Identifying the Potential Mass Casualty Shooter: Policy Initiatives for Campus Law Enforcement

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the students, faculty, and staff on college campuses across the country. Assessing threats is often a tedious and perplexing task. But, your school, which should be a safe environment to facilitate the learning process, should not be a frightening place.

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Abstract

Problem Statement

Campus law enforcement agencies are tasked with ensuring the safety and security of the many students in their learning community. This mission is complex considering the varying backgrounds students bring to college life and the many individuals that see college students as prey. Campuses are not immune from criminal activity. During the 2005–06 academic year, seventy-eight percent (78%) of schools experienced one or more incidents of violent crime (Dinkes, Cataldi, Lin-Kelly, and Snyder, 2007). Offenses range from minor physical assaults to homicide. Seventeen percent (17%) experienced one or more serious violent incidents, such as forcible rape or homicide (Dinkes et al., 2007).

Revealing and acting upon problem behaviors is paramount. Over the last two years, at least forty-one people have been murdered on college campuses across America in non-domestic related incidents (Massengill, Martin, Davies, Depue, Ellis, and Ridge, et al., 2007; Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2008; Hoover, 2008). Many campus law enforcement agencies have policies that address the detection of threats to their learning institutions. Many interact with campus community members to absorb information and discern potential human hazards; however, some do not. Numerous campus departments have no compelling process of sharing valuable information on the threats that face them (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Even though all threats are not the same,

all should be appropriately evaluated in a timely fashion by individuals trained in assessing threats (O'Toole, 1999).

Since campus law enforcement agencies are poised to handle incoming issues, they have a unique opportunity to take a leadership role in coordinating threat assessment teams, identifying at-risk individuals, and coordinating an appropriate response (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Unfortunately, many campuses do not have general threat assessment policies. Some even contain ambiguous language (Virginia Commonwealth University [VCU], n.d.). In addition to vague or non-existent policies, confusion about the stipulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is prevalent (Massengill et al., 2007). Furthermore, the federal laws governing health care records provided in learning institutions are not completely compatible with those governing other health records (Massengill et al., 2007). There are very certain, formidable hurdles to information sharing between administrators, police, and health professionals (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Because of the legal ramifications alone, many are not fully informed about when they can share information on troubled students (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

Methods of Approach

The predicament of having ineffective or nonexistent campus law enforcement policies for threat assessments are identified in this analysis. After problem identification, the prevalence of violent behavior on campuses and the associated consequences are discussed. The available literature is incorporated

and synthesized. Research is then related to available theory. And, findings are compared to existing policies and intervention strategies for campus law enforcement agencies. The study concludes with recommendations for policy initiatives. Utilizing this approach, the need for policy consistency and intervention takes shape.

Results of the Study

Loss of life resulting from ineffective policies is intolerable. Economic cost of violence resulting in death is also unbearable. From the loss of a loved one to incident-related costs, the expenditures are nearly insurmountable (Mattman and Kaufer 1998, as cited in Kennedy, n.d.). A need for effective prevention policies clearly exists. Systematic study of violent, deadly behaviors on college campuses increases understanding of the issue and validates recognition and intervention policies. For policy makers to address deviancy on college campuses, they need an accurate understanding of the extent, nature, and context of the problem (Dinkes et al., 2007). Standards identified in this study, and studies like it, work to benefit decision makers. Strategies should be derived from this compilation of data which outlines causes of violence, proactive recognition efforts, and appropriate intervention techniques. Understanding why individuals offend leads to intervention efforts that prevent such occurrences (Conklin, 2004).

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Introduction

Campus Victimizations

Each year, countless numbers of students enter post high school academia with expectations of achieving personal success. College life offers these students a first chance to excel without parental involvement or regulation. A minority of the students set free in the college environment fail simply because they are not able to operate without definitive boundaries. Some succeed without exception. Others enter this rapidly moving, learning environment encumbered with emotional hindrances, saddled with previous exposures to violence or victimizations. These exposures increase the chance these individuals will turn to violence as an outlet (DuRant, Cadenhead, and Pendergrast, 1994; as cited in Valois, Zullig, Huebner and Drane, 2006). Some in this group are destined to turn their psychoses into hazards for those within reach.

Campus law enforcement agencies are tasked with ensuring the safety and security of the many students in their learning community. Campuses are often described as safe environments that facilitate the learning process. In fact, college violent crime rates are much lower than the national average of 466 per 100,000 residents (Reeves, 2008). Although campuses are generally protected from the criminal element, they experience movements of crime, as does any community. During the 2005–06 academic year, seventy-eight percent (78%) of schools experienced one or more incidents of violent crime (Dinkes, Cataldi, Lin-Kelly,

and Snyder, 2007). Offenses range from minor physical assaults to homicide. Seventeen percent (17%) experienced one or more serious violent incidents, such as forcible rape or homicide (Dinkes et al., 2007). Between 1993 and 2005, an estimated nine percent (9%) of students were threatened or injured with a weapon (Dinkes et al., 2007).

With violent incidents occurring on campuses across the nation, campus law enforcement agencies are often not informed. Between 1995 and 2002, only thirty-five percent (35%) of violent victimization against students were reported to police (Baum, 2005). Many of these students indicated their victimization was private or personal and simply refused to report (Baum 2005). The reality is victimizations of non-students are more likely to be reported than those of college students (Baum, 2005).

College and university police departments must discover prospective problems through preventative measures and reactive enforcement. Considering crimes occurring on campuses nationwide are underreported to law enforcement (Trump, 2003), discovering potential problematic behavior is only that much more difficult. Nevertheless, campus police officers must continuously interact with members of their work community in an effort to detect problems. This activity is not out of the norm. In 2004, more than eighty percent (80%) of campus law enforcement departments met regularly with student groups, faculty, and staff (Reaves, 2008).

For law enforcement, revealing and acting upon problem behaviors is paramount. Over the last two years, at least forty-one people have been murdered

on college campuses across America in non domestic related incidents (Massengill, Martin, Davies, Depue, Ellis, and Ridge, et al., 2007; Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2008; Hoover, 2008). In April 2007, on the Virginia Tech campus Seung Hui Cho murdered thirty-two, wounded twenty-five, and then killed himself as part of the nation's largest mass casualty occurrence outside of war (Massengill et al., 2007). In February 2008, in an incident equaling to our fourth worst college shooting, Steven Kazmierczak entered a lecture hall at Northern Illinois University slaughtered five and wounded eighteen before taking his own life (FBI, 2008). Also in the same month, Latina Williams, a twenty three year old college student, entered a classroom on the campus of Louisiana Tech University killing two before taking her own life (Hoover, 2008). Scores of other college mass casualty shootings have taken place dating back to 1966.

Existing Policies

Many campus law enforcement agencies have policies that address the detection of threats to their learning institutions. Many interact with campus community members to absorb information and discern potential human hazards; however, some do not. Before the tragic occurrence at Virginia Tech, the campus identifiably had no threat assessment team to detect problem behaviors (Massengill et al., 2007). Departments across the campus had no compelling process of sharing valuable information on the threats that faced them (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). This breakdown is not unique to a particular campus. Only after a deadly school shooting in Taber, Alberta, community

members acted to form a collaborative multi-disciplinary threat assessment training program (Woods and Cameron, 2003). Threat assessment and information sharing are imperative to campus safety. Even though threats may look different from campus to campus, all must be evaluated in a timely fashion by individuals trained in assessing threats (O'Toole, 1999).

