A BIT Response to a Non-Community Member Threat: A Tabletop Exercise of the Charleston, SC Shooting

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Abstract
As the authors contemplated this paper describing a tabletop exercise involving the horrific and senseless killing of nine members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, it was critical that we offer help to Behavioral Intervention Teams and not be exploitive in any way. Our hearts are saddened and our prayers continue to be with the families and friends of Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Tywanza Sanders, Cynthia Hurd, Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Myra Thompson, Ethel Lance, Rev. Daniel Simmons, Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, and Susie Jackson. The surviving members of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church have demonstrated the strength of their faith and compassion for their fellow man. Their response is a shining beacon in the darkness of an all too familiar national tragedy.
Introduction

Behavioral Intervention Teams in higher education should look for opportunities to improve their processes and test procedures. Reviewing a previous case which an institution’s team dealt with is one method. Packaged scenarios, such as those provided by NaBITA in “The Book on Behavioral Intervention Teams” and during the annual Threat Assessment Institute are invaluable resources for tabletop exercises. Another option for BITs is to create a dynamic tabletop exercise from a current event. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how a current event can be used as a tabletop exercise and to encourage other BITs to consider this practice in their training.

There is the need for testing and practicing plans because great plans can go horribly wrong during crises. Tabletops can expose gaps, uncover issues that need to be addressed, and serve as a reminder of positional responsibilities of members of the team responding to the incident, while also checking the current validity of resources such as warning systems, relationships with local authorities, and a BIT’s ability assemble and react quickly (Harmon, 2010). Tabletop exercises are used in a wide range of fields and organizations because “tabletops can be used to enhance general awareness, validate plans and procedures, rehearse concepts, and/or assess the types of systems needed to guide the prevention of, protection from, mitigation of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident” (CERT, 2015). Exercises should have a clear objective, use the proper tools, and stick to the agenda for the particular exercise. Additionally, these exercises should foster engagement between team members as they work together in response to the hypothetical incident (Harmon, 2010 and Ready, 2015).

At the conclusion of the exercise, the team should conduct a hot wash, or immediate response of what worked as planned, what did not, and ways to improve the response. Appropriate members of the team should then be assigned the tasks of updating and making adjustments to the plan (Harmon, 2010).

Some incidents lend themselves better to a tabletop exercise than others. This was the case with the incident of June 16, 2015, as it was soon discovered by authorities that the alleged gunman had originally considered an attack on a local college. This tabletop started with the question, “What if we had discovered we were being targeted by a non-campus community member?”

The authors followed the news accounts of Dylann Roof and the shooting in Charleston, SC. When Reuters (2015) reported the gunman had told a friend of his intentions to attack a college campus, the BIT chair and chief of police at Columbus State University speculated about how the team would address pre-incident leakage of information regarding a non-student. In nearly 60 percent of all targeted attacks, there is some degree of leakage of the perpetrators’ intent (Drysdale, Modzelenski, and Simions, 2010). When a community member who may be leaking information of an attack is identified, the BIT can work to de-escalate the behavior through various methods of intervention (Sokolow, Schuster, and Lewis, S, 2012, December). In this case, Roof was a member of the greater community, but when he leaked information about an attack on a particular college campus, he inserted himself into that college community.

Pre-Tabletop Exercise

The exercise facilitator should gather the information and tools needed and set the stage for the hypothetical incident (CERT, 2015). With this particular exercise, the materials were presented as if they were in real time. The facilitator (BIT chair) instructed team members to read the Reuters June 20, 2015 article (Appendix A) as a BIT report generated by the campus police department. BIT members were also instructed to view the Brendan O’Connor account of Roof’s manifesto that appeared in Gawker (Appendix B). The manifesto was discovered during a campus police interview with Christon Scriven, friend of Roof’s. The BIT chair further instructed the team to refrain from projecting any knowledge of information regarding the actual incident (i.e., news accounts or knowledge of the shooting outside the context of the exercise and the two Appendices attached).

