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Overview Level One VTRA™ Training

Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA™) Protocols:

Comprehensive Practice to Address a Wide Range of Violence

Multidisciplinary collaboration improves both assessment and intervention in a variety of applications, from policing, mental health, population health and social engagement projects, to the increasingly important work of Violence Threat Risk Assessment™ (VTRA™). The current societal manifestation of violence ranges from domestic, school, gang, and workplace violence to suicide and violent extremism exacerbated by single-incident mass attacks where the impact is exponentially intensified by the preferred weapon of choice, a firearm. Although collaboration can enhance assessment and intervention, if there is not a clear protocol for how collaboration will look, what roles each discipline (agency) will play and what criteria will be used to determine level of risk and plan interventions, the common outcome is limited success in achieving the intended goals.

Therefore, the Center for Trauma-Informed Practices (CTIP) developed a comprehensive multidisciplinary (multiagency) Violence Threat Risk Assessment™ (VTRA™) community protocol where small towns and cities, and large urban areas and regions have formal written agreements that bind leading agencies and service providers together for a common and consistent practice regarding assessment, prevention, and intervention for violence risk in its many forms.

Community, Regional and/or Program Specific VTRA™ Protocols include:

- a) Roles and responsibilities.
- b) Consistent evidence-based variables and processes for data collection.
- c) Proper information sharing guidelines.
- d) Procedures for assessing level of risk.
- e) Data-driven interventions to stabilize.
- f) Data-driven strategies for comprehensive interventions to achieve lasting gains in even the most complex cases.
- g) Early intervention and prevention strategies.

This version of the VTRA™ Model is leading the way in trauma-informed and multi-stakeholder practice, as it relates to violence prevention and intervention. Throughout the training you will see a softer use of language when communicating with non-professionals who are involved with a case of an Individual of Concern (IOC) who was reported to have made a threat to family members, coworkers, peers or others.



As well, the VTRA protocol, practice, and process has been strengthened by ongoing collaboration with individuals, professionals and programs that represent the diversity of the

world around us. The VTRA process works well in conjunction with the Traumatic Event Systems (TES) Model because the “Fields of Violence Threat Risk Assessment and Crisis/Trauma Response are inseparably connected”. (J. Kevin Cameron, 2001).

Foundation of the VTRA Model and Protocol

As a trauma-informed and equity-inclusion guided practice, VTRA Teams are trained to consider the role of trauma in individuals. This is accomplished by utilizing considerations from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) studies. VTRA Teams are also trained to consider the role of trauma in human systems (families, work-places, communities, societies, etc.), while considering if both individual and systems dynamics are converging in a current assessment that may include systemic racism and marginalization. The early underpinnings of the VTRA™ model and protocol include the foundational work of the United States Secret Service Safe Schools Initiative, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as theoretical and practical applications from psychology, psychiatry, traumatology, family systems theory, criminology, organizational behavior, criminal justice, and others. In essence, the springboard for the early development of the model was the realization that many high-profile shootings were perpetrated by an “Individual of Concern” (IOC) where the professionals involved often under-reacted to clear (and some-times blatant) pre-incident signs and indicators that some individual, or group, was moving rapidly on a path-way to violence. This realization led us to the conclusion that in some cases the professionals were actually unwittingly contributing to the IOC’s risk for violence without realizing it by failing to heed the many conscious and unconscious “cries for help” that were given. VTRA™ resolves this issue and enhances already existing successful police and community practices.



VTRA Level One Training 2023 Training Syllabus



*6th Ed. Training Guide, 11th Ed. Protocol,
1st Ed. ARTO*

Day One Morning (9 am– 12 noon) – Training Guide	
Topic	Time
Introductions:	90 Minutes
Professional Trust / Safe to Learn:	
Acknowledgements:	
About the VTRA Model: - Defining Trauma informed Practice - The role of Trauma and Violence - How to assess the interaction between diversely Traumatized individuals within the same system	
Introduction to CTIP's Research: - Evidence Based CTIP Practices - Wide Ranging Application of VTRA	
Comprehensive Case Highlights: - VTRA as a Trauma informed and Mental Health Model - Going beyond Threat Assessment - Trauma-Generated Violence - Trauma Informed Least Intrusive Interventions (TILI) - Group Discussions	90 Minutes (Cont'd on next page)
Key Concepts: - Serious Violence is Evolutionary - Justification Process - Commitment - Snap Theory - Pathway to Violence - Under Reaction - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	
Introduction to the Primary Hypotheses: Cry for Help	
Assessing Threats: - Motivation - Types of Threats - Factors in Threat Assessment	
The Connection Between Threat and Risk Assessment: - Threat Assessment - Risk Assessment - Introduction to PBAs (Plausibility – Baseline – Attack Related) - Worrisome Behaviors - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	
Foundational and Current Research – United States Secret Service (USSS) and The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)	

