

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Item 2: Target

Partially present risk related to a target occurs when a potentially threatening individual identifies a target(s), but the threat itself remains vague or unclear

Examples include:

- Expressing anger toward a coworker or group, vaguely mentioning a desire to "get back at them" or "teach them a lesson" without providing details on how they would act on these feelings
- Sharing a wish for harm to befall a group or organization, such as posting on social media, "I hope the students at this school get what's coming to them," without clarifying exactly what this entails or who might carry out this vague threat

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Item 2: Target

Significantly present risk for target refers to a potentially threatening individual who has identified a target(s) and made a specific threat of future violence toward the target

Examples include:

- The identification of a specific individual as the source of their grievance or as responsible for wrongdoing and communicates a plan for revenge: “The administration of this university has wronged me, and they will pay with their lives.”
- “I have taken all I can from my boss, and I am going to assault her in the parking lot after work.”

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Item 3: Access to Means

This item assesses an individual's access to the specific means to carry out the act of physical violence that was communicated in their threat

NOT PRESENT	The individual has not made a threat of physical violence **OR** The individual does not have any access to the means to carry out the act of physical violence and has not considered how to get access
PARTIALLY PRESENT	The individual can articulate how they could gain access to the means to carry out the act of physical violence **OR** The individual has mitigated access to the means to carry out their threat
SIGNIFICANTLY PRESENT	The individual has unmitigated access to the means to carry out the act of physical violence

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Item 3: Access to Means

Partially present access to means refers to having plans or knowledge on how to obtain the tools needed to carry out an act of physical violence, even if those means are not immediately accessible

Examples include:

- Researching how to acquire a firearm or knowing potential ways to access a weapon but not yet taking action
- Being aware that a friend or family member owns a weapon that is not currently within reach

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Item 3: Access to Means

Significantly present access to means refers to having immediate and direct access to the specific tools needed to commit the act of physical violence communicated in a threat

Examples include:

- Someone already in possession of a firearm or other weapon, has it readily available, and can use it at any moment
- A person with easy access to explosives or other dangerous materials stored in their home or vehicle

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Item 4: Planning Behaviors

This item assesses the presence of planning behaviors related to carrying out an act of physical violence

NOT PRESENT	There is no evidence that the individual is planning to carry out an act of physical violence
PARTIALLY PRESENT	The elements of the individual's plan are not fully formed, demonstrating inconsistent logistics or vague, incomplete ideas
SIGNIFICANTLY PRESENT	The elements of the individual's plan are fully formed, demonstrating more consistent logistics or specific, complete ideas

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Item 4: Planning Behaviors

Partially present planning behaviors for a threat of physical violence refer to an individual who shows some level of preparation but lacks a fully developed or concrete plan

These types of behaviors may include:

- Identifying a target but the exact means or timing of the attack is undefined e.g., “Someday those who have hurt me are going to pay.”
- An expressed desire to cause harm and potential methods have been considered but no tools have been acquired or specific details have not been determined

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Item 4: Planning Behaviors

Significantly present planning behaviors for a threat of physical violence refer to an individual who has developed a clear, detailed, and actionable plan to carry out the threat

These types of behaviors may include:

- A specific identified target, an exact time and location for the attack, and they have secured the necessary weapons or tools to execute it
- Rehearsal or conducted surveillance on the target area to ensure success

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Concerning Ideology and Interests

Items 5-8

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Potential Information Sources: Items 5-8

- Referral information
- Interviews with:
  - Witnesses, referral sources, other relevant stakeholders
  - Individual of concern
- Review of:
  - Any written materials, including journals, manifestos, schematics, etc.
  - Communication to any parties perceived as the source of the grievance(s)
  - Social media

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Item 5: Grievances

This item assesses the degree to which an individual has grievances, including perceived injustices or feelings of unfair treatment, which may provoke motivations for retaliation

Partially Present

The individual has articulated grievance(s) that are intermittent or are limited to a particular area of their life

AND

The grievance(s) articulated do not overwhelm or dominate the individual's thinking

Significantly Present

The individual has articulated grievance(s) that are pervasive, deeply felt, and/or impact multiple areas of their life

OR

The articulated grievances drive a desire for retaliation in a way that overwhelms or dominates the individual's thinking

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Item 5: Grievances

Partially present risk related to grievances occurs when an individual expresses complaints or dissatisfaction that are intermittent or limited to a singular area of their life, without dominating their overall thought process

Examples include:

- Periodically expressing frustration about their work environment, but it does not affect their ability to do their job **or** cause them to seek retaliation
- Voicing concerns about a relationship but remains engaged in the relationship without it dominating their mindset
- Expressing perceived unfair treatment by an instructor, but not seeing all instructors as treating them in this way

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Item 5: Grievances

Significantly present risk related to grievances occurs when an individual's grievances are pervasive, deeply felt, and/or impact multiple areas of their life; or when these grievances drive a dominant desire for retaliation

Examples include:

- The expression of an intense grievance related to their career, personal relationships, or academic performance, and allowing grievances to shape daily behavior and outlook
- Grievances that are so all-consuming that the individual is constantly preoccupied with thoughts of retaliation, such as an employee who received a negative performance review and now spends hours ruminating on ways to make their boss pay, through both reputational and/or physical harm

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Item 6: Hate-Based or Ideological, Hardened Beliefs

This item assesses to what degree an individual holds beliefs rooted in hate or ideologies that create conflict with others, degrade individuals perceived as enemies or different than themselves, and legitimize harmful action to achieve a desired outcome

Partially Present

The individual has expressed or endorsed hate-based or ideologically hardened beliefs that are inconsistent or not entrenched