A BIT report was generated by the BIT chair, which included Appendix A as the incident description and Appendix B as an attachment to the report. A BIT report is the official record of reporting an incident about a person of concern to the BIT. For this exercise, the BIT report was submitted into the institution’s Maxient software database. A “poke” (Maxient notification function) was sent out to the BIT core team with instructions to review the case for an emergency tabletop exercise (which actually took place during regular summer team training).

Information Presented to the BIT for the Tabletop Exercise

1. Bob (fictitious character) reported to the Campus Police Tip Line that his friend, Christon Scriven, told him that Dylann Roof stated that he wanted to “shoot up” our college campus.
   a. Campus Police asked Bob to come in for an interview, to which he agreed.
   b. The Campus Police chief informed the BIT chair about the information from obtained from Scriven.

2. Scriven agreed to come in for an interview, which the BIT chair watched on a live video feed with the chief of police. This point was debated by the team during the exercise. The question was whether the BIT chair could be viewed as an agent of the police. The team’s final determination was the
person of concern was not a campus community member and the members of the university were working in concert to provide a safe campus environment. There were no Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act violations, and the chair would not be acting or recommending actions against a student or employee.

a. Scriven shared the information found in Appendix A and led the police to the online manifesto (Appendix B).

b. During the interview, Scriven told the police that Roof attended a local high school.

c. The dean of students located a high school classmate (Sandy) who currently attends the college that is the alleged target of the attack and spoke with her. Sandy relayed her beliefs concerning Roof. She remembered him as being similar to a white-supremacist and always seemed to be in trouble at school. This served to validate to the BIT the claims and feelings that Roof had made in his manifesto. Sandy reported that while she and Roof were in the same class in high school, he had not graduated. She stated that Roof had stopped attending high school around their junior year.

3. Behavioral Intervention Team Discussion:

a. The BIT chair and the chief of police briefed the team, using the Actionable Case Workflow Chart (Appendix C) as the guide for the discussion.

b. Using the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool, the BIT rated Roof at 6-Elevated.

i. As indicated by the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool in that Roof may be a threat to others, the BIT conducted a preliminary SIVRA-35 (see Appendix D), which returned a score of 40/70.

c. Campus Police provided social media content concerning Roof and available police records. Campus Police reported that his Facebook page contained pictures of him holding guns and white supremacist materials. Police also reported that Roof had been informed that if he returned to a local mall, he would be arrested for criminal trespassing in February 2015 after engaging in strange and suspicious behavior. He was then arrested in March 2015 for misdemeanor drug possession and arrested April 2015 for violating the no-trespass warning at the mall. During the arrest at the mall, Suboxone, a drug used to treat narcotic addiction, was found in his possession. He had a prescription for it.

d. The BIT reviewed Scriven’s statements, the information from Sandy, and the manifesto.

4. The BIT discussed the problem of how to harden-the-target (the university) while not agitating the person of concern, who was not formally a member of the campus community.

a. The BIT considered ways to encourage Roof to submit himself for a mental health assessment. The question remained of who would make the contact with Roof and who would facilitate the assessment.

b. The BIT considered contacting family and known friends to request their assistance. How would this be received and then passed on to Roof? Could the lack of control of the message actually agitate Roof into taking action, or would the message even be passed along?

Determinations of the Behavioral Intervention Team

After much BIT discussion, it was determined that:

1. Since Roof was not currently and had never been a student at the university, the university administration had no authority to approach him, his family, or friends to encourage him to participate in a mental health assessment.

2. Therefore, Campus Police would present Judge Smith with the findings of the BIT (Threat Assessment Tool & SIVRA-35), along with a copy of the manifesto, pictures from Roof’s Facebook page, and the statements from Scriven and Sandy in an effort to obtain a search warrant for Roof’s home to search for the gun Scriven had described. The team discussed that:

   c. In Georgia, a Terrorist Threats claim could not be used as probable cause, because no individual had been targeted by name.

   d. However, as: (1) the school was named; (2) a time frame was established for an attack (within seven days); and (3) a person of concern had recently purchased a weapon and it appeared that he was in drug rehabilitation, the team felt that it was possible that the judge would grant the warrant under 16-10-28 False Public Alarm.

