Threat assessment is a problem-solving approach to violence prevention that involves assessment and intervention with students who have threatened violence in some way.

School-Based Threat Assessment has to account for three unique factors: 1) Compared to adults, students more frequently make threats, 2) Overreactions to student misbehavior can have serious negative consequences, and 3) Schools have a duty to educate all students.

Threat Assessment has three phases: identification, evaluation, and intervention, all of which take place on a graduated scale in response to the specific incident.

Threat assessments should be conducted by a team of individuals with multidisciplinary backgrounds and a wide range of resources who go through training together to ensure a shared context and baseline of knowledge.

Schools benefit from an internal threat assessment team who can respond quickly and personally, as well as a network of support, including law enforcement, for extreme situations.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is not as restrictive as many believe and should not be a barrier to providing information for a threat assessment.

Benefits of a threat assessment include safety, limiting school exclusions, reducing disciplinary inequities, helping troubled students, and supporting a positive school environment.

Some of the challenges facing school threat assessment are: standards for high quality training and implementation, inaccurate public perception of threat assessments, and an incomplete incorporation of law enforcement on campus.

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