AND

These beliefs do not motivate the individual's intentions to seek retaliation through future action

Significantly Present

The individual has endorsed hate-based or ideologically hardened beliefs that are consistent and entrenched

OR

The individual's hate-based or ideologically hardened beliefs motivate the individual's intentions to seek retaliation through future action

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Item 6: Hate-Based or Ideological, Hardened Beliefs

Partially present risk related to hate-based or ideologically hardened beliefs refers to beliefs that are inconsistent or not entrenched, and do not motivate an individual to seek retaliation

Examples include:

- The expression of racism, misogyny, or radical political ideology, but with the ability to have relationships with some people who disagree with them or can find some exceptions to their hardened beliefs
- Holding strong views on issues like abortion but still having relationships with others who have opposing views and not engaging in retaliatory behavior
- Posting polarizing views on social media or in online forums, but these posts are inconsistent and do not translate into any specific action

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Item 6: Hate-Based or Ideological, Hardened Beliefs

Significantly present risk related to hate-based or ideologically hardened beliefs arises when an individual consistently adheres to extremist views that deeply influence their behavior and intentions

Examples include:

- Active participation in white supremacist groups, frequently attending rallies, sharing racist propaganda, and isolating themselves from anyone who does not share their beliefs
- A person with entrenched pro-choice beliefs who aggressively confronts religious co-workers about their beliefs, stalks pro-life activists online, and surrounds themselves exclusively with others who support violent retaliation against religious groups and politicians promoting pro-life beliefs

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Item 7: Interest in Violence, Violent Content, or Causing Harm

This item evaluates an individual's interest in violent content, particularly how the interest involves consuming violence for its own sake or viewing violence as behavior to be emulated, based on a heightened focus on violence, violent content, or causing harm

Partially Present

The individual has demonstrated or expressed sporadic or occasional heightened interest in violence or violent content including transient fantasies about violence

AND

These interests do not dominate the individual's thoughts or influence a desire to cause harm to others

Significantly Present

The individual has demonstrated or expressed a consistent or persistent heightened interest in violence, violent content or causing harm

OR

The individuals' violent interests include a desire to kill or persistent fantasies about engaging in harm toward others

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Item 7: Interest in Violence, Violent Content, or Causing Harm

Partially present risk related to interest in violence, violent content, or causing harm is seen when an individual occasionally shows heightened interest in these topics, but it does not dominate their thinking or lead to harmful actions

These interests may include:

- After a frustrating day, an individual briefly fantasizes about getting revenge on a difficult coworker but quickly dismisses these thoughts without acting on them
- Someone who frequently plays violent video games or reads true crime books, not just out of curiosity or entertainment, but because they find enjoyment in the actual killing, blood, gore or other violence, or occasionally fantasize about carrying out similar acts of violence

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Item 7: Interest in Violence, Violent Content, or Causing Harm

Significantly present risk related to interest in violence, violent content, and causing harm is evident when an individual displays a persistent fascination with violent content, such as watching videos of real-life violence or repeatedly expressing a desire to kill or harm others

These interests may include:

- Frequently sharing graphic content on social media, accompanied by comments glorifying violence
- Spending significant time detailing elaborate fantasies of harming or killing specific people they feel have wronged them
- A persistent and intense interest in violence, coupled with a desire to act on these fantasies

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Item 8: Researched Past Attacks

This item assesses how the individual has researched past attacks to learn from and emulate previous violent acts or those engaged in violent acts

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has engaged in cursory research of past attack(s) tied to a concerning curiosity about the attack(s) or the shooter(s) **AND** The individual's interest in the attack(s) or shooter(s) is not driven by a desire to learn from the shooter's actions and emulate them	The individual has thoroughly researched past attack(s) as a detailed study of the attacker's methods, strategies, and outcomes **OR** The individual's interest in the past attack(s) demonstrates a desire to learn from them and inform their own planning

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Item 8: Researched Past Attacks

Partially present risk related to research of past attacks is present when an individual has shown a casual or fleeting interest in past incidents, such as reading about mass shootings or watching documentaries about infamous attackers, out of curiosity about the attack or the shooter rather than for educational academic research. While the individual's interest may be related to a concerning curiosity the research is not associated with an intent to emulate.

This research may include:

- Periodically searching online for detailed information about a notorious school shooting, driven by a strong interest in the attack and the shooter's motives, though without any apparent intent to replicate the act
- Researching an attacker to learn more about their interests and motives for carrying out an attack based on the individual's own interest in these things

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Item 8: Researched Past Attacks

Significantly present risk related to research of past attacks arises when an individual conducts in-depth studies of previous incidents, analyzing the attacker's methods, strategies, and outcomes

This research may include:

- Spending hours reviewing detailed case files, videos, and forensic reports of a well-known mass shooting
- Closely examining how an attacker planned and executed their actions

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Behaviors and Experiences

Items 9-21

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Potential Information Sources: Items 9-21

- Referral information
- Interviews with:
  - Witnesses, referral sources, other relevant stakeholders
  - Individual of concern
  - Clinical provider, if release is in place
- Review of:
  - Academic transcripts, academic advising, academic progression, etc.
  - Any written materials including journals, manifestos, etc.
  - Information re: past military or law enforcement experience
  - Law enforcement information re: firearms access, criminal history, publicly available court records, etc.
  - Prior BIT Referrals, case management notes, etc.
  - Social media
  - Student conduct/employee discipline history

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Item 9: Suicidality

This item assesses the degree to which the individual has considered dying by suicide

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has expressed vague, passive, or historical suicidal ideation	The individual has expressed current (present in approximately the last two weeks) specific, and active (intent, plans) suicidal ideation

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Item 9: Suicidality

Partially present risk related to an individual who has expressed vague, passive, or historical suicidal ideation is evident when they discuss past feelings of hopelessness or fleeting thoughts of suicidality/self-harm without current plans or explicit threat

Examples include:

- Reporting they feel overwhelmed and reflecting on past suicidal thoughts, saying things like "I've been suicidal in the past, but I don’t want to go back there.”
- Expressing vague suicidal ideation such as, "Sometimes it seems like it would be easier if I just didn’t wake up in the morning.”

