



Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

CONFIDENTIAL: To be retained by CESD Division office only

Stage 1: Data Collection Form

Student: _____ Birthdate: _____

Student Number: _____ Age: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Parents/Guardians: _____

Persons Gathering Data: _____

Data Gathering Date: _____

Safety of all first: It is not a Stage I VTRA if there is imminent danger or the threat is time sensitive (e.g. “they said they were coming back to get her with a knife”). In these cases, Call 911 and possibly call a lock down.

The following “VTRA Stage I Data Collection Form” is only for the use of Level I and Level II trained professionals in the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response Violence Threat/Risk Assessment (VTRA) Model.

Violence/Threat Making Behaviours (Examples of high-risk behaviours addressed in this protocol include but are not limited to:

- Serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill
- Verbal/written threats to kill others (“clear, direct, and plausible”)
- Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) text messaging, threats to kill others (refer to Appendix B of the National Training Protocol for abbreviations commonly used on the Internet and texting)
- Possession of weapons (including replicas)
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices)
- Fire Setting
- Sexual intimidation or assault
- Gang related intimidation and violence

Three Primary Hypotheses in VTRA:

- It is a conscious or unconscious “Cry for Help”?
- It is a conspiracy of two or more! (Who else knows about it? Who else is involved?)
- Evidence of fluidity?

**BEFORE INITIATING STAGE 1 of a
Violence Threat Risk Assessment**

Step 1: Monitor the Threat Maker

- School Administrators: make sure you know the whereabouts of the target(s) and threat maker(s) and address any immediate risk factors if they exist.
- If necessary, appropriately monitor and/or detain the Threat Maker(s) until the police member of the team is present.
- Do not allow Threat Maker access to coats, backpacks, desks, or lockers.
- Determine if the threat maker has immediate access to the means (knife, gun, etc.).
- School Administrators: If appropriate, check locker, backpack, desk, internet histories, diaries, notebooks

Step 2: Contact CESD VTRA Lead

School Administrator contacts Wanda Christensen (Associate Superintendent) to determine whether to activate a Stage I VTRA or alternatively to convene a Local Support Meeting. If Wanda is not available, then contact Mark Linski (Behavior Consultant).

<u>Name</u>	<u>CESD I-Phone</u>	<u>CESD Office</u>
Wanda Christensen	403-877-8401*	403-227-7074
Mark Linski	403-391-0722*	403-227-8007

(*Preferred phone number)

**INITIATING STAGE 1 of a
Violence Threat Risk Assessment**

Step 3: Gathering Data

- To avoid the “uni-dimensional assessment” the CESD VTRA Lead will call **VTRA-Trained** School/Police/Family School Wellness (FSW) Team together.

Didsbury RCMP Detachment	403-335-3382
Olds RCMP Detachment	403-556-3324
Innisfail RCMP Detachment	403-227-3342
Three Hills RCMP Detachment	403-443-5538
Red Deer Rural RCMP Detachment	403-885-3300
Red Deer City RCMP Detachment	403-343-5575
Sundre RCMP Detachment	403-638-3675
Sylvan lake RCMP Detachment	403-887-3333

- The CESD VTRA LEAD, School Administrator, VTRA Police member and Family School Wellness Worker will decide which VTRA Trained person will interview whom in order to collect the data as outlined below.

Step 4: Obtain immediate Data

- Consider interviewing these people *and recording their responses on the Stage One Data Collection Form*:
 - Threat Maker (There should never be more than two people in the room interviewing the Threat Maker).
 - Individual who Reported
 - Target(s)
 - Witnesses
 - Family School Wellness Worker
 - Teachers and other school staff (secretaries, teacher assistants, bus drivers, etc.)
 - Friends, classmates, acquaintances
 - Current and previous school records (Call the sending school)
 - Police (record check)

Step 5: Contact Parents/Guardians

- Notify the Threat Maker(s) and Target(s) Parent(s) or Guardian(s) at the earliest opportunity if appropriate.
- Ask parents/guardians relevant questions and *record responses on the Stage One Data Collection Form*.
- If parents/guardians HAVE NOT BEEN NOTIFIED, explain:

Step 6: CESD VTRA LEAD Contacts Other Agencies

As per the formal signed protocol, other agency partners may be involved in the Stage I VTRA process as consultants to the school/police team and sources of initial data relevant to the case at hand such as past or current involvement by other agencies that once they are informed of the initial school/police data may release necessary information or physically join the team.

