



# **Pembina River & Area Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment & Intervention Protocol Questions and Answers**

## **1. What is VTRA?**

The Violence/Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) process is used to address violent or threat making behavior in schools, through an intervention process rather than a disciplinary process. The intention is to seek understanding of the student and the reasons for the behavior, then respond through intervention. This promotes a safe school environment for all. While this process is primarily used in schools, this protocol extends to community agencies as well.

## **2. Why do we need VTRA?**

Prevention of youth violence is a community responsibility as it is everybody's duty to report. Proactive strategies to recognize early warning signs and initiate / reinforce violence reduction in schools and the community are encouraged and supported.

## **3. How does VTRA help a young person?**

Open and collaborative community partnerships help to ensure that the right child gets the right support at the right time.

## **4. How does VTRA help a school? A community?**

Through consultation and information sharing with local cross-sector agencies and other specialized agencies, threatening and/or violent behavior will be analyzed to guide school-based and community-based risk reduction and child/youth support planning.

## **5. Who is involved in this process?**

The VTRA process that *the Pembina River and Area Threat/Violence Risk Assessment and Intervention Project Committee* follows is well supported by our community. A protocol is being written to describe our process and the relationship between the participating agencies. The protocol will be signed by the agency leaders on May 3, 2016.

## **6. What is the process?**

There is a ten step process from the moment an administrator is notified of a concern with violence or threat making behavior until intervention is in place. These steps are outlined in Stage 1 – Violence/Threat Risk Assessment Process and Report Form. If the results of completing Stage 1 determine that the student is a medium to high risk Stage 2 – Violence/Threat Risk Assessment will be activated to bring multiple agencies together to support the student, family, and school.

## **7. What are the possible outcomes?**

The goal is that every incident of youth violence in our community be addressed. We are also hopeful that in creating awareness of the signs and identification of worrisome behaviours, potential violent or threat making behaviours can be prevented.

**8. What can we expect from this process?**

Community safety is everyone's responsibility. The goal is that every incident of youth violence in our community is addressed. The inter-agency foundation of the VTRA Protocol encourages the open, timely sharing of information about incidents of violence, threat making or worrisome behaviour.

**9. How did VTRA come to be in our community?**

In 2014 under the leadership of our Aspen Collaborative Services (ACS), Level One and Two Training from the Canadian Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response, is ongoing for school personnel and agency partners in our area.

**10. What triggers the process?**

Students who regularly demonstrate aggressive behaviours can make it challenging to decide when to activate a Stage 1 VTRA process. VTRA is not intended for students who are behaving within their baseline of behaviour. Students who show a 'slow but steady' increase in baseline behaviours are of concern. The *Monitoring Baseline Behaviours* tool is designed to help define and monitor baseline behaviour and assist in decision making to activate a Stage 1 VTRA or not.

**11. What is the VTRA protocol?**

The VTRA protocol is a formal agreement among the participating partners which is representative of their commitment to the process as well their participation and support. This protocol is a formal agreement signed by the leaders of each of the participating partners.

**12. How can I find out more about VTRA?**

Please contact the agency with which you are most closely associated. Each agency has a designated VTRA contact.

**13. Who should be trained in the process?**

It is recommended that decision-makers within an organization be familiar with legal considerations for sharing information and procedural concerns associated with this process. They should be aware of this process and provide the assurance that their organization will participate in a supportive way. There are two levels of training and it is recommended that at least one person within each participating organization be trained in both levels. Ideally organizations should strive to develop and have trained a response team.

**14. How much does this cost?**

Our Cross-Ministry Regional Collaborative Service Delivery Partnership (RCSD) has provided over \$35K to cover training costs. The majority of the costs have been covered through RCSD. Partner agencies are absorbing some costs through in kind work and donations are always welcome. Training costs include: venue rental, materials, training costs and sustenance.

**15. How do you get trained if you are interested?**

Please contact the agency with which you are most closely associated. Each agency has a designated VTRA contact.

**16. Who do I call if I witness or receive information about a threat?**

Contact the agency that is most appropriate to the incident. For example, if you see a child acting physically aggressive with Another student on the school playground as you are walking by during recess time, report it to that school Principal. However, if you see the same thing outside of school hours, report it to the RCMP. It is reasonable to follow up to ask about the outcome of the incident.