

Background

The Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) process was initiated through a community based VTRA Steering Committee in 2009 in response to the implementation of the Ministry of Education's Safe Schools Act. It is part of a Community Threat Assessment Community Protocol, which is defined as:

*"The fundamental intent of the Community Threat Assessment Protocol is to support the child/youth and their families to go beyond the eradication of threat and risk of violence to help children/youth make better life choices for a safer community."*¹

The first Community Protocol (Protocol) was signed in 2012 and included 12 community partners in the City of Greater Sudbury (City). In 2015, the Protocol was expanded to include 18 community partners in the City and surrounding areas of Sudbury/Manitoulin.

The City formerly had staff trained in the VTRA process; however, those trained have since left the corporation or have been assigned to other roles.

Community Participation

Protocol partners are expected to respond to all youth behaviours that pose a potential risk to other youth, staff, themselves, and members of the community, by a change in baseline behaviour with an escalation towards violence. The Protocol acknowledges that support for early intervention measures by the school boards and community partners can prevent community violence.

The effective ongoing application of this Protocol supports collaborative planning to prevent traumatic events. In addition, the timely sharing of appropriate information about youth at risk for violence towards self and others ensures that risk management plans and support plans are put in place.

The Protocol is designed to ensure that once awareness of threatening behaviour occurs appropriate community partners communicate information that activates immediate risk reduction, a systematic risk/threat evaluation process, and the development of a risk management and support plan.

Partners work together for the benefit of children, youth, and their families by:

- Building working relationships based on mutual respect and trust;
- Involving children, youth, and their families in planning for services and support;
- Recognizing that each child and youth has unique strengths and needs that require consideration when developing a service plan;
- Realizing that working successfully together is a process of learning, listening, and understanding one another; and

- Being patient, trusting, and working cooperatively can help children and youth become happy, healthy, active, involved, and caring members of the community.

As part of the program design, school board and agency representatives commit to ongoing participation, staff development, and program review. The VTRA Steering Committee has asked the City to sign onto the Protocol and thus renew training in areas that have regular interactions with youth up to 18 years of age. The Leisure Services Division and Social Services Division are two areas identified as priorities for this specific training opportunity. A review of areas that interact with youth will identify the number of individuals that will be trained and participate in the VTRA process.

Next Steps

Pending approval by City Council, the City will commit to being part of the VTRA Protocol and determine training needs.

References

¹ Youth Strategy Board Presentation

<http://www.gsps.ca/en/yourpolice/resources/YouthStrategyBarsantiBoardPresentation.pdf>