



Center for
Prevention Programs
and Partnerships

Targeted Violence & Terrorism Prevention through Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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This presentation includes case studies of actual events. Some of the behaviors and actions of persons referenced in these cases may be constitutionally protected and are not necessarily indicative of future radicalization to violence.

The Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships' Mission



Center for
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The Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) strengthens our country's ability to prevent terrorism and targeted violence nationwide, through funding, training, increased public awareness, and partnerships across every level of government, the private sector, and in local communities.

Definitions

Targeted violence refers to a premediated act of violence directed at a specific individual, group, or location, regardless of motivation, that violates the criminal law of the United States or of any State or subdivision of the United States.

Terrorism refers to any activity involving a criminally unlawful act that is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources, and that appears intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence government policy by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.

The Constitution protects an individual's right to freely believe, speak, and associate with others. An individual's freedom of belief, regardless of the cause they support, is protected. Certain actions in support of one's beliefs, such as the threat, planning, incitement, or use of unlawful violence, are not protected.

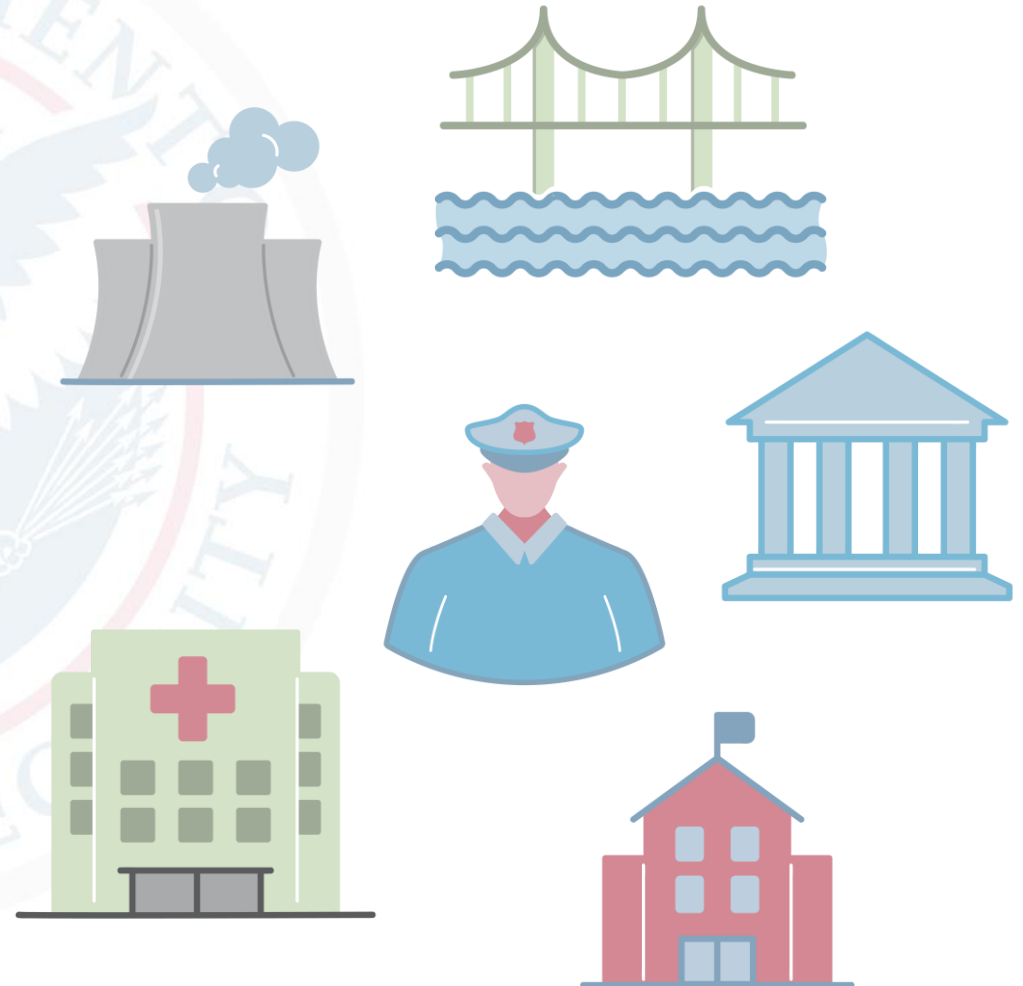
The Current Threat Picture

The primary terrorism threat in the U.S. stems from lone offenders or small cells of individuals motivated by a variety of grievances.