Campus police officials meet regularly with students, faculty, and staff. In 2004, more than eighty percent (80%) of campus police officers met regularly with their community members (Reeves, 2008). Campus law enforcement officials are also most often the first point of contact between potential violent offenders and the community (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Most campus law enforcement agencies also have personnel assigned to deal with crime and related threats and most also engage in problem solving techniques (Reeves, 2008). But, many do not lead interdisciplinary threat assessment teams. There is an apparent opportunity for law enforcement to take a lead role at identifying at risk youth and preventing violent crimes or the graduation to violent crimes (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000).

Campus law enforcement agencies are poised to handle incoming issues; they have a unique opportunity to take a leadership role in coordinating threat assessment teams, identifying at-risk individuals, and coordinating an appropriate response (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). However, training programs must also coincide with preventative measures. Students and staff must recognize what threatening behavior looks like and have a mechanism for reporting. If an individual's behavior appears threatening as defined by community standards or

has the potential for violence, the information must be referred to a team of individuals trained in threat assessment.

Most colleges and universities also maintain well-defined workplace violence policies. As illustration, Oklahoma State University (1998) has a workplace violence policy which indicates "all employees, regardless of position with the University, shall immediately report acts of violence and any serious threats which a reasonable person would consider potentially dangerous made against them or witnessed by them" (p. 2). Virginia Commonwealth University (n.d.) has a workplace violence policy which indicates threats are unacceptable and designates a team of individuals to assess and respond to workplace threats. However, many campuses do not have general threat assessment policies; some that do, contain ambiguous language (VCU, n.d.). In addition to vague or non-existent policies, confusion about the stipulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is prevalent (Massengill et al., 2007). Many faculty members have difficulty discerning when they can actually share information under the Family Educational Rights and Prevention Act (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Many are confused about what disclosures they can make under certain federal and state privacy laws (Massengill et al, 2007). Federal laws regulating health care in an educational setting are not completely compatible with other laws governing health records (Massengill et al, 2007). Many are confused as to whether or not disclosures can be made to law enforcement regarding threats made by an individual they consider mentally ill.

Guidance for the Future

Colleges and universities should provide a targeted approach, addressing risks and identifying prevention and intervention efforts along the way (Langford, n.d.). These factors must be identified through an assessment of local problems and available resources (Langford, n.d.). Furthermore, training should exist on FERPA and other privacy laws. Because of misunderstandings on the legal ramifications of FERPA, many are not fully informed about when they can share information on troubled students (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Identifiably, the federal laws governing health care records provided in learning institutions are not even completely compatible with those governing other health records (Massengill et al., 2007). There are certain road blocks to information sharing between administrators, police, and health professionals (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007) that must be eliminated.

Scores of students and staff are threatened each year with potential acts of violence. Nevertheless, many threats are invalid. Threateners may not have the motive, means, or opportunity to commit acts of violence. Standing in contrast are the few that exhibit non-threatening behavior, but pose an enormous threat. These individuals emit subtle cues of their proclivity toward violence, but act within the realm of what is considered normal, for the most part (Nicoletti, Spencer-Thomas, and Bollinger, 1999). Their behavior may be considered strange, but not a threat if evaluated by an untrained person. As a consequence, all threats should not be treated the same (O'Toole, 1999). All threats must be

accurately assessed by trained individuals and intervention methods must implored when required (O'Toole, 1999).

In order to accurately address the extent of threatening behavior or even crime on campus, each college must determine the extinct, nature, and context of the crime problem (Dinkes et al., 2007). Colleges must draw on existing research, logic and theory to decide what strategies to implement to solve there specific problems (Langford, n.d.). Colleges must perform risk analysis or threat assessments and choose intervention and prevention measures (Massengill et al., 2007). Each campus must discern the level of threat protection required (Massengill et al., 2007). Notably, it is impossible to eliminate all threatening or adherent behavior but risks and the potential for violence must be minimized (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

There is a distinctive need for determining the validity of threats to college students. However, it is often determining what threatening behavior looks like (Cornell University Council on Mental Health and Welfare [CUCMHW], 2007). The definition of threatening behavior may be different for a graduate student than for an undergraduate student or for a faculty member (CUCMHW, 2007). In addition to ambiguous definitions of threats, there are obstacles to sharing information between faculty, students, law enforcement, and mental health professionals (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Knowledge of risks can help develop preventative measures and intervention techniques (Weerman, Harland, and Van der Laan, 2007). Campus police and other school officials are

situated to assess threats, allocate services, and determine intervention efforts (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003).

In the process of determining threats, school officials should establish teams that are representative of the many disciplines across campus (Dunn, 2003). Threat assessment teams require working associations among individuals from both inside and outside of school systems (Fein, Vossekuil, Pollack, Borum, Modzeleski, and Reddy, 2004). Institutions of higher learning should establish and maintain well trained multi-disciplinary teams to accurately assess hostile behaviors and other potentially violent actions. These teams should include representatives from law enforcement, human resources, student affairs, legal, and mental health experts (Massengill et al., 2007). Relationships between faculty, law enforcement, mental health professionals and others aid in acquiring and using information about any given individual (Fein et al., 2004). These members provide the foundation for a well-rounded threat assessment team. Incorporating the right people in threat assessment programs assure all threats are assessed by the appropriate individuals and all information is shared. Unfortunately, many wait until after a tragic occurrence to develop preventative measures.

Loss of life resulting from ineffective policies is intolerable. Economic costs of violence resulting in death are also unbearable. From the loss of a loved one to incident-related costs, the expenditures are nearly insurmountable (Mattman and Kaufer 1998, as cited in Kennedy, n.d.). The need for effective prevention policies clearly exists. It is the intent of this analysis to demonstrate

the need for a standardized, law enforcement guided approach in detecting problem behaviors.

For policy makers to address problem behaviors, they must understand the extent, nature, and context of the problem (Dinkes et al., 2007). This comparative analysis and other systematic studies of violent, deadly behaviors on college campuses will ultimately increase understanding of the issues and validate flourishing intervention policies. Identification of the root causes of violence in particular settings provides guidance toward developing successful intervention efforts. Understanding why individuals offend leads to intervention efforts that may prevent such occurrences (Conklin, 2004). Proactive recognition efforts and appropriate intervention techniques must be waged. Standards identified in this study, and those like it, work to benefit decision makers and increase safety for all on campus.

Literature Review

Prevalence of the Threat

In 2004, college campuses received an average of sixty two (62) reports of serious violent crime per one hundred thousand (100,000) students (Reaves, 2008). This serious violent crime number may appear minimal, but the threat of a school shooting causes extreme discomfort to everyone in the college community. High school and college-aged students report avoidance of normal school activity if they suspect an imminent attack (Dinkes et al., 2007). Violence, in general, can lower quality of life and also lead to social and academic difficulty (Cohen, Miller and Rossman, 1994; as cited in Langford, n.d.).

