

The Role of School Climate in Effective Behavioral Threat Assessment Management (**BTAM**)

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Introductions



Agenda

- School-based Behavior Threat Assessment and Management (**BTAM**)
- Dimensions of School Climate
- Perspectives of VT Youth – YRBS Data Highlights
- School Strategies
- Collaborating Across the Ecosystem of Threat Mitigation
- Q&A

Educators

**Parents,
Families &
Community
Members**

**State Education
Agency**

Public Safety

**Mental Health
Professionals**

**Medical
Providers**

Safety is our shared priority.

Behavior Threat Assessment and Management (**BTAM**) is...

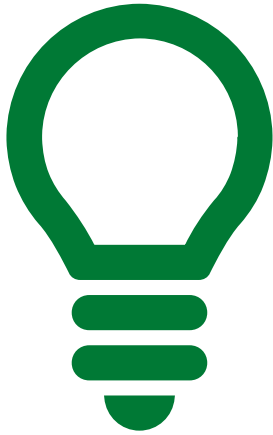
- A multidisciplinary, fact-based, systematic process designed to identify, assess, and manage potentially dangerous or violent situations
- Most effective when it is embedded within a comprehensive multi-tiered system of support (VTmtss) and other efforts to promote a positive school climate and effective and positive discipline practices
- BTAM has roots in: Act 29: School Safety and Security



BTAM is not...

- A substitute for school teams and processes that address nonviolent behaviors of concern
- A disciplinary process or a mechanism to allow schools to remove children from school because they have behaviors that are difficult to manage
- A pipeline to the juvenile justice system

Implementation Criteria



BTAM should only be used in the context of *threatening* behavior.

It is imperative that BTAM processes are followed with fidelity and in accordance with IDEA, Section 504, FERPA, and other civil rights and privacy laws” (NASP, 2021).

Effective BTAM

When done properly, **students** are:

- Provided with necessary interventions and supports
- Not misidentified or labeled
- Not unnecessarily suspended or expelled



Research

According to the National Association of School Psychologists (2024)

BTAM can facilitate “data-based and objective decisions and minimize the risk of erroneous decisions based on profiling characteristics, personal biases, or misperceptions.”

This is further supported by the work of Dewey Cornell, PhD on Comprehensive School Threat Assessment.

Dimensions of School Climate

Is a focus on the space between the physical school environment and effective management of BTA Services

- School & Classroom Environment
- School-Family Partnerships
- Personal Relationships
- Educational Equity
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Support
- Curriculum and Instructional Practices
- Student and Educator Well-being
- Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying Prevention
- Personal Safety
- **Behavior Threat Assessment Services**



Data Review

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & AGENCY OF
EDUCATION

YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR
SURVEY

2021 VT YRBS High School Results

Fights & Safety

- During the past year, one in six or about 17% of high school students reported they were in a physical fight at school
- During the past 30 days, 9% of high school students skipped school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from high school

Weapons

- 4% of high school students reported *recently* carrying a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property.
- During the past year, 7% of high school students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.

2021 VT YRBS Middle School Results

Bullying

- Overall, 40% of middle school students self-reported they have ever been bullied at school
- Of that, nearly 25% of students were reportedly bullied recently. In that same timeframe, 8% of middle school students reported bullying others

Fights & Safety

- Nearly 40% of middle school students reported that they have been in a physical fight
- 10% of these students recently skipped because they felt unsafe either at school or on their way to or from middle school

School Connectedness

High School

- 20% of VT high school students are *not sure* if their school has clear rules and consequences for behavior
- 15% reported they are *not sure* they have at least one teacher or adult that they can talk to if they have a problem and another 15% reported they do *not* have that adult at school
- 43% of HS students reported that feel they *never* or *rarely* get the kind of help they need at school

Middle School

- 20% of VT middle school students are *not sure* if their school has clear rules and consequences for behavior.
- 20% of middle school students reported are *not sure* if there was someone at their school they can talk to about a problem.

Belonging in Schools

An invitation for recalibration, reshaping,
and realignment...

School Climate Strategies

Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Supports

([VTmtss](#))

Schoolwide

Classroom

Student-centered

Community

Collaborating Across the Ecosystem of Threat Management

- What role is school leadership taking in the implementation?
- What resources, supports, or services need to be in place for students, families, and/or staff? What professional development is needed?
- How are you currently collaborating with school and community partners, safety personnel, and medical providers?
- What barriers currently exist that hinder students' access to appropriate services that support their school success?
- What policies, procedures or processes need to be reviewed, revised, or developed to support effective collaboration and coordination across the ecosystem of support?
- What new services or connections need to be developed?



School safety is the responsibility of all.



Next step -
Do something

**What is one
thing you
might do
*differentl*y?**

Questions?

Email Michele at Michele.Hartje@vermont.gov

Education Programs Coordinator – School Climate

VTmtss Team

Student Services Division

Vermont Agency of Education

Resources:

- [Act 29: School Safety and Security | Agency of Education \(vermont.gov\)](#)
- [SCHOOL SAFETY - IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY | Vermont School Safety Center](#)
- [Behavior Threat Assessment and Management \(BTAM\) Best Practice Considerations for K–12 Schools \(nasponline.org\)](#)
- [School Climate | Agency of Education \(vermont.gov\) \(Webpage updates In-Progress\)](#)
- [Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Supports | Agency of Education](#)

**Thank
You!**

