

## School Threat Assessment Response Team (START)

The phenomenon of premeditated school shootings has been experienced throughout the nation. The tragedies have resulted in loss of life with associated acute and long-term emotional harm to victims, survivors, educational institutions, and community.



Early identification, intervention, case management, and monitoring is critical to the prevention of school violence.

In Los Angeles County, the Department of Mental Health's School Threat Assessment Response Team (START), in collaboration with schools and law enforcement, have responded to numerous incidents of potential school violence in elementary, middle, high school and college campuses. Timely interventions have prevented school tragedies. The need for a comprehensive prevention, intervention, and monitoring program in elementary, middle, high schools, community colleges, trade schools, and universities is readily apparent.

**START** was designed to address the need for a comprehensive threat prevention and management program. In the City of Los Angeles, START and the Los Angeles Police Department work together to address school violence. County-wide, START Teams provide threat prevention and management assistance to other school districts and law enforcement agencies.

## Key Components of School Threat Assessment Response Teams

### Training and Program Consultation

**START** provides educational and training programs for select audiences. They are designed to increase situational awareness among school administrators, faculty, parents, students, campus security, and local law enforcement. They do this in part by providing information on the behaviors and characteristics typically found among school shooters. These programs are also designed to improve understanding about the dynamics of school shooters and the importance of timely identification, assessment, and monitoring. The training focuses on two areas: 1) risk/threat assessment and 2) uniform standards of practice that include multidisciplinary Crisis or Threat Management Teams. Consultation is available to educational institutions interested in developing crisis management teams which focus on students of concern.



### Early Screening and Identification

**START** provides educational institutions with case-by-case consultation on students or situations of concern. Educational institutions are supported in adopting a multidisciplinary/multi agency team approach consisting of internal and external experts. This approach has proven to be successful in preventing and managing violence in other settings and is consistent with recommendations that followed the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007.

### Assessment

**START** dedicates staff resources to assist schools in completing a comprehensive assessment of the student, situation, support system, and other factors relevant to the perceived, implied, or stated threat.

### Intervention

**START** collaborates with educational institutions to provide a response appropriate to the situation. Response options may include further assessment, ongoing monitoring, arrest or detention, involuntary hospitalization, voluntary outpatient psychiatric treatment, residential placement, and substance abuse education and treatment. Other strategies may include anger management, job training, and other support services not traditionally thought of as mental health. Interventions may include consultation with the criminal justice system including judges, district attorneys, and defense attorneys.

### Case Management and Monitoring

**START** provides post-intervention services including case consultation, case management, linkage, follow-up, and periodic review of risk factors.





## ***Get the Assistance Your School Needs Now!***

### **START provides:**

- Training & Program Consultation
- Early Screening & Identification
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Case Management & Monitoring



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**DEPARTMENT OF  
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Sachi A. Hamai  
Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles County

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#### **Department of Mental Health**

Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D., Director  
550 South Vermont Ave., 12th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90020

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