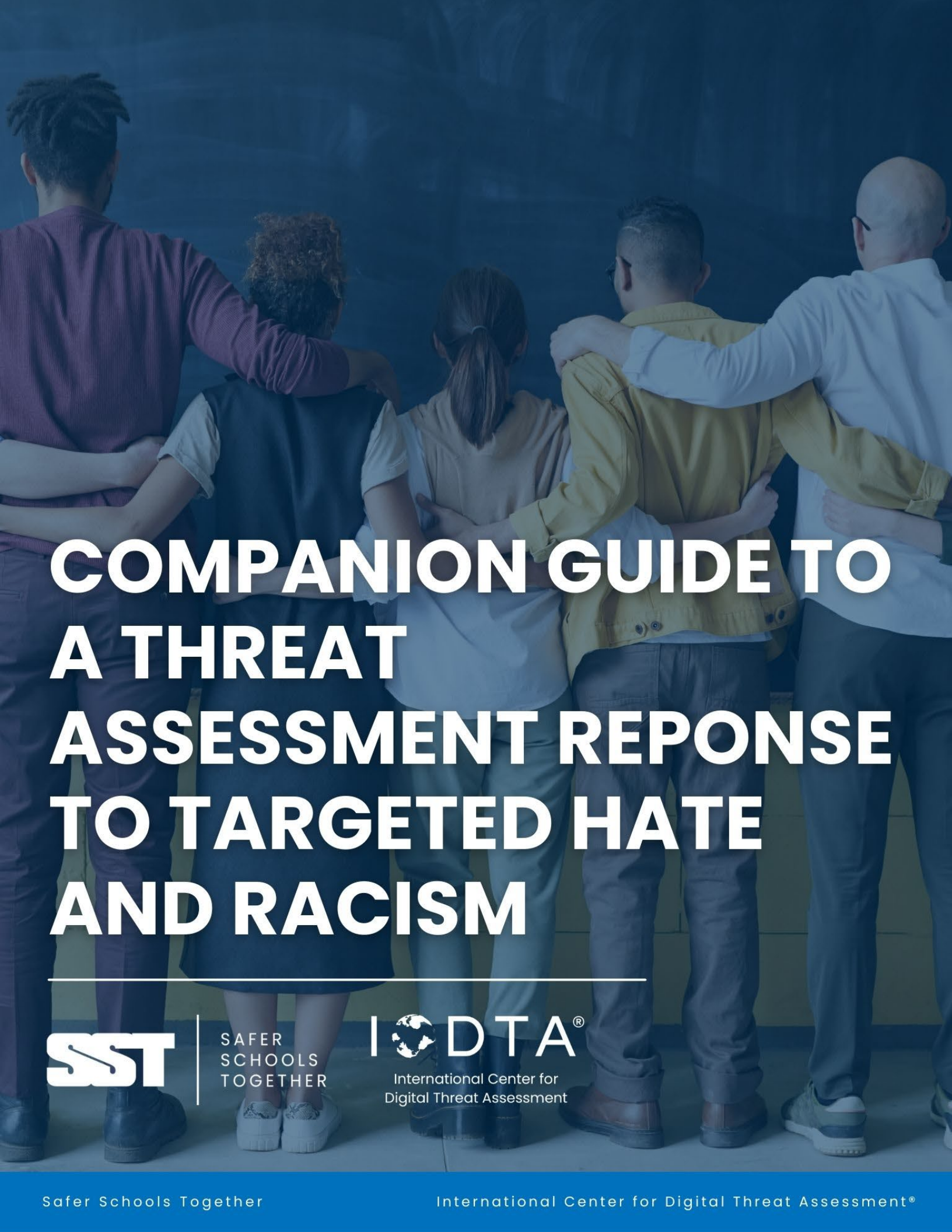




COMPANION GUIDE TO A THREAT ASSESSMENT RESPONSE TO TARGETED HATE AND RACISM



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International Center for
Digital Threat Assessment



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INTRODUCTION

[Safer Schools Together \(SST\)](#) recognizes the importance of creating safe and caring school communities that promote mutual respect and inclusive, welcoming places for students and staff to work, play, and learn. To combat the racially motivated and hate-related online posts and behaviors that occur in our schools, SST has created this Companion Guide to a Threat Assessment Response to Racism and Targeted Hate.