Violent extremist ideologies, false or misleading narratives, and conspiracy theories contribute to a heightened threat.

Both domestic violent extremists (DVE) and foreign terrorist organizations (FTO) continue to amplify false or misleading narratives.

Source: National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin (2022, November 30); FBI and DHS NDAA Report (2022, October); FBI and DHS NDAA Report (2021, May).



Current Threat Statistics

- The United States spends about \$115 billion per year on domestic counterterrorism, and expenditures on domestic homeland security increased by well over \$1 trillion since 2001.
- While counterterrorism investigations have been successful in preventing attacks, “in the post-9/11 era...individuals associated with domestic extremist ideologies were successful in committing violent crimes **57.5%** of the time” and perpetrators of mass casualty violence succeed approximately **33%** of the time.
- During the five-year period from 1990-1994, the United States averaged **2** mass casualty plots per year by violent extremists. By comparison, during the five-year period from 2017-2021, there were an average of **40** mass casualty plots per year in the United States — a **1900%** increase.

Sources: Mueller and Stewart 2021: Terrorism and Bathtubs: Comparing and Assessing the Risks.

Jensen, Kane and Akers 2023: Comparing Violent and Non-Violent Offenders and Jensen, Kane and Akers 2023: Mass Casualty Extremist Offenders.

Why a Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention?

- Aims to protect the health, safety, and well-being of everyone
- Brings together multidisciplinary experts
- Elicits input from a diverse range of stakeholders
- Evidence-based



Source: Centers for Disease Control. "About the Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention," April 9, 2024.
<https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/about/about-the-public-health-approach-to-violence-prevention.html>

What are Public Health-Informed Approaches to Violence Prevention?

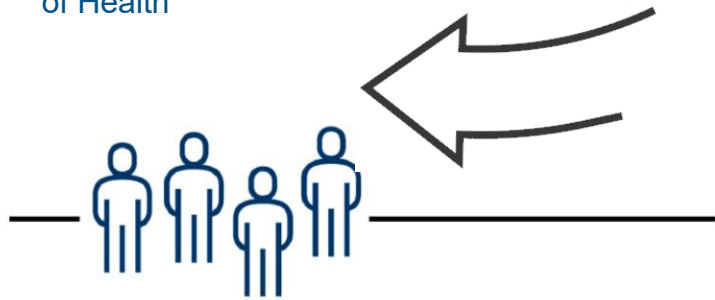
- Focus on the health, safety, and well-being of everyone
- Recognize that violence is a public health issue
- Address the significance of social, behavioral, and environmental factors
- Consider a multidisciplinary approach
- Emphasize gathering input from a diverse set of stakeholders
- Call for individuals to participate in community services

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Public Health Association (APHA)

Prevention – The Public Health Model

Social Determinants of Health

of Health



Falling Off the Cliff

Represents an individual committing an act of targeted violence or terrorism.

Primary Prevention

Foster resilient communities that reduce risks associated with violent extremism and increase protective activities.

Examples: Jobs programs, bystander awareness, Music in Common, University of Texas El Paso

Secondary Prevention

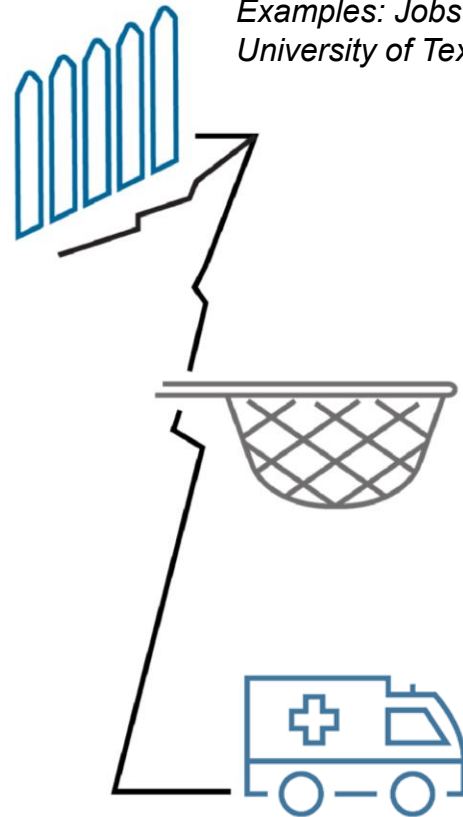
Provide services to persons in the early stages of radicalizing to violence.

