Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT)
What is BAT?
Who Serves on BAT?

CORE TEAM

- Campus Police
  - Chief Tom Engells
- HR
  - Ronald McKinley (Debbie Conley)
- Legal
  - Carrie King (Carolanda Bremond)
- Psychiatry
  - Dr. Karen Wagner
- Student Health
  - Dr. Falanda Limar
- Student Services
  - Scott Boeh (Chair)

Various ex-officio members as situations require
Why BAT... why now?

- Learn from the past.
• **Seung-Hui Cho, 23, Virginia Tech, 4/16/2007**
  – Shot and killed 27 students, 5 faculty and wounded 17 others.
  – Known history of being mentally unstable and possibly dangerous;
    He had been diagnosed with a form of social anxiety disorder and
    depression; professors encouraged him to seek counseling after
    finding his behavior and his writing to be disturbing; He also was
    investigated for the stalking and harassment of two students that
    led to his being declared mentally ill and ordered to go to therapy
    by a special justice in Virginia.

• **Steven Kazmierczak, Northern Illinois University, 2/14/2008**
  – Killed 5 students and injured 21 others. He carried his weapons
    concealed in a guitar case. Kazmierczak then fatally shot himself.
  – There have been reports of his struggles with mental illness,
    reportedly stopped taking medication, erratic behavior a few
    weeks before shooting, suicide attempt and being bullied in high
    school.
• **Anthony Powell, 28, Henry Ford Community College, 4/10/2009**
  
  – Killed a female college classmate before using the same handgun to kill himself.
  
  – It was reported he had suffered from depression and had previously tried to date her but was rejected.
  
  – YouTube™ clip: “I’m really thinking about killing myself. I think I am going to do it. I’m just scared.”

• **Jared Loughner, 22, Tucson/Pima, 1/8/2011**
  
  – Loughner killed six people an injured 14 others with a Glock 9 mm pistol.
  
  – He expressed delusions of persecution at the hands of the US treasury, Pima college, the campus bookstore, and professors who would not let him talk freely in class.
Why BAT... why now?

- Learn from the past.
- Assess and Intervene as early as possible.
- Avoid escalating behavior.
- Prevent silos of information.
- Make decisions based on a complete picture.
- Mitigate risk in an effort to keep the UTMB community healthy and safe.
Student verbally abuses staff member in Financial Aid

While on rotation, student loses temper with belligerent patient and has to be asked to leave the patient’s room

During Intramural Sports, student hits another student causing a severe head injury and threatens to return to finish thing with everyone present

Student gets in verbal argument with classmate and causes scene in Jamail

Student has crying meltdown when meeting with Dean about grades – Dean is not aware of other issues around campus

Student becomes withdrawn from classmates and grades drop dramatically from one semester to the next

Student argues with staff in parking office and begins throwing things from the front counter – Campus Police are called
Guiding Principles

• Serve as a **CONNECTOR** to the current processes used by administrative units and the school’s student affairs deans to address student behaviors that raise concerns. Foster communication, collaboration, and coordination among various departments and units on campus.

• Work with schools and administrative units to **ENGAGE IN EARLY RECOGNITION, REPORTING, AND INTERVENTION** with persons whose behavior has raised some concern about their well-being, stability, or potential for violence to self or others.

• Work with schools and other administrative units to **IDENTIFY PATTERNS OF ABERRANT BEHAVIORS**, which might suggest the need for an intervention in advance to prevent a behavioral concern from rising to the level of a threat or crisis.

• **PROVIDE EASY ACCESSIBLE REPORTING TOOLS** and **SERVE AS THE CENTRAL POINT OF CONTACT** for individuals reporting aberrant behavior or behavior that deviates from an established baseline
Functions

• Educate the campus community about behaviors of concern and reporting procedures
• Provide consultation and support to faculty, staff, administration, and students in assisting individuals who display concerning or disruptive behaviors.
• Serve as the central point of contact for individuals reporting aberrant behavior or behavior that deviates from an established baseline.
• Triage reports – identifying patterns of aberrant behaviors which might suggest the need for an intervention.
• Assess threat/risk
• Assess available resources
• Follow a formalized protocol of instruction for communication, coordination and intervention.
• Coordinate follow-up – Connect individuals with needed campus and community resources.
• Observe ongoing behavior of individuals who have displayed disruptive or concerning behavior.
• Assess long-term success
Next Steps

• Standardize Procedures
  – Create Operating Procedures Document
  – Adopt and Implement Standardized Protocols

• Create Reporting Tools with comprehensive data base

• Increase communication and education to campus community
NaBITA THREAT ASSESSMENT TOOL

MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, "THE D-SCALE"

- DYSREGULATION/MEDICALLY DISABLED*
  - Suicidal
  - Para-suicidal (extreme cutting, eating disordered)
  - Individuals engaging in risk taking behaviors (e.g. substance abusing)
  - Hostile, aggressive, relationally abusive
  - Individuals deficient in skills that regulate emotion, cognition, self, behavior and relationships

- DISTURBANCE
  - Behaviorally disruptive, unusual and/or bizarre acting
  - Destructive, apparently harmful to others
  - Substance abusing

- DISTRESS
  - Emotionally troubled
  - Individuals impacted by situational stressors and traumatic events
  - May be psychiatrically symptomatic

GENERALIZED RISK

NINE LEVELS OF AGGRESSION

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### Classifying Risk

**Mild Risk**
- Disruptive or concerning behavior
- Student may or may not show signs of distress
- No threat made or present

