

# GUELPH WELLINGTON DUFFERIN VTRA Protocol 2023



## *Community Violence Threat Assessment Protocol A Collaborative Response to Assessing Violence Potential*

Fourth Edition: April 2023

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## RATIONALE

As a community, we are all committed to making our schools and communities safe. In Guelph, Wellington, and Dufferin, we have a long-standing history of collaboration and partnership in supporting children, youth and families. The term "partner" in this document does not mean a legal partnership but rather a collaborative arrangement.

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*The goal of early intervention by school boards, community partners, children, youth and families/caregivers will be to reduce and manage both school and community violence and enhance safety for all.*

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This protocol supports collaborative planning among schools, community partners, families/caregivers, and children/youth to reduce violence and reflect safe, caring and restorative approaches. It fosters timely sharing of information about a child or youth who poses a risk for violence towards themselves or others. It is the process of deliberately trying to "connect the dots" that paints a picture when a person is moving on a path towards serious violence before a violent act occurs. The protocol promotes supportive and preventative plans being put in place.

The strength of this partnership between school boards and community partners lies in the multidisciplinary approach, which is fundamental to the safety of the community. Members strive to share and review relevant information, details of threatening situations and/or evidence promptly to collaborate effectively, making use of a broad range of expertise. This collaborative process will respect an individual's right to privacy and the safety of all to the fullest extent possible.

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*"A single evaluator can use the best violence risk assessment tool (or checklist) out there, but no risk assessment tool is worth squat unless you have good data to put into it. And a multidisciplinary VTRA Team can collect more data and in a more timely fashion than any one professional can trying to do it on their own" NACTATR 2018*

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## A NEED FOR TRAINING

This protocol document is not a substitute for training in the field of Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) and should not be used until adequate training is received. The VTRA protocol is intended to be used by multidisciplinary teams trained in the theory and practice of threat-risk assessment through [Level 1 Violence Threat Risk Assessment Training](#).

### **Signing partners on the Guelph Wellington Dufferin Protocol agree to:**

- Level 1 Training for staff who will be involved in Stage 1 VTRA's
- Level 1 Training for the Regional Committee representative for the agency and/or agency Lead
- Half-day VTRA refresher training every two years delivered by certified trainers (not to replace the full Level 1 training requirement)

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The primary members who are permanent partners of the VTRA protocol uphold and ensure the functionality of this agreement. These include:

- Canadian Mental Health Association of Waterloo Wellington
- Compass Community Services
- Dufferin Child and Family Services
- Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington
- Guelph Police Services
- Ontario Provincial Police Dufferin
- Ontario Provincial Police Wellington
- Upper Grand District School Board
- Wellington Catholic District School Board

Along with permanent partners, additional community partners include the following organizations across the regions of Guelph, Wellington and Dufferin County:

- Children, Community & Social Services, Youth Justice Division
- Choices Youth Shelter
- Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
- Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- Family Transition Place
- Guelph Wellington Women in Crisis
- John Howard Society of Waterloo-Wellington
- Wyndham House

Additional community partners will be invited to join as training occurs. This will allow the protocol to expand and reflect a comprehensive community commitment to early intervention measures and responses to behaviour that pose a potential threat to students, staff, and community members.



## VISION AND STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Violence prevention in our schools and neighbourhoods is a community responsibility. All schools and community partners work together to promote and maintain safety and strive to prevent violence.

The partners agree to work together for the common goals of reducing violence, managing threats of violence, and promoting individual, school and community safety. We will do so by proactively sharing information, advice, and support in a timely manner. The strength of this collaboration lies in the multidisciplinary composition of the VTRA response team. Promptly after a threat, the response team will share and review relevant information and the details of the event to collaborate using a broad range of expertise and information sources.

*As partners, we will work together for the benefit of children/youth, and their parents/guardians by:*

- Building collaborative working relationships based on mutual respect and trust
- Promoting safe, caring and restorative schools with the support of the community
- Involving children, youth and their families in planning for services and supports
- Recognizing the unique strengths and needs of an “Individual of Concern” when developing interventions, supports and services
- Realizing that working together successfully is a process of learning, listening, and understanding one another
- Participating on the VTRA Regional Committee
- Participating on the VTRA Regional Committee Executive for permanent members