Victimized college students often experience a wide assortment of physical and emotional consequences (Cohen, Miller and Rossman, 1994; as cited in Langford, n.d.). Victims of threats experience headaches, nightmares, and depression (Shar and Smith, 1994; as cited in Ferguson, San Miguel, Kilburn, and Sanchez, 2007). Mental health related symptoms precipitate in approximately ten percent (10%) of college students in any given year (Pope, 2008). Victims of aggressive actions are more likely to have a negative perception of their school, behavior issues, and have difficulty completing school activities (Nasel et al., 2001; as cited Ferguson et al., 2007). They tend to avoid certain activities and function poorly in the school environment (Sharp and Smith, 1994; as cited in Ferguson et al., 2007).

School violence has become increasingly important to campuses across the nation. Multiple schools shootings have thrust school violence into the public

eye (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Schools are developing intervention methods to deal with potential threats and community fears. But, identifying threats is not an effortless task. Teenagers come to college with collective life experiences shaped through socialization with family, peers, the community, and culture (O'Toole, 1999). Life experiences may be both positive and negative. Collective experiences develop personalities and emotions. Consequently, behavior is affected by a wide range of experiences and social influences (O'Toole, 1999). The path that leads an individual to become a school shooter is evolutionary in nature, often with significant abhorrent behaviors emitted along the way (O'Toole, 1999). School shooters do not decide with spontaneity and without preplanning to shoot their fellow students or faculty members.

Associated Behaviors

Violence and anger appear related. Anger increases the need for retaliation; it energizes some into devastating action (Agnew, 1992; as cited in Brezina, Piquero, and Mazerolle, 2001). Many believe anger is a contributing factor to school violence in specific (Furlong and Smith 1999; as cited in Brezina et al., 2001). Students who have anger issues and those who adhere to hostile behaviors have a general weak commitment to school and traditionally demonstrate a history of outwardly exhibiting aggression (Brezina et al., 2001). Escalating behavior patterns, resulting in eventual violence, are often the outcome of troubled children (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000) who are in need of emotional support.

Aggressive behaviors have noticeably increased in schools. Between 1993 and 1999, professors on college campuses experienced an annual average of forty one thousand six hundred (41,600) incidents of non-fatal workplace violence (Duhart, 2001). In 2003, over seventy percent (70%) of seven hundred twenty eight (728) school resource officers interviewed believed that aggressive behaviors have increased in elementary schools over the past few years (Trump, 2003). Overt types of misbehavior in school happen with a greater degree of frequency than other delinquent activities (Weerman et al., 2007). With the increase in anger, school violence may still be underreported. According to Trump (2003), over eighty seven percent (87%) of school resource officers felt that the number of crimes occurring on campuses are unreported to police.

Aggressive behavior has also been connected to the use of weapons (Callahann Rivara, 1992; as cited in Valois et al., 2006). Many suspect that weapons are a catalyst to violence. However, this may be a misinterpretation of the impetus to violence. Studies suggest students have limited access to firearms. In a 2002 study, only four percent (4%) of students had access to a firearm on campus (Miller, Hememway, and Wechsler, 2002). And, approximately two-thirds (2/3) of college students who reported being violently victimized between 1995 and 2002 relayed the offender did not have a weapon (Baum, 2005). In addition, overt threats or the use of a weapon suggests danger, but nonverbal can also communicate a threat (Hinman and Cook, 2001).

Behavior may be considered a threat whether it includes anger, weaponry, or nonverbal action. A specific threat is an expression of intent to do some

particular harm against an individual or group (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005). Specific characteristics should not be considered in isolation, threat assessment requires the understanding of psychology of the offender (Megargee, 1993; as cited in Hinman and Cook, 2001). Behavior is an expression of self; having a particular day does not indicate a student's exact personality or usual behavior pattern (O'Toole, 1999). Often, delinquency results from patterned behavior. Individuals are driven to delinquency by circumstance or other individuals (Brezina et al., 2001).

Even with the increasing anger and associated behaviors, tones of anger may not be obvious. Behaviors may be related to socialization, life satisfaction or environmental strains. In a study of five thousand thirty two (5,032) high school students, Valois, Zullig, Huebner and Drane (2006) found a reduced level of satisfaction in life led students to carry weapons, feel unsafe, or commit deviant behavior. Life satisfactions are also related to mental health (Diner et al., 1999; as cited in Valois et al., 2006). There have been notable increases in college enrollments of those with mental illness. Increased enrollments have been attributed to advances in treatment (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Support networks have also enabled mentally ill to successfully complete many collegiate programs (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

Unfortunately, there is no existing profile that leads us directly to the next mass casualty killer (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005). Research has yet to identify traits or characteristics that can reliably identify school shooters from other students (O'Toole, 1999). Many students who display risk factors usually

do not become school shooters. Others pose potential devastation without ever making direct threats (Fein, Vossekuil, and Holden, 1995). School shooters often do not pose these direct threats (Hinman and Cook, 2001). These calculated individuals harbor plans of destruction. Students who pose real threats often do not demonstrate any kind of level of risk (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005).

The exact motivation of each potential school shooter will never be known with complete certainty, but understanding motives may be crucial to evaluating threats (O'Toole, 1999). Violence is a development process that generates from societal conditions, individual triggers, and a setting permissive to violence; it is not nearly the result of a single action (Fein, Vossekuil, and Holden, 1995). All threats must be evaluated as potential problems and a standardized method of evaluating each threat is of critical importance (O'Toole, 1999).

School shooters often plan their attack for months (Kluger, 2007). They always progress toward violence and offer the potential for intervention (Nicoletti, Spencer-Thomas, and Bollinger, 1999). There are a variety of behaviors that project problematic behavior. The non-social, withdrawn, in-justice collector, who writes about death or violence, describes characteristics of the potential mass casualty shooter. These individuals display problematic behaviors and are ripe for intervention. Although exact motivations may never be known with complete certainty, evaluating problem behaviors is crucial (O'Toole, 1999).

Prevention Attitudes

Colleges are microcosms of larger communities. Students face increasing threats to their security just as the larger community does (Trump, 2003). Mass casualty shootings involve the many dimensions of college society. School shootings directly impact students, faculty, staff, families, and the at-hand communities (O'Toole, 1999). Although no particular characteristic or trait is a specific indicator of violence, no one characteristic or trait is without effect (O'Toole, 1999). Thus, it is responsibility of school officials to establish intervention mechanisms.

The failure at Virginia Tech to take preventative actions may have been reflective of the common perception that mass killings are rare (Fox and Levin, 2003). Notably, universities and colleges have become increasingly focused on potential school shooters (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Yet, the majority of school resource officers feel response plans are not adequate (Trump, 2003). Schools have failed to educate parents on school safety and crisis planning (Trump, 2003). And, funding for school safety in schools is decreasing (Trump, 2003).

Schools that tolerate disrespect, where students feel a detachment from other students or the institution, and that foster class division amongst students are at extreme risk for violence (O'Toole, 1999). Many faculty members do not know how to translate their instructional ability to teach positive coping skills to students during a crisis (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003). They may fail to address threatening behaviors because of fear of reprisal, a misunderstanding of FERPA

or fear of repercussions under the American with Disabilities Act (Noonan-Day and Jennings, 2007).