Educators play a vital role in proactively responding to all occurrences of racist and hate-related comments and behaviors within the school community – including online. The Companion Guide to a Threat Assessment Response to Racism and Targeted Hate is intended to assist trained Safety and Threat Assessment (S/TA) Teams in responding to incidents of racism and targeted hate that may occur in their school communities. Hate incidents motivated by factors including, but not limited to race, culture, religion, and sexual orientation are identified in the TA Protocol as a category for activation of the TA process.

It is important to note how [intersectionality](#) recognizes that various aspects of one's identity, such as race, gender, and sexual orientation shape the experiences for individuals and groups of people. Understanding intersectional hate motivated incidents helps to identify distinct aspects of discrimination and hate-related incidents that people experience.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

TA teams should use a trauma-informed lens when interacting with students, staff, and families. A trauma-informed approach starts with understanding trauma's physical, social, and emotional impact on an individual, a group of individuals, and the professionals who help them.



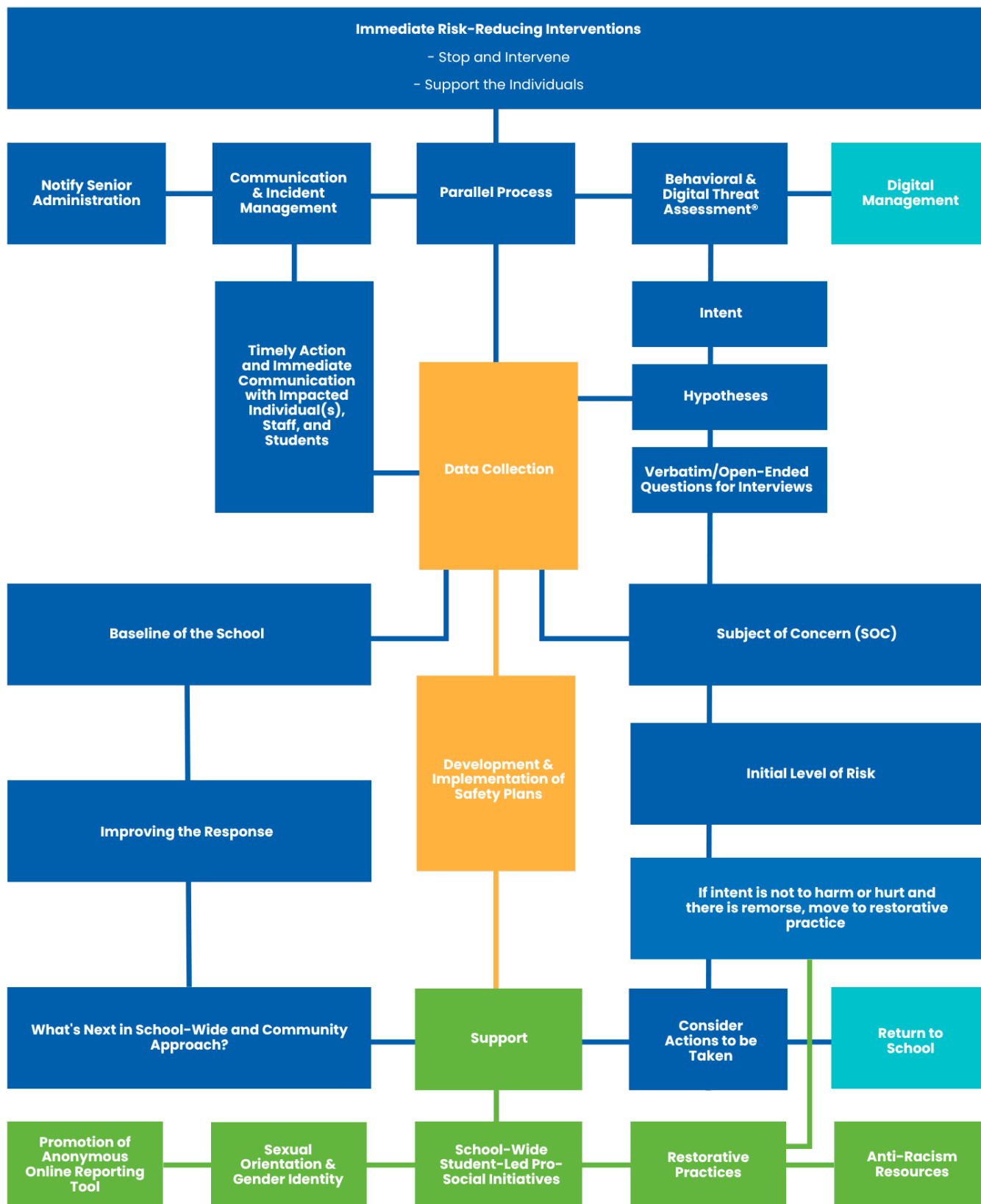
Some high-profile incidents result in a more significant impact on an organization or community. TA teams need to pay careful attention to:

- Recognizing the prevalence of trauma and how past and current experiences of violence and trauma can impact various aspects of school life.
- Understanding how trauma can affect an individual, group of individuals, an organization or system.
- How to respond thoughtfully and with compassion.

To ensure a trauma-informed response, communication and the management of incidents of racism and targeted hate must co-occur when the TA process is activated. This is referred to as a parallel process. The Companion Guide includes a flowchart as a visual representation of the steps to follow to help decrease the traumatic impact an incident may have on school community members, including students, staff, and parents. In some cases, due to certain circumstances, (i.e., when an incident goes viral members of the broader community can also be impacted.

FLOWCHART

This flowchart is a visual representation of the parallel process to follow.



IMMEDIATE RISK REDUCING INTERVENTIONS

Stop and Intervene

- Initiate a timely response to a report of racist and/or hate-related behavior.
- Undertake an initial collection and consolidation of data (1-2 hours).
- Contact Law Enforcement. Police and/or School Resource Officers (SROs) participate with local schools, school districts, and other community partners in TA training and on multi-disciplinary TA teams to address student safety and public safety concerns.
- Check lockers. Does the Subject of Concern (SOC) have access to weapons?
- Is removal of access to weapons possible?
- Address identified sources of justification (conspiracy of two or more, virtual pairing, possibility of a puppet master).
- Determine who else was there and who else knows about the incident (online or offline).
- Locate and separate all individuals involved and place them in a safe space with supervision.
- Consider securing all digital devices while a police investigation is in progress.
- If the incident is a potential criminal offence, be cautious with whom you interview and when (seek clarification from Law Enforcement).



Support the Individual

- Ensure the safety of all concerned, paying careful attention to the potential impact on the climate and culture of the school community.
- Ensure the support plan for the target is based on the hypotheses of their risk enhancers.

PARALLEL PROCESS

**Communication
and Incident
Management**



**Threat
Assessment
(TA)**

When responding to an incident, it is imperative to work through the Communication and Incident Management & Threat Assessment (TA) process simultaneously.

- Ensure a data-driven process and avoid an emotional or perception-based response.
- Make sure careful attention is paid concurrently to both communication/incident management and the TA process.

