

THREAT ASSESSMENT

Prevention, Prediction, and Intervention

“A threat assessment is composed of components that are used to define the risks an organization faces from an employee, customers, or outsiders. The threat assessment is comprised of past and current behavior as well as other sources of information such as a background search, interviews with peers and supervisors who can maintain confidentiality as well as other documented data.

I urge you to keep an open mind to the possible suggestions. Containing violent behavior does not always mean going with a conventional tactic. A myopic approach may escalate the very behavior we are trying to manage.”

- Dr. Dana Picore

Threat Assessment Scale:

Low: This indicates that the assessor believes the individual is at no risk, or very low risk, for violence

Moderate: This scale indicates that the assessor believes the individual is at somewhat elevated risk for violence

High: This scale indicates that the assessor believes the individual is at high or very elevated risk for violence.

“A person can pose a grave threat without articulating it. Some people who make threats ultimately pose threats; some people who pose threats never make threats.”

- National Institute of Justice

This is why a threat assessment consultant is crucial in the process of determining dangerousness.

It is important for all involved in the threat assessment to understand that the options chosen with each individual case may not be what you would normally consider during the traditional course of a working day. Certain circumstances will need to be assessed at a different level of insight when you are dealing with a possible hostile individual.

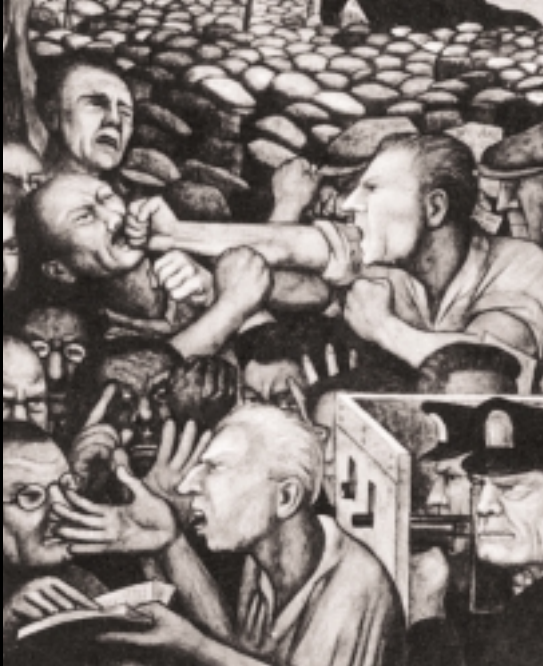
Some of the suggestions may appear "soft" or "hand-holding" the subject. Keep in mind that a threat assessment is designed to modify, control, or eliminate inappropriate behavior and the intervention is designed to stop the subject from escalating acting out negative behavior.

There is no guarantee that any intervention will ultimately stop violence from happening, but it offers solutions and possible de-escalation of the propensity of violence rather than hoping that nothing will occur and turning a blind eye.

A Threat Assessment Team (TAT) should include a threat assessment expert, human resources, legal counsel, and corporate security to provide an interdisciplinary team of experts. The team is put forth to evaluate measures for implementation that will offer containment of the subject and to protect, life, property and injury to innocent people.

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Statistics and Liability:

- The National Safe Workplace Institute calculates that a single episode of serious workplace violence can cost employers as much as \$250,000.
- The U.S. Department of Justice reports one million violent crimes in the workplace annually, and case law and OSHA regulations are holding employers liable.
- Homicide has become the second leading cause of occupational injury death.
- The magnitude of non-fatal workplace assaults comes from a survey by the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company indicating that 2.2 million workplace assaults (defined as physical attacks) occurred between July 1992 and July 1993.
- Of those who commit workplace murders, 40 percent then commit suicide.
- Incidents of workplace violence not only affect employee morale and public perception, but there are significant legal consequences as well. Violent acts may result in litigating exposures from three sources. These include regulatory authorities, third parties, and the potentially violent employee himself or herself.

Partial List of Various Options to Contain the Subject:

There are pros and cons to each bullet point. Each chosen option must be carefully assessed before its implementation.

- Restraining Order
- Surveillance
- Executive Protection
- Uniform Guard Service: Armed and Unarmed
- Severance Package
- Unemployment
- Employee Assistance Program
- Worker's Compensation
- Voluntary Commitment to a Mental Facility
- Involuntarily Commitment to a Mental Facility
- Police Report and Intervention
- Anger Management
- Psychotropic Medication
- Outplacement Services
- Intermittent Monitoring of the Subject
- Letter from Legal Department telling the subject to stop all inappropriate behavior.
- Lay-off with a group versus being laid off individually. From the perspective of the individual employee facing a lay-off as a result of these momentous changes, the stress and disruption can be enormous. The person who is the only one losing a job is in a potentially more stressful situation than would be the case if the firing were part of a lay-off involving others.
- Access control and perimeter design as a means to ensure building security.
- Allowing the perpetrator to maintain contact with the victim through emails and letters, although the subject cannot know that their communications are reaching the victim, unless that response is required by law. The perpetrator must not receive a response. This may be our best way of accumulating information concerning the subject's propensity for violence.
- Termination

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