

Convention Presentation Summaries

Each year, CCAPS sponsors several programs for continuing education credits for psychologists. At this year's convention in Las Vegas, we sponsored 28 programs. If you couldn't make all the programs you wanted to attend or weren't able to attend the convention this year, you can still find out more about some of the quality presentations that were sponsored. Below are descriptions of several presentations from this year's convention.



Counselor's Role on a Behavioral Threat Assessment Team

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Media coverage of the University of Colorado student, James Holmes accused of opening gunfire in a crowded movie theater quickly switched focus to the university "Behavioral Evaluation and Threat Assessment team," the university police, and the treating university psychiatrist. It is tragic reminders such as these that the campus threat assessment team and the role of the counselor are becoming a necessity due to the increased presence of troubled, disturbing, and disruptive behaviors in learning and living environments.

There are several model frameworks for threat assessment and intervention teams, all of which indicate the use of a multidisciplinary approach as a best practice model and discuss balancing the rights of the individual with the need of the institution to secure the safety and security of its constituents. Additionally, these model frameworks advocate the use of a comprehensive behavioral intervention and threat assessment model to promote the campus as a culture of awareness and resourcefulness. Ideally, campus efforts to identify early warning signs, prevent disruptive or dangerous behaviors, and educate the campus on available resources promote the institution's educational mission.

Behavioral-health professionals such as mental health counselors, social workers, and psychologists along with psychiatrists or psychiatric nurse practitioners are often asked to serve as active or consulting members of the campus assessment team. These individuals may be members of the campus or contracted members of the community. They serve an important role in assisting the campus assessment team in understanding, assessing and conceptualizing a response to troubled, disruptive or potentially violent persons. In addition to the role the behavioral-health professional plays during a threat assessment team meeting, critical contributions also occur before and after such a meeting. Some of these contributions may include communicating with clinicians about a client of concern, consulting with faculty or staff who identifies a student in distress, or providing outreach and education to departments on clues and warning signs of a troubled and disruptive student.

The presence of behavioral-health consultant on a threat assessment team is recommended and often requires an understanding from the team members regarding the nature and type of contributions which can be made along with the factors that limit disclosure and inter agency collaboration and communication. Examples of such concerns include dual roles, conflicts related to state statutes associated with confidentiality, ethical standards established by professional affiliation, criteria for clinical action (e.g., involuntary hospitalization), differences between institutional concerns associated with public perception and individual rights associated with mental health law, and capacity for and effectiveness in predicting behavior, particularly violent behavior.

Similarly to the 2012 ACPA program, this program will provide an introduction to some of the factors that define, enrich and complicate the nature and type of contributions a behavioral-health professional makes on a campus multidisciplinary risk/threat assessment team. Additionally, the program will explore with the participants how various behavioral-health professionals across the nation are navigating this complicated role.

Because there are many different learning styles, this program will employ several methods of presentation. Presenters will use a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by a handout outlining the program's agenda. In addition to a didactic presentation, presenters will engage the group in thought provoking discussions through small and large group interactive discussions as well as an extensive and multi-phased case scenario.

Learning Objectives:

- Acquire a basic understanding of the nature and function of behavioral-health/threat assessment in a higher education setting
- Be able to clarify the nature and role of the behavioral-health professional on a multi-disciplinary team
- Be able to identify examples of clinical, ethical and legal issues which affect the role and scope of the counselor's contribution
- Obtain experience through case study simulation in the identification of potential dual role conflicts and constraints on dissemination of information

References:

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<http://www.naspa.org/safercomm.pdf>

Student Mental Health and the Law: A Resource for Institutions of Higher Education available at:
<http://www.myacpa.org/comm/ccaps/docs/TJFLegalResource.pdf>

Dunkle, Silverstein and Warner, writing in the *Journal of College and University Law* (2008, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 585-636)

Sokolov and Hughes (2007, *Risk mitigation through the NCHERM behavioral intervention and threat assessment model*

Desinger, Randazzo, O'Neil and Savage (2008). *The handbook for Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams*. Applied Risk Management: Massachusetts

Bickel and Lake (1999) *The Rights and Responsibilities of the Modern University: Who Assumes the Risks of College Life?* Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.