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| Threat Management Risk Matrix | |
| This risk matrix is designed to assist Hamilton Health Science leadership to understand violent threats made against a member of the HHS community (staff, physicians, patients etc.) or the organization itself, and how to appropriately respond.  A direct threat has been defined as an unambiguous statement to a target or to authorities of  intent to do harm.[[1]](#endnote-1) The vast majority of major violent acts committed are planned and are rarely knee jerk reactions.  While all threats need to be investigated, it is important to keep in mind that an individual who truly intends to do harm will not likely directly threaten the organization prior to committing an act of violence. Tips and information regarding indirect threats (i.e. overheard conversations, tip-lines, social media posts) or identified concerning behavior pose much greater risks of violence and require a more active response.  The team assessing the threat must always consider the following in order to gauge whether or not the threat is credible:   * **Content**: words or deeds used * **Context**: what happens before, during and after a threat is made * **Circumstances**: What are the surrounding facts such as method of delivery (bomb, shooting), relationship between individual making the threats and target, type of target, timing of attack (large event, time of year etc.)   When using the following matrix, assume that each escalating level meets the necessary requirements for the preceding levels of concern. An incident may initiate as a low or moderate level of concern, only to escalate through additional threats and behaviours by the suspect individual.  **Note: For any threat of violence, regardless of threat level, always notify Hamilton Police Services.** | |
| **Risk Factors/Indicators** | **Recommended Actions** |
| **Level of Concern: Low – Violence is not likely to occur** | |
| * Message is confusing, unrealistic, and does not make any allusions to a violent act * No evidence or statement of a grievance with HHS or affiliated persons * Language appears designed to convince recipient of it seriousness rather than conveying intent to commit action (e.g. “This is not a joke”) * Communication references information that is not accurate to HHS indicating a lack of knowledge of their target and planning. * Method of delivery suggest suspect is hesitant to engage in a physical approach or high-risk behavior (e.g. an anonymous letter vs. a letter hand delivered in person) * Little evidence the suspect has a previous relationship with HHS or affiliated persons * Known circumstances suggest suspect would be unable to carry out the threat (i.e. incarcerated, not within reasonable travel distance etc.) * There does not appear to be a pressing time imperative or conveyed urgency in the threat | * Notify HHS security of the threat * Notify Hamilton Police Services * Determine whether further internal investigation is warranted or appropriate * Notify Public Relations   + No need to inform staff   + Monitor social media for any additional threats made by individual (if known) * If further monitoring and investigation is warranted, notify Site Administrator * Notify EDM Specialist for record keeping and tracking |
| **Level of Concern: Moderate – Violence cannot be ruled out, but situation is not urgent** | |
| **Risk Factors** | **Recommended Actions** |
| * Communication is not necessarily confusing or unrealistic, but has a sense of ambivalence (not committed to any action) * Threat may explain an understandable grievance and that violence is being considered an option to resolve the issue * Threat suggests suspect has done some research on target, beyond what is typically known to the public (e.g. schedules, location of specific offices etc.) * The suspect indicates, or if suspect is known, that they have an established relationship with the organization (e.g. spouse of staff, patient, patient’s family etc.) * No sense of urgency in communication and indications that the suspect may still wish to seek a peaceful resolution to grievance * Threat may still lack significant information about the suspect, context of threat, and other important aspects * Concern brought forward by HHS Staff or Community member about suspect | * Notify HHS security of the threat * Notify Hamilton Police Services * Notify Site Admin * Notify Public Relations   + Monitor for additional threats made on social media   + Notify known stakeholders * Increased level of concern coupled with a lack of detailed information warrants further investigation and monitoring. * Establish Threat Management Team Collaborate with HPS to create a threat management plan. * Notify EDM Specialist for record keeping and tracking |
| **Level of Concern: Elevated – Indication Suspect is at Tipping Point, Increased Probability of Violence** | |
| * Tone of threat indicates intensity and determination, especially if multiple threats are sent through multiple avenues (phone, email, letter etc.) * Communication indicates they have conducted research on target and has inside, personal, or background information. Strongly suggests they have the knowledge to approach and attack. * Threat may invoke authority for action (e.g. divine sanction, only one who can achieve justice) * Threat is targeted at a specific person or location * Threat conveys a desire for fame or notoriety through violence * Suspect, if known, has exhibited or has a record of suicidal tendencies/ideation * Threat conveys knowledge and evidence of weapons that may be used (i.e. pictures of bomb making materials, firearms etc.) * Suspect has been seen on property exhibiting stalking or surveillance behavior * Tip received from Hamilton Police Services (or other police agency)regarding a threat to HHS * Concern brought forward by HHS Staff or Community member about suspect | * Notify HHS security of the threat * Notify Hamilton Police Services * Notify Site Admin * Notify Public Relations   + Monitor for additional threats made on social media   + Clear message to staff with available information to be sent to increase awareness and outline required actions * Notify EDM Specialist to assist in plan development and to develop appropriate materials/training for staff * Work with HPS to develop a threat management plan. This may include a comprehensive internal investigation to identify relevant information and possible peaceful solutions to resolve grievance. * Additional security resources at specific target location (if known) may be deployed |
| **Level of Concern: High – Violence is possible and could occur in the near future** | |
| **Risk Factors** | **Recommended Actions** |
| * The language of the threat is less emotionally based and more action oriented. Suggests a more predatory mindset engaged in planning instead of reactive. * Threat conveys suspect’s willingness to deal with consequences of action and/or contains elements often found in suicide notes * Threat conveys that violence is the only way for suspect to resolve grievance * Does not convey the precise time, place, or exact target * Suspect is known and has a history of violence/criminal record for violent crime * Suspect is known to have a relationship with HHS and/or HHS personnel * Threat is part of a chain of escalating threats and/or behaviours * Suspect may have been trespassed from HHS property for prior actions or behaviours * Tip received from Hamilton Police Services (or other police agency) regarding a threat to HHS | * Notify HHS security of the threat * Notify Hamilton Police Services * Notify Site Admin * Notify Public Relations   + Monitor for additional threats made on social media   + Clear message to staff with available information to be sent to increase awareness and outline required actions * Notify EDM Specialist to assist in plan development and to develop appropriate materials/training for staff * Work with HPS to develop a threat management plan. This may include a comprehensive internal investigation to identify relevant information and possible peaceful solutions to resolve grievance. * Additional security resources at specific target location (if known) to be deployed * Potential for Hamilton Police to station officers at site and/or increase patrols * Threat management team to review lockdown procedures should it be required |
| **Indications of Potential Imminent Attack – Violent attack is likely in the next few hours/days** | |
| * Tip received from Hamilton Police Services (or other police agency) regarding an imminent threat of attack to HHS * Internal tip received from staff or community member regarding a direct reference to an attack (ex. suspect informs them not to come to work the following day) * Public Relations identify a threat made through social media * Threat from suspect indicates a finality to their action * Threat from suspect found on other mediums indicate a predictive attack i.e. the attack has already been carried out, they have already died taking action, provide post-mortem rationale for attack | * Notify Security * Notify Hamilton Police Services * Notify Site Administrator * Notify EDM Specialist * Activate Command Centre(s) * Initiate Lockdown procedures to targeted site(s)   + Site Admins at other sites may determine to lockdown as well or Corporate leadership may initiate a lockdown at all HHS facilities if deemed appropriate * If bomb attack is suspected, Code Black to be initiated and a search and sweep is to be conducted of the targeted or all facilities |

1. “Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks”, Behavioral Analysis Unit, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015, 15 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)