VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN WORD

FACTOR A: FIXATION AND FOCUS

This factor is based on the concept of a specific target being identified in the writing sample. This is a target in real life and the target is identified specifically.

Sub-factor A.1 Naming of Target: Is the person, place, or system being targeted identified clearly in the writing sample?

Sub-factor A.2 Repetition of the Target: Is the target mentioned more than once? Is the target identified and then repeated multiple times for emphasis?

Sub-factor A.3 Objectification of Target: Is there language that indicates a negative view or dehumanizing of the target?

Sub-factor A.4 Emphasis of Target: Does the writer use capital letters, quotes, color changes, graphics, parenthetical inserts, or emoji to emphasize the target? This becomes more concerning if related to a theme of retaliation, blaming others, or wounded self-image (my life is over).

Sub-factor A.5 Graphic Language: Does the writer describe what s/he wants to do to the target in a graphic or detailed manner?

FACTOR B: HIERARCHICAL THEMATIC CONTENT

This factor is based on the concept of the writer or protagonist in the story being identified in the writing sample as superior or in an avenging or punishing role. This can occur through the anti-hero of the story or writer being seen as all-powerful and giving out judgment for past wrongs or the proletariat or targets in the story being seen as weak, stupid, or naïve.

Sub-factor B.1 Disempowering Language: Is the person, place, or system being targeted described as a sheep, lemming, cattle, retarded, or something similar?

Sub-factor B.2 Glorified Avenger: Is the writer or protagonist described as an all-powerful figure or someone who is smart, knowledgeable, and able to punish those who have wronged him/her? There may also be a tendency to use the gun or weapon to enhance the attacker's gender status to present him/herself as all powerful or superior.

Sub-factor B.3 Reality Crossover: For fiction pieces, is there a cross-over between fiction and reality? Additionally, does the writer reference an ideology or historical figure such as Hitler/Nazis or previous mass murderer as a role model or someone to emulate or copy?

Sub-factor B.4 Militaristic Language: Does the writer use military language around tactical or strategic attacks on a target?

Sub-factor B.5 Paranoid Content: Does the story structure give a sense of paranoia or worry beyond what would be considered normal?

FACTOR C: ACTION AND TIME IMPERATIVE

This factor is concerned with writing content that conveys a sense of impending movement toward action. This may be communicated by mentioning a specific time, location, or event such as a graduation, academic admission, or results of a conduct meeting.

Sub-factor C.1 Location of the Attack: Is the location of a potential attack site mentioned in detail?

Sub-factor C.2 Time of the Attack: Is there a time/date given for the attack?

Sub-factor C.3 Weapons and Materials to be Used: Are specific weapons or materials mentioned in the writing that will be used in the attack?

Sub-factor C.4 Overcoming Obstacles: Does the writing sample include examples of obstacles that must be first overcome in order to carry out an attack?

Sub-factor C.5 Conditional Ultimatum: Is there an ultimatum attached to the time and the location of the attack?

FACTOR D: PRE-ATTACK PLANNING

Many who move forward with violent attacks write and plan in detail prior to these attacks. Sometimes, this pre-attack planning is boastful and can be described as a "howling" behavior designed to intimidate others towards compliance. Other times the pre-attack planning is unintentionally leaked prior to the attack and discovered by a third party.

Sub-factor D.1 Discussion and Acquisition of Weapons: Does the writing contain evidence of discussion about potential weapons or materials that may be used to carry out an attack?

Sub-factor D.2 Evidence of Researching or Stalking the Target: Does the writing give evidence the author has conducted detailed research concerning the potential target?

Sub-factor D.3 Details Concerning Target: Has the writer given evidence of studying the details of a particular location to attack?

Sub-factor D.4 Fantasy Rehearsal for Attack: Is there evidence of a fantasy rehearsal concerning a potential attack?

Sub-factor D.5 Costuming Description: In fiction writing, is there a discussion of elaborate, dark costuming worn by the anti-hero prior to or during the attack?