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Item 9: Suicidality

Significantly present risk related to suicidal ideation is evident when an individual has recently expressed specific and active thoughts of suicidality, including concrete plans and intentions

Examples include:

- Explicitly mentioning a plan to take their own life on a specific date, detailing methods and a location for the act, such as buying a firearm or obtaining lethal substances
- Communicating intent to friends or family, such as saying, "I've been planning this for weeks and have set a date next week to end it all."

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Item 10: Disconnection from Reality

This item assesses the individual's connection to reality and ability to form lucid, coherent thoughts

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has demonstrated limited disconnection from reality **AND** The disconnection has not resulted in a desire to cause harm or actual engagement in behavior that could endanger their safety or the safety of others	The individual has demonstrated prominent disconnection from reality **OR** The disconnection has resulted in a desire to cause harm or actual engagement in behavior that could endanger their safety or the safety of others

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Item 10: Disconnection from Reality

Partially present risk related to disconnection from reality is evident when an individual shows limited signs of detachment, such as occasional, mild delusions or unusual beliefs, but these do not lead to harmful behaviors or intentions

Examples of a disconnection include:

- Expressing belief in conspiracy theories
- Claiming to have unusual experiences, like thinking they receive special messages through everyday occurrences, but they do not act on these beliefs or let them influence their behavior in dangerous ways

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Item 10: Disconnection from Reality

Significantly present risk related to disconnection from reality is evident when an individual exhibits pronounced detachment from reality that leads to harmful intentions or actions

Examples of a disconnection include:

- Developing delusional beliefs that they are being persecuted by a shadowy organization, prompting them to stockpile weapons and create a detailed plan to confront these perceived threats.
- Becoming convinced they have a divine mission to harm certain people, resulting in actual threats or attempts to carry out violent acts against those they believe are obstructing their goals

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Item 11: Substance Use

This item assesses an individual's substance use, including the use of alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and illicit substances

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has reported frequent or problematic substance use that has not led to significant negative consequences	The individual has reported frequent or problematic substance use that has led to significant negative consequences

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Item 11: Substance Use

Partially present risk related to substance use is evident when an individual reports frequent or problematic use of substances without experiencing significant negative consequences

Examples include:

- Regular use of alcohol or recreational drugs, such as cannabis or stimulants, leading to periods of impaired judgment or disorientation, but they have not yet faced major issues like legal problems, loss of academic status/employment, or severe health consequences
- Exhibiting signs of problematic use, such as neglecting responsibilities or social engagements, but these issues have not escalated to a point where they are causing serious harm to themselves or others

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Item 11: Substance Use

Significantly present risk related to substance use is evident when an individual's frequent or problematic use has resulted in serious negative consequences

Examples include:

- Regular use opioids or alcohol to the extent that it leads to multiple DUIs/arrest, job or academic loss, or severe health issues such as liver damage
- Experiencing strained relationships with family and friends resulting from erratic behavior or neglect of responsibilities
- Potential hospitalization for substance-related overdoses or complications

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Item 12: Personality Traits

This item assesses to what degree an individual has personality traits that may lead them to disregard the humanity of others and attempt to dominate or harm them. Personality traits assessed in this item include lack of empathy, manipulation of others, superior sense of self, and fame-seeking.

Partially Present	Significantly Present
Lack of empathy, manipulation of others, sense of superiority, or fame-seeking occur intermittently or in specific situations in such a way that they occasionally create conflict	Lack of empathy, manipulation of others, sense of superiority, or fame-seeking are deeply ingrained traits that frequently contribute to significant conflict

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Item 12: Personality Traits

Partially present risk related to certain personality traits (e.g., lack of empathy, manipulation of others, superior sense of self, or fame-seeking) is evident when an individual exhibits these traits in a way that may lead to occasional conflict

Examples include:

- Occasionally manipulating colleagues to advance their own career, creating tension and disputes in the workplace, but not consistently enough to disrupt overall functioning
- Displaying a superior sense of self in social or academic settings, occasionally belittling others in ways that cause discomfort or argument, but without a pattern of sustained, harmful behavior

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Item 12: Personality Traits

Significantly present risk related to certain personality traits (e.g., lack of empathy, manipulation of others, superior sense of self, or fame-seeking) is evident when an individual consistently exhibits behaviors that lead them to disregard the humanity of others and attempt to dominate or harm them

Examples include:

- Regularly belittling and exploiting their friends or colleagues, using manipulation to undermine them and secure personal gain at their expense
- Engaging in behavior to seek attention, such as publicly humiliating others to gain notoriety
- A general belief that they are above the rules/laws that apply to others

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Item 13: Noticeable Behavior Change

This item assesses how an individual's behavior has deviated from their typical behavior indicating emotional or mental turmoil

Partially Present	Significantly Present
Changes in behavior are occasional, subtle, or context dependent	Changes in behavior are consistent, pronounced, and/or pervasive such that they impact the individual's functioning or decision-making

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Item 13: Noticeable Behavior Change

Partially present risk related to noticeable behavior change is evident when an individual shows subtle or context-dependent shifts in behavior

Examples include:

- An intermittent display of increased irritability or agitation during stressful periods, such as becoming uncharacteristically confrontational during project deadlines but not showing the same behavior outside of these contexts
- Exhibiting moments of intense emotion when discussing certain topics, like a recent personal loss or perceived injustice
- Behavior changes potentially related to academic performance, work, relationships, personal hygiene, or any other behaviors that indicate a change from the individual's baseline

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Item 13: Noticeable Behavior Change

Significantly present risk related to noticeable behavior change is evident when these changes are pronounced, and pervasive

Examples include:

- Becoming isolated and withdrawn leading to a noticeable decline in work or academic performance
- Having increased emotional outbursts
- Neglecting personal responsibilities such as general self-care, or care for others
- Behavior changes related to academic performance, work, relationships, personal hygiene, risk-taking behavior, or any other behaviors that indicate a significant change from the baseline and disrupt the individual's normal functioning and decision-making

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Item 14: Access to and Experience with Firearms

This item assesses the degree to which an individual has experience with or access to firearms

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has limited experience with firearms **OR** The individual has mitigated access to firearms	The individual has prior training and/or significant experience with firearms **OR** The individual has unmitigated access to firearms

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Item 14: Access to and Experience with Firearms

Partially present risk related to access and experience with firearms is evident when the individual's experience with firearms is minimal or the access is somehow mitigated

Examples include:

- They have handled a firearm a few times at a shooting range or inherited one from a family member but does not actively possess or carry it
- A family members own firearms, but they are kept in a locked safe and the individual does not know the combination to the safe

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Item 14: Access to and Experience with Firearms

Significantly present risk related to access and experience with firearms is evident when the individual has significant prior training and/or significant experience with firearms, or unmitigated access to them

Examples include:

- An individual who has undergone extensive military or law enforcement training and regularly practices shooting at a gun range
- Someone who owns firearm(s) and has them readily accessible at home or in their vehicle, without any safeguards

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Item 15: Homelife Experiences

This item assesses the degree to which an individual experiences familial or living environment stressors either currently or in their childhood. Homelife experiences assessed in this item include domestic abuse, parental/guardian conflict, childhood neglect or trauma, substance use challenges by a family member, familial criminal charges or incarceration, state agency involvement, or financial instability.

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual reported occasional or limited exposure to significant stressors in their family or living environment	The individual reported consistent or significant exposure to stressors in their family or living environment that may be impacting their overall functioning or wellbeing

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Item 15: Homelife Experiences

Partially present risk related to an individual's experiences with familial or living environment stressors is present when they have occasional or limited exposure to stressors

Examples include:

- An individual who grew up in a household where financial instability occasionally led to stress and tension but did not result in chronic neglect or abuse
- Someone who may currently experience occasional conflicts or substance use issues at home, or previously experienced this in childhood, but these factors have not dominated their life or caused significant consequences for them

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Item 15: Homelife Experiences

Significantly present risk related to an individual's experiences with familial or living environment stressors is present when these challenges have been consistent or significant, whether in childhood or currently

Examples include:

- An individual who grew up in a home marked by chronic domestic abuse and parental substance use may have experienced ongoing trauma that severely affected their development and well-being
- Someone currently living in a household with frequent and intense parental or partner conflicts, compounded by financial instability and involvement with state agencies resulting from a family member's criminal charges

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Item 16: Social Experiences

This item assesses the degree to which an individual is currently experiencing or has experienced in their childhood, social or relationship stressors, bullying/harassment, or social isolation/alienation

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual reported occasional or limited social or relational stressors, bullying/harassment and/or social isolation	The individual reported persistent or significant social or relationship stressors, bullying/harassment, and/or social isolation

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Item 16: Social Experiences

Partially present risk related to an individual's current social experiences is evident when they face challenges such as social or relationship stressors, bullying, or isolation, but these issues are not overwhelming

Examples include:

- Experiencing occasional conflicts with friends or coworkers that cause stress but do not lead to complete social withdrawal
- Facing intermittent bullying or harassment at school or work but still maintaining some supportive relationships

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Item 16: Social Experiences

Significantly present risk related to an individual's social experiences is present when they face severe or pervasive social challenges, such as intense relationship stress, ongoing bullying, or deep social isolation, that significantly impact their well-being

Examples include:

- Experiencing relentless harassment at school or work, leading them to withdraw from social interactions entirely
- Someone who experienced significant or long-term bullying in childhood, impacting their connectedness to others

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Item 17: Work/School Experiences

This item assesses the degree to which an individual is currently experiencing stressors related to academic and/or job performance. Academic and job performance stressors assessed in this item include a decline in grades/quality of work, employment-related disciplinary actions, demotions, terminations, removals, or stress related to their school or work performance or status.

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual reported occasional or limited academic or job performance stressors	The individual reported consistent or significant academic or job performance stressors that may be interfering with or limiting their ability to fully engage in their school or work environment

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Item 17: Work/School Experiences

Partially present risk related to work or school experiences is present when an individual faces challenges such as academic or job performance stressors, but the impacts of these are limited

Examples include:

- A student might experience a slight decline in grades based on increased workload, but still manage to maintain passing grades and stay engaged in school
- An employee might receive a warning or face minor disciplinary actions at work but continue to perform adequately in their role

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Item 17: Work/School Experiences

Significantly present risk related to work or school experiences is present when an individual faces severe academic or job performance stressors that greatly impact their functioning

Examples include:

- A student might experience a dramatic decline in grades, failing multiple classes and risking expulsion, resulting from overwhelming stress or disengagement
- An employee might be facing serious disciplinary actions, such as demotion or termination, based on consistently poor job performance or repeated infractions
- Substantial setbacks in school or work can lead to heightened stress, a sense of failure, and increased risk of negative outcomes, such as withdrawal or harmful behaviors

