

## Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM)

BTAM is a structured, evidence-based process employed across schools nationwide to identify, assess, and address potential threats. It emphasizes prevention and early intervention.

Ivywood's BTAM protocol follows Michigan law and aligns with national best practices set by the U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education

### Key steps involved in a standard BTAM protocol:

#### 1. Identification and Reporting

Information or a report that involves behavior that represents a concern is received.

- Identify Concerning Behavior: Recognizing communications (verbal, written, social media, drawings) or actions that indicate a possible threat to self or others.
- Referral: A student, staff member, parent, or community member reports the concerning behavior to the designated school contact (often an administrator or counselor).
- Initial Triage: The BTAM team leader quickly reviews the report to determine if it meets the threshold for a full threat assessment.

#### 2. Inquiry and Information Gathering

The team gathers facts to understand the context and severity of the threat

- Team Activation: The multidisciplinary BTAM team convenes.
- Information Collection: The team gathers information from multiple sources:
  - Interviews with the subject of concern and the target(s).
  - Interviews with witnesses, staff, and family members.
  - Reviewing school records (discipline, academic, mental health).
  - Collecting digital evidence (social media, notes).
- Fact-Finding: The goal is to determine the facts of the situation and the context.

#### 3. Assessment and Risk Determination

Using a structured protocol, the team analyzes the collected facts and distinguishes between threats made and threats posed.

- Analyze the Threat: The team evaluates the nature of the threat (e.g., specific target, method, time, place) and the subject's motive, intent, and access to means.
- Classify the Threat: The threat is classified into one of two categories:
  - Transient Threat: Expressed verbally in anger/frustration with no clear intent or capacity to carry it out. (Requires immediate, simple intervention.)
  - Substantive Threat: Indicates an intent and/or plan to cause harm, suggesting the individual poses a threat. (Requires intensive management.)
- Consultation: If the assessment is difficult or involves mental health factors, the team consults with appropriate experts.

#### **4. Management and Intervention Plan**

Based on the risk determination, the team develops an action plan to mitigate the threat and provide support.

- Risk Mitigation: The team identifies necessary safety measures, which may include temporary removal from the classroom or school, police involvement, or removing access to potential weapons.
- Intervention Plan Development: The plan focuses on the underlying issues that led to the threat. Interventions are personalized and often include:
  - Counseling or referral for external mental health services.
  - Academic or behavioral support strategies.
  - Disciplinary consequences (used in conjunction with support).
  - Communication protocols with the parents/guardians.
  - Student locker/backpack checks or other monitoring procedures.
- Implementation: The plan is implemented, and relevant staff are informed of their roles.

#### **5. Monitoring, Re-assessment, and Closure**

The BTAM process is ongoing until the risk is deemed resolved.

- Active Monitoring: The team continuously monitors the student's behavior and the effectiveness of the interventions.
- Re-assessment: The team convenes to review new information or changes in the student's behavior. The plan is then adjusted accordingly to reflect any decrease or increase in risk.
- Case Closure: The case is formally closed only when the team determines that the risk has been fully and successfully mitigated, and the student no longer poses a threat to the school community or themselves.