Staff members are often aware that they have preventative responsibilities (Trump, 2003). However, faculty and students may have different opinions of acceptable behavior. Faculty members must become aware of school dynamics from a student perspective in order to effectively detect problem behaviors (O'Toole, 1999). Students may often know someone who needs help or someone who has made a threat, but fail to share that information because of an undeveloped relationship with faculty or staff (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Faculty should be aware of proclivity toward depression, anger, or other indicators of dangerousness that do not rise to the level of an actual threat (O'Toole, 1999). Vague comments may appear harmless, but also may indicate the desirability of committing acts of violence.

Collegiate programs must be committed to a multifaceted approach to deal with the many threats (Dittman, 2004). Establishments that deal with threat effectively make prevention a priority, implement analysis, policies, and programs relevant to risk, reinforce the stability and safety of the campus environment, and affix responsibility for actions (Greenberg, 2007). Effective violence prevention programs require community collaborative efforts which include students, staff, mental health professionals, law enforcement, school officials, and parents (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Policies and procedures must assure behavioral compliance. Accountability must be a mandate.

Theoretical Framework

Linking Behaviors

Linking violent behavior and eventual delinquency provides significant impact on policy. Theoretical explanations help effectively explain criminal behavior (Tittle, 2000). Deviant behaviors are often very present. Interventions and preventative measures must be waged accordingly. Theory may help those with the responsibility of assessing threats determine behaviors that warrant scrutiny.

Behaviors associated with delinquency result from an underlying construct (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; as cited in Weerman et al., 2007). Some individuals are associated with delinquency because of decreases in life satisfaction (Valois et al., 2006). These individuals aspire to achieve money, societal stature, or friendship. When those goals are blocked, they experience strains that lead them toward criminal behavior as an outlet. Others are associated with delinquency because they lack social bonds. Increased involvement in traditional activities works to prevent deviancy (Hirschi, 1969; as cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003).

Those who have self reported violent behaviors relay strains affect them significantly (Mazerolle, Burton, Cullen, Evans, and Payne, 2000). Some legitimize aggressive, violent behaviors if they experience societal strains. These strains may result from simple roadblocks like getting their feelings hurt or relationship failures (Edrley and Asher, 1993; as cited in Valois et al., 2006). Externalization of blame or passing the blame off onto others is a primary

characteristic in those who eventually engage in violent acts (Fox and Levin, 1994). Thinking becomes so defective that offenders justify assaultive acts; they often reverse roles indicating they are the actual victims (Beck, 1999). The strain theory is especially relevant to aggressive behaviors (Mazerolle and Piquero, 1997; as cited in Brezina et al., 2001). Anger occurs when individuals experience strain and blame it on others (Brezina et al., 2001).

In addition to strain, individuals who are without connection to societal bonds are more likely to have time to engage in deviancy (Hirschi, 1969; as cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003). If individuals maintain conventional bonds then they have an increased connection to others and are more likely to conform societal rules and less likely to engage in deviant behavior (Hirschi, 1969; as cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003). Bonds with family members, the community, or even religion may act as a deterrent to criminal behavior (Cretacci, 2003).

Strain Theory Application

According to general strain theorists, goal blockage results in an increased chance of resorting to deviant behaviors (Agnew, 1992; as cited in Brezina et al., 2001). Individuals may perceive strain from failure to achieve goals, the presence of noxious stimuli, or from removal of positive incentives (Agnew and White, 1992; as cited in Mazerolle et al., 2000). Traditional strain theorists associate this goal blocking with delinquency in adolescence. Strain theorists emphasize that frustrations occur when humans are unable to achieve basic human needs. Strain

is “the frustration and sense of injustice that result from experiencing socially structured incapacities as low capacities” (Conklin, 2004, pp. 149).

Those involved in delinquent behaviors perform risky actions and are associated with a host of problems (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; as cited in Weerman et al., 2007). After controlling outside influence, researchers have found a significant relationship between exposure to strains and delinquency (Agnew and White, 1992; Hoffman and Miller, 1998; Paternoster and Mazerolle, 1994; as cited in Mazerolle et al., 2000). When individuals experience strain and associate anger with that strain, there is an increased chance the anger and resulting deviant behavior will be embraced (Mazerolle et al., 2000). Strain may result in retaliation and violent outbursts. In turn, juveniles that maintain high levels of anger experience strain at a greater intensity and are more prone to translate that into violence (Mazerolle et al., 2000). Strain is directly correlated with violence.

Verbal belligerence and threatening conduct has increased noticeably in the classroom setting (Schneider, 1998). Students experience fewer roadblocks to aggressive behavior than students experienced in years past. Misbehavior in the classroom has also been linked to delinquency later in life (Weerman et al., 2007). Problem conduct develops into future paths of delinquency (Loeber, 1997; as cited in Weerman et al., 2007). In addition, misbehavior at school has been linked to misbehavior elsewhere (Weerman et al., 2007). Exposure to violence and violent victimizations is a strong predictor in the future use of violence (DurRant, Cadenhead, and Pendergrast, 1994; as cited in Valois et al, 2006). Serious forms

of misbehaviors are directly related to an increased risk of future delinquency (Weerman et al., 2007).

The probability of resorting to criminal behavior is shaped by the availability of coping resources and the presence of intervention factors that encourage adaptations to strain (Brezina et al., 2001). Research indicates individuals turn to delinquency as a way of managing the negative effects of strain (Brezina, 1996; as cited in Mazerolle et al., 2000). Thus, mechanisms must be in place not only to detect problems with coping, but provide interventions. Contrary to the belief of some, anger is learned and reactions are controllable (Thomas, 2003). Individuals skilled in detection and intervention techniques must be available to intercede. Often, those unskilled in intervention encourage venting which leads to anger arousal (Thomas, 2003). Intervention should include programs that provide an outlet in lieu of release. Reactions to circumstances may also differ. Because there is no precise index of strains, individuals may perceive strains when other would not (Mazerolle et al., 2000). Accordingly, individuals who intercede must be trained in identifying a spectrum of behaviors that collectively appear to present at threat.

Social Bond Theory Application

Individuals who experience a detached feeling from society are also more likely to deviate toward criminality (Hirschi, 1969; as cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003). Hirschi, the author of the social bond theory, suggests "the essence of internalization of norms, conscience, or superego…lies in the attachment of the

individual to others" (as cited in Cullen & Agnew, 2003, p. 233). He proposes there are four elements of an individuals bond to society; they are attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (as cited in Cullen & Agnew, 2003). These elements require an emotional connection to others, a yearning for conformity to societal rules, being involved in societal activities, and a belief in the established rules of society. Individuals display commitment or obey rules because of a fear of consequences of deviant behavior, limited time to deviate from the norm, or a belief in the common good (Hirschi, 1969; as cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003).

Although the social bond theory was not designed to answer why people commit criminal activity, this theory has the potential for predicting proclivity toward criminality (Hirschi, 1969; as cited in Cullen and Agnew, 2003). Individuals with the strongest societal bonds are the least likely to commit crime (Tittle, 2000). Failing to express emotions and engage in relationships may be an indicator of problematic behavior worthy of further examination by teams designated to assess threatening behaviors. Failure to attach appears directly related to negative affectivity (Pines, 2005; Penny & Spector, 2005; Adam, Gunnar and Tanaka, 2004; Waerden, Cook and Vaughan, 2003; Davila, Bradbury and Fincham, 1998; as cited in Kunst, Schweizer, Bogaerts, and van der Knaap, 2008). Those who feel uncomfortable with emotions and encounter problems while building emotional bonds experience detachment from society (Kunst, Schweizer, Bogaerts, and van der Knaap, 2008) and may be less invested in conformity. Previous research suggests the importance of social bonding in predicting deviance (Longshore, Chang, Hsieh, and Nena Messina, 2004). In a

study of one hundred sixty eight (168) youths detained at a juvenile facility, Knight, Witchcoff, and Tripodi (1996) found bonds had a direct impact on delinquency. The two suggest interventions should involve family support, education, and emotional support.