Projected Results of the BIT’s Action

Once the BIT had determined its intended course of action, the team postulated as to what it believed would happen as a result. The following is a summary of that discussion:

1. Roof would refused to come in for an interview with Campus Police, but his attorney would inform the university that Roof would be filing a complaint for an unlawful search.

2. While the police would able to confiscate the gun on Day Five of the seven-day window, four months later, it would most likely be ordered by the court that the gun be returned to Roof.

3. During that four-month time period, Roof’s parents would become involved and Roof would be placed in a residential treatment program.
4. On Day Seven, everyone would still breathing and continue to do so.
5. Regarding the gun being returned to Roof, the university would petition the court to have the gun remain in the custody of police, as the person of concern is undergoing a residential treatment program for drug rehabilitation and mental health assessment related to violent tendencies.

At the end of the exercise, the BIT felt strongly that:
1. Acknowledging the threat in an official capacity can bring attention to the person of concern, who can now receive help.
2. This acknowledgment could thwart an attempt by hardening the target.
3. When the findings of the NaBITA Threat Assessment Tool, SIVRA-35, and a Structured Professional Judgment of a trained BIT are coupled with statements taken by police and a copy of the manifesto, this truly would make a great argument to a judge for obtaining warrants and protective court orders.

Conclusion
Modern Behavioral Intervention Teams should have a variety of tools, protocols, and procedures that have been tested and considered as best practices within the industry (Sokolow and Lewis, 2009). Much like any team involved in the safety of others, BITs should routinely evaluate their tools and resources to determine their current state of readiness. Tabletop exercises have long been used by law enforcement and emergency management teams to prepare for what they hope never occurs.

Using a current event that is still unfolding may add urgency to a discussion for a BIT tabletop exercise. Inserting fictional characters to a scenario may be necessary to allow the conversation to flow around the table, linking team members to the person of concern. Utilizing this particular incident created a sense of realism and familiarity to the campus for this BIT. The team found itself protecting the campus community, not discussing an incident that happened at some other location far away.

The team discovered that while the courts may not allow a search warrant, a judge may over turn a decision, and families of a person of concern may or may not be cooperative; and that simply having the conversation and bringing others into the discussion may very well in itself harden the university as a target of a violent act. The tabletop experience by this Behavioral Intervention Team should encourage other colleges and universities to conduct similar exercises.

References


Appendix A
CHARLESTON SHOOTER ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO ATTACK A COLLEGE

By Reuters
June 20, 2015 | 8:41am
www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/20/us-usa-shooting-south-carolina-friends-idUSKBN0P008D20150620

Friends of the white gunman who shot and killed nine black people inside an historic African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina said he first talked about attacking a college campus, the Washington Post and NBC News reported on Friday.

The Washington Post reported 22-year-old Christon Scriven, a black neighbor of gunman Dylann Roof, said that during a recent night of drinking, Roof said he wanted to open fire on a school. At another point, Roof talked about shooting up the College of Charleston, according to the newspaper. “My reaction at the time was, ‘You’re just talking crazy,’” Scriven told the Post. “I don’t think he’s always there.”

Scriven also told NBC News that Roof may have changed his plans after deciding the college campus was a harder target to access.

“He just said on Wednesday, everything was going to happen. He said they had seven days,” Scriven said to NBC News. “I just ran through my head that he did it […] Like, he really went and did what he said he was going to do.”

Reuters could not verify the report as Scriven could not be immediately reached for comment.

Roof, 21, who authorities say spent an hour in Bible study with parishioners at the nearly 200-year-old Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church before opening fire on Wednesday night, appeared via video feed before a magistrate judge who on Friday ordered him held without bond.

