**Course Goal:** The student will formulate management strategies based on behavioral threat assessments which will assist to limit targeted threat violence and mitigate risk factors.

**Course Purpose:** This course will provide police officers with a historical perspective of behavioral threat assessment (BTA), define common BTA terms and nomenclature, explain “pathway to violence” and “warning behavior typology” behaviors, interpret the anatomy of a BTA investigation, which will improve investigative practices and help mitigate violent risk factors. This information will provide department members with behavioral management strategies and an organizational road map to help prevent acts of targeted violence within the community. This course provides updated legislative content of Penal Code Section 835a.

**Topics:** Topics discussed in this course will include:

1. Historical Perspectives
2. BTA Anatomy
3. Social Influences
4. Investigative Considerations

**Student Learning Activities and Methods of Evaluation** This course will utilize facilitated instruction, video presentation, firsthand accounts, case study reviews, policy reflection, and group discussions. Student learning will be assessed through the use of facilitated group discussion and instructor-led question and answer.

1. Introduction and Historical Perspectives – Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA) Myths, Core Concepts, and terms and nomenclature
   1. Common BTA Myths
      1. A-Typical Profiles
         1. This is false
         2. Common characteristics exist which are to general to provide accurate profiles
         3. Those who commit acts of targeted violence follow a pathway and exhibit behaviors…do not have a “profile”
      2. Targeted violent offenders are a product of mental illness/derangement
         1. This is false as well
         2. Many had contact with mental health professionals, but few indicators that would suggest an attack is eminent
         3. Statistics to show similarities, but no over-arching example of “profile” exists
      3. Direct threats equal likelihood of attack
         1. Those attackers studied in Exceptional Case Study[[1]](#footnote-1), none communicated the threat directly to victim(s)
         2. Understanding myths and how they influence a BTA investigation
      4. Mental History is not causation
         1. No common links between diagnosis and mass murder
   2. Behavioral Threat Assessment “core concepts”
      1. 10 “core concepts” to BTA according to the Safe School Initiative[[2]](#footnote-2)
         1. Acts are rarely sudden and impulsive
         2. Others knew about attacks PRIOR to the attack
         3. Most attackers did not/do not make “direct” threats
         4. There IS NOT an accurate profile of the would-be attacker
         5. Most attackers engage in pre-assaultive behavior identified in the “typology” of warning behaviors.
         6. Most attacker considered suicide and have difficulty with coping skills
         7. Many attackers have a grievance and felt bullied or persecuted by others
         8. Most attackers have or had access to weapons
         9. In many cases, others may have been included in the preparation stages
         10. Most attacks were stopped by means OTHER THAN LAW ENFORCEMENT intervention
      2. Developing the capacity to evaluate behavior associated to a BTA may indicate potential risk factors
         1. Introduction of “Pathway to Violence” concept
         2. Introduction to warning behavior “typology”
      3. A BTA investigation can influence the identification of targeted violence
   3. Unique nomenclature and vernacular used within the professional BTA community
      1. Nomenclature associated to a BTA investigation
         1. Stalking
         2. Pathway to Violence
         3. Anchors
         4. Behavioral Indicators
         5. Energy Bursts
         6. Inhibitors
         7. Grievance
         8. Fixation
         9. Aggression
         10. Hunters and Howlers
         11. Threat Management
         12. Risk Violence
         13. Siloing
         14. Leakage
         15. Ideation
      2. Identifying “targeted violence”
         1. Definition of targeted violence
         2. Difference between “decision” to commit violence and “reaction” to violent action
      3. Historical perspective
         1. Exceptional Case Study explained
         2. Safe School Initiative explained
         3. ATAP (Assoc. of Threat Assessment Professionals) and RAGE-V (Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence- ATAP assessment tool)
