The Safety of Our Campus is Everyone’s Responsibility

How to Recognize Suspicious Circumstances
Threat Assessment

- set of investigative and operational techniques used by trained professionals to identify, assess, and manage the risks of targeted violence and its potential perpetrators
The three major functions of threat assessment programs are:

- **identification** of a potential perpetrator,
- **assessment** of the risks of violence posed by a given perpetrator at a given time, and
- **management** of both subject and the risks that s/he presents to a given target.
Who are the TAT members?

- **Ongoing Members**
  - Dean of Students (Chair, Liaison to Administration)
  - Director of Public Safety
  - Director of Health Services
  - Student Conduct Office/Director of Residential Life
  - Student Affairs Administrative Assistant (Secretary)
  - Director of Counseling and Disabilities Services (Coordinator)
  - College Counselor

- **Members on As-Needed Basis**
  - President of the College
  - Catawba College Legal Counsel
  - Director of Human Resources
  - Senior Academic Affairs officer
  - Chaplain of Catawba College
  - Local law enforcement representatives
  - Rowan County Emergency Management Coordinator
Violence is a process

- Violence is a process, as well as an act.
- Violent behavior does not occur in a vacuum.
- Careful analysis of violent incidents shows that violent acts often are the culmination of long-developing, identifiable traits of problems, conflicts, disputes, and failure.
Three Factors of Violence

- Violence is the product of an interaction among three factors:
  - the *individual* who takes violent action,
  - the *stimulus or triggering conditions* that lead the subject to see violence as an option, “way out,” or solution to problems
  - A *setting that facilitates or permits the violence*, or at least does not stop it from occurring.
Making vs. Posing a Threat

- Individuals utter threats for many reasons, only some of which involve intention or capacity to commit a violent act. However, a person can present a grave threat without articulating it.

- Some persons who make threats ultimately pose threats.

- Many persons who make threats do not pose threats.

- Some persons who pose threats never make threats.
Certainly instances of impulsive violence do occur in heated situations. But, research has shown that very serious targeted attacks and murders more commonly involve advanced planning. Incidents of workplace violence can be prevented in some cases because information about a person's ideas and plans for harm can be observed or discovered in advance.
The problem is that available information is likely to be scattered and that “leakage” of clues may occur by various means. Therefore, Threat Assessment teams need to act quickly upon an initial report of concern, see who else has a piece of the puzzle, then assemble the information to see what picture emerges.

At Catawba, we may or may not be able to control the *individual* or the *stimulus*, but we can create a setting that *reduces the facilitation of violence*.

This is why all members of the campus community must work together to prevent violence through *training* and *informed observation*.
So what do we need to know to help keep our campus safe from violence?

Today we are focusing on the first step in threat assessment which is to **identify potential perpetrators**.
Warning Signs

- There are several indicators of a potential threat which, taken by themselves, may not be immediately obvious. Nevertheless, you may only be seeing part of what is going on and so it's very important to tell a campus resource person any cause for concern that you may have.
Warning signs may be found in many forms

- one-on-one settings
- group interaction
- public behavior
- private behavior
- letters
- emails
- blogs, websites, & social networking sites
- photos
- phone calls
- text messages
Warning Signs

- Explicit statements about harming someone
- Changes in behavior (sudden or otherwise)
- Change in academic performance
- Unexplained absenteeism
- Increase in alcohol or drug use
- Anxiety or uncertainty about family/relationships/situations
- Suicidal thoughts
- Attempts to harm or kill self
- Conflicts with others
Warning Signs

- Lack of energy or chronic fatigue
- Bizarre behavior
- Change in appearance/declining hygiene
- Sending disturbing messages (i.e. texts, e-mails, letters) to students/employees
- Displays paranoia
- Alienates self from family and others; social isolation
- Loss of job/income/relationship
Warning Signs

- Disruptive behavior/irritability/abrasive towards another
- Coursework content that is alarming
- Depression or nervousness
- Identifying with other persons who engaged in past violence toward others
- Making statements that support the use of violence to resolve issues
How to Recognize Suspicious Circumstances

- Persons monitoring areas, entrances to buildings or buildings
- Persons pacing back and forth who appear to be dazed or confused
- Persons speaking incoherently
- Persons wandering in residence halls or buildings that appear to have no legitimate purpose
Suspicious Circumstances

- Unauthorized persons in restricted or sensitive areas
- Persons requesting sensitive information, building/HVAC plans, water, electrical, telecommunications locations, etc.
- Persons wearing clothing not consistent with weather conditions
Suspicious Circumstances

- Persons abandoning packages, backpacks, briefcases in unusual areas, such as high traffic/high populated areas such as sporting events, lectures, common areas, etc.
- Persons attempting to access utility rooms
- Multiple persons who appear to be working in consort, committing any of the above
Suspicious Circumstances

- Unusual powders or liquids/droplets/mists/clouds, especially found near intake/HVAC systems or enclosed spaces
- Dead animals/birds, fish, insects
- Unexplained/unusual odors
- Unusual/unscheduled spraying or discovery of spray devices or bottles
Tell colleague and/or supervisor
Call Public Safety (4000)
Call the Dean of Students (4410)
Call 911 if threat appears immediate
File a report through CatWatch

All CatWatch reports are sent to Public Safety and the Dean of Students, daily
To report an incident or suspicious behavior:

To report warning signs or suspicious circumstances through CatWatch:

Login to Catlink. Under the Home tab, click on the CatWatch link. Fill out the form. Or, go to:
http://catawba.edu/about/our-campus/offices/student-affairs/safety/catwatch/
Why is safety my job?

Silence creates an environment that facilitates violence.