FACTOR E: INJUSTICE COLLECTING

The term "injustice collector" was coined by Mary Ellen O'Toole as a risk factor in the first prong of the threat assessment approach: the personality of the student. The injustice collector keeps track of his/her past wrongs and is often upset in a manner beyond what would typically be expected.

Sub-factor E.1 Perseverating on Past Wrongs: Does the writer give evidence of being wronged by others?

Sub-factor E.2 Unrequited Romantic Entanglements: Does the writer discuss past romantic relationships that ended in frustrated outcomes with the writer or protagonist alone and isolated?

Sub-factor E.3 Desperation, Hopelessness or Suicide Ideation/Attempt: Does the story or email have a quality of sadness, isolation, and a lack of positive outcomes or options for either the writer or the main character? Did the writer express an idea, thought, or description of a plan to kill him/herself?

Sub-factor E.4 Amplification/Narrowing: Is there language that amplifies (use of CAPS, emoji, or color/highlighting) or narrows the focus of anger and threat to a particular individual, department, or group?

Sub-factor E.5 Threats to Create Justice: Does the writer offer an explanation of how s/he will seek ultimate justice, karma, payback, or a narrative on how the individual will "make things right?"

SCORING

To score the VRAW², the writing sample should be read through carefully several times and areas of concern highlighted. Staff using the VRAW² then makes a decision surrounding each of the main five factors to determine if it is present. This is determined by rating each of the five sub-factors as 0 for not present, 1 for unsure, and 2 for present. The sub-factors are then added up. Scores of 5 or more indicated the overall factor is endorsed.

Factors Endorsed	NaBITA Tool	SIVRA-35
5 Factors	Extreme	High
4 Factors	Severe	High
3 Factors	Elevated	Moderate
2 Factors	Moderate	Moderate
1 Factor	Mild	Low

VRAW²

VIOLENCE RISK ASSESSMENT OF WRITTEN WORD

Rate each of the five sub-factors either 0 for not present, 1 for unsure, and 2 for present, then add up all points. Scores of 5 or more indicated the overall factor is endorsed.

FACTORS	POINTS			NOTES
FACTOR A: Fixation and Focus	☐ Endorsed ☐ Not Endorsed			
Sub-factor A.1 Naming of Target	☐ 0	☑ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor A.2 Repetition of the Target	☐ 0	☑ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor A.3 Objectification of Target	☐ 0	☑ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor A.4 Emphasis of Target	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor A.5 Graphic Language	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
FACTOR B: Hierarchical Thematic Content	☐ Endorsed ☐ Not Endorsed			
Sub-factor B.1 Disempowering Language	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor B.2 Glorified Avenger	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor B.3 Reality Crossover	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor B.4 Militaristic Language	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor B.5 Paranoid Content	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
FACTOR C: Action and Time Imperative	☐ Endorsed ☐ Not Endorsed			
Sub-factor C.1 Location of the Attack	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor C.2 Time of the Attack	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor C.3 Weapons and Materials to be Used	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor C.4 Overcoming Obstacles	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor C.5 Conditional Ultimatum	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
FACTOR D: Pre-Attack Planning	☐ Endorsed ☐ Not Endorsed			
Sub-factor D.1 Discussion and Acquisition of Weapons	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor D.2 Evidence of Researching or Stalking the Target	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor D.3 Details Concerning Target	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor D.4 Fantasy Rehearsal for Attack	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor D.5 Costuming Description	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
FACTOR E: Injustice Collecting	☐ Endorsed ☐ Not Endorsed			
Sub-factor E.1 Perseverating on Past Wrongs	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor E.2 Unrequited Romantic Entanglements	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor E.3 Desperation, Hopelessness, Suicide Ideation/Attempt	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor E.4 Amplification/Narrowing:	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	
Sub-factor E.5 Threats to Create Justice:	☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	

Note: Dangerousness and violence, from a student, faculty, or staff member is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately predict. This training topic offers research-based techniques and theories to provide a foundational understanding and improved awareness of the potential risk. The training or tool should not be seen as a guarantee or offer any assurance that violence will be prevented.