NOTIFY SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

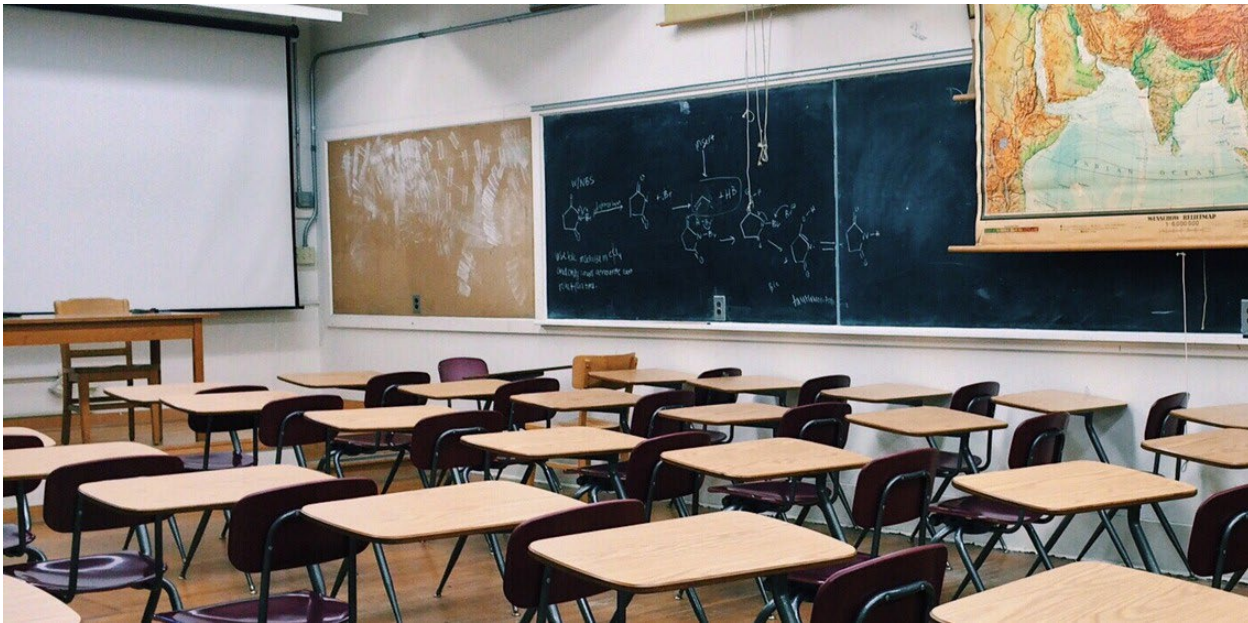
- Senior Administration has the overall responsibility for school safety.
- Public School Administrations need to notify the District Safe School Officials and/or other Senior Administration as required.
- Independent School Administrations need to notify their Association's Safe School Coordinator, Safe School Official (usually the Principal or Head of School), or the Independent Schools Branch.
- It is important to notify Senior Administration to provide information, seek assistance if necessary, and ensure seamless and timely communication.
- Notify the Department of Education (In Canada, the Ministry of Education or BC Ministry of Education and Childcare) if the incident is high profile and/or involves a police investigation and media attention.
- Notify Safer Schools Together if you require immediate assistance at info@saferschoolstogether.com.

COMMUNICATION & INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

- Notify Parents/Legal Guardians of all parties involved.
- Decide what your response is based on the level of impact. A high-profile incident can result in significant media attention and require more extensive communication by the district.
- Prepare communications as necessary for students, staff, parents, media, and community agencies if applicable.

TIMELY ACTION & IMMEDIATE COMMUNICATION WITH IMPACTED INDIVIDUAL(S), STUDENTS, AND STAFF

1. How widespread is the impact?
2. Who are the community members and groups to communicate with?
3. How can these community members and groups support the impacted individual(s), students, and staff?
4. Who else needs to be involved?



DIGITAL & BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT



Incidents Posted Online:

- Who recorded the incident?
- Who was with them when they created the content?
- Who was with them when they posted it online?
- With whom was the video shared?
- What social media platforms was the incident shared on?
- Who's liking, commenting, or sharing the content?

Incidents Shared Online:

- Consider interviews with individuals who have made specific comments about the incident (i.e., potential for inordinate knowledge).

Removal Of Inappropriate Content From Online and Media Sources:

- If the account holder is known, ask them to delete the video after you've obtained a copy, apart from intimate images.
- Takedown notice via social media platforms – [Digital Millennium Copyright Act \(DMCA\)](#). When submitting on behalf of a student, see our [Copyright Transfer Agreement Template](#).
- Report the account hosting the video (e.g., fight pages).
- Preservation/Production Orders if criminal charges are possible.