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Item 18: Personal or General Stressors

This item assesses the degree to which an individual is currently experiencing personal or general stressors unique to the individual not captured in other items

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual reported occasional or limited personal or general stressors	The individual reported consistent or significant personal or general stressors

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Item 18: Personal or General Stressors

Partially present risk related to an individual currently experiencing personal stressors unique to their situation is present when these challenges cause some distress but do not severely impact overall functioning

Examples include:

- Grieving the recent loss of a beloved pet, leading to temporary sadness and distraction, but they continue to manage daily responsibilities and maintain their usual routine
- Grappling with issues related to identity, experiencing occasional confusion or stress, but they seek support and still engage in their daily activities without significant impairment
- Difficulties meeting basic needs, such as occasional food insecurity, might feel stressed but manages to find resources and maintain their daily life

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Item 18: Personal or General Stressors

Significant risk related to an individual currently experiencing personal stressors is evident when these challenges severely impact their daily functioning and well-being

- **Examples include:**
  - An individual who has been the victim of a violent crime might experience intense trauma, leading to severe anxiety, depression, or withdrawal from daily activities
  - Someone struggling with issues related to their identity, facing extreme discrimination or rejection, may experience profound emotional distress and isolation
  - An individual living in inadequate housing, such as being unhoused or living in extremely unstable conditions, which can lead to significant health and safety risks, and impact their ability to maintain employment or access essential services

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Item 19: Criminal History

This item assesses the degree to which an individual has been or is currently involved with law enforcement or the criminal justice system. Behaviors assessed in this item could include violent or nonviolent offenses.

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has a demonstrated history of limited or minor criminal offenses	The individual has a demonstrated history of repeated or serious criminal offenses

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Item 19: Criminal History

Partially present risk related to an individual's criminal history is evident when they have a history of limited or minor offenses or have had contact with law enforcement without formal charges

Example includes:

- An individual might have a few past infractions, such as minor traffic violations or petty theft, which suggest some previous legal issues but do not indicate serious or violent behavior

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Item 19: Criminal History

Significantly present risk related to an individual's criminal history is evident when they have a pattern of repeated or serious criminal offenses that indicate a high potential for continued criminal behavior

Examples include:

- Someone with multiple convictions for violent crimes, such as assault or robbery, demonstrates a concerning pattern of aggression and disregard for the law
- An individual with a history of repeated offenses like drug trafficking or multiple thefts, despite previous legal interventions, shows a persistent inclination towards serious criminal activities

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Item 20: Disciplinary History

This item assesses an individual's disciplinary action(s) at school or work . These disciplinary actions may be current, ongoing, or historical.

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has engaged in occasional or minor behavioral infractions leading to disciplinary action(s) at school or work	The individual has a demonstrated history of frequent or severe infractions leading to significant disciplinary action(s) at school or work

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Item 20: Disciplinary History

Partially present risk related to an individual's disciplinary history is evident when they have engaged in occasional or minor behavioral infractions that have led to disciplinary actions at school or work

Examples include:

- An employee’s warnings for tardiness or lapses in professional behavior have been addressed without significant impact on their overall job stability
- A student may have been charged or sanctioned for occasional disruptions or minor policy violations, but these incidents have not significantly affected their academic progress

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Item 20: Disciplinary History

Significantly present risk related to an individual's disciplinary history is evident when they have a pattern of frequent or severe infractions that lead to substantial disciplinary actions at school or work

Examples include:

- An employee with multiple suspensions, demotions, or terminations resulting from repeated violations of company policies, such as harassment or theft
- A student who faces repeated suspension/expulsion or significant disciplinary measures for serious behavioral issues, such as aggressive outbursts or severe disruption

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Item 21: Violent Behavior Not Involving Criminal or Disciplinary Actions

This item assesses an individual's engagement in violent behavior(s) not involving criminal or disciplinary actions

Partially Present	Significantly Present
The individual has a demonstrated history of occasional or minor violent behavior not involving criminal or disciplinary actions	The individual has a history of frequent or significant incidents of violence not involving criminal or disciplinary actions

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Item 21: Violent Behavior Not Involving Criminal or Disciplinary Actions

Partially present risk related to an individual's history of occasional or minor violent behavior is evident when such behaviors are sporadic and do not result in criminal or disciplinary actions

Examples include:

- An individual might have a few instances of aggressive outbursts, such as shouting at others during heated arguments which involve incidental physical contact, like bumping someone while storming out in a moment of frustration, but these incidents do not lead to formal complaints or legal repercussions
- Someone might occasionally exhibit minor physical aggression, throwing objects at someone in anger, shoving someone, throwing a single punch at a friend during a heated argument, etc., yet they have not been reported to authorities or faced significant disciplinary actions

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Item 21: Violent Behavior Not Involving Criminal or Disciplinary Actions

Significantly present risk related to an individual with a history of violent behavior not involving criminal or disciplinary actions is evident when such behaviors are frequent and show a pattern of escalating aggression, even if they have not yet led to formal criminal or disciplinary actions

Examples include:

- An individual might consistently engage troubling behaviors like frequent physical altercations with peers, violent outbursts in social settings, or threatening gestures that create an environment of fear
- Someone who regularly exhibits aggressive behaviors, such as damaging property or intimidating others, despite not facing legal consequences or formal reprimands

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Case Study - Kat

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Case Study – Kat

Referral from Student, Bobby Z.

Timestamp: December 12, 2023, 10:48 PM

I was scrolling through Twitter this evening when I came across the below post from Kat Camille, a girl that is in my Environmental Science Class. It seems like these fraternity guys killed chickens or something as part of a ritual. I don't know what Kat means by, "Gonna find your friend next," or what else these guys have done, but I was worried and wanted to send this referral. For some reason my phone did not screenshot the whole post, but in the photos, there are two guys covered in blood smiling with the caption "Initiation Complete. Those chickens were no match for our new brothers."

