

HOME > PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

# Behavioral Threat Assessment in Schools: Evidence, Fit, and Appropriateness

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**DEVELOPED BY**

MHTTC Network  
Coordinating Office

**TARGET AUDIENCE**

Addictions Counselor,  
Administrator, Criminal  
Justice Professional,  
Educator, Medical  
Professional, Mental  
Health Professional,  
Other, Pharmacist,  
Recovery Specialist,  
Researcher, Student

School violence, including school-based gun violence, is a major public health issue that has negative consequences for students, families, schools, and communities (Basile et al., 2020; Peterson et al., 2021). One approach that schools have adopted to address school violence is behavioral threat assessment (BTA). Based on a request from our funder, the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA), we developed a report on behavioral threat assessment and its intersection with youth mental health.

This report aims to:

1. **Describe** the problem of school violence and how BTA became a widely implemented school violence prevention strategy;
2. **Report** on the current state of BTA implementation and its effectiveness;
3. **Discuss** considerations for the fit and appropriateness of using BTA in schools; and
4. **Offer** recommendations for schools, policymakers, funders, researchers, and SAMHSA on addressing BTA use in schools.

#### KEYWORDS

**Adolescents/Youth, Evidence Based Practices, School Mental Health, Violence Prevention**

#### LANGUAGE(S)

English

#### ATTACHMENT(S)

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1

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SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or Text TALKWITHUS  
to 66746



**MHTTC**

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