*Partners will commit to:*

- Ongoing participation with a minimum of three Regional Committee meetings per year
- Designate a VTRA Lead from their agency who is [trained in Level 1 VTRA](#) (see *Roles and Responsibilities* section of this document for further details)
- Ensure an internal process is in place in their agency to respond to and initiate a VTRA when the protocol is activated
- Staff development and training to ensure agency staff are aware of the protocol and ready, willing and able to share relevant information during the VTRA process
- Ensuring that [Level 1 Training](#) for staff involved in Stage 1 or 2 VTRA meetings is completed as well as a half-day refresher every two years as per protocol

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*This protocol is explicitly designed to facilitate communication so that when any partner activates the VTRA, the School Boards and community partners may communicate relevant child/youth information in a timely fashion*

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## KEY APPROACHES IN THREAT/ RISK ASSESSMENT

### Sharing of Relevant Information

Once it has been determined that VTRA criteria have been met, all partners will share relevant information to avert or minimize the imminent risk of violence that affects the health and safety of any person(s). Each partner agency will ensure that an internal system of communication and training is in place to allow for such sharing in a timely and supportive manner.

### Fair Notice

Prior to any VTRA protocol being implemented, all respective agencies and school boards (clients, students, staff and parents/caregivers/guardians) should be provided with information about the protocol and procedures by way of a “**fair notice**”. The fair notice will include information about how threats of violence will be responded to, given the ongoing community-wide commitment to this protocol.

### Investigative Mindset

An investigative mindset is central to successfully applying the Violence Threat Risk Assessment process. Threat assessment requires thoughtful probing, viewing information with professional objectivity, and paying attention to key points about pre-attack behaviours. Personnel carrying out Threat/Risk assessments strive to be accurate and fair.

### Building Capacity

The Regional Committee will coordinate annual [Level 1 training](#)(s) for protocol partners and their staff. Each partner agency will have a process in place to ensure that new employees are aware of the protocol, the foundational underpinnings of the protocol and the need to share information in a timely manner to support a collaborative approach to threat risk assessment.

### Protocol Review

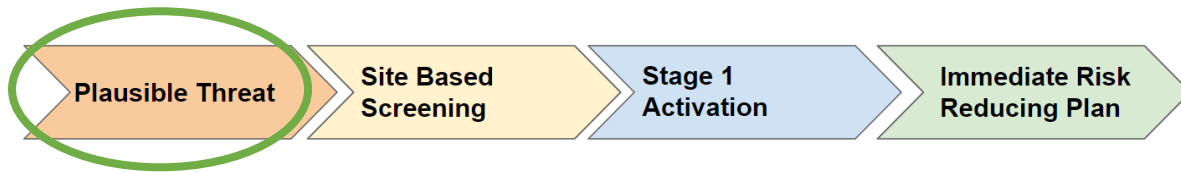
The VTRA Regional Committee will review this protocol every two years and revise it as needed.

### Contact List

An up-to-date contact list of the Community Violence Threat Assessment Protocol partners and VTRA Leads for each signing organization will be maintained and shared with all partners. Each agency commits to keeping this list and contact information up to date by notifying the VTRA Coordinator.



## VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT: DETERMINING RESPONSE



When a child/youth engages in behaviours or makes threatening comments or gestures that may result in serious injury to self and/or others in our community, the Violence Threat Risk Assessment Team from that school or organization will gather initial information and consult to assess if criteria has been met to activate a Stage 1 VTRA.

This Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol is based on the model developed by *The Centre for Trauma Informed Practices (CTIP)*, previously *The North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response*.

The following guidelines help school and community personnel determine when to activate the VTRA process. It is important to carefully consider each and every individual incident to ensure the most appropriate response. To facilitate timely activation of the protocol, each community partner will identify a Lead VTRA contact person and develop a system to internally activate the VTRA protocol. This information will be provided to the VTRA Regional Committee.

### Immediate Risk Situations

These situations include armed (weapons/device capable of causing serious injury or death) persons inside a building (or periphery) who pose a risk to some target(s) or active shooter scenarios. When immediate risk is identified, the agency or organization institutes emergency response measures (e.g., School/agency lockdown, code white), and 911 is called. In these cases, police intervention and protection of students and staff is the immediate response – not Stage 1 VTRA. VTRA will not undertake a formal Threat/Risk Assessment until the situation has been stabilized. However, if it is possible to collect Stage 1 VTRA data, after the situation has stabilized, it is highly beneficial for intervention planning to commence.