Current Campus Policies Aimed at Preventing Violence

Case Studies

Many college shooters experience strains prior to exacting their form of revenge or they demonstrate the inability to emotionally bond with peers, family or faculty. Most importantly, many outwardly exhibit an inability to deal with the strain or the inability to connect with others prior to inflicting their final act. Scores of college mass casualty shootings have taken place dating back to 1966. Three most recent shootings indicate warning signs are often apparent and should not be ignored.

In April 2007, on the Virginia Tech campus Seung Hui Cho murdered thirty-two, wounded twenty five, and then killed himself as part of the nation's largest mass casualty occurrence outside of war (CNN, 2007). Cho was described as an introvert. According to the "Report to the President," by the time Cho was in seventh grade his inability to communicate led his parents to seek help (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Cho's parents sent him to a psychologist. He was diagnosed with selective mutism. By the eighth grade, Cho's writings demonstrated suicidal and homicidal ideations and he made several references to the Columbine school massacre. During high school, Cho continued seeing a psychologist for his shyness and selective mutism. He appeared to be succeeding in dealing with his trouble communicating (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

In 2003, Cho decided to attend college at Virginia Tech (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). By 2004, he moved off campus to room with a

senior who was rarely home. He began writing and by 2005 sent a manuscript to a publisher. The manuscript was rejected and Cho became depressed. He wasn't in counseling at the time and problems began to surface. He moved back into the campus residence halls and began acting strange. Cho began writing about violence and disturbing class mates. College classrooms, like those at Virginia Tech, are increasingly becoming more prone to classroom disruption and violent behaviors (Dittman, 2004). Cho was also accused of stalking a female student. Cho was referred to counseling and by December of 2005, he had been confined to a psychiatric ward for being an imminent danger to his self or others. He was released the following day.

Cho's acknowledged problematic behavior continued until the day of his assault on the campus. After the incident, the Virginia Tech review panel indicated communication with parents offers opportunity for successful deterrence (CUCMHW, 2007). The panel also indicated information sharing among key officials across campus is important in determining the ability to notice early warning signs.

In February 2008, in an incident equaling to our fourth worst college shooting, Steven Kazmierczak entered a lecture hall at Northern Illinois University (NIU) slaughtered five and wounded eighteen before taking his own life (CBS, 2008). Kazmierczak also met difficulties in his life. He enlisted in the US Army in 2001, but was discharged for unknown reasons prior to completing basic training (Goldman, Esposito, Thomas, Date, and Pinto, 2008). His mother died in 2006 from complications related to Lou Gehrig's disease. Reports indicate

the week before the occurrence at NIU, Kazmierczak's behavior became erratic (Goldman, Esposito, Thomas, Date, and Pinto, 2008). Kazmierczak stopped taking medication for depression and began displaying violent behavior. Notably, college populations across the country are impacted by mental health problems with implications of welfare, productivity, the overall environment, and the academic mission (Dittman, 2004).

In the same month as the shooting at NIU, Latina Williams, a twenty three year old college student, entered a classroom on the campus of Louisiana Tech University killing two before taking her own life (Fox News, 2008). Williams exhibited problematic behavior as well. She had not spoken to her family in years and immediately prior to the shooting was living out of her car (Fox News, 2008). Williams was reportedly paranoid and began losing touch with reality. The morning of the shooting, Williams told a counselor she was going to kill herself. These three cases offer a grim reminder that signs are apparent and prevention and intervention efforts are required.

Fortunately, intervention efforts have worked on college campuses. Since the mass casualty shootings at Virginia Tech, Louisiana Tech, and Northern Illinois University, reporting has risen. Faculty members across the nation are speaking up about violence indicators, which in turn have accelerated the demand for mental health services (Pope, 2008). Most success stories are not written about or gain media attention because they fail to shock the public into watching. However, they, in fact, exist.

At a middle school, a student reported receiving threatening letters in his

locker (Hinman and Cook, 2001). A multi-disciplinary team reviewed the letters and determined the student wrote them himself; he confessed to the offense (Hinman and Cook, 2001). A southern college, equipped with a threat assessment team, also successfully thwarted an attack. The school received a very direct written threat (Hinman and Cook, 2001). The author of the threat alleged he was a member of an Islamic extremist group. He indicated he intended to bomb an administration building, kill one female professor, and leave a fake detonator in a crowded eating area. The letter was examined by the group and considered a threat. The group utilized the services of an Arabic linguist who determined the author did not use terminology typical of Arabic speakers. She suspected the individual was only trying to write like a person from the Middle East. The linguist's supposition was correct and a 19 year old college student was determined to be the offender. He was subsequently arrested.

Many states and communities have adopted emergency preparedness and violence prevention plans to address community violence (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). The challenge becomes full implementation of these programs and effective communication between the many involved departments (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). In addition to detecting potential school shooters, crime prevention efforts are often multi-dimensional. The "Second Step Violence Prevention Program" is a school associated program designed to improve social competence and reduce antisocial behavior (Taub, 2001; as cited in Ferguson et al., 2007). Many programs incorporate restorative justice. These programs help victims forgive and offenders reconcile (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2006; as cited in

Ferguson et al., 2007). In addition, there are a variety of school-based anti-bullying programs that are designed to reduce bullying or other violent behaviors (Ferguson et al., 2007). However, those needs programs offer benefits to victims, they're not effective in reducing bullying (Ferguson et al., 2007).

Threat Assessment

There are many practices and policies in place on college campuses regarding risk assessment. Practices vary from call centers for crisis management to threat assessment teams for threat detection and prevention (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Some institutions actively evaluate thousand of threats each year (de Becker, 1999). Almost all of the four year campuses across America provide some crime prevention programming (Reaves, 2008). However, some schools adopt a one-size-fits-all approach when dealing with violence (O'Toole, 1999). One-size-fits-all programs may generate potential underestimates of threatening behavior and overreaction to less serious threats with those who are not threatening being unfairly labeled (O'Toole, 1999).

At present, no standard exists. Threatening behavior may be examined and dealt with or ignored, minimized, or denied (de Becker, 1999). Even though the "Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Crime Statistics Act" dictates that campus law enforcement must provide timely warnings of crimes that represent a threat to safety (Reaves, 2008), crime prevention efforts are not regulated. Federal laws, like the "No Child Left Behind Act," may even lead to underreporting of school crime since they require states to label schools as

dangerous if they reach a certain number of criminal events in a year (Trump, 2003).

With the lack of guidance, there are many schools that employ threat assessment teams in an effort to thwart the mass casualty shooter. Multidisciplinary threat assessment teams have garnered success. The primary responsibilities of a threat assessment team are to assess the credibility of a threat, determine if a response is needed, and provide the appropriate level of intervention (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Threat assessment teams include individuals from various disciplines that collaboratively work to define the nature and scope of a threat (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Teams receive and evaluate information and act on any potential threats (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Even false threats need attention because they are disruptive to the campus community (Bolz, Dudonis, and Schilz, 1996; as cited in Hinman and Cook, 2001). Interdisciplinary teams process available information and assess the degree of threat (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). They must acquire and evaluate large amounts of information from many locations; consequently, the mass of work is much easier for a group than a single individual (Hinman and Cook, 2001).