Please note: For assistance and any questions regarding these resources, please contact Safer Schools Together - info@saferschoolstogether.com

INTENT/MOTIVE

It is imperative TA teams do their due diligence to determine the intent of the behavior.

- Threatened to do what and to whom?
- Is the threat motivated by the desire to taunt, frighten, intimidate, coerce, control, or inflict harm or is the threat a means of calling out for help, seeking attention, confronting authority, or getting revenge?

HYPOTHESES

- What are some hypotheses around intent/motive?
- Beyond the obvious, what else is concerning about the language (i.e., level of detail, method of delivery, threat that is clear, direct, and plausible)?
- Who else was there? Who else knows about it (i.e., conspiracy of two or more, virtual pairing, possibility of a puppet master)?

VERBATIM/OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW

These verbatim questions are an example and should be informed by your hypotheses. Please ensure your questions are open-ended.

- Identify the potential sources of information (i.e., Subject of Concern (SOC), the intended target, witnesses, parent/legal guardian of the SOC, teacher or other school staff who know the subject best, School Resource Officer, school file, TA field, etc.).
- Interviews are important to test our hypotheses and need to be adjusted depending on the TA team's hypotheses, history of target/site selection, risk enhancers, perceived injustices, and overall level of commitment.
- Hypotheses = Interview Question.

For the Subject of Concern (SOC):

- "Why did I want to meet with you today?"
- "Why are others worried about you harming someone?"
- "Who were you threatening to harm?" (We use past tense as we are now intervening.)
- "What individuals or things cause you stress or harm you?" (i.e., bullying, threats, etc.)
- "What are some good things going on in your life?"

For Teacher/Staff:

- "What behavioral changes have you observed in recent weeks?"
- "Who are the SOC's peers in your class/school?"
- "How well does the SOC get along with other students?"
- "What conflicts or difficulties with peers have you observed?"
- "How does the SOC respond to being disciplined or to figures of authority?"
- "Does the SOC tend to hold a grudge or seem resentful?"
- "Have you had any contact with the SOC's parents/legal guardians? How would you describe your connection?"

For Parents/Legal Guardians:

- "When have you heard your child talk about incidents like this before?"
- "How familiar are you with the intended target? What previous interactions have occurred with the target?"
- "When did you last meet with the school staff about concerns regarding your child?"
- "Who does your child share concerns with at home or school? Who are they close to?"
- "What was the most recent incident that your child reported being bullied, teased, intimidated, or rejected in some way? If so, what has been your response?"

DATA COLLECTION

Development of Safety Plans for Known Targets and SOC

- Customize safety plans for targets and the SOC (if required) depending on the level of risk.
- For successful implementation, determine which staff need to be informed.
- Determine who will be designated as the student's primary point of contact.
- Clearly define expectations for both in school and online behavior; parents/legal guardians and other family members will need to support the plan.

Baseline of the School

- How would you describe the school's climate and culture?
- Is the 'Code of Conduct' clearly understood by students, staff, and parents/legal guardians?
- Is the school an 'open' or 'closed' system?
- Is there a bi-directional flow of information? Do staff and students know who to report worrisome behavior to?
- Were there previous behavioral incidents that will impact the current incident?
- What is the recency and timeline of any previous concerning incidents (i.e., last year – two incidents of targeted racist graffiti)?

Improving the Response

- Look at data such as discipline and [PSSTWorld](#) anonymous online reporting tool data.
- Review how the school responded to past incidents.
 - What needs to be improved?
 - How might improvement tasks be delegated?

NOW WHAT? A SCHOOL-WIDE APPROACH

- Prioritize strategies based on data gathered.
- Are social-emotional learning (SEL) or positive behavior interventions and support (PBIS) emphasized as a curricular priority?
- Are students, staff, and parents/legal guardians empowered to assume leadership roles and participate in decision-making related to enhancing a safe and caring school environment (i.e., town halls, information evenings, communications, assemblies, focus groups, school-wide culture, climate assessment, etc.)?