Examples: Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) Teams and Threat Assessment and Management programs with properly-trained personnel, Boston Children Hospital, NYS Division of Homeland Security, Hawaii Homeland Security

Tertiary Prevention

Prevent recidivism by those who have or have planned to commit acts of targeted violence or terrorism.

Examples: Counter Extremism Project (CEP)'s Radicalization, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, and Recidivism (4R) Network, Counseling and/or treatment to support re-entry, Life after Hate



Jones CP, Jones CY, Perry GS, Barclay G, Jones CA. Addressing the social determinants of children's health: a cliff analogy. *J Health Care Poor Underserved*. 2009;20(4 Suppl):1-12. doi: 10.1353/hpu.0.0228. PMID: 20168027.

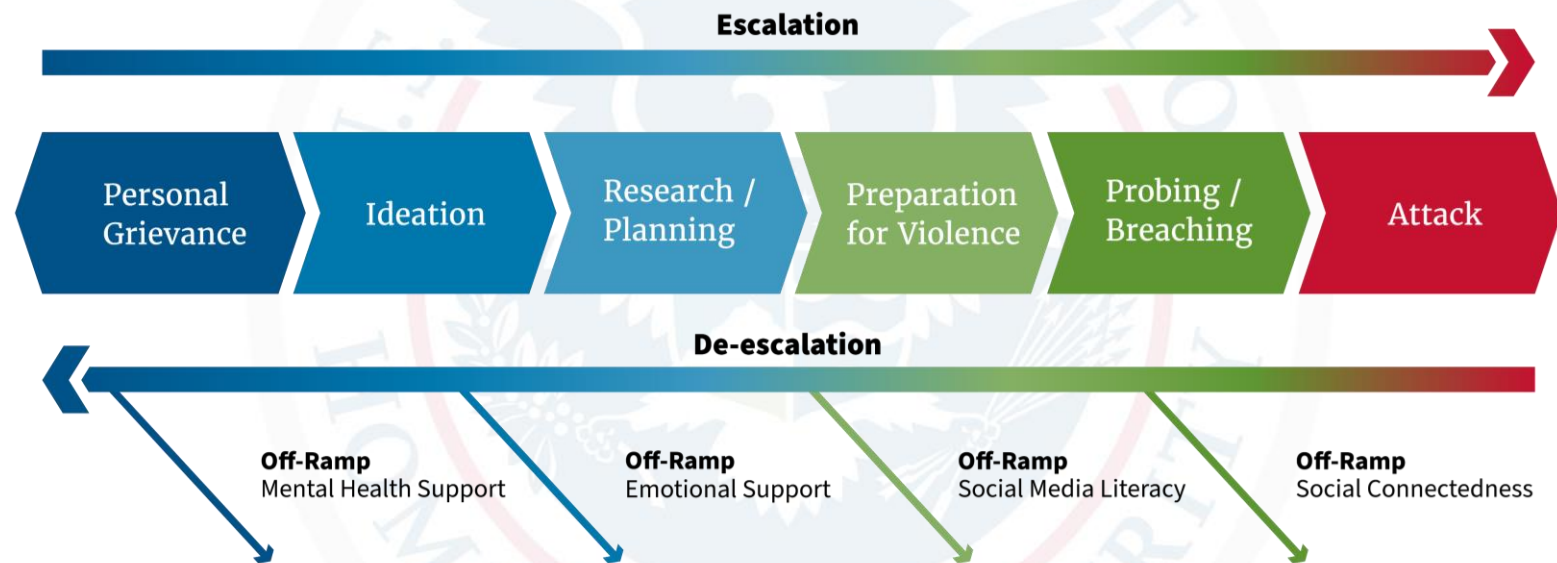


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Understanding the Pathway Toward Violence: Risk and Protective Factors

Pathway to Violence Model

This is one of several models proposed to describe a progression from grievance to attack. Steps along a pathway include a highly personalized grievance, violent ideation, research and planning, specific preparations for violence, breaches of security or other boundaries, and attack. Individual pathways may differ by person. Not every individual who commits violence takes a pathway.