He has been charged with nine counts of murder and a weapons offense.

The attack at the church nicknamed “Mother Emanuel” for its key role in African-American history followed a wave of protests across the United States in recent months over police killings of unarmed black men, focusing attention on racial bias in the criminal justice system and renewing a civil rights movement under the banner of “Black Lives Matter.”

Appendix B
Here Is What Appears to Be Dylann Roof’s Racist Manifesto

Brendan O’Connor
Filed to: DYLANN ROOF 6/20/15 10:55am

Via Twitter users @HenryKrinkle and @EMQuangle, here is what appears to be Charleston shooter Dylann Roof's racist manifesto. “The event that truly awakened me was the Trayvon Martin case,” the author of this document writes. “I can say today that I am completely racially aware.”

It goes on: “Black people are racially aware almost from birth, but White people on average dont think about race in their daily lives.”

The manifesto comes from a website registered under Dylann Roof’s name, lastrhodesian.com, discovered through a Reverse Who is look-up on domaintools.com.

There are two links on the front page of lastrhodesian.com: one is to a text file; the other is to a .zip folder, which contains numerous photographs of Roof. In several of these, he is seen to be wearing a jacket stitched with the flag of the white supremacist state of Rhodesia.
Read the full document below:

I was not raised in a racist home or environment. Living in the South, almost every White person has a small amount of racial awareness, simply because of the numbers of negroes in this part of the country. But it is a superficial awareness. Growing up, in school, the White and black kids would make racial jokes toward each other, but all they were were jokes. Me and White friends would sometimes would watch things that would make us think that “blacks were the real racists” and other elementary thoughts like this, but there was no real understanding behind it.

The event that truly awakened me was the Trayvon Martin case. I kept hearing and seeing his name, and eventually I decided to look him up. I read the Wikipedia article and right away I was unable to understand what the big deal was. It was obvious that Zimmerman was in the right. But more importantly this prompted me to type in the words “black on White crime” into Google, and I have never been the same since that day. The first website I came to was the Council of Conservative Citizens. There were pages upon pages of these brutal black on White murders. I was in disbelief. At this moment I realized that something was very wrong. How could the news be blowing up the Trayvon Martin case while hundreds of these black on White murders got ignored?

From this point I researched deeper and found out what was happening in Europe. I saw that the same things were happening in England and France, and in all the other Western European countries. Again I found myself in disbelief. As an American we are taught to accept living in the melting pot, and black and other minorities have just as much right to be here as we do, since we are all immigrants. But Europe is the homeland of White people, and in many ways the situation is even worse there. From here I found out about the Jewish problem and other issues facing our race, and I can say today that I am completely racially aware.

Blacks
I think it is is fitting to start off with the group I have the most real life experience with, and the group that is the biggest problem for Americans.

Niggers are stupid and violent. At the same time they have the capacity to be very slick. Black people view everything through a racial lense. That’s what racial awareness is, its viewing everything that happens through a racial lense. They are always thinking about the fact that they are black. This is part of the reason they get offended so easily, and think that some thing are intended to be racist towards them, even when a White person wouldn’t be thinking about race. The other reason is the Jewish agitation of the black race.

Black people are racially aware almost from birth, but White people on average dont think about race in their daily lives. And this is our problem. We need to and have to.

Say you were to witness a dog being beat by a man. You are almost surely going to feel very sorry for that dog. But then say you were to witness a dog biting a man. You will most likely not feel the same pity you felt for the dog for the man. Why? Because dogs are lower than men.

This same analogy applies to black and White relations. Even today, blacks are subconsciously viewed by White people are lower beings. They are held to a lower standard in general. This is why they are able to get away with things like obnoxious behavior in public. Because it is expected of them.

Modern history classes instill a subconscious White superiority complex in Whites and an inferiority complex in blacks. This White superiority complex that comes from learning of how we dominated other peoples is also part of the problem I have just mentioned. But of course I dont deny that we are in fact superior.

