Threat Assessment Tool

*Note: If you already know there is a high risk, with a specific, identifiable threat, additional questions are not going to change the threat level. That is a CRISIS response, not a threat assessment.*

Try starting out with a question such as:

1. *It seems like you’re having a hard time [lately/today], what’s been going on?*

If the student did not present to seeking help on their own, you can ask:

1. *Do you have any understanding of why we’re meeting together* or *Do you know why your friends or your teachers are concerned about you right now?*
2. *Help me understand what you’re going through right now.*
3. *Do you foresee any changes that could make this situation better? Worse?*

# Threat Assessment Questions

Move on to more specific threat assessment questions:

## Tier I

1. *Are you angry at anyone right now or have you recently been angry with someone?*
2. *Have you had any thoughts of hurting anyone?*
3. *Have you been thinking about how you might do this?*
4. *Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?*
5. *Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to hurt someone? Did you intend to carry out this plan?*
6. *Have you ever done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to hurt someone?*
   1. *In the last 3 months?*

## Tier II

1. *When you have the thoughts, how long do they last?*
2. *How many times have you had these thoughts?*
3. *Could you stop thinking about hurting someone or wanting to die if you wanted to?*
4. *Are there things - anyone or anything - that stopped you from wanting to hurt someone or acting on thoughts of revenge or destruction?*
5. *What sort of reasons did you have for wanting to hurt someone? (End bullying, attention, relieve stress, revenge, cause something to happen, reaction)*
6. *Do you have access to any materials to cause harm to others or a weapon?*

# Strength-Based Questions

1. *What do you have in your life that is working well for you?*
2. *What kinds of supports do you have in your life?*
3. *What kinds of supports do you need that you don’t have?*
4. *What steps can the people around you take to support you?*

**Severity Consideration Scale for Questions**

*How Often:*

1. Less than once a week
2. Once a week
3. 2-5 times in a week
4. Daily or almost daily
5. Many times each day

*How Long Do They Last:*

1. Fleeting - few seconds or minutes
2. Less than 1 hour/some of the time
3. 1-4 hours/a lot of time
4. 4-8 hours/most of the day
5. More than 8 hours/persistent or continuous

*Could You Stop If You Could:*

1. Easily able to control
2. Can control thoughts with little difficulty
3. Can control thoughts with some difficulty
4. Can control thoughts with a lot of difficulty
5. Unable to control
6. Does not attempt to control

*Can Anything Stop You?*

1. Deterrents definitely stopped you
2. Deterrents probably stopped you
3. Uncertain that deterrents stopped you
4. Deterrents most likely did not stop you
5. Deterrents definitely did not stop you

# Assessing the Level of Threat Risk Checklist

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Low** | **Medium** | **High** |

1. **Low Level of Risk**

\_\_\_ Homicidal thoughts or thoughts of harm are vague or uncertain, or transient

\_\_\_ Has plan, but plan is implausible, uncertain, or lacks detail

\_\_\_ Strong protective factors

\_\_\_ Immediate risk factors are time-limited, modifiable, or easily navigated

\_\_\_ Does not seem to have access to means

\_\_\_ Has homicidal thoughts, but no clear intent to follow-through

\_\_\_ Self-harm thoughts, behaviors, plans that are superficial, transient

\_\_\_ Can engage in problem-solving with assistance

\_\_\_ Can identify some personal strengths with assistance, can imagine hope in the future

\_\_\_ Does not have a significant history of homicidal or tortuous behavior, thoughts, or can identify clear changes they have made and intent to not follow-through on past behaviors

1. M**edium Level of Risk**

\_\_\_ Homicidal thoughts with more detail, more thought-out, and/or considering means, more often

\_\_\_ Has plan, may have details, uncertainty of how to carry it out

\_\_\_ Has clear plan with flushed out details but no ability to carry it out *(i.e., wants to shoot classmates, has no access to a gun or does not know anyone with a gun)*

\_\_\_ Weaker or fewer protective factors

\_\_\_ Risk factors are more long-term, and have been resistant to intervention

\_\_\_ Has uncertain access to means, or knows where means can be, but cannot currently navigate barriers *(i.e., knows where family guns are but they are locked in a safe student does not have access to)*

\_\_\_ Intent on causing harm, but carrying out is vague *(want people to go away, want to have something happen to cause harm rather than them taking action to kill, hurt or torture)*

\_\_\_ Self-harm behaviors are more consistent, have required more than basic first aid, and have urges behind them

\_\_\_ Has difficulty engaging in problem-solving, even with assistance

\_\_\_ Can only identify one strength, or that strength is in someone needing them to continue living, a significant gap between the present and a future they imagine can be better

\_\_\_ Some vague thoughts about preparing for their death or the death of others such as not preparing for the future, or telling others not to prepare

\_\_\_ Has had a previous harm attempt more than 3 months ago, or has other harmful/tortuous behavior or thoughts in their past

1. **High Threat Risk**

\_\_\_ Homicidal thoughts have detail to them that are plausible

\_\_\_ Has plan that has detail, and could reasonably carried out

\_\_\_ Little to no acknowledgement of protective factors

\_\_\_ Risk factors can be a combination of long-standing & immediate that are severe and have not shown to be mediated with assistance

**\_\_\_ Has access to means or has a plan to access means (*note that having immediate access to means or having a plan to access means can immediately shift risk level)***

\_\_\_ Has homicidal/harm thoughts with clear intent to follow through

\_\_\_ Self-harm behaviors are significant, have needed medical intervention, and have varied mediums

\_\_\_ Is not able to engage in problem-solving: causing harm/revenge is the only answer to their problems

\_\_\_ Has victim(s) under surveillance

\_\_\_ Engaging in identifiable, risk-laden behaviors that could lead to severe injury or death to themselves/others

\_\_\_ Cannot identify personal strengths, feels as though others would be better off without them, cannot see a future

\_\_\_ Has prepared for death such as giving away possessions, given important projects to other students, writing good-bye notes, or has written notes that could be perceived as such

\_\_\_ Homicidal/harm intent or plans within the last month and/or tortuous behavior within the last 3 months

1. **Recommendations**

\_\_\_ Monitor situation:

Who:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How Often:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Time Frame: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Safety Plan (Be very specific about what behavior is impacting the community)

\_\_\_ Parental/Family Involvement

\_\_\_ Contact Emergency and/or Legal Services

\_\_\_ Referrals/Resources

\_\_\_ Parental/Family Transport to Emergency Services

\_\_\_ Communication/Restriction of Means

\_\_\_ Consultation with (legal, mental health, etc): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Rationale (for actions taken & actions not taken)**

*The level of intervention should mirror the level of threat*

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