Traumatic Events System (TES) Model – Introduction to the Trauma - Violence Continuum • Theoretical Foundation • Background • Crisis vs. Traumatic Event • Ground Zero, Impact Zone, Secondary Trauma Sites • Critical Periods	90 Minutes <i>(Cont'd from previous page)</i>			
Other Potential Warning Signs • Dehumanization • Frequency/Intensity/Recency • Pairing and Virtual Pairing • Imitators vs. Innovators • Conspiracy of Two or More – Hypothesis #2 • Empty Vessels • Case Analysis and Group Discussion				
Human Target and Site Selection: • Human Target Selection • Site Selection • Unidimensional Assessments • Case Analysis and Group Discussion				
Lunch	12 noon – 1 pm	Lunch	12 noon - 1 pm	Lunch

Day One Afternoon (1 pm – 4 pm) – Training Guide	
Topic	Time
IOC Typologies – Understanding the Dynamics of Violence: - Predominantly Behavioral Type - Predominantly Cognitive Type - Mixed Type - Non-Traditional - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	90 Minutes
Priming: Baseline Behaviors: - Comprehensive Case Study #1 - Comprehensive Case Study #2 - Comprehensive Case Study #3 - Group Discussion - Homework Assignment Fluidity – Hypothesis #3 - Understanding the interaction between Homicidal and Suicidal Domains - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	90 Minutes
End Of Day One	



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*6th Ed. Training Guide, 11th Ed. Protocol,
1st Ed. ARTO*

Day Two Morning (9 am – 12 noon) – Training Guide	
Topic	Time
Day One Review: Case Analysis and Group Discussion	30 Minutes
Human Systems Theory – How Trauma can impact an entire Human System (Communities, Families, Organizations, Etc.)? - The Organization as a System - Naturally Open - Naturally Closed - Traumatically Open - Traumatically Closed - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	60 Minutes

Day Two Morning – Protocol	
Topic	Time
Evolution of VTRA:	90 Minutes <i>(Cont'd on next page)</i>
About the VTRA Model: - Limitations - Culture and Climate - Vision	
Practical Applications – Protocol Development: Highlighting Best Practices across North America	
Micro vs. Macro: - The Interdependence between Micro and Macro - Understanding the Historical and Foundational Risk Enhancers that contribute to Risk. - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	
Determining when to Activate the VTRA Protocol: - Immediate Risk Situations - Formal Categories for VTRA Protocol Activation - Non-work Hour Cases - Worrisome Behaviours - Children under 12 Years of Age - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	
Working with Cultural Diversity: - VTRA as an Equity and Inclusion Guided Model - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	
Individuals with Special Needs/Disabilities: - Function of Behavior - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as a Special Consideration - Considerations for Preliminary Data Gathering - Mental Health and other Special Needs / Considerations	90 Minutes <i>(Cont'd From Previous page)</i>

VTRA Reminders - VTRA Workplace / HR Applications - VTRA is not a Disciplinary Tool - VTRA is meant to be Helpful – not Hurtful					
Lunch	12 noon – 1 pm	Lunch	12 noon – 1 pm	Lunch	

Day Two Afternoon (1 pm – 4 pm) – Protocol	
Topic	Time
Legal Matters – Pertaining to VTRA - Responsible Sharing of Information - Police or other Public Safety Agency - Search and Seizure - Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT)	60 Minutes
Violence Threat Risk Assessment: Data Driven Process - Low Risk - Medium Risk - High Risk - Case Analysis and Group Discussion	
Violence Threat Risk Assessment: Managing beyond the Initial Threat Supporting Targeted or Victimized Individuals or Systems	
Traumatic Events Systems (TES) Model of Crisis/Trauma Response (A Brief Introduction) - Theoretical Foundation - Practical Application - Other System Dynamics and Variables to Consider	
High Profile VTRA's Comprehensive Case Applications	
Anonymous Threats – Assessment and Intervention - Language of Commitment - Contra-Indicators	

Day Two Afternoon – Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO)	
Topic	Time
Introduction to ARTO: • Micro Assessment – Risk related to a single IOC and the target(s) they have threatened. • Macro Assessment – Risk including those targets beyond the initial threat • Trauma Informed Least Intrusive Interventions (TILI)	120 Minutes
Screening – Plausibility; Baseline; Attack-Related Behaviours (PBA's): • Assessing Dangerousness – J.M.C.C. • Language Analysis • Case Analysis and Group Discussion	
ARTO Micro Assessment (ARTO) Application: • Matching Resources to Risk • Sustaining Interventions	
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and how it can influence Violence:	
Stage One Micro Assessment – Data Collection Process: • The better the data, the better the assessment.	
Conclusion / Closing Comments and Questions	
End of Day Two	

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