California State Fullerton University has a threat assessment team appointed by the Vice President for Administration. This team is responsible for addressing and responding to situations involving threats or potential threatening behavior (California State Fullerton University [CSFU], 2003). According to California State Fullerton University policy, department heads and managers must

ensure faculty and staff have access to training on University safety policies, appropriate practices and procedures, assault prevention training, and guidelines or conflict resolution. Additionally, staff must inform the CSFU Police Department of all known threats or acts of violence, even if the situation has reached resolution. This policy requires that the Vice President for Student Affairs provides students with access to education on University policies, assault prevention come and guidelines for resolving violent confrontations (CFSU, 2003). It also requires students report all threats or acts of violence.

The University of Wisconsin Green Bay has a multidisciplinary review team designed to assess threatening behaviors. The campus, as part of security and emergency preparedness, provides training on FERPA and a policy on violence and threat assessment (University of Wisconsin Green Bay [UWGB], 2007). Since the mass casualty shooting at Virginia Tech, college faculty and staff members have attempted to disrobe their fear of FERPA (Pope, 2008). Clarification on the avenues of sharing under FERPA is necessary (CUCMHW, 2007). Many now realize FERPA applies to educational records and not observations of threatening behavior (Pope, 2008). Faculty and staff members are now also being provided with violence and threat recognition training and a mechanism for reporting.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison maintains a threat assessment team comprised of many agencies including the Dean of students, the UW Police Department, and Human Resources (University of Wisconsin-Madison Police Department [UWPD], 2008). The University of Wisconsin Madison also provides

a mechanism for reporting. Policy indicates reports may be channeled through the Dean of Students, the Employee Assistance Office, or the UW Police Department (UWPD, 2008). The UW Police Department also disseminates information to students and staff members on recognizing warning signs of a person in crisis and the signs of potential violence (UWPD, 2008). This information relays persons who perpetrate violence or commit mass casualty shootings do not conform to a profile. However, the information suggests a warning signs of potential violence include repeated loss of temper, physical disruption, vandalism, substance abuse and risk taking behavior, talking or writing about acts of violence, isolating behavior, failure to acknowledge the feelings or rights of others, and a drop in school or work performance.

Other Violence Policies

Other schools maintain active policies to address threatening behaviors. The University of Northern Colorado has coordinated initiatives designed to perpetrators accountable, care for victim needs, and reduce violent behaviors (Langford n.d.). Through strong policies and procedures, the University of Northern Colorado maintains admissions standards, awareness programs, prevention and intervention initiatives, and other crime prevention measures (Langford, n.d.). Initiatives include peer education and services for survivors.

The Virginia Commonwealth University policy on threats indicates anyone who is aware of a threat, whether implied or an actual event, must report the incident to his or her supervisor and the Virginia Commonwealth University

Police Department or Human Resources (Virginia Commonwealth University [VCU], n.d.). VCU has a team of faculty and staff who analyze workplace threats. This team consists of campus police, human resources, employee health services, counseling, and other departments when appropriate. The VCU threat assessment and violence prevention policy regulates workplace conduct. It offers parameters for behaviors in a work setting (VCU, n.d.).

Oklahoma State University maintains a policy on threats which indicates all situations involving harassment, abuse, assaultive behavior, or violent acts engaged by any community member, whether temporary or full time, will not be tolerated (Oklahoma State University [OSU], 1998). The OSU policy includes all statements that put a reasonable person in fear of harm are included as non-tolerable activity. OSU community members are to report threats or acts of violence to the Office of Personnel, campus police, their supervisor, or any other administrative manager (OSU, 1998). The OSU threat assessment team consists of members from campus law enforcement, the Office of Personnel, Counseling Services, Employee Assistance, and others as needed (OSU, 1998). In addition, the OSU policy on workplace threats and general violence maintains a framework for responding to threatening situations to minimize recurrence and protect potential victims.

The University of Iowa maintains a violence prevention policy which applies to all community members. This policy dictates that acts or threats of violence, including verbal, physical, and sexual inappropriate behavior, will result in sanction because they disturb the learning process (University of Iowa [UI],

2007). Violations of this policy may be brought forward formally or informally and by any member of the community.

The University of Georgia has a policy which indicates interpersonal violence of any kind is not permitted (University of Georgia Office for Violence Prevention [UGOVP], 2007). The University of Georgia also employs a multifaceted approach to preventing violence (UGOVP, 2007). The University of Tennessee College of Nursing requires criminal background checks as part of their applicant screening process (University of Tennessee College of Nursing [UT], n.d.). The University of Kentucky and Mississippi State University have teams comprised of teachers, advisors, administrators, and police coordinated in an effort to identify troubled behavior (Pope, 2008). Other universities, that have student care teams, are also adding a layer of threat detection (Pope, 2008).

Cornell also has a threat assessment team. This team is comprised of campus police, the Judicial Administrator's Office, Counseling Services, the Dean of Students' Office, and Residential Programs (CUCMHW, 2007). Cornell also maintains a policy geared toward threat reduction. Violations of the Cornell policy on violence may effectively lead to discipline, termination, or separation (Dittman, 2004). In addition, Cornell has created a problem focused early intervention program designed to facilitate early identification of aggression (Langford, n.d.). Cornell programs provide campus leaders with information on opportunities for improving campus climate through risk reduction, enhancing communication networks, and identifying areas in need of support (Dittman, 2004). Correspondingly, there has been a growing demand for counseling services

and increased attention on student mental health and substance abuse (Langford, n.d.).

Recommendations

The Need for Intervention

The interventions discussed have the potential to reduce hazards associated with school shootings and many other violent behaviors (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Although no two schools are the same, schools with violence prevention programs that work employ multiple strategies and address the full spectrum of violent behaviors (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). In order for any program or policy to work, it must be implemented with understanding and full participation from administrators, parents, students, teachers, law enforcement, and other community members (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). An integral comprehensive safety program includes identifying the need for a positive school, supporting student needs, establishing crisis teams, increasing security, and improving collaboration (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005).

Interventions should include groups of community members, including teachers, who are available to work with the troubled students or at minimum discuss strategies for dealing with him or her (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Effective practices must include identifying the appropriate people to share concerns (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Responsible individuals must take threatening behavior seriously and wage effective responses (Hinman and Cook, 2001). A policy that demands focus on identification, but not intervention is doomed (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005). Roadblocks need to be established to prevent mass casualty shootings.

Early preventative efforts should be incorporated into any viable program. These prevention programs must include providing support for children at risk, those who are mentally ill, and those referred for treatment (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Prevention programs must also approach the issue of anger in the student population. The level of anger within the campus community contributes to the amount of student to student conflict (Brezina et al., 2001). It left unregulated, anger within the student population fosters friction across the board (Brezina et al., 2001). Parents, teachers, and students must be sensitive to warning signs and have the knowledge of what to do if someone is exhibiting problem behavior (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

Serious behaviors in school, particularly school violence, demands that policy makers understand effects especially given the expense of research and intervention efforts (Ferguson et al., 2007). Traditional responses to violence focus on specific incidents and rely upon the criminal justice system for disciplinary measures (Langford, n.d.). A thorough approach to violence assessment includes measures aimed at interventions and particularly prevention (Langford, n.d.). Focus must first be driven to determine the underlining of violence before appropriate intervention measure may be enacted (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Working to address needs may reduce the prevalence of later deviancy.