Subject of Concern (SOC)

- What is the digital and behavioral baseline of the SOC?
- Is the SOC possibly unaware of the seriousness of the incident and may not realize the impact of their actions on others?
- Who needs to be interviewed, and in what order?
- What risks need to be managed?
- What immediate steps need to be taken (i.e., TA response – timelines, discipline process, assessment of both emotional and traumatic impact in addition to the level of risk for violence)?

Initial Level of Risk

- Level of risk: to do what and to whom?
- Is there a potential of low risk to the SOC but high risk to the school community?
- Is there a risk of contagion and a viral spread online?
- Is there evidence of a 'conspiracy of two or more', 'virtual pairing', or the possibility of a 'puppet master'?

If Intent is Not to Harm or Hurt

- Confirm the intent of the behavior then move to Restorative Practice.

Please note: Restorative practice in schools is based on restorative justice principles instead of punishment. The focus is to build safe, inclusive, and caring school communities supported by clear understandings and authentic communication to bring issues and conflicts forward in a helpful way.

Teachers, counselors, administrators, and SROs may be involved in restorative practice.

Approaches such as circles, conferencing, and peer-led mediation help get to the root cause of hurtful or concerning student behavior. By building supportive learning environments and focusing on social-emotional learning, restorative practices can reduce social barriers to learning, create a context for valuing diversity, nurture a sense of belonging, and promote positive mental health.

Consider Actions to be Taken

- The traumatic impact of the behavior on the school community.
- The feelings of safety and school climate and culture supersede the SOC's level of risk.
- Develop and implement safety plans for known targets and SOC.

Return to School

- Is the school a justifiable target or site for violence or retaliation?
- Has the SOC or target(s) made themselves justifiable targets within the school community?
- If the student moves schools, a return to school may be possible after a period of time.
- A safe return to the same location would minimally require:
 - A district-based intake meeting.
 - A review of the student's behavior, both at school and in the community (connect with police contacts).
 - Connection with all individuals impacted by the incident.
 - A review of the current digital/media baseline of the incident and the SOC.
 - An expectation to follow the school's Code of Conduct.

SUPPORT AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Implementation and Ongoing Promotion of an Anonymous Online Reporting Tool

- [PSSTWorld Anonymous Online Reporting Tool](#) allows a student to report dangerous past or planned events, racism, targeted hate, bullying, and serious threats without compromising their identity.
- The [erase|Report It Tool](#) is available to school districts and schools in British Columbia.
- Students can contribute safety tips and fears anonymously via the internet directly to school district professionals through the reporting tool.
- Students should be aware of the site and have constant reinforcement regarding the value of using it.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI)

- SOGI assists schools and educators in building inclusive environments for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities.
- School districts have SOGI Leads to support incidents and/or answer questions.

School-Wide Student-Led Pro-Social Initiatives

Examples of school-wide student-led pro-social initiatives could include:

- Presentations to younger students.
- Student-led and Student Council assemblies/focus groups.
- Experiential-based learning.
- Positive social media campaigns.
- Presentations to community organizations, boards of education, etc.

Restorative Practice

- Aims to involve all those affected by the incident that has taken place.
- This encompasses the community that may have inadvertently been affected by the incident.
- The dialogue often takes place in a circle setting; this builds a sense of community and brings functionality to the discussion amongst students.
- Staff must be made aware of when to utilize restorative practice, as some circumstances may not warrant the use of circle dialogue.
- A report on the [Relationship between Restorative Justice and Indigenous Legal Traditions in Canada](#).

Anti-Racism Resources

- [Responding to Racism and Targeted Hate Presentation](#).
- [Friendship Centers](#).
- Intercultural Settlement Societies (i.e., [AMSSA](#), [Mosaic BC](#)).
- [Schooling for Critical Consciousness – Seider & Graves](#).
- [Unconscious Bias in Schools – Benson & Fiarman](#).
- [Choose Your Voice](#).
- [Voices into Action](#).
- [Workshops/Professional Development](#).
- [Ethos Lab](#).
- [erase Website – erase racism | embrace diversity](#).
- [Supporting Trauma-Informed Practice](#).
- [Mental Health in Schools Strategy](#).



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