



Intelligence

state of the art threat assessment

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Upcoming Events

AETAP Conference

Budapest, Hungary
20 – 23 April 2020

Foundational Violence Risk Assessment and Management Workshop

Vancouver, Canada
27 April – 1 May 2020

Summer Training Institute 2020

Palo Alto, USA
15 - 19 June 2020

Specialized Violence Risk Assessment and Management Workshop Series

Vancouver, Canada
14 - 17 September 2020

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Editor's Note



As always, *Intelligence* will keep you up to date with recent advances in threat assessment from around the globe through knowledge and experiences shared by world-leading experts.

I am very happy to introduce Ms. Nicole Russell, who has recently joined our team as a Conduct Investigation Specialist and will be providing services related to investigations of past conduct, as well as review and development of relevant policies in this area. Nicole has been practicing as a lawyer for over fifteen years and we are very excited to have her join our team to expand our services.

In this issue, Dr. Stephen Hart provides us with an important practice update related to the nature of hate crime and the implications for threat assessment. Hate crime has increased markedly in recent

years and can involve serious and even lethal violence towards targeted individuals and groups.

Dr. Brianne Layden will also be providing a research update on an article related to preventing vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout in forensic mental health. This article is of great relevance to threat assessment professionals in light of our routine exposure to both trauma and violence.

In addition, we have several special announcements. First, the annual Association of European Threat Assessment Professionals conference is being held in Budapest, Hungary between 20-23 April 2020. Second, Protect International is offering a new webinar series in collaboration with CONCEPT Professional Training.

We hope *Intelligence* will continue to provide a forum for you to share and develop your expertise in threat assessment. We encourage you to contribute and provide feedback.

Sincerely,
Kelly A. Watt, PhD
Director and Threat Assessment Specialist at Protect International Risk and Safety Services

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“If you can’t handle the heat, get out of the kitchen”

Training in threat assessment tends to focus on building knowledge and skills regarding assessing and managing violence risk. Unfortunately, relatively little attention is devoted to how to cope with the content of the assessments you carry out, the impact that interviewees or collaterals may have on you, or even the stress associated with the setting in which you work (e.g., jail, prison, forensic psychiatric hospitals). What is perhaps more concerning is that there is even less discussion around what to do when you notice that the stress associated with your job is too much. Although some training programs have come a long way in this regard, proverbs similar to the above are not

unheard of in response to questions about self-care.

Pirelli, Formon, and Maloney (2020) recently published an article in *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* regarding preventing vicarious trauma (VT), compassion fatigue (CF) and burnout (BO) among forensic mental health professionals. Respectively, the authors define these phenomena as occurring after professionals are exposed to discussions of traumatic events, experience intense or prolonged empathy for the pain reported by those they evaluate, or when professionals become less engaged in their work due to chronic stress associated with the job. The authors highlight that there is little research focusing on the experiences of forensic mental health professionals with regard to VT, CF, and BO. Although these phenomena are perhaps understudied among this population, the scope of the problem is likely greater when you include threat assessors in non-forensic or non-traditional settings such as higher education. There are many professionals working on threat assessment teams in higher education that are responsible for managing cases involving self- and other-directed violence. Professionals in this sector similarly receive little training and support in dealing with VT, CF, and BO, and are also vastly understudied.

Pirelli and colleagues (2020) discuss recommendations for dealing with VT, CF, and BO, such as self-care and treatment or targeted interventions for stress and trauma. Positive (i.e., adaptive rather than avoidant

copings) and intentional self-care is often recommended for these phenomena; however, self-care is preventative and may not significantly reduce symptoms once they occur. Indeed, sometimes VT, CF, and BO occur in spite of your best self-care efforts, and when you least expect it. As such, it was refreshing to see the emphasis that Pirelli and colleagues (2020) placed on specific interventions (e.g., psychotherapeutic treatment) to mitigate the negative effects of VT, CF, and BO. In this line of work, it is important to know when and how to take a break to deal with job-related stressors. If it gets challenging to handle the heat, so to speak, you may not need to get out of the kitchen—rather, you may need to figure out how to turn down the temperature.

Some final highlights from the article include the importance of not ignoring discussions of difficult topics and the benefit of working in teams. It is widely considered best practice to consult with colleagues and to work in multidisciplinary teams and, as this article notes, working in a team can help to prevent or mitigate the stressors associated with this line of work. Pirelli and colleagues (2020) conclude with a request for more research in this area and, although we echo this call, we also hope to see more support for threat assessment professionals in non-forensic settings (e.g., higher education) who routinely encounter violence toward the self and others.

Brianne Layden, PhD, Protect International Risk and Safety Services, Inc.

Upcoming Webinars

CONCEPT and Protect International “Wednesday Webinar” Series

An Introduction to Violence Risk/Threat Assessment: Approaches to Comprehensive Assessment
25 March 2020

An Introduction to Violence Risk/Threat Assessment: Legal Issues
22 April 2020

Violence Risk/Threat Assessment Case Illustrations: Violence in Healthcare
9 September 2020

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The Nature of Hate Crime: Implications for Threat Assessment and Management

Hate crime, also known as bias crime, is violence motivated by prejudice against people who belong to an identifiable group that is distinguished by protected statuses such as nationality, ethnicity, culture, or language; religion or spirituality; gender, sexual identity, or orientation; age; and physical or mental disability. The violence ranges from intimidating communications up to homicide or even mass homicide. It is intended to express animus toward and cause fear in not only the people who are directly victimized but, more generally, all people who are members of the same group.