Here is the screenshot of the tweet.

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Do you want a follow up response?

No. Please keep my name out of this.

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Case Study – Kat

Information gathered during the BIT meeting:

- The dean of students shares that Kat is a first-year student majoring in Environmental Studies.
- Kat is very involved and has joined several student organizations that promote animal and environmental rights.
- She is the founder and president of the student-run organization, HEAL (Helping Every Animal Live) and the group has organized protests at factory farms in areas around campus.
- Dr. Matt Fink, the Faculty Advisor for HEAL, shared that Kat is a very passionate advocate, and as she learns more about veganism (her dietary preference) and the treatment of animals, she feels even more committed to her activism efforts.
- Dr. Fink also stated that Kat has developed a group of friends who share the same values and are a supportive community through HEAL.

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Case Study – Kat

Information gathered during the BIT meeting:

- Housing shares that Kat lives on campus in a single room.
- Housing reports no concerns with suitemates or issues on the floor.
- University Police (UPD) shared that Kat has a large social media following where she promotes "self-healing and seeking the truth."
- Her social media pages feature graphic images of animals being killed at factories and call for her followers to "stop participating in murder."
- UPD noted that it appears Kat spends a lot of time online sharing articles about veganism and provoking arguments with those who do not share her beliefs.
- However, despite being argumentative at times, Kat's posts do not encourage violence towards others or contain violent fantasies.

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Case Study – Kat

Information gathered during the BIT meeting:

- The academic representative spoke with Kat's faculty members and a few mentioned that Kat is passionate regarding her perspective in the classroom, which can lead to arguments with her classmates.
- The professors who have seen this side of Kat have managed the conversation.
- Student Conduct has no record of Kat being reported by a professor for an allegation of classroom disruption.

The Team determined that Dean of Students, Dr. Aaron Austin, would conduct the Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA), a violence risk assessment tool as soon as possible.

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Video Demonstration

Kat

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Case Study – Kat

Collateral Information:

- Dean Austin interviewed Kat's mother, Nikki Camille, on December 14, 2023, at 3:05 p.m.
- Dean Austin explained the recent incident report and asked Nikki Camille to share some information about Kat to help provide more information for the assessment.
- Nikki shared that Kat has "always felt strongly about a variety of social justice issues" and has considered herself an advocate for causes for several years.
- When asked about Kat's relationship with her sister, Nikki confirmed the strained relationship between Kat and her sister saying, "The girls were close, but now the girls haven't talked to each other in two years because of Kat's beliefs and her sister's job."

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Case Study – Kat

Collateral Information:

- Nikki said that Kat's beliefs have been "stressful on [the family]" but added that she and Kat's brother still eat meat and Kat "has a good relationship with [them]."
- When asked about access to weapons, Nikki confirmed that Kat was raised around firearms and was taught at an early age how to use firearms to "protect herself."
- However, to Nikki's knowledge, Kat has not used a gun in several years and does not currently have access to a firearm.
- Nikki confirmed that Kat has not had issues in school or with authority.
- Nikki said that Kat was "never any trouble in school" and the "riskiest things she does are those protests."

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Case Study – Kat

Collateral Information:

- This confirmed Kat's report that she does not have a history of high-risk behaviors.
- Without being asked, Nikki said Kat has never been a "drinker or a druggie."
- Nikki said because of their close relationship Kat has admitted to being "drunk and high before," but Nikki is confident she's not a regular drinker or drug user.
- Dean Austin asked about any diagnosed health conditions, and Nikki confirmed that Kat has never been diagnosed with a mental health condition, but that Kat did go to a therapist during her parents' divorce.

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SIVRA

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

Kat Ratings

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SIVRA

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

1. Communicated a Threat
2. Target
3. Access to Means
4. Planning Behaviors
5. **Grievances (S)**
6. **Hate-Based or Ideological, Hardened Beliefs (S)**
7. Interest in Violence, Violent Content, or Causing Harm
8. Researched Past Attacks
9. Suicidality
10. Disconnection from Reality
11. Substance Use
12. **Personality Traits (P)**
13. Noticeable Behavior Change
14. **Access to and Experience with Firearms (P)**
15. Homelife Experiences
16. **Social Experiences (P)**
17. Work/School Experiences
18. **Personal or General Stressors (P)**
19. Criminal History
20. Disciplinary History
21. Violent Behavior Not Involving Criminal or Disciplinary Action

Outcome: Standard Need for Intervention

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Kat: Standard Need for Intervention

- 0-7 Risk Elements (partial or significant): Standard Need for Intervention
- Individualized interventions should include:
  - Direct services aimed at increasing distress/frustration tolerance and impulse control
  - Case management
  - Connection to resources
  - Reduction of risk factors and increase of protective factors

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Case Study - Will

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Case Study – Will

Referral from Dean of Students

Timestamp: April 27, 2021, 9:07 AM

I received the attached email from Will today, and it is one of many he has sent to myself and various other offices. This email was sent to the Director of Housing, Director of Disability Support Services, and Director of Student Conduct, and me.

Will has continued to express his frustration with the University and his belief that he is somehow being singled out and discriminated against because his housing accommodation request was recently denied, and he received a warning about submitting his COVID testing results on time, per our policy.