- The path or pathway to violence is not a linear trajectory.
- Individuals can on- or off-ramp at any point during the escalation process.

Sources: National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Office (NTER) Threat Evaluation and Reporting Overview (TERO) Participant Guide Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Toolkit; DHS National Threat Evaluation and Reporting (NTER) Program Office, and DHS Office of Health Security (OHS).

Risk and Protective Factors

A **risk factor** is a characteristic that may increase the likelihood of a person experiencing or perpetrating targeted violence or terrorism, but there is no cause/effect relationship. A risk factor does not predict or cause targeted violence or terrorism.

A **protective factor** is a characteristic that may decrease the likelihood of a person experiencing or perpetrating targeted violence or terrorism. A protective factor provides a buffer against risk, without cause/effect relationship.



- No single factor leads to a pathway to violence.
- An individual may possess some or all these factors and never commit violence.

Examples of Potential Risk Factors and Protective Factors



There are **many** potential risk factors for targeted violence and terrorism, including:

Having a criminal history

Fixation on violence

Thrill/risk seeking

Use of illicit substances

Real or perceived threat

Justification for violence

There are also **many** potential protective factors for targeted violence and terrorism, including:

- Law abidance
- Societal inclusion and integration
- Institutional trust
- Political and life satisfaction
- Parental involvement
- Exposure to nonviolent belief systems and narratives
- Nonviolent outlets for addressing grievances
- Resources to address trauma and mental health issues



- **No single factor leads to radicalization.**
- An individual may possess some or all of these factors and not radicalize to violence.

School Based Threat Assessment and Management



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2021

Averting Targeted School Violence

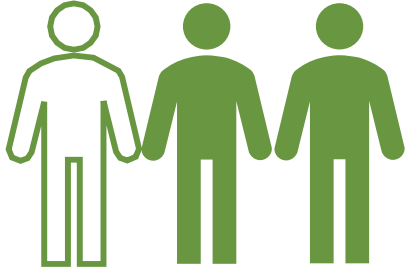
A U.S. SECRET SERVICE ANALYSIS OF
PLOTS AGAINST SCHOOLS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

NATIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

"The findings demonstrate there are almost always intervention points available before a student resorts to violence," said Dr. Lina Alathari, the center's director.

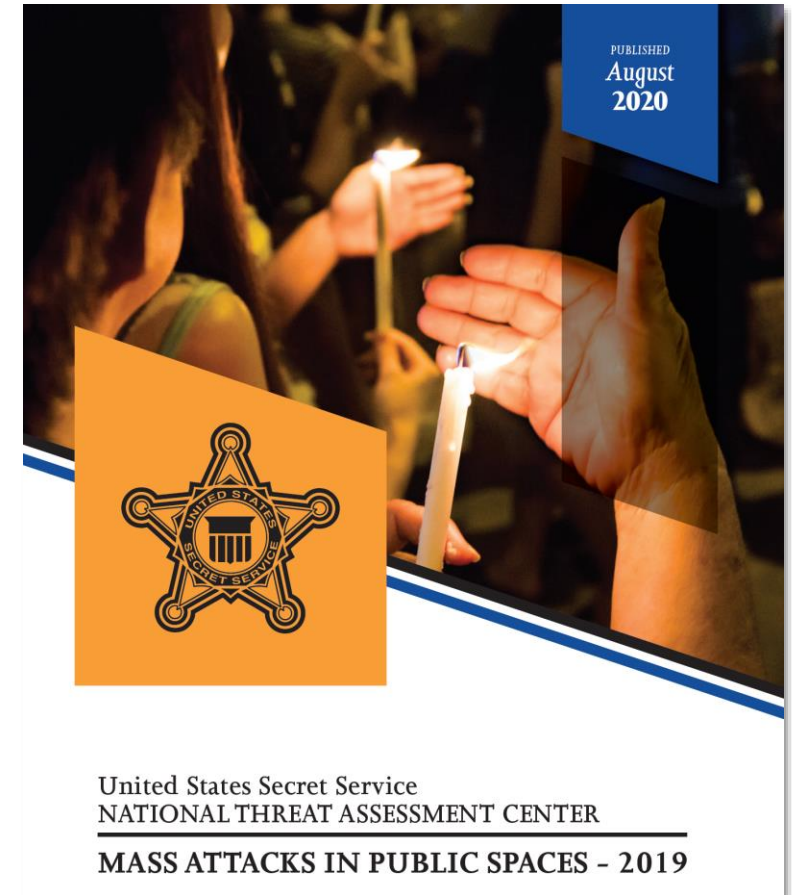
Bystanders Can Help



Two-thirds of attackers exhibited behaviors that elicited concern in other people.