Campus police officers have many interactions with students who have a potential for violence and are often the first responders in the cases in criminal activity and violent outbreaks (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). However,

since campuses are generally seen as safe, the need for crisis preparation or threat management is routinely diminished (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). However, an infrastructure must be developed to protect college environments and to protect student populations (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003). Threat assessment teams appear to be a logical progression of intervention and prevention measures. Threat assessment in particular is genuinely a process of evaluating threats and managing them (Hinman and Cook, 2001). If done correctly threat assessment focuses on personal history, relationship history, life events, mental status, and resiliency of subjects with the proclivity towards violence (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005). Effective threat systems have consistent policies and standardized methods of evaluating and assessing threats and developing appropriate intervention measures (O'Toole, 1999).

The Threat Assessment Initiative

Threat assessment teams, after given the appropriate information, must conduct reliable assessments of safety risks (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007. The threat assessment model is designed to be used by not only law enforcement professionals, but mental health experts, educators and school officials (O'Toole, 1999). Threat assessment offers a systematic procedure for assessing violence risks and determining appropriate intervention measures (O'Toole, 1999). Procedures must outline how team members, including mental health and criminal justice professionals, are to be used (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003).

The general process of threat assessment discovers likely targets of a threat, the feasibility that the threatener will actually carry out the threat, the level of indicated harm, intervention efforts, and identification and apprehension methods (Hinman and Cook, 2001). In order for threat assessment teams to carry out their given task they must be trained and have the support of community members (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005). The team must examine all relevant factors related to the potential offense (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005). There is a certain, pressing need for collaborations between educators, mental health professionals, and law enforcement to determine risks and provide intervention mechanisms (O'Toole, 1999). Even with the difficulty of critiquing there own school threat assessment team members must have an understanding of the dynamics in their school to avoid it becoming a potential crime scene (O'Toole, 1999).

Threat assessment moves away from profiling and it looks at behaviors that lead to violence (Hinman and Cook, 2001). Threat assessment teams also coordinate prevention and responses to violence (Nicoletti, Spencer-Thomas, and Bollinger, 1999). Counselors, legal advisors, parents and other individuals trained in threatening situations, offer an opportunity into determining the proclivity towards violence (Nicoletti, Spencer-Thomas, and Bollinger, 1999). A core team of evaluators are given the task of accurately evaluating threats and identifying unknown suspects; the group also determines intervention methods necessary to determine risks (Hinman and Cook, 2001).

It is likely that most threats will not be carried out, but each threat should be taken seriously (O'Toole, 1999). The threat that goes unnoticed or ignored may be the threat leads to a mass casualty event. Threat evaluators are experts and, thus, have the responsibility of ensuring that every threat receives competent evaluation (Hinman and Cook, 2001). Effective threat assessment is based upon effort, knowledge, and appropriate assessment training (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005).

Threat assessment teams should include individuals who work within the school and the community and are who are able to evaluate all risks (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003). Teachers, counselors, and campus law enforcement officials are positioned to identify and react to potential violence whether issued intention or direct threats or rumors (Greenberg, 2007). College law enforcement officers who are trained in investigate analysis are important to the team (Hinman and Cook, 2001). In addition, mental health experts can assess mental health issues and link at risk individuals to the appropriate counseling services (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Teachers must also be involved, whether through reporting or as team members, because they have the most contact with troubled students (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Threat assessment teams must also seek assistance from other experts when necessary (Hinman and Cook, 2001). Outside consultants often have expertise in a particular field that aid in determining the threat or providing for appropriate intervention method (Hinman and Cook 20001). Threat assessment teams do not require input from each member on each particular incident; however, certain experts are necessary when particular

behaviors are exhibited (Hinman and Cook, 2001). Computer experts, who may not be part of the threat assessment team, may be incorporated when threatening emails or other forms of other computerized threats are sent (Hinman and Cook, 2001). Consultation with others is a key part of the threat assessment model (Fein, Vossekuil, and Holden, 1995).

Risk assessment and intervention efforts may also require help from victim advocates, students, faculty, parents, health services, counseling, and other campus community members (Langford, n.d.). When threats are received, team members should be willing and capable of evaluating the threat or provided an opportunity to discuss the facts with others in order to determine the severity of the threat (Dunn, 2003). Ultimately, threat assessment team members must have the appropriate resources to determine if threats are real (Hinman and Cook, 2001).

Threat assessment teams are based on trust and a shared mission (Greenberg, 2007). Threat assessment teams should be empowered to take action and gather information to determine the potential risk factors and intervention efforts (Massengill et al., 2007). These teams must lead toward intervention and prevention. They are often the first responders to threatening behavior (Woods and Cameron, 2003). Community members must recognize the crucial nature of violence assessment and agree with the need to maintain and cultivate relationships toward threat assessment (Greenberg, 2007). Threat assessment experts should be provided the leeway to gather and analyze information on behavior which will permit reasonable judgment efforts (Fein et al., 2004). Team

members must determine if individuals have means, motive, ability, and intent to carry out violent acts (Hinman and Cook, 2001). Risks must be assessed in a timely fashion by appropriately trained individuals (O'Toole, 1999).

Team members are tasked with identifying details and the determination of the threat. The details may include behavior patterns, location of potential threat, and concrete information about preparation (O'Toole, 1999). The investigation is primarily invested in understanding the threateners behaviors that are pre-indicators to violence (Hinman and Cook, 2001). Agencies and systems must recognize pre-attack behaviors in order to reduce the number of threatening situations and help alleviate fears of victimization (Fein, Vossekuil, and Holden, 1995).

In the past, FERPA has generated confusion regarding what individuals within a college community can share. It is important educational administrators, mental health officials, students, and faculty are trained on when and how they are legally entitled to share information about behaviors particularly about mental illness, for protection of the students and community population (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). It is crucial that those who need mental health help get the services they require (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

Once assessments have taken place by the team, team members must decide on intervention efforts. These intervention efforts may come from various resources and may be staged at different time intervals (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005). It is imperative that after intervention has taken place, threat assessment teams follow through. Teams must determine if interventions are

successful and if more effort is required. In the case of an unsuccessful deterrent, additional intervention measures must be enacted (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

In an effort to recognize potential warning signs, the college community must assist in identifying and responding to those in crisis (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). If threat assessment and behavior reporting becomes a college community accepted manner, it has the potential to improve the school climate (Rutter, Maugham, Mortimer, and Ouston, 1979; as cited in Weerman et al., 2007). A culture of trust must exist and it must be conducive to communication (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). The culture must be conducive to reduce student isolation, de-stigmatize mental illness, and provide intervention efforts (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). The single downside to threat assessment models may be hypersensitivity to eccentricity (Pope, 2008).