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Case Study – Will

Referral from Dean of Students

Timestamp: April 27, 2021, 9:07 AM

He has shared that he plans to file multiple complaints with various University and federal offices including the University President, DOJ, OCR, ADA, and Title IX, which is his right. I am worried about how Will is handling things academically and emotionally and believe he might benefit from some support as he navigates the various challenges he has shared. He mentions his disability being more pronounced and seems very frustrated overall. After speaking with some of my colleagues, I now realize he has sent about 25 similar emails to various people and departments over the last month.

See below the email he sent today:

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Hello Dean,

I do not appreciate that you have told me that I have continually refused to get weekly testing for COVID 19. You are wrong on that assumption, and I demand an apology.

At the start of the semester, Student Housing said I did not have to submit to weekly testing. So, I did not. If you want to verify that letter from Student Housing, I can forward it to you upon request.

This “miscommunication” is beginning to look less like a “miscommunication” and more like an intentional attempt to sabotage me by you, Student Housing, and Jake in Conduct. Your repeated attempts to contact me about testing, when you know I am complying with testing, borders on harassment, and I have sought a restraining order against all three of you.

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I also would like to file a formal complaint with you, with the Education Department, the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX/ADA as I believe you have all violated my disability rights by not granting me a housing accommodation and retaliating against me because of my disability.

This has caused significant problems with my current disabilities, and I blame this aggravation directly on you, disability services, and student housing, along with your Title IX Officer. She threatened to call the police on me after I asked for reasonable accommodation on this, as she felt I was somehow threatening her.

This increased retaliation and the fundamental difference have caused increased aggravation to all my disabilities. The accommodation to change written policy is not a far stretch for the University, and a person with PTSD should be handled on a special basis. We do not respond well under stress, and we get upset when we feel attacked in any fashion.

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Suppose the University continues to retaliate against me. In that case, I will also have to remind you of the complaint I made with the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX/ADA, for which this University is accountable.

You will not get away with mistreating people with disabilities and I will make sure you have consequences for your discrimination. Especially, “dean” of students and your staff in housing and conduct. The OCR and Title IX will investigate allegations of retaliatory action, and the OCR expects institutions to cooperate fully in such investigations.

I would be mindful of what you do from here on out as harassment and discrimination have taken a severe toll on my mental health and academic success at this University and I’m not afraid to make sure that this behavior isn’t tolerated. I know that standing up for myself comes with the risk that you will further retaliate against me, but I am willing to take that chance with the University if that is the only way we can resolve this issue.

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I have no problem taking this to court and the Federal Government for investigation. I am sick of being treated this way by this University, as I have done nothing wrong and have been a stellar student and resident ever since I arrived. This University is now threatening me with conduct action and has created instability in my life, and I blame you all for this. I mean, really?

You name another student that has been put under a microscope to ask for accommodations in student housing, and I would bet we could not find one individual. This shows me that I am now a target of the University, and they will do everything they can to get me out of here. I will not stand for that, and I have every right to fight you on this. I know the law, probably better than you, and will be victorious in this fight.

Respectfully, Will

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Case Study – Will

Information gathered during the BIT Meeting:

- The dean of students shares that Will is a veteran that is not involved in any registered student organizations.
- Housing shares that Will was living alone in a two-person apartment on-campus (at no additional cost) during COVID.
- This was a typical housing situation across campus given the need to socially distance and fewer students living on campus.
- Housing also shares that Will had a friend that would come and stay with him occasionally. He referred to them as his "caretaker," but they were not an accommodation or roommate.
- In Spring 2021, Will was notified that a new roommate would be placed with him starting Fall 2021 when the campus resumed normal operations.

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Case Study – Will

Information gathered during the BIT Meeting:

- Disability Support Services (DSS) shares that Will initiated an accommodation request through their office to maintain the single occupancy of the double apartment at no additional cost.
- Will is registered with DSS for PTSD and a medical disability that creates mobility issues but does not require a wheelchair or other assistance as a result of his military services.
- DSS granted a single accommodation; however, because the University offers single occupancy housing, he was offered to move to the single occupancy building or remain in the double room and pay for the unoccupied space.
- Will declined the single room housing placement, stating that he wanted to remain in the double occupancy room at the single occupancy rate.

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Case Study – Will

Information gathered during the BIT Meeting:

- Housing, in coordination with DSS, explained that this was not a reasonable accommodation, and he would have to move rooms or pay the additional rate.
- The Director of Student Conduct shares that during this same time, Will was not following the campus rules regarding testing for unvaccinated students as he was repeatedly late in submitting his COVID testing results.
- Will received automatic email communication prompting him to comply with the testing requirements.
- Recently, he received a failure to comply letter from the Office of Student Conduct regarding the repeat tardiness.

Based on this information, the BIT rated Will as moderate on both the D- and E-Scales. DSS agreed to reach out to Will in an attempt to coordinate necessary resources.

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Case Study – Will

Referral from Student Conduct

Timestamp: May 6, 8:34 AM

I received an email from Will last night, which I opened first thing this morning and I am attaching below. I am extremely concerned about his references to violence and wanted the BIT to know right away. Will was recently charged with Failure to Comply due to failing to share his COVID test results in a timely manner per the current COVID testing policy. I have worked with Will to help him, as he told me he was having difficulty with the online portal where results are shared. He received a warning initially and was not formally charged. I gave him the option to email the results directly to the COVID compliance office to avoid any portal issues.

Over the next month Will failed to email his testing results to the compliance office and yesterday he was issued a charge letter for Failure to Comply. This is the response I received from him via email:

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Director of Student Conduct,

I am writing this email to notify you that you continue to harass me and violate my rights to not have something invade my body like a testing swab. I ask you this, why does the University feel it is a good idea to harass me and push me to a breaking point? Given recent acts of violence from people that are angry and upset, I would think you would think twice before pissing me off. Ask yourself--why might someone engage in this kind of violence? I think I might be able to answer that for you.