Begin by asking to speak to the trained-VTRA staff member. Ask the trained-VTRA partner to check to see if the Threat Maker in question is or was a client and ask if they are in possession of information they are required to disclose (for the safety of the client or others). Determine if:

- There is nothing to report.
- There is information relevant to the case that needs to be disclosed as per the VTRA Memorandum of Understanding (significant risk of harm to the health or safety of others is present).
- The risk is not immediate but a Release of Information Form should be requested to allow for a full disclosure of the contents of the file relevant to the case at hand.

- Call Child and Family Service Authority (CFSA). **Tell the Intake Worker that you are calling a Violence Threat Risk Assessment and ask to speak to the trained-VTRA individual.** Ask the VTRA-trained person whether they have an open file or have had an open file in the past. If so, ask questions relevant to the case at hand and ***record responses on the Stage One Data Collection Form.***

Red Deer and Area 403-340-5400

Didsbury/Olds Area 403-507-8035

- Call Mental Health Trained-VTRA staff member. Ask the VTRA-trained person whether they have an open file or have had an open file in the past. If so, ask questions relevant to the case at hand and ***record responses on the Stage One Data Collection Form.***

Red Deer and Area 403-340-5466

Olds 403-556-4204

Didsbury 403-335-7285

- Call Youth Probation VTRA staff member. Ask the VTRA-trained person whether they have an open file or have had an open file in the past. If so, ask questions relevant to the case at hand and ***record responses on the Stage One Data Collection Form.***

Note: At this point of the Stage I process, some initial data may not be available to complete the VTRA Stage 1 Data Collection Form but enough information is usually available to determine if:

1. An immediate risk is posed
2. A Stage 2 TVRA is required

THE INCIDENT

Key Point: **What was the threat/incident? Where did it happen? When did it happen?**

Probable Interviewees: Witnesses; School Personnel; Peers; Threat Maker; etc.

Possible Questions:

- Where did the incident happen & when?
 - How did it come to the interviewee's attention?
 - Who was present & under what circumstance did the incident occur?
 - What was the specific language of the threat, detail of the weapon brandished, or gesture made?
 - Were there statements regarding:
 - Justification for the threat?
 - Means to carry out the threat?
 - Consequences weighed out (I don't care if I live or die!)?
 - Conditions that could lower the level of risk (unless you take that Facebook post down I will stick my knife in your throat!)?
 - What was the motivation or perceived cause of the incident?
 - What was the response of the target (if present) at the time of the incident? Did they add to or detract from the Justification Process?
 - What was the response of others who were present at the time of the incident? Did they add to or detract from the Justification Process?
-

Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

ATTACK-RELATED BEHAVIOURS

Key Point: **What steps has the Threat Maker taken to carry out the threat?**

Probable Interviewees: School Personnel, Peers, R.C.M.P., Parents

Possible Questions:

- Has the Threat Maker sought out information consistent with their threat making or threat-related behavior?
 - Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intentions to attack a target currently or in the past?
 - Has the Threat Maker attempted to gain access to weapons or do they have access to the weapons they have threatened to use?
 - Have they developed a plan & how general or specific is it (time, date, identified target selection, site selection, journal of justifications, maps & floor plans)?
 - Has the student been engaging in suspicious behaviour (eg. showing an inordinate interest in alarm systems, sprinkle systems, video surveillance in schools or elsewhere, schedules & locations of police or security patrol)?
 - Has the Threat Maker engaged in rehearsal behaviours (e.g. packing or brandishing fake but realistic looking weapons, air rifles, pistols, or engaged in fire setting such as lighting fire to card board tubes cut and taped to look like a pipe bomb, etc.)?
 - Is there any evidence of attack related behaviours in their locker (back pack, car trunk, etc.) at school or bedroom (shed, garage, etc.) at home?
 - Have others been forewarned of a pending attack or told not to come to school because “something big is going to happen?”
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Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

THE TARGET(S) [Person(s) being threatened]

Key Point: **Describe the target of the threat.**

(Remember that in some cases the Target is higher risk for violence than the threat maker with the most common case being where the Threat Maker is the victim of bullying and the Target is the Bully.)