I wish with a passion that niggers were treated terribly throughout history by Whites, that every White person had an ancestor who owned slaves, that segregation was an evil an oppressive institution, and so on. Because if it was all true, it would make it so much easier for me to accept our current situation. But it isn’t true. None of it is. We are told to accept what is happening to us because of ancestors wrong doing, but it is all based on historical lies, exaggerations and myths. I have tried endlessly to think of reasons we deserve this, and I have only came back more irritated because there are no reasons.

Only a fourth to a third of people in the South owned even one slave. Yet every White person is treated as if they had a slave owning ancestor. This applies to in the states where slavery never existed, as well as people whose families immigrated after slavery was abolished. I have read hundreds of slaves narratives from my state. And almost all of them were positive. One sticks out in my mind where an old ex-slave recounted how the day his mistress died was one of the saddest days of his life. And in many of these narratives the slaves told of how their masters didn’t even allowing whipping on his plantation.

Segregation was not a bad thing. It was a defensive measure. Segregation did not exist to hold back negroes. It existed to protect us from them. And I mean that in multiple ways. Not only did it protect us from having to interact with them, and from being physically harmed by them, but it protected us from being brought down to their level. Integration has done nothing but bring Whites down to level of brute animals. The best example of this is obviously our school system.

Now White parents are forced to move to the suburbs to send their children to “good schools”. But what constitutes a “good school”? The fact is that how good a school is considered directly corresponds to how White it is. I hate with a passion the whole idea of the suburbs. To me it represents
nothing but scared White people running. Running because they are too weak, scared, and brainwashed to fight. Why should we have to flee the cities we created for the security of the suburbs? Why are the suburbs secure in the first place? Because they are White. The pathetic part is that these White people dont even admit to themselves why they are moving. They tell themselves it is for better schools or simply to live in a nicer neighborhood. But it is honestly just a way to escape niggers and other minorities.

But what about the White people that are left behind? What about the White children who, because of school zoning laws, are forced to go to a school that is 90 percent black? Do we really think that that White kid will be able to go one day without being picked on for being White, or called a “white boy”? And who is fighting for him? Who is fighting for these White people forced by economic circumstances to live among negroes? No one, but someone has to.

Here I would also like to touch on the idea of a Northwest Front. I think this idea is beyond stupid. Why should I for example, give up the beauty and history of my state to go to the Northwest? To me the whole idea just parallels the concept of White people running to the suburbs. The whole idea is pathetic and just another way to run from the problem without facing it.

Some people feel as though the South is beyond saving, that we have too many blacks here. To this I say look at history. The South had a higher ratio of blacks when we were holding them as slaves. Look at South Africa, and how such a small minority held the black in apartheid for years and years. Speaking of South Africa, if anyone thinks that think will eventually just change for the better, consider how in South Africa they have affirmative action for the black population that makes up 80 percent of the population. It is far from being too late for America or Europe. I believe that even if we made up only 30 percent of the population we could take it back completely. But by no means should we wait any longer to take drastic action.

Anyone who thinks that White and black people look as different as we do on the outside, but are somehow magically the same on the inside, is delusional. How could our faces, skin, hair, and body structure all be different, but our brains be exactly the same? This is the nonsense we are led to believe.

Negroes have lower Iqs, lower impulse control, and higher testosterone levels in generals. These three things alone are a recipe for violent behavior. If a scientist publishes a paper on the differences between the races in Western Europe or Americans, he can expect to lose his job. There are personality traits within human families, and within different breeds of cats or dogs, so why not within the races?

A horse and a donkey can breed and make a mule, but they are still two completely different animals. Just because we can breed with the other races doesnt make us the same.

In a modern history class it is always emphasized that, when talking about “bad” things Whites have done in history, they were White. But when we learn about the numerous, almost countless wonderful things Whites have done, it is never pointed out that these people were White. Yet when we learn about anything important done by a black person in history, it is always pointed out repeatedly that they were black. For example when we learn about how George Washington carver was the first nigger smart enough to open a peanut.