For **more than half** of the attackers, their behaviors concerned others to the point that the observer feared for the safety of themselves or others.

Source: U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC).





We Know

- Research shows that most perpetrators of school attacks are current students
- Clear indicators/warning signs are given
 - On Average 4-5 concerning behaviors were observed prior to the attack
 - Peers and teachers were more likely to observe the concerning behaviors
- Many felt bullied, persecuted and/or had grievances
- School- based attacks are rarely impulsive. Violence is a process not an event; therefore we need to interrupt the process
- The process of violence begins with identifying the concerning behavior and intervening as soon as possible

Breaking the Code of Silence

Serious efforts at prevention will fail unless students are willing to talk to adults at school or a trusted adult.

Breaking the code of silence entails creating connections between students and staff.

See something, say something



What is Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management?

1. **Identifies** individuals who exhibit threatening or concerning behavior.
2. Gathers information to **assess** whether they pose a risk of harm.
3. Identifies appropriate interventions, resources, and supports to **manage** that risk.



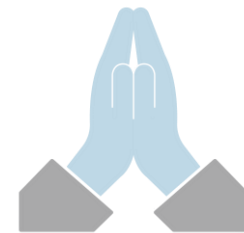
Threat assessment and threat management can and should occur before a criminal investigation.

What are Bystanders and What Can They Do?

Bystanders	 <p>Family and Friends</p>  <p>Community Members</p>  <p>Peers and Colleagues</p>  <p>Community Leaders and Authority Figures</p>
Action Items	 <p>Provide help to someone who may need intervention before they commit an act of violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay non-judgmental• Listen for escalation• Be interested without being challenging• Report unusual behavior

What Is a Multidisciplinary Team?

- A team of persons with different professional backgrounds that comes together to solve a problem
- It may include administrators, mental health and social service providers, faith leaders, medical personnel, law enforcement, and others.
- Any institution can create their own multidisciplinary team that can be trained in threat assessment and threat management to handle cases.



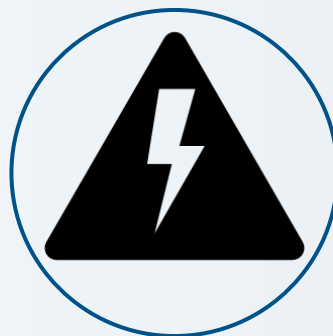
Assess



**Risk
Factors**



**Triggers
and
Stressors**



**Warning
Behaviors**



**Warning
Behaviors That
Could Signal
Imminence**



Mitigators



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In Practice

- Texas Education Code 37.115
 - Requiring School Based Threat Assessment
- Texas Behavioral Threat Assessment, Intervention, and Prevention Program Strategy
 - Initiative through Texas Department of Public Safety to establish community Threat Assessment and Management Teams



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Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) Resources

NTER's Resources

- Public-Facing Training on Targeted Violence and Terrorism
- Instructor Certification in Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management
- Webinar Series on Targeted Violence Prevention and Threat Assessment
- Threat Assessment and Management Resources

Your Agency Needs a BTAM Master Trainer!
The National Threat Evaluation and Reporting (NTER) Master Trainer Program (MTP) is a train-the-trainer initiative that certifies Federal, State, Local, Tribal and Territorial partners to teach Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) techniques and best practices. Certified Master Trainers receive exclusive access to key training and program resources that will assist your organization in building BTAM processes and utilizing BTAM to prevent targeted violence and terrorism.

Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) Resources

- Prepare for Evolving Threats**
 - A national, evidence-based framework for BTAM
 - Access to a national network of Master Trainers and BTAM subject matter experts for consultation
- Train Your Community**
 - Certification from the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Intelligence & Analysis
 - Comprehensive and adaptable instructional guides and toolkits in BTAM
- Build Institutional Knowledge of Threats**
 - Continuing education opportunities in targeted violence prevention and BTAM
 - Exclusive invitations to webinars and case debriefs led by subject matter experts
- Develop Multi-Disciplinary BTAM Teams**
 - Expert support for building BTAM processes
- Shift Towards Prevention**
 - Connections to organizations and programs specializing in violence prevention
 - Share prevention resources with diverse disciplines across all levels of government

Interested in learning more about the Master Trainer Program? Want to know more about the process of having a Certified Master Trainer in your own organization? Please contact NTER.MTP@hhs.gov

Threatening or Concerning Behaviors

Behaviors that may indicate: ■ Concern ■ Heightened Concern ■ Imminent Concern

NOTE: Vetting these behaviors to assess the potential for intended violence while ensuring the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties requires additional information and professional training. Please report threatening or concerning behaviors to the appropriate authorities within your organization or community, if you know someone who is struggling with mental health issues or who may pose a danger to themselves or others, please seek help and call 9-1-1 for emergencies.

To access these resources and learn more about the NTER mission, please visit the NTER website:

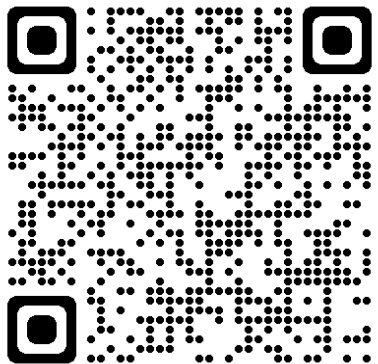


United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)

Training

NTAC provides customized training by request, focusing on:

- Proactively identifying threatening and concerning behavior
- Assessing whether individuals pose a risk of violence or other harm
- Developing community-based risk management strategies and proactive interventions



Sign up for an NTAC Live Streamed Training Event

<https://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/virtual>

Regional Program Managers



Domestic Security Strategists (DSS)

- Email: NTAC-DSS@usss.dhs.gov
- Website: www.secretservice.gov/ntac

Remember: If You See Something, Say Something®

The DHS “If You See Something, Say Something®” campaign is a national campaign that raises public awareness of:

- The indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime
- The importance of reporting suspicious activity to state and local law enforcement

If your organization is interested in partnering with the campaign to raise awareness in your community or within your organization, please contact us at SeeSay@hq.dhs.gov.



Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Program

To date, CP3 has funded a total of \$70 million in programming to 143 recipients through the TVTP Grant Program.

Current TVTP Grant Program priority areas:

- Enhancing Recidivism Reduction and Reintegration Capabilities
- Advancing Equity in Awards and Engaging Underserved Communities in Prevention
- Addressing Online Aspects of Targeted Violence and Terrorism
- Preventing Domestic Violent Extremism



Learn More: www.dhs.gov/tvtpgrants

Enabling Innovation in Prevention Efforts

- CP3 enables innovation by supporting prevention efforts across the country through the Invent2Prevent Program and the TVTP Grant Program.
- Invent2Prevent is a structured, experiential learning program that empowers university and high school students to create dynamic projects aimed at preventing targeted violence and terrorism.



Prevention Practitioners Network

- Conduct capacity-building workshops
- Publish free practice guides for interdisciplinary professionals
- Host a National Directory of prevention resources and mental and behavioral health clinicians willing to accept referrals
- Raise public awareness through national bystander campaigns
- Facilitate case consultations for clinicians with complex cases



**Prevention
Practitioners
Network**

Directory

An inclusive index of multi-stage violence prevention resources and clinically licensed mental and behavioral health providers



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Who should be listed as a resource or provider?

RESOURCES

- Raising societal awareness
- Media literacy
- Civic engagement
- Youth resilience
- Threat assessment
- Bystander training
- Referral services
- Recidivism and reintegration

If you are an educator, academic, social worker, licensed practitioner, counselor, government official, law enforcement officer, or work for any number of nonprofits that relate to this broad field, please submit [our form](#) to join the directory.

Clinically licensed professionals looking to connect with individuals or families at risk of violence.

Our resource directory will be inclusive of all organizations whose missions align with the broad vision of preventing school shootings, hate-based violence, and other mass casualty events.

Questions?

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kate.shaw@hq.dhs.gov

Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3):
<https://www.dhs.gov/CP3>

Grants Office:
terrorismprevention@hq.dhs.gov

For More Information

Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3):
<https://www.dhs.gov/CP3>

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terrorismprevention@hq.dhs.gov