THREAT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES (TAG)
A thorough assessment is essential to effective treatment

The County of Los Angeles School Threat Assessment and Response Team (START) typically refers students at risk for Targeted School Violence (TSV) to mental health providers and school counselors. The referral includes the various factors or dynamics that, if addressed in therapy, improve the students' life circumstance and lessen the likelihood of school violence.

The following indications are designed to assist mental health providers in the intake process, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning.

- Risk assessment is a method by which the probability of generally violent behavior is estimated based on at-risk traits while risk factors, or red flags, are those that research has determined to be statistically related to violence (Meloy, Hoffman, Guldimann, & James, 2011).

- START offers mental health providers an assessment of risk and risk factors as part of the referral process to facilitate treatment planning.

- The U.S. Secret Service Report Enhancing School Safety Using A Threat Assessment Model (2019) identifies common risk factors to targeted school violence including prior trauma, domestic violence, bullying, loss, isolation, and fascination with prior school shootings.

OPEN SOURCE

Meloy, J. R., Hoffman, J., Guldimann, A., & James, D. (2011). The Role of Warning Behaviors in Threat Assessment: An Exploration and Suggested Typology. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*. DOI: 10.1002/bsl.999

U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) (2019). *Enhancing School Safety Using A Threat Assessment Model. An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence.* Retrieved from https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_0711_USSS_NTAC-Enhancing-School-Safety-Guide.pdf

Examples to illustrate the link between risk factors and Targeted School Violence

BRENDA ANN SPENCER

At age 16, Brenda killed the principal and a custodian and wounded 8 children and a police officer at Grover Cleveland Elementary School in San Diego in 1979. Brenda's history includes, childhood sexual and physical abuse, neglect, bullying, substance abuse, depression, suicidality, and complex trauma.

ALVARO RAFAEL CASTILLO

At age 18, Alvaro fatally shot his father at home and wounded two students at Orange High School in Hillsborough, SC. in 2006 modeling the Columbine shooting. Alvaro's history includes isolation, paranoia, suicide attempts, delusions to kill others, child abuse, exposure to domestic violence, and obsession with school shootings and firearms. Alvaro did not have behavioral problems in school and had good grades.

ELLIOT O. RODGER

At age 22, Elliot killed 6 and injured 14 people in Isla Vista, CA in 2014, near the campus of UC Santa Barbara. His manifesto is called "My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger." Elliot's history includes isolation, severe bullying, Autism Spectrum traits, parents' divorce, rage against women, "incel" identity, narcissism, grandiosity, lack of empathy, paranoia, "injustice collector" behaviors, resentment, grievances, envy of more successful peers, and cultural identity problems.

Our experience is that when these issues are incorporated into the students' treatment, they allow for an effective therapeutic strategy that reduces or eliminates the threat

For more information, please email: **START@dmh.lacounty.gov** or visit **https://dmh.lacounty.gov/START**

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