

# Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Threat Assessment Process

(Revised 2021)

The genesis of the NOVA Threat Assessment Process occurred immediately following the passage in 2009 of Virginia Criminal Code Section 23-9.2:10 that mandated all colleges and universities to establish and operate campus violence prevention committees and threat assessment teams. The statute specifically calls for a threat assessment team that includes members from law enforcement, mental health professionals, representatives of student affairs and human resources, and, if available, college or university counsel.

## **College Threat Assessment Team Purpose Statement:**

The purpose of NOVA's Threat Assessment Team is to assess potentially threatening behaviors, including communications, and provide steps to mitigate risk when an individual may pose a threat to self or others within the NOVA community.

A secure database, maintained by the College, is utilized to track and document all threat cases, as well as other cases that are brought to the attention of The Office of Wellness and Mental Health and The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities that are not deemed as threats but as disruptions to the teaching and learning process.

Behavior Intervention Teams (BIT) are operating on each of our six campuses and serve the additional centers and sites that are located near and associated with those campuses. BIT has the authority to intervene in low to mid-level student risk behavior intervention cases. These cases are usually those in which members of the NOVA community need assistance to perform at their normal functioning level.

## **BIT Purpose Statement:**

The purpose of NOVA Behavior Intervention Teams is to provide a systematic and professional collective response in instances where students' behavior is concerning or disruptive to themselves, to others, or the community.

For disruptive behavior cases, The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and Human Resources Employee Relations Specialists manage cases as they are received. As warranted, the College may take appropriate disciplinary actions for violations of the Code of Conduct.

For cases that rise to elevated threat level, the College Threat Assessment Team has the authority to address cases at the College. The members of this team meet monthly and as needed to review current cases, continue their training in the field of threat assessment, and to resolve issues as they arise. Decision-making in specific cases that are reviewed and assessed by this team involves using the team members' professional observations and judgments and the following tools and resources:

- Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V) (2006 The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals)
- Structured Professional Judgment (2011 Hart, S. & Logan, C.)
- WAVR-21
- Priority Classification of Threat Assessment Incidents (2021 Deisinger)

This team is trained to respond quickly and efficiently to all incidents that pose a major risk to the NOVA community. This team uses added regional resources from law enforcement and mental health fields on an as-needed basis.

All of the teams involved in the NOVA Threat Assessment Process embody the principles of collaboration, coordination, and alignment of principles, to include:

### **LAW – POLICY – PROCEDURE – PRACTICE**

**We strive to be FAIR, OBJECTIVE, REASONABLE, and TIMELY.**

In accordance with the NOVA Administrative Council, the NOVA Threat Assessment Team works collaboratively with these other committees established to enhance the safety and security of all who attend and work at NOVA:

- Violence Prevention Committee
- College Emergency Planning Committee

All documents related to the entire Threat Assessment Process are stored in a secure database and are available only to team members. Anyone can submit a report of concerning behavior via the NOVA website. Each report is carefully screened by the trained case managers and then assigned to the most appropriate college authority for further investigation and response. NOVA does not provide mental health services (per the policy of the Virginia Community College System), but we do provide faculty, staff, and students with resources and referrals.

All records are kept for a minimum period of seven years to comply with all Federal and VCCS requirements.