### Stage 1 Activation Criteria

Behaviours of an “Individual of Concern” that pose a threat and/or risk to self or others can present in a variety of ways. Examples of high risk behaviours addressed in this protocol include, but are not limited to:

- Serious incidents of violence with intent to harm or kill. *Note: this includes responding after a serious incident of violence from a VTRA lens*
- Indicators of suicidal ideation as they relate to fluidity between homicidal and suicidal. *Note: suicidal ideation and behaviours on their own do not activate VTRA*
- Verbal/written threats or gestures to harm or kill others (“clear, direct, and plausible”) [see Appendix A](#)



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- The use of technology to communicate threats to harm/kill others (social media, websites)
- Possession of weapons (including replicas)
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices)

The agency that is activating the VTRA protocol is responsible for gathering enough information to assess that the criteria has been met and all partner agencies will respond accordingly

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*It is highly encouraged that any concerns be discussed with the VTRA Lead in your organization to avoid under-reaction and support a fulsome conversation to address initial information*

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**NOTE:** Fire Setting, gang-related intimidation and violence, suicidal ideation or attempts in conjunction with homicidal behaviours (fluidity), and hate incidents motivated by factors including but not limited to race, culture, religion and/or sexual and gender diversity may require VTRA activation.

### **Special Considerations (see Appendix C)**

Sometimes, school and community members may underreact to a serious threat posed by young children or a child/youth with special needs, attributing their behaviours to age, diagnoses or disability. However, the same dynamics that can increase the risk of violence in the general student population can also be factors that contribute to the potential for violence in young children or a child/youth with special needs. If there is a significant increase in baseline behaviour, weapons possession or a clear, direct and plausible threat, the VTRA protocol will be activated.

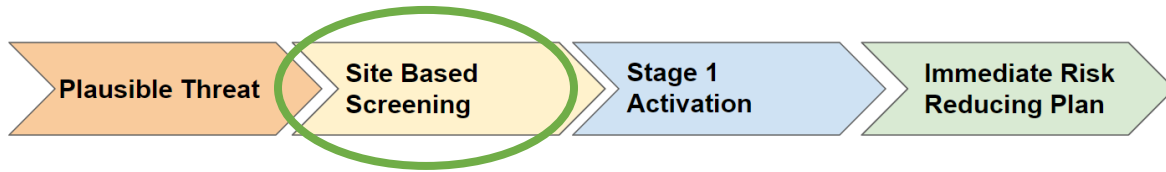
### **Working with Cultural Diversity**

All agencies involved in the VTRA process should always consider the potential for cultural bias. Members of some cultures and identities experience significant rates of poverty, racism and discrimination and often language may barriers exist. These factors, along with possible distrust of authority figures, can lead to the presence of multiple stressors that increase the perceived level of risk or actual risk. When a Stage 1 is activated, agencies will consider all factors in supporting a helpful, not harmful outcome for the “Individual of Concern” and their family/guardians. Ideally, at least one VTRA Team member will be of the same cultural background as respondents from ethnic minority groups.





## VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT: INITIAL SCREENING



### Screening: Initial Data Collection

The school or community partner who initially receives information relating to a threat or instance of violence will gather enough information to help them determine if the criteria has been satisfactorily met for a Stage 1 response.

Initial data collection and assessment includes baseline behaviour, attack related behaviour, and justification using CTIP's screening form: **Assessment of Risk To Others (ARTO)** (tbc).

Once a School or Agency has activated the Stage 1 VTRA, they have deemed that criteria was met. There may be circumstances where the agency engaged in the screening process will contact police for additional information that may inform activation. However, this is not a requirement for activation. It is highly recommended that anyone considering responding to a situation with a VTRA activation **consults with other VTRA Leads** in the community (*without names or identifying information to protect privacy*).

As quoted by Kevin Cameron, **"If the VTRA Team is struggling with whether or not to activate the protocol, you have already answered your question! When in doubt...check it out. Data equals prevention and or early intervention"**.