         4. Secret Service and FBI Involvement
   4. Unique and identifiable perpetrator traits are needed to properly assess risk factors.
      1. Pathway to Violence[[3]](#footnote-3)
         1. Grievance
         2. Violent Ideation
         3. Research and Planning the Attack
         4. Pre-Attack Preparation / Weapon Acquisition (Gene Disinger)[[4]](#footnote-4)
         5. Probing and Breaching
         6. Final Act Behavior
         7. Attack
      2. Warning Behaviors (Dr. Reid Meloy)[[5]](#footnote-5)
         1. Pathway Behaviors
         2. Fixation
         3. Ideation
         4. Novel Aggression
         5. Violent Energy Bust
         6. Leakage
         7. Directly Communicated Threats
         8. Last Resort
         9. Legacy Token
   5. BTA systematic approach to assess and manage targeted violence and associated risk factors
      1. Identifying possible targeted violence
         1. Possible risk factors associated to BTA
         2. Understanding targeted violence as it relates to “traditional” criminal activity
      2. Create a baseline approach
         1. Identifying behavior associated with targeted violence
      3. Identifying predictive behavior
         1. Sudden and unexpected changes in behavior
   6. Learning Activity:
      1. Case Study 1 – Review of Williams Officer Involved Shooting
         1. Instructor Lead Discussion and Q&A on key learning topics.
         2. Identify behaviors of suspect preceding the shooting.
2. BTA Anatomy – The anatomy or warning behaviors and warning behavior typology
   1. Human behaviors can influence the direction of a BTA investigation.
      1. Anatomy of a BTA Investigation
         1. Pathway to Violence
         2. Warning Behaviors
3. The “Pathway to Violence” is a foundation for most BTAs.
   * 1. Grievance
        1. Discuss the meaning
        2. The cause of someone’s distress or reason for resentment
     2. Ideations
        1. Discuss the meaning
        2. Entertaining ideas specific to the utility and acceptability of violence to address the grievance
4. Research & Planning
   * 1. Discuss the meaning
     2. Developing the groundwork for the attack
5. Preparation
   * 1. Discuss the meaning
     2. overt acts to develop the plan (i.e. purchasing the weapons, collecting ammo etc.)
6. Probing/Breaching
   * 1. The meaning
     2. Circumventing security measures
     3. Testing the waters
7. Attack
   * 1. Discuss the meaning
     2. The overt action leading to destruction of life/property
8. Typology of “warning behaviors”
   * 1. Fixation
        1. Preoccupation with someone or something
     2. Identification
        1. Identifying with utility of violence. pseudo-commando / warrior mentality
     3. Novel Aggression
        1. Aggressive acts by the suspect, not related to the inevitable act(s) or attack
        2. Testing to see if they can commit acts of violence
     4. Energy Bursts
        1. Intense increase of warning behaviors activity
        2. Intensity of frequency and/or duration
     5. Leakage
        1. Providing information to 3rd party(s) that attack is imminent
     6. Directly Communicated Threats
        1. Rarely exists
        2. Unambiguous statements of threats to victim(s)
     7. Last Resort Behavior
        1. The decision by the suspect to end his/her own life, which leads to the act of violence
        2. Can be indicative by a note of letter to other OR acts of violence to unintended targets moments before the intended act
9. Triggers, Stressors and Mitigators can be used to identify “protective factors” during a BTA.
10. Triggers
    * + 1. Event that initiates a response
        2. For purposes of the BTA, this usually moves the suspect further down the pathway
11. Stressors
    * + 1. Anything that causes tension and/or anxiety for the suspect
        2. Stressors and Triggers can often escalate the suspect’s pathway to violence
        3. Management of these are important to mitigate risk
12. Mitigators
    * + 1. Protective factors that may help mitigate risk and violence
        2. Also referred to as “buffers” or “Inhibitors”
13. Learning Activity
    * 1. Case Study 2 – Grimmie shooting
         1. Instructor Lead Discussion and Q&A on key learning topics.
         2. Identify Known behaviors from case file
         3. Compare and contrast identified behaviors to the warning behavior typology and pathway behaviors.
14. Social Influences – Outside factors that influence BTA implementation and management strategies
    1. Law that influence BTA management strategies.
       1. Penal Codes
          1. Stalking
          2. Domestic Violence