On another subject I want to say this. Many White people feel as though they dont have a unique culture. The reason for this is that White culture is world culture. I dont mean that our culture is made up of other cultures, I mean that our culture has been adopted by everyone in the world. This makes us feel as though our culture isnt special or unique. Say for example that every business man in the world wore a kimono, that every skyscraper was in the shape of a pagoda, that every door was a sliding one, and that everyone ate every meal with chopsticks. This would probably make a Japanese man feel as though he had no unique traditional culture.

I have noticed a great disdain for race mixing White women within the White nationalists community, bordering on insanity it. These women are victims, and they can be saved. Stop.

Jews
Unlike many White nationalists, I am of the opinion that the majority of American and European jews are White. In my opinion the issues with jews is not their blood, but their identity. I think that if we could somehow destroy the jewish identity, then they wont cause much of a problem. The problem is that jews look White, and in many cases are White, yet they see themselves as minorities. Just like niggers, most jews are always thinking about the fact that they are jewish. The other issue is that they network. If we could somehow turn every jew blue for 24 hours, I think there would be a mass awakening, because people would be able to see plainly what is going on. I dont pretend to understand why jews do what they do. They are enigma.

Hispanics
Hispanics are obviously a huge problem for Americans. But there are good hispanics and bad hispanics. I remember while watching hispanic television stations, the shows and even the commercials were more White than our own. They have respect for White beauty, and a good portion of hispanics are White. It is a well known fact that White hispanics make up the elite of most hispanics countries. There is good White blood worth saving in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and even Brasil. But they are still our enemies.

East Asians
I have great respect for the East Asian races. Even if we were to go extinct they could carry something on. They are by nature very racist and could be great allies of the White race. I am not opposed at all to allies with the Northeast Asian races.
Patriotism

I hate the sight of the American flag. Modern American patriotism is an absolute joke. People pretending like they have something to be proud while White people are being murdered daily in the streets. Many veterans believe we owe them something for “protecting our way of life” or “protecting our freedom”. But I’m not sure what way of life they are talking about. How about we protect the White race and stop fighting for the Jews. I will say this though, I myself would have rather lived in 1940’s America than Nazi Germany, and no this is not ignorance speaking, it is just my opinion. So I don’t blame the veterans of any wars up until after Vietnam, because at least they had an American to be proud of and fight for.

An Explanation

To take a saying from a film, “I see all this stuff going on, and I don’t see anyone doing anything about it. And it pisses me off.”. To take a saying from my favorite film, “Even if my life is worth less than a speck of dirt, I want to use it for the good of society.”.

I have no choice. I am not in the position to, alone, go into the ghetto and fight. I chose Charleston because it is most historic city in my state, and at one time had the highest ratio of blacks to Whites in the country. We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.

Unfortunately at the time of writing I am in a great hurry and some of my best thoughts, actually many of them have been to be left out and lost forever. But I believe enough great White minds are out there already. Please forgive any typos, I didn’t have time to check it.

If this was indeed written by Dylann Roof — as it certainly seems to have been — let there be no more equivocation about his motivations.

Appendix C

ACTIONABLE CASE WORKFLOW CHART

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Report Received Emergency?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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Maxient Report Check:
- Academic
- Non-academic
- Medical Withdrawals
- Appeals
- Others

NaBITA Tool
- Mild
  - Notify appropriate personnel for intervention and request follow-up report.
- Moderate
  - Possibly: Notify appropriate personnel for intervention and request follow-up report.