Successful intervention measures on campuses tend to lower delinquency rates, harassment occurrences, suicide, and other forms of anti-social behavior (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Team assessments and interventions increase the likelihood that troubled individuals will receive the treatment they require. The social or learning environment may also likely benefit because disruptive behaviors will be reduced (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.).

Threat assessment models may experience roadblocks. Some community members do not view campus police forces as full law enforcement officials (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). To counteract this perception, law enforcement officials should be involved in emergency management planning,

communication processes, and the atmosphere must be driven to reduce this presumption. Some community members feel they should not share information with law enforcement, mental health professionals, or other entities on campus. Campus community members must feel free and compelled to share information and move toward promising practices (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003). They must also have an outlet for immediate reporting (Whitaker and Pollard, 1994). All prevention efforts include supporting normative behaviors and promoting bystander intervention, even if that intervention is reporting the behavior or behaviors to team members (Langford, n.d.).

Threat assessment involves training team members to the expert level, but parents, teachers, and students must also be trained to recognize warning signs of potential violence. These community members if trained appropriately offer an opportunity to alert those who can provide for intervention (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). These community members must have a mechanism to report potential threats of violence to the threat assessment team for appropriate intervention (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Training for all must include a commitment to observe legal standards and individual liberties. The proper balance must be stuck between the two to garner appropriate treatment (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Training should focus on recognizing when individuals pose a threat to themselves or others and when intervention is appropriate (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

Policy Continuity

Public officials must initiate policy efforts to improve school climate (Trump, 2003). In order to determine the required policy efforts, campuses should survey their students, faculty, and staff about normative behaviors, safety, environmental issues, and priority concerns (Langford, n.d.). It is imperative that each college evaluate its climate because solutions that are on-size-fits-all are unlikely to help in every circumstance (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Research should result in effective policies and response models. These efforts must anticipate the results of certain behaviors and identify effects to the community (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003). Schools must adopt a system for responding to threats. Administrators should enact specific policies for agencies involved in threat analysis (O'Toole, 1999) and intervention employment. Efforts and intervention approaches should be driven toward problem solving (Langford, n.d.).

This threat assessment model may exist in harmony with many other behavior and recognition efforts and intervention models. The multi disciplinary threat assessment team in Taber, Canada, found success in utilizing mental health experts, law enforcement officials, school administrators, and other professionals who have a wide variety of experience and training (Woods and Cameron, 2003). Programs targeting at-risk youth may also provide a compliment to threat assessment team intervention measures (Ferguson, Miquel, Kilburn, and Sanchez, 2007). The complex nature of violence indicates multi component initiatives are

mandatory in assessing contributing factors (Langford, n.d.). Intervention efforts should focus on the dynamics of violence (Langford, n.d.). Early intervention is essential to averting crises (Lockyer and Eastin, 2007). If detected in its earliest stages, at-risk behaviors can be eliminated (Lockyer and Eastin, 2007). In addition to early intervention programs, behavioral therapy for anger issues has proven to be successful in college students, juvenile delinquents, and prison inmates (Beck and Fernandez, 1998). Therapy may be employed as a primary intervention. Family relationships and bonds between teachers and students or mentors and mentees may also be critical to intervention success (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Mentors may play a significant factor in intervention efforts for at risk juveniles; these mentors may include law enforcement officials and teachers (Lockyer and Eastin, 2007).

The key to threat assessment is sharing information and bridging gaps between law enforcement, education, and mental health (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Policy efforts require collaboration among community and law enforcement officials. Grant applications and entitlement funding require evidence of this joint effort (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Communication, bonding, and awareness are important to violence prevention (Levitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007).

Conclusion

The Need for Effective Policies

It is of certain, consistent and effective threat reduction policies are needed. These unfailing, substantive policies in threat assessment require analysis of the current collegiate environment, collaboration efforts, and policies facilitating reporting of problem behaviors. Campuses should provide a strategic and targeted approach, addressing priority problems, the risks, and protective factors identified through the analysis of local problems and assets (Langford, n.d.). Universities should conduct risk analysis and then choose a level of security appropriate for their campus. Success also is dependent upon collaboration (Lockyer and Eastin, 2000). Everyone must work together toward the common goal of threat assessment. Faculty members are encouraged more now than ever before to speak up when they witness signs of trouble (Pope, 2008). College departments are now beginning to share information more readily especially if threats to community safety are perceived (Pope, 2008). The climate must be enabling (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.).

Available information indicates campus law enforcement should take the lead role in assessing threatening behaviors. However, other community professionals must be involved and a reporting structure must exist. Policies should be enacted to support threat assessment efforts. Policies must clarify and promote understanding of laws in relation to information sharing (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Monies are even being allocated to create safer

school environments (Sherman, 2000; as cited in Ferguson et al., 2007). The implications for policy consistency and intervention are tremendous.

Campus Law Enforcement and Threat Assessment

Empirical studies have addressed behaviors of the violent student. Knowledge about at risk indicators can help tailor interventions (Weerman et al., 2007), but no one factor is decisive. There is no research that identifies a single trait or characteristic that can reliably distinguish school shooters from others (O'Toole, 1999). Conversely, no one factor is completely without consequence. This means when a student emits certain behaviors, law enforcement officials have the capacity and the responsibility to keep the threat from turning into an actuality (O'Toole, 1999). Threat assessment requires conscious effort and thorough analysis of risks (Hinman and Cook, 2001) brought forth by law enforcement. Campus law enforcement is well situated to coordinate support, services, counseling and referrals (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003).

Campus police departments are in much need of developing and maintaining mechanisms for reporting abhorrent behaviors and analyzing actual threats. School violence demands expert assessments (de Becker, 1999). Procedures for recording and monitoring threats must be implemented (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Campuses may additionally consider establishing multiple review teams (UWPD, 2008) or a hotline for reporting potential threats, including harassment, vandalism, and other non-emergency events (Kramen, Massey, and Timm, n.d.). Yet, systematic threat assessment is the optimal

strategy for determining the seriousness of violent behaviors (Jimerson, Brock, and Cowan, 2005).

The Need for Constant Assessment: Crime Reduction

Violence prevention should be seen as part of the collegiate mission (Langford, n.d.). After the tragedy at Virginia Tech, college administrators are looking more aggressively and proactively at signs of trouble (Pope, 2008). Noxious conditions foster delinquency (Agnew and White, 1992; as cited in Mazerolle et al., 2000). Campuses are not exempt from deviant activity. Since quality of life is the cornerstone of health promotion (Epp, 1986; as cited in Valois, Paxton, Zullig, and Huebner, 2006) and societal civility, enhancing quality of life should be the focus of campus law enforcement.

Indicators of the potential for inflicting mass casualties are available for early detection and possible intervention. It is impossible to eliminate all risks; yet, potential for occurrence must be minimized (Leavitt, Spellings, and Gonzales, 2007). Existing information indicates the level of preventative measures should be evaluated by each institution (Massengill et al., 2007). Problem-focused early intervention programs, characterized by cross-disciplinary collaboration, appear to actively engage threat assessment challenges (Langford, n.d.). Schools can extend outreach to the community and offer support to parents (Schonfeld and Newgass, 2003). These programs maintain vigorous recognition and intervention processes. Nevertheless, threat assessment teams appear as a viable standard solution for discerning problem student behaviors on campuses across America.

These teams are responsible for addressing and respond to situations involving threats or acts of violence (O'Toole, 1999).

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