

APPENDIX C: VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT (VRA)

Threat assessment is the process of assessing the actionability of violence by an individual against another person or group following the issuance of a direct or conditional threat. A ***Violence Risk Assessment (VRA)*** is a broader term used to assess any potential violence or danger, regardless of the presence of a vague, conditional, or direct threat.

The implementation of VRAs require specific training and are typically conducted by psychologists, clinical counselors, social workers, case managers, law enforcement officers, student conduct officers, and/or other Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) (sometimes also known as CARE teams) members.

A VRA occurs in collaboration with the BIT, CARE, and or threat assessment team and must be understood as an on-going process, rather than a singular evaluation or meeting. A VRA is not an evaluation for an involuntary behavioral health hospitalization (e.g., 5150 in California, Section XII in Massachusetts, Baker Act in Florida), nor is it a psychological or mental health assessment.

A VRA assesses the risk of actionable violence, often with a focus on targeted/predatory escalations, and is supported by research from the fields of law enforcement, criminology, human resources, and psychology.

When conducting a VRA, the assessor(s) use an evidence-based process consisting of:

1. an appraisal of ***risk factors*** that escalate the potential for violence;
2. a determination of ***stabilizing influences*** that reduce the risk of violence;
3. a contextual ***analysis of violence risk*** by considering environmental circumstances, hopelessness, and suicidality; catalyst events; nature and actionability of threat; fixation and focus on target; grievance collection; and action and time imperative for violence; and
4. the application of ***intervention and management*** approaches to reduce the risk of violence.

To assess an individual's level of violence risk, the Title IX Coordinator will initiate the violence risk assessment process through the BIT. The BIT will assign a trained individual(s) to perform the assessment, according to the specific nature of the Title IX case.

The assessor will follow the process for conducting a violence risk assessment as outlined in the BIT manual and will rely on a consistent, research-based, reliable system that allows for the operationalization of the risk levels.

Some examples of formalized approaches to the VRA process include: The NaBITA Risk Rubric,¹ The Structured Interview for Violence Risk Assessment (SIVRA-35),² The Extremist Risk Intervention

¹ www.nabita.org/tools

² www.nabita.org/resources/assessment-tools/sivra-35/

Scale (ERIS),³ Looking Glass,⁴ Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk (WAVR-21),⁵ Historical Clinical Risk Management (HCR-20),⁶ and MOSAIC.⁷

The VRA is conducted independently from the Title IX process, free from outcome pressure, but is informed by it. The individual(s) conducting the assessment will be trained to mitigate any bias and provide the analysis and findings in a fair and equitable manner.

The BIT/CARE or threat team's member(s) conducts a VRA process and makes a recommendation to the Title IX Coordinator as to whether the VRA indicates there is a substantial, compelling, and/or immediate risk to health and/or safety of an individual or the community.

³ www.nabita.org/resources/assessment-tools/eris/

⁴ www.nabita.org/looking-glass

⁵ www.wavr21.com

⁶ hcr-20.com

⁷ www.mosaicmethod.com