Imagine a scenario of a veteran with PTSD who is being harassed just like me. He has tried to resolve the issue through legal means and understands the law but also has PTSD and anger issues. He feels as though he is being harassed and targeted by the University and wants revenge.

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Legal means haven't worked and there is nothing left but violence. The veteran is out of options, isolated, and alone. The veteran is well-versed in tactical and strategic command. A critical mind like the veteran's is the most dangerous because the veteran has seen war and can make an analysis about the best way to eliminate a threat using any means possible. The veteran will then take that analysis and use it against anyone that has crossed or upset them. The veteran will collect his arsenal of firearms and sniper rifles and pack his SUV to drive to campus.

He will wait for each administrator that has wronged him as they come out of their office at the end of the day. He will patiently pop them off one by one. No one has any idea where the shots are coming from because the veteran uses his sniper training to take a strategic position. The veteran goes all Charles Whitman on the University. Calculated shots destroy everything in the veteran's path as he guns down every individual within the shooting range, creating the largest mass shooting in U.S. history. The veteran reigns all powerful, taking down the Ivory Tower of academia.

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Let me ask you something – what would it take for someone to get here? All I have to say is, you tried to derail me, but lucky for you, I'm not that kind of veteran, but you can see how someone might be, right? This kind of thing could happen, and it will happen if universities continue to oppress those who are different from them. Thank God you got someone as forgiving as me. I am here to make sure that discrimination never happens to another veteran like me, but my weapon has always been pen and paper.

Now I know this grossly exaggerated but let me ask the University why it wants to push students' buttons – what would it take to push a disabled veteran to the point he plots an attack. I am not that veteran – that veteran is contemptible and dangerous, and I would be more worried about pissing that kind of veteran off because the result might not be the same as pissing me off. That veteran is locked, loaded, and ready to hit a soft target like the university. The opportunity is always there, especially if a student feels as though they have been wronged.

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Let this be a warning to all universities across the nation. Administration needs to recognize the toll COVID and isolation has taken on veterans. I can guarantee if you push a veteran like me too hard, they will break. Let's consider our best path forward so that no one gets upset and has to take drastic action.

-Will

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Case Study - Will

Information gathered during Emergency BIT Meeting:

- The University Police Chief stated that he initiated a welfare/safety check immediately when he saw the referral
- UPD searched Will's apartment and did not find any weapons in his room
- Given the new email and new referral, Will is rated Critical and brought in for a mandated violence risk assessment with the BIT Case Manager

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Video Demonstration

Will

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Case Study - Will

Update from Campus Police:

- Campus police reports that they did a search of Will's on campus residence hall and found no weapons or items of concern in his residence hall room. The search was thorough, and no evidence suggesting any immediate threat was discovered.

- A registered vehicle search showed that Mr. Douglas does have an SUV registered in his name on campus. This vehicle was not searched at the time. Mr. Douglas states he has firearms in off campus storage.

- Campus police further explained that in an on-scene interview with Mr. Douglas, he firmly denied any intent to cause harm. He clarified that the content of the email in question was purely hypothetical and not a statement of actual plans or intentions. Mr. Douglas was cooperative throughout the process and reiterated that his email was speculative in nature, not indicative of any imminent action. Based on the findings and interview, campus police found no reason to hold Mr. Douglas.

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Case Study - Will

Collateral Interview with Veteran Services:

- Dr. Schiemann conducted a collateral interview by phone with the Director of Veteran Services, Tracy Bowman. Director Bowman provided insight into the challenges Will has been facing.
- She confirmed that Will has been dealing with significant stressors, both in his personal and academic life. At home, he is struggling to balance the need for a caretaker to help with his physical disability, as well as financial difficulties, particularly in paying for housing. These stressors have impacted his performance in class, as he has fallen behind in his coursework.
- Director Bowman also noted that, based on her experience working with Will, she has never observed or been made aware of any violent history, unusual interest in violence, or references to past attacks. While Will has displayed some agitated and confrontational behavior, she emphasized that this is not a significant change in his demeanor, suggesting that it may be more reflective of his ongoing stress rather than a new or escalating concern. Overall, her observations suggest that Will's struggles stem from external stressors rather than any violent tendencies.

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SIVRA

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

Will Ratings

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SIVRA

Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment

1. **Communicated a Threat (S)**
2. **Target (S)**
3. **Access to Means (S)**
4. **Planning Behaviors (P)**
5. **Grievances (S)**
6. Hate-Based or Ideological, Hardened Beliefs
7. Interest in Violence, Violent Content, or Causing Harm
8. **Researched Past Attacks (P)**
9. Suicidality
10. Disconnection from Reality
11. Substance Use
12. **Personality Traits (P)**
13. Noticeable Behavior Change
14. **Access to and Experience with Firearms (S)**
15. **Homelife Experiences (P)**
16. Social Experiences
17. **Work/School Experiences (P)**
18. **Personal or General Stressors (P)**
19. Criminal History
20. **Disciplinary History (P)**
21. Violent Behavior Not Involving Criminal or Disciplinary Action

Outcome: Immediate Critical Need for Intervention

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Will:
Immediate Need for Critical Intervention

- If risk is *significantly* present on Item# 1 **AND** Item #2, **AND**
- Item #3 is *partially/significantly* **OR**
- Item #4 is *significantly* present
- The Assessor needs to contact law enforcement and initiate emergency response procedures regarding an imminent and/or lethal threat directly following the interview
- The Assessor should attempt to initiate emergency response procedures while the student is still in the office, if possible
- Depending on the information presented on these first four items, the Assessor may need to contact law enforcement immediately

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