Probable Interviewees: School Personnel; Peers; Threat Maker, etc.

Possible Questions:

- Does the Target have a history of violence or threats of violence? Explain.
- What is the frequency, intensity & recency (FIR) of the Target's violent behaviour?
- What has been the Targets past human target selection?
- What has been the Target's past site selection?
- Is there evidence the Target has instigated the current situation?
- Who is in the Target's peer structure and where does the Target fit (i.e.: leader, co-leader, and follower)?

Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

PEERS

Key Point: **How are peers influencing the Threat Maker?**

Probable Interviewees: School Personnel, Peers, Threat Maker, etc.

Possible Questions:

- Who is in the Threat Maker's peer structure and where does the Threat Maker fit (i.e.: leader, co-leader, and follower)?
 - Are others involved in the incident that may intentionally or unintentionally be contributing to the justification process?
 - Is there a difference between the threat maker's individual baseline & their peer group baseline behaviour?
 - Is there a peer who could assist with the plan or obtain the weapons necessary for an attack?
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Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

THREAT MAKER – MENTAL HEALTH

Key Point: **Mental Health History**

Probable Interviewees: School Personnel, CFSA, FSW, Mental Health, Threat Maker, Peers, etc.

Possible Questions:

- Do they have a history of depression or suicidal thinking/behaviour?
 - Is there evidence of fluidity in their writings, drawings or verbalizations?
 - Does the Threat Maker use drugs or alcohol?
 - Does the Threat Maker engage in risk enhancing behaviours (e.g. gangs, sexual activity, etc.)?
 - Does the Threat Maker have a mental health diagnosis or evidence of a mental health diagnosis?
 - Has the Threat Maker been in therapy? Include dates and frequency.
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Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

THREAT MAKER – EMPTY VESSEL

Key Point: **What is the threat maker filling him/herself with?**

(Most Threat Makers are imitators not innovators so what/who might they be imitating?)

Probable Interviewees: School Personnel, Family, Peers, Threat Maker, etc.

Possible Questions:

- Does the Threat Maker have a healthy relationship with a mature adult?
 - Does the Threat Maker have inordinate knowledge or interest in violent events, themes, or incidents, including prior school – based attacks?
 - How has the Threat Maker responded to prior violent incidents (local, national, etc.)?
 - What type of violent games, movies, books, music, Internet searches, does the Threat Maker fill him/herself with?
 - Is there evidence that what the Threat Maker is filling him/herself with is influencing his/her behaviour?
 - What related themes are present in the Threat Maker’s writings, drawings, etc?
 - Is there evidence of fluidity (i.e. fluctuation between suicide and homicide) and/or religiosity?
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Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

THREAT MAKER – CURRENT CONTEXT

Key Point: **Recent significant changes in the Threat Maker’s life.**

Probable Interviewees: Threat Maker, Parents, School Personnel, Peers, etc.

Possible Questions:

- If the Threat Maker has been suspended, will the level of risk increase or decrease? Explain.
 - Has the Threat Maker experienced a recent loss, such as a death of a family member or friend; a recent break-up; rejection by a peer or peer group; been cut from a sports team; received a rejection notice from a college, university, military etc?
 - Have the Threat Maker’s parents just divorced or separated?
 - Is the Threat Maker a victim of child abuse & has the abuse been dormant but resurfaced at this time?
 - Is the Threat Maker being initiated into a gang and is it voluntary or forced recruitment?
 - Has the Threat Maker recently had an argument or “fight” with a parent/caregiver or someone close to him/her?
 - Has the Threat maker recently been charged with an offence or suspended or expelled from school?
 - Is the place where they have been suspended to likely to increase or decrease their level of risk?
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Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

THREAT MAKER – FAMILY

Key Point: **What's happening in the home?**

Probable Interviewees: School Personnel, Mental Health, CFSA, FSW, Family, Threat Maker, etc.