Hate crime is a special concern in Canadian criminal law. The [Criminal Code](#) includes four offences that reflect hate-motivated crime. In addition, the Code recognizes that motivation by hate is an aggravating factor in sentencing for any criminal offence. Hate crime is less common than some other violent offences in Canada but has been increasing in recent years. Indeed, the number of hate crimes committed in 2017 – the most recent years for which figures are available – represented an increase of 47% over the number committed in 2016 ([Statistics Canada, 2018](#)). Some of the major findings from analysis of these statistics is that hate crime based on religion is targeted primarily at Jewish and Muslim Canadians; hate crime based on race or ethnicity is targeted mainly at Black Canadians; and the most serious violence is perpetrated against Canadians who are members of the LGBTQ2SI community. The Canadian experience is similar

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in many respects to that of other Western nations with developed economies (e.g., [the United Kingdom, United States](#)).

Hate crime resembles terrorism and honour-based violence in three major ways ([Hart, 2019](#)). First, all three are forms of criminal violence and their risk factors overlap with those for general criminality and violence.



Second, all three are defined by the presence of a specific motivation and although those specific motivations differ, they all involve the perpetrators' attempts to assert their self-identity as being fundamentally different from and morally superior to that of their victims. Third, all three may involve perpetrators acting alone but typically are committed as part of a group; and when committed as part of a group, the perpetrators may play different roles. For these reasons, hate crime, terrorism, and honour-based violence are more accurately viewed as “close

cousins” than “distant relatives” ([Mills, Freilich, & Chermak, 2017](#)).

These similarities have implications for threat assessment in hate crime cases. One is that it is essential to use general violence risk assessment tools in all hate crime cases, but then to move beyond those to consider special risk factors. Another is that threat assessment professionals must take care to confirm the presence of hate as a motivation and rule out the presence of desire for political change, or desire to protect or regain family honour, as motivations. A final implication is that threat assessment of hate crime cases should always consider the potential role of group dynamics. Fortunately, there is a professional literature on hate crime that contains recommendations and guidelines that are of direct relevance for threat assessment and management (see [Dunbar, Blanco, & Crevecoeur-MacPhail, 2016](#)).

Stephen D. Hart, PhD, Protect International Risk and Safety Services, Inc.

References

Hart, S. D. (2019). Assessing risk for group-based violence. In D. Eaves, C. D. Webster, Q. Haque, & J. Thalken-Eaves (Eds.), *Risk rules: A practical guide to structured professional judgment and violence prevention* (pp. 173-179). Hove, UK: Pavilion Publishing and Media.

AETAP: Upcoming Conference in Budapest, Hungary



The 13th AETAP (Association of European Threat Assessment Professionals) Conference, preceded by an Expert Day, will take place in Budapest, Hungary from 20th to 23rd April 2020. We have invited inspiring speakers from 9 countries who will examine the subject of threat management from different perspectives and on varied topics.

For example, as one stream of the expert day, Dr. Lorraine Sheridan (current President of APATAP) will speak on the subject matter of stalking. At the conference, Prof. Paul Gill will speak about radicalization, Rachael Frost will discuss domestic and targeted violence, and Rory Steyn's talk is titled 'Witness to Greatness: Threat Assessment Perspectives from

Nelson Mandela'.

Among many other great contributions, the last day will present the opportunity to hear a compelling case on 'Public Figure Stalking from the perspective of Criminal Investigation, Offender Profiling & Threat Assessment'. This will be an interactive case presentation giving you the chance to pose your own questions to the speakers and discuss this matter further.

As every year, there are also great options for networking besides the expert day and conference itself. On 21 April, our annual gala dinner will take place at the Sofitel and for 22 April we have organized a very special casual evening. After a short bus ride, we'll enjoy

Hungarian food and a live band just outside the city.

We are very excited about all contributions so far, which enrich our conference and have made it possible for us to come together once again. We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to AETAP's 13th conference this year in Budapest.

Karoline Roshdi (Vice President AETAP) & Andrea Wechlin (President AETAP)

Website: www.aetap.eu

[Program](#)

[Registration](#)

Contact: info@aetap.eu

New Webinar Series: Foundational Issues and Case Illustrations

Protect International is offering a new webinar series in collaboration with CONCEPT Professional Training focusing on an introduction to violence/risk threat assessment (the state of the field, initial versus comprehensive assessment, approaches to comprehensive assessment, and legal issues) and violence risk/threat assessment case illustrations across diverse sectors (health care, higher education, law enforcement, and workplaces). These webinars have been developed in response to needs expressed by threat assessment professionals who have taken part in our training. You are welcome to participate in the entire series or just a part of the series and all of these webinars can be viewed live or on-demand! [Click here for more information.](#)