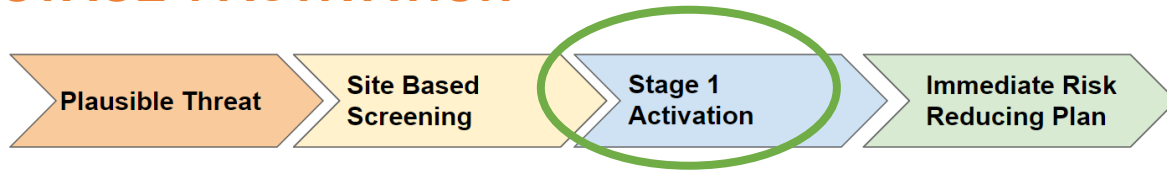
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*The School Board or Agency who activates the protocol will be the Lead Agency for the duration of the process, including activation of other partners, information gathering, chairing and records retention. On occasion, partners may take a shared Leadership role in the process.*

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## VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT: STAGE 1 ACTIVATION



Once the Lead agency deems the criteria met, they will activate the Stage 1 process. It begins with contacting key VTRA partners and convening the team in a physical space within a short amount of time.

### Maintain Safety While Stage 1 Team is Convening

When a threat has been identified, unless the “Individual of Concern” poses an imminent or obvious safety concern, removing the threat-maker from the property, through suspension or other process, **is not advised**. A poorly timed removal from a community agency or “out of school” suspension is high risk. In this stage, many threat makers decide to finalize a plan to attack a specific target: this can include homicidal or suicidal acts. VTRA may or may not result in a suspension. Threat/Risk Assessment is not a disciplinary measure. If the “Individual of Concern” refuses to remain on the property in a safe manner, the police may be called to support the safety of everyone.

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*Poorly timed disciplinary action can be high risk as the “Individual of Concern” often views this period as the “last straw”. It is in this stage that many threat-makers decide to finalize a plan or carry out a specific threat. Termination or suspension does not “cause” the violence to occur, but it can create the necessary “context” for the high-risk individual, who is already struggling, to take the final step from planning to action.*

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### Activating Other Partner Agencies

The Agency Lead initiating the activation will contact police, child and youth mental health, child protection and/or school board of record. Each agency is responsible for ensuring a process is in place to expeditiously respond to Stage 1 Activations.

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*The language, description and understanding of VTRA’s must be consistent across all partner agencies. This includes an understanding that the process is not punitive and is meant to be helpful, not harmful. Inconsistent language and/or judgement undermines the VTRA process for our families and students and creates a problematic climate of divisiveness. Our families, guardians and students need to understand (and feel) that we are coming together to support a fulsome collection of data to inform risk levels and support the safety of everyone. Without this wrap-around support, the process can become more harmful than helpful.*

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## Police Services

When contacting police services, the following information will be provided: name of the “Individual of Concern”, address, parent/guardian/caregiver names and contact information. Where privacy allows, the name of the potential targets will also be shared.

### The Police will:

- Provide background information and may or may not attend the Stage 1 meeting. This will be assessed collaboratively based on the unique circumstances of each case moving to a Stage 1 meeting.
- Perform initial information gathering with the “Individual of Concern” and/or targets and bring the data back to the Stage 1.
- Police may request that specific steps not be completed in the Stage 1 meeting if this will cause interference in a criminal investigation (e.g., they may request certain people not be interviewed).
- Public safety is the primary mandate for police services. **If the law enforcement team member chooses not to proceed legally at the time, then the officer will continue with the Stage 1 VTRA Team.**
- If charges are laid, the police member of the team will refer the case for investigation to a general duty member and continue to participate as an active VTRA Team member.
- A police investigation does NOT prevent the remaining VTRA members from continuing with data collection relative to the threat assessment, including obtaining a history of prior target selection, site selection, and changes in baseline behaviours.
- Good communication between police and remaining VTRA members is essential so as not to compromise an investigation/prosecution or place unnecessary strain on the victim. It is understood that collaboration between VTRA members will be ongoing, even though each team member has their own area of expertise and “jurisdiction”.

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*The Stage 1 Team will continue to gather information, using background information as provided, regardless of whether police are in attendance or just providing information to support. As any new information arises from the Stage 1 meeting, the police will be informed as appropriate. Similarly, if police are gathering information, the Stage 1 Team will continue to meet, and the police will report back to the Stage 1 team with any information they receive.*

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## Child and Youth Mental Health and Child Protection

The agency that initiates the Stage 1 will contact other community partners for information. Procedures will be in place to support fluid communication pathways and information sharing.

### The Child and Youth Mental Health or Child Protection agency will:

- Share any historical involvement and information that is **relevant** to threat risk assessment. This may include information on family dynamics, family members, and the “Individual of Concern”. This information will be shared with the Stage 1 Team.
- If the person of concern is currently "in service" with any of the community partner agencies or services, the clinician assigned and/or their manager or representative will attend the