**Moderate Risk**
- More involved or repeated disruption. Behavior more concerning
- Likely distressed or low-level disturbance
- Possible threat made or present
- Threat is vague and indirect
- Information about threat or threat itself is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail
- Threat lacks realism
- Content of threat suggests threatener is unlikely to carry it out

**Elevated Risk**
- Seriously disruptive incident(s)
- Exhibiting clear distress, more likely disturbance
- Threat made or present
- Threat is vague and indirect, but may be repeated or shared with multiple reporters
- Information about threat or threat itself is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail
- Threat lacks realism, or is repeated with variations
- Content of threat suggests threatener is unlikely to carry it out

**Severe Risk**
- Disturbed or advancing to dysregulation
- Threat made or present
- Threat is vague, but direct or specific but indirect
- Likely to be repeated or shared with multiple reporters
- Information about threat or threat itself is consistent, plausible or includes increasing detail of a plan (time, place, etc.)
- Threat likely to be repeated with consistency (may try to convince listener they are serious)
- Content of threat suggests threatener may carry it out

**Extreme Risk**
- Student is dysregulated (way off baseline) or medically disabled
- Threat made or present
- Threat is concrete (specific or direct)
- Likely to be repeated or shared with multiple reporters
- Information about threat or threat itself is consistent, plausible or includes specific detail of a plan (time, place, etc.)
- Threat may be repeated with consistency
- Content of threat suggests threatener will carry it out (reference to weapons, means, target)
- Threatener may appear detached

### Intervention Tools to Address Risk as Classified

**Mild Risk**
- Confrontation by reporter
- Behavioral contract or treatment plan with student
- Student conduct response
- Evaluate for disability services and/or medical referral
- Conflict management, mediation, problem-solving

**Moderate Risk**
- Confrontation by reporter
- Behavioral contract or treatment plan with student
- Student conduct response
- Evaluate for disability services and/or medical referral
- Conflict management, mediation (not if physical/violent), problem-solving

**Elevated Risk**
- Confrontation by reporter
- Evaluate parental/guardian notification
- Evaluate need to request permission from student to receive medical/educational records
- Consider interim suspension if applicable
- Evaluate for disability services and/or medical referral
- Consider referral or mandated assessment

**Severe Risk**
- Possible confrontation by reporter
- Parental/guardian notification obligatory unless contraindicated
- Evaluate emergency notification to others (FERPA/HIPAA/Clergy)
- No behavioral contracts
- Recommend interim suspension if applicable
- Possible liaison with local police to compare red flags
- Deploy mandated assessment
- Evaluate for medical/psychological transport
- Evaluate for custodial hold
- Consider voluntary/involuntary medical withdrawal
- Direct threat eligible
- Law enforcement response
- Consider eligibility for involuntary commitment

**Extreme Risk**
- Possible confrontation by reporter
- Parental/guardian notification obligatory unless contraindicated
- Evaluate emergency notification to others
- No behavioral contracts
- Interim suspension if applicable
- Possible liaison with local police to compare red flags
- Too serious for mandated assessment
- Evaluate for medical/psychological transport
- Evaluate for custodial hold
- Initiate voluntary/involuntary medical withdrawal
- Direct threat eligible
- Law enforcement response
- Consider eligibility for involuntary commitment
UTMB BAT
Threat Assessment and Management Flow Chart

1. Identify Person of Concern
   - Conduct Initial Screening
     - Imminent Situation?
       - Yes → Alert Law Enforcement
       - No → Conduct Triage
     - Concern?
       - No → Close & Document Case
       - Yes → Conduct Triage
       - Conduct Full Inquiry
         - Make Assessments
         - Pose a Threat?
           - No → Close & Document Case
           - Yes → Develop & Implement Management Plan
         - In Need of Help?
           - No
            - Develop & Implement Management Plan
            - Implement Referral or Assistance Plan
            - Close & Document Case
            - Refer & Follow-up
            - Monitor the Plan
            - Close & Document Case

2. Alert Law Enforcement
   - Close & Document Case

3. Conduct Triage
   - Close & Document Case

4. Close & Document Case
   - Close & Document Case
What behaviors should be concerning?

Is someone you know...
Is someone you know...

- experiencing a decline in work or academic performance?
- demonstrating disruptive or disturbing behavior?
- showing dramatic changes in appearance, behavior or weight?
- having problems at home, with classes or work?
- making disturbing comments in conversation, email, letters, social media postings or papers?
- sad, anxious or experiencing dramatic mood shifts?
- abusing alcohol or drugs?
- isolating themselves socially?
- acting paranoid or suspicious?
- struggling with health problems?
Is someone you know...

- isolating themselves socially?
- frequently angry or easily frustrated?
- struggling with health problems?
- talking about not being around?
- giving away prized possessions?
- experiencing a significant loss?
- have a history of violent behavior?
- have access to a firearm?
- frequently watches programs/movies with violent themes?
Other Red Flag Warnings

- Fantasizing about weapons or fanatical about collecting military assault weapons
- Fascination with violent incidents
- Being a member of a hate group or underground militia
- Obsession with law enforcement, military, or military groups
- Hate issues with authority figures like supervisors, managers or government officials
- Ongoing bullying and intimidating behavior
- History of domestic violence
- Using social media to post outrageous claims, extreme political views and to spew hatred
How can you help?

DO...

Continue to be a resource for one another.
Rethink how you address student problems.
Be a good listener.
Take good notes. Choose your words carefully.