

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT TEAMS (TAMT)

Funded under grant number 21STFRG00014

from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T)).

Project Background

TAMTs (threat assessment and management teams) are evidence-based best practices for dealing with terrorism and target violence in schools, but the complications of local implementation combined with concerns about stigmatization and over-policing of minoritized communities means there is a need to understand both barriers and facilitators to successful implementation in a range of settings, both urban, suburban, and rural, and within different states' existing legal frameworks.

This project focuses on a public health approach to the national priority of ending school violence. We will examine elements of school culture and procedures that contribute to safety, specifically:



School-based TAMTs



Bullying and school responses



School belongingness

Year 1 will focus on school-based threat assessment teams and Year 2 will focus on individual level measures of belongingness.

What We Expect to Accomplish in Year 1

AIM 1: Examine structural and situational barriers and facilitators to implementing a TAMT in schools in urban, suburban and rural school districts in Connecticut, Illinois and Massachusetts. This includes six districts in each state.



Data collection:

- Semi-structured interviews with school-based stakeholders (90) and statewide experts (30)
- Focus groups (54) with students, educators and parents in each district
- Policy documents, best practices, laws and white papers
- District-level survey (18) around use of TAMTs Policy and training focused

What We Need from Our Local Partners

Illinois School and Campus Safety Resource Center at Western Illinois University

Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth

CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Prevention at Western Connecticut State University

Partner organizations will be responsible for helping to identify potential school districts and experts by:

- connecting researchers to schools and experts via email,
- going on site visits to help introduce the research project,
- making introductions to statewide experts (legislators, researchers, advocates, community organizations).

Year 1 Deliverables

- Findings from year one will be used to develop surveys with individual metrics.
- Summary guides for participating schools, includes overview of best practices and feedback on risk and protective factors.
- Best practice guides focused on implementation and recommendations
- Manuscripts and reports to share findings

What We Expect to Accomplish in Year 2

AIM 2: Through the data collected in year 1, a survey will be created to examine the association of these hypothesized risk and protective factors.

AIM 3: Examine levels of perceived school belongingness, experiences of bullying, and trust in school administration/adults by collecting data from six districts in three states.



Data collection:

- Individual-level survey with **adults, parents, teachers?**

What We Need from Our Local Partners

Partner organizations will:

- Provide feedback on the data collection instruments
- Assist with identifying key state policies and procedures around TVTP
- Help to distribute findings with participating districts.

Year 2 Deliverables

- Manuscripts and reports to share findings
- **Other?**

Research Team and Contact Information

University of Illinois at Chicago

Program Director

Stevan Weine M.D., Professor of Psychiatry,
Director, Center for Global Health
smweine@uic.edu

Research Team Members

Gabriel Pena, MPH
Chloe Polutnik Smith, MPH

Boston Children's Hospital

Program Director

B. Heidi Ellis, PhD., Associate Professor of Psychology,
Director, Trauma and Community Resilience Center
Heidi.Ellis@childrens.harvard.edu

Research Team Members

Kathlyn Elliott, PhD
Enryka Christopher, MSc
Sewit Yohannes