Possible Questions:

- How many homes does the Threat Maker reside in (shared custody, goes back and forth from parent to grandparents' home)?
 - Is the Threat Maker (subject) connected to a healthy/ mature adult in the home?
 - Who all lives in the family home (full-time and part-time)?
 - Has anyone entered or left the home who may be influencing level of risk?
 - Who seems to be in charge of the family and how often are they around?
 - Has the Threat Maker engaged in violence or threats of violence towards their siblings or parent(s) caregiver(s)? If so, what form of violence and to whom including Frequency, Intensity, Recency (FIR)?
 - Are parent(s) or caregiver(s) concerned for their own safety or the safety of their children or others?
 - Does the Threat Maker have a history of trauma? Including car accidents, falls, exposed to violence, abuse, etc.
 - Is there a history of mental health disorders in the family?
 - Is there a history of drug or alcohol abuse in the family?
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Answers: *(Include date of data collection and source. Provide specific details.)*

Genogram:

Step 7: Determine Level of Concern

VTRA Team members collate the data and discuss all relevant information regarding the Threat Maker. As a team, ask the question: “To what extent does the Threat Maker pose a threat to school/student safety?” “Do they pose a threat to themselves or someone outside the school (i.e. family)?” The Stage 1 Assessment is an overall assessment of current level of risk and is a precursor to (if necessary) a more comprehensive Stage 2 VTRA.

- Low Level of Concern
 - Risk to the target(s), students, staff, and school safety is minimal.
 - Threat is vague and indirect.
 - Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail; threat lacks realism.
 - Available information suggests that the person is unlikely to carry out the threat or become violent.
 - Within the general range for typical baseline behavior for the Threat Maker.

- Medium Level of Concern
 - The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible.
 - Threat is more plausible and concrete than a low level threat. Wording in the threat and information gathered suggests that some thought has been given to how the threat will be carried out (e.g. possible place and time).
 - No clear indication that the Threat Maker has taken preparatory steps (e.g., weapon, seeking), although there may be an ambiguous or inconclusive references pointing to that possibility. There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty: “I’m serious!”
 - A moderate or lingering concern about the Threat Maker’s potential to act violently.
 - Increase in baseline behaviour.
 - Increase in baseline behaviour of the Threat Maker.

- High Level of Concern
 - The threat or situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.
 - The threat is specific and plausible. There is an identified target. The Threat Maker has the capacity to act on the threat.
 - Information suggests concrete steps have been taken toward acting on threat. For example, information indicates that the Threat Maker has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance.
 - Information suggests strong concern about the Threat Maker’s potential to act violently.
 - Significant increase in baseline behaviour.
 - Immediate intervention is required to prevent an act of violence from occurring.

**Sources for the above categorizations represent the work of the FBI, Durham Regional Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police Threat Assessment Unit, and the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response.*

Step 8: Decide on a Course of Action

With the input of all Threat Assessment Team members, decide on a course of action.

- Low Level of Concern
- Medium Level of Concern
- High Level of Concern

Step 9: Intervention Plan (include VTRA Summary Form)

- Consider the following:
 - Suicide assessment completed by _____
 - Daily schedule modified
 - Alert staff and teachers on a need-to-know basis by _____
 - Referral for a Psycho-educational assessment
 - Backpack, coat and other belongings check-in and out by _____
 - Late arrival
 - Drug and alcohol intervention initiated by _____
 - Early dismissal
 - Increased supervision during _____
 - Referral to a doctor
 - Disciplinary action _____
 - Daily Check-in with _____
 - Weekly Check-in with _____
 - Other (e.g. community based resources; parents)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Step 10: Complete VTRA Summary Form

Step 11: Store a copy in the Student Record File (CUM)