          3. Terrorist Threats
          4. Restraining Orders
          5. 835a – How BTA impacts use of force decisions
          6. Others
       2. Employment Laws
          1. Harassment-Free workplace
          2. Duty by employer to maintain a safe environment to work in
       3. Mental Health Laws
          1. Tarrasoff v. Regents of the University of California– Case Law requiring notification to potential victims
          2. HIPPA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
          3. FERPA – Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
    2. Policy and Procedures
       1. California Laws
          1. Red Flag Laws
          2. GVROS – Gun Violence Restraining Orders
          3. SB1331 – Domestic Violence Lethality Assessments
       2. Policy and Protocols
          1. Roles policy plays in BTAs
          2. Roles Protocols play in BTAs
          3. Internal Routing Procedures
          4. BTA Reviews and Oversite
    3. Social Concerns
       1. Social Media
          1. Trending Sites
          2. Person of Concern’s Social Platform(s)
          3. Dark Web
       2. Politics
          1. Current Global Climate
          2. U.S. Climate and Western ideology
          3. Ideologies
       3. Mental health concerns
          1. Mental Illness
          2. Symptomology of various illnesses
    4. Learning Activity
       1. Tabletop Exercise – Group presentations
          1. Each group will identify positive and negative influences that can affect a BTA investigation
15. Investigative Considerations – Evaluating investigative concerns within that develop during a BTA investigation
    1. Threat assessments – Where and When to start
       1. Investigative Matrix
          1. Level 1
          2. Level 2
    2. Stressors – Making Prevention a Reality[[6]](#footnote-6)
       1. Life
          1. Financial
          2. Romantic
          3. Law Enforcement
          4. Work/School
       2. United States Secret Service “Systems” approach
          1. Education
          2. Employment
          3. Law Enforcement
          4. Community
          5. On-Line Presence
          6. Social Network
          7. Family
    3. Assessment and Management Teams
       1. Assessment
          1. WAVR-21 – Assessment tool for workplace violence assessments
          2. JACA – Justification, Alternatives, Consequences and Ability
          3. RAGE-V - Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence
          4. TRAP-18 – Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol
          5. B-SAFER – Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk
       2. Management Teams
          1. Community Based System
          2. Multidisciplinary Approach
          3. Participating disciplines should be vast
             1. Law enforcement
             2. Prosecution
             3. Advocates
             4. Mental Health
             5. Probation/Parole
             6. School Administrators
             7. SRO – School Resource Officer
             8. Others
    4. Forms of Violent Risk Assessments
       1. Direct Assessment
          1. Direct Contact
          2. Interview-based
          3. Assessment tools to guide
          4. Most thorough
       2. Indirect Assessment
          1. No face-to-face
          2. Most fitting to gauge “risk potential”
          3. More investigative
       3. Questionaries
          1. Creating a team checklist
          2. Should elicit pathway and warning behaviors
       4. Interviews
          1. Person of Concern Interviews
          2. Other Interviews
    5. Mitigation Reviews
       1. Multidisciplinary Approach
          1. COMPStat Comparison[[7]](#footnote-7)
          2. Prevention NOT Prediction
       2. Proposal of the a SJPD Threat Assessment and Mitigation Unit (TAM Unit)
          1. TAM – Threat Assessment and Management
          2. CMU - Crisis Management
          3. MCAT – Mobile Crisis Assessment Team
          4. CIT – Crisis Intervention Team
          5. FTLOs – Field Terrorism Liaison Officers
       3. Review of LAPD Threat Management Unit (TMU) Model[[8]](#footnote-8)
          1. TMU – Threat Management Unit
          2. Mental Evaluation Unit (MEU)
          3. Systemwide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART)
          4. Case Assessment Management Program (CAMP)
    6. Learning Activity
       1. Compare and contrast three different case studies
          1. Thwarted Catoctin High School shooting
          2. Serial Killer BTK
          3. Redwood City Stalker

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