California Health Sciences University

CHSU THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

I. PURPOSE

Long before many perpetrators of violence act out, they often raise “red flags” among various individuals with whom they come in contact, including professors, police, peers, and mental health counselors. The problem is that this information is often scattered among multiple individuals. No one person has the full picture of what is going on with the person of concern. The interdisciplinary approach to threat assessment in this policy, helps ensure that “red flags” are investigated and people who need help receive support before they turn to violence.

The main goals of the Threat Assessment and Management Team (Team) is to prevent individuals from harming themselves or others, and to assist persons in need. By identifying and responding to persons in need, the Team is perhaps one of the most critical tools the University has to prevent targeted violence on campus, and identifying and intervening in problems that affect the well-being of the campus community. The Team aims not only to prevent people from harming others, but also from harming themselves or disrupting their own ability to succeed in their employment or educational goals.

II. SCOPE

The Team receives and assesses all reports of threats and other alarming behaviors by any student or employee of a college or university, as well as by others who might impact the safety or well-being of the campus community (e.g. people living close to the campus who exhibit threatening or unusual behaviors).

III. POLICY STATEMENT

The Team is committed to improving community safety through a proactive, collaborative, coordinated, objective, and thoughtful approach to the prevention, identification, assessment, intervention, and management of situations that pose, or may reasonably pose, a threat to the safety and well-being of the CHSU community.

There is no single “type” of person who perpetrates violence. The threat assessment process is focused on the specific behaviors a person has exhibited and determining whether the person poses a threat based on those behaviors. In terms of demographics, background or appearance, there is no useful profile of a person who engages in violence or harm. Many people who do not act in violence may possess characteristics and traits of people who do. In contrast to profiling, this threat assessment policy focuses on behaviors by a person of concern and whether the circumstances and facts of the case indicate a person is thinking of or planning harm.

This policy is primarily concerned with behavior that may not have violated a University policy, but that is a concerning indicator for violence or other harm. If the Team determines that a behavior has violated a University policy that also provides for remedies for the behavior under that policy, such as the Anti-Harassment Policy or Employee Conduct Policy, the behavior in question will be investigated and remedied according to that policy.

After receiving a report of concerning behavior, the Team will gather information from a variety of sources both on and off campus, and will seek to verify information from several sources when possible. Using the information available, the Team will examine the context of behavior, factors that may precipitate violence, and any information that may indicate that a person is on a trajectory toward violence or other negative behavior.

The Team will determine how it might be able to intervene to prevent harm. Where no other University policy specifically addresses the behavior or threat, the Team may use multiple strategies to manage a threat including connecting and/or providing the individual with resources and assistance, reducing access to a target, issuing no contact directives or no trespass directives, decreasing the vulnerability of a potential target, and address situational or environmental factors.

IV. DEFINITIONS

The Team is a multidisciplinary team that interacts and operates on a regular basis – and as needed for crisis situations. The Team is available to review and discuss any students, employees or other persons who have raised concern and may be at risk of harming either themselves or others, or who pose a significant disruption to the learning, living or working environment.

V. PROCEDURES

Using standardized case management checklist and forms, the Team engages in a methodical threat assessment process, and

- decides the best course of action to mitigate any identified threats;
- documents the information that was available at the time of the assessment;
- documents the decisions that were made by the Team;
- ensures that decided courses of action are implemented and documented;
- and monitors closed cases for a period of time for substantive changes.

A. Activating the Team

It is the responsibility of the team leader to conduct initial case analysis and to call the team together if necessary. The team leader may consult with one or more members of the team or the whole team during the threshold analyses stage. This does not preclude any member of the team from raising concern to the team leader and the rest of the team. The following questions shall guide the initial analysis. If the answer is yes to any of the questions, a full inquiry is recommended.

- Has there been any mention of suicidal plans of attempts?
- Has there been any mention of thoughts/plans of violence?
- Have there been any behaviors that cause concern for violence or the person’s well-being?
- Does the person have access to a weapon or are they trying to gain access?
- Are there behaviors that are significantly disruptive the campus environment?

The initial case analysis shall be documented by the team leader or case manager. Even if the answer is no to all the questions above, the team may engage in full analysis if they believe the circumstances warrant further investigation.

B. Team Leader

The initial team leader will be designated by the president from among the team members. The team leader role may rotate on an annual basis at the discretion of the team. The team leader is responsible for the following:

- Coordinating team meetings and training
- Ensuring that cases are documented thoroughly
- Acting as the case manager or designating that responsibility as appropriate on a case by case basis
- Ensuring that follow-up actions are completed and documented

C. Team Members

In order to maximize collaboration and coordination across the organization, the team shall be composed of individuals from various departments. Other non-members may be brought into a case as needed. The team shall include designated representatives from the following departments or entities:

- Academic affairs/Provost
- Human resources (for cases involving faculty or staff members)
- Security Director
- Student Affairs
- Mental health
- Legal Counsel
- Specialty members as determined on a case-by-case basis

D. Team Training

Annually the team shall convene for the following purposes:

- Conduct lookback analysis of previous cases to determine improvements in the threat assessment process
- Plan any future outreach to the campus community
- Conduct refresher training using scenario-based tabletop exercises

E. Record Keeping

As the recipient and screener of all potential threat-related information, it is helpful for the Team to maintain a centralized database of everyone who has come to the Team's attention. This can be accomplished with a spreadsheet, or, if the volume of cases is low enough, the case files themselves are sufficient. Records that should be maintained by the team include:

- Case files
- Original incident report
- Documentation of the individual's exact words and actions
- Witnesses
- Emails, memos, voicemails
- Minutes of each team meeting

The team leader shall be responsible for maintaining all records in a secured, centralized location that is easily accessible.

VI. RESPONSIBILITY

The Team is responsible for threat assessments pursuant to this policy. The team leader is responsible for facilitating team operations. A case manager may be assigned by the team leader from among the members of the team. The team leader shall be responsible for maintaining all records in a secured, centralized location that is easily accessible. It is the responsibility of the team leader to conduct the initial case analysis and to call the team together. Initial case analysis shall be documented by the team leader or case manager.

- Policy Owner: Provost
- Effective Date: 8/13/2019
- Approval by Provost Date: 8/14/2019
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