Request Reports:
- Academic Record/Speak with Instructors
- Mapp-Works
- Disability Services
- Police (Criminal History & Social Media)
- SIVRA-35 (threat to others)
- Interviews
- Administrations/FIn Aid/Bursar

Possible Interim Action is Necessary

Briefing to Team on Preliminary Investigation

Recommendation to Close

Recommendation to Refer

Refer Back to Team with New:
- NaBITA Tool
- SIVRA-35
- Mental Health Assessment
- Recommendation
Appendix D

SIVRA-35 Results
1 message

NaBITA <noreply@nabita.org>           Thu, Jul 2, 2015 at 9:07 AM
To: reese_aaron@columbusstate.edu

Total Score: 40/70        OVERALL RISK: HIGH          Case Number: 20150702

Narrative: The data you entered suggests an individual who is a risk to others. Decisive and quick action is required to thwart a potential violent attack on an individual or on campus. Multiple departments should be involved in this case to better address concerns for the community and campus safety.

If the student’s whereabouts are not currently known, locating the student for further assessment is essential. Most extreme risk cases will require some separation — as permitted by law and campus policy — from campus to allow for further assessment, information gathering and potential campus and/or criminal charges.

Efforts should be made to notify and work with those who can help mitigate risk (e.g. parents, extended family, friends) while the BIT engagement continues.

Item Breakdown
A score of “1” indicates that some of the behavior may be present. A score of “2” indicates that the behavior is strongly present.

Item #1: There is a direct communicated threat to a person, place, or system. Rated: 2
Source: Deisinger, Randazzo and Nolan, 2014; ASIS and SHRM, 2011; Meloy et al., 2011; Drysdale et al., 2010; Randazzo and Plummer, 2009; ATAP, 2006; Turner and Gelles, 2003; O’Toole (2002).

Item #2: The student has the plans, tools, weapons, schematics, and/or materials to carry out an attack on a potential target. Rated: 1

Item #3: The student harbors violent fantasies to counteract his/her isolation and/or emotional pain. Rated: 1

Item #4: The student has an action plan and/or timeframe to complete an attack. Rated: 2

Item #5: The student is fixated and/or focused on his target in his actions and threatening statements. Rated: 2
Source: Deisinger, Randazzo and Nolan, 2014; Meloy et al. (2011); O’Toole and Bowman (2011); ASIS and SHRM (2011); US Post Office (2007); Turner and Gelles (2003).

Item #6: The student carries deep grudges and resentments. He can’t seem to let things go and collects injustices based on perceptions of being hurt, frustrated with someone, or annoyed. Rated: 1

Item #8: There has been leakage concerning a potential plan of attack. Leakage can include a direct threat, but also can be “found” items shedding light on a plan of attack. Rated: 2
Item #13: The student displays a hardened point of view or strident, argumentative opinion. This is beyond a person who is generally argumentative or negative. Rated: 2  
Source: Meloy et al. (2011); ASIS and SHRM (2011); Randazzo and Plummer (2009); ATAP (2006); Turner and Gelles (2003); O’Toole (2002); Byrnes (2002).

Item #15: The student is driven to a particular action to cause harm.* Rated: 2  

Item #16: The student has had a recent breakup or failure of an intimate relationship and/or the student has become obsessed in stalking or fixated on another person romantically. Rated: 1  
Source: ASIS and SHRM (2011); Drysdale et al. (2010); Randazzo and Plummer (2009); ATAP (2006); Turner and Gelles (2003); Vossekuil et al. (2002).

Item #19: The student has a weapon (or access to weapon), specialized training in weapon handling, interest in paramilitary organizations, or veteran/law enforcement status. Rated: 2  
Source: Melay et al. (2011); ASIS and SHRM (2011); US Post Office (2007); ATAP (2006); Turner and Gelles (2003); Vossekuil et al. (2002).

Item #20: The student glorifies and revels in publicized violence such as school shootings, serial killers, and war, or displays an unusual interest in sensational violence. The student uses weapons for emotional release and venerates destruction. Rated: 2  

Item #21: The student externalizes blame for personal behaviors and problems onto other people despite efforts to educate him/her about how others view these actions. The student takes immediate responsibility in a disingenuous manner. Rated: 1  
Source: O’Toole and Bowman (2011); US Post Office (2007); ATAP (2006); Turner and Gelles (2003); O’Toole (2002).

Item #22: The student intimidates or acts superior to others. The student displays intolerance to individual differences. Rated: 2  
Source: Van Brunt, 2015; Meloy et al. (2011); O’Toole and Bowman (2011); ATAP (2006); Turner and Gelles (2003); O’Toole (2002).

Item #23: The student has a past history of excessively impulsive, erratic, or risk-taking behavior. Rated: 1  
Source: O’Toole and Bowman (2011); ASIS and SHRM (2011); Randazzo and Plummer (2009); US Post Office (2007); Turner and Gelles (2003).

Item #24: The student has a past history of problems with authority. The student has a pattern of intense work conflicts with supervisors and other authorities (e.g., resident advisor, conduct officer, professor, or dean). Rated: 2  
Source: O’Toole and Bowman (2011); ASIS and SHRM (2011); US Post Office (2007); ATAP (2006); Turner and Gelles (2003); O’Toole (2002).

Item #25: The student handles frustration in an explosive manner or displays a low tolerance for becoming upset. This is beyond avoiding responsibility or calling mom/dad or a lawyer. Rated: 1  
Source: O’Toole and Bowman (2011); ASIS and SHRM (2011); Turner and Gelles (2003); O’Toole (2002).

Item #26: The student has difficulty connecting with other people. The student lacks the ability to form intimate relationships. The student lacks the ability to form trust. Rated: 2  

Item #27: The student has a history of drug or substance use that has been connected to inappropriate ideation or behavior. Substances of enhanced concern are methamphetamines or amphetamines, cocaine, or alcohol. Rated: 2  
Item #30: The student engages in the objectification of others (perhaps in social media or writings). Rated: 2
Source: O’Toole and Bowman (2011); O’Toole (2002); Byrnes (2002).

Item #31: The student seems obsessed with another person, location, or behavior the individual has little control over. Rated: 2

Item #32: The student has oppositional thoughts and/or behaviors. Rated: 2

Item #33: The student has poor support and connection from faculty, administration, and staff. The student has an unsupportive family system and peers who exacerbate bad decisions and offer low quality advice or caring. They experience evaporating social inhibitors. Rated: 1

Item #35: The student has drastic, unexplained behavioral change. Rated: 2

The SIVRA-35 is an informal, structured set of items for those who work in higher education to use with individuals who may pose a risk or threat to the community. The SIVRA-35 is not designed as a psychological test and it is not designed to assess suicidal students. SIVRA-35 results are not a prediction of future violence.

The ideal approach to violence risk assessment is utilizing an individual trained and experienced in violence risk assessment to interview the subject. Since these individuals are difficult to find, the SIVRA-35 serves as a starting place for clinical staff and administrators to conduct a more standardized, research-based violence risk assessment with students determined to be at an increased risk.

While risk and threat assessment cannot be predictive, multiple agencies (e.g., the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Secret Service, Department of Education, Post Office, ASIS International, and the Society for Human Resource Management, ASME-ITI) have suggested risk factors to attend to when determining the potential danger that an individual may represent. Several prominent experts in campus violence and workplace threat assessment have also recommended key considerations salient when assessing risk and threat (Meloy, 2000; Byrnes, 2002; Turner & Gelles, 2003; Deisinger, Randazzo, O’Neill & Savage, 2008; Meloy, Hoffmann, Guldimann, & James, 2011).

Building on this research, the SIVRA-35 provides the user a score from 0–70 indicating a numerical level of risk. Scores from 1–20 indicate a low risk for violence, scores from 21–40 indicate a moderate risk, and scores from 41–70 indicate a high risk. The SIVRA-35 will help those assessing violence risks to organize their thoughts and perceptions in a standardized manner and bring the current literature to the task of evaluating at student.

References


O’Toole and Bowman (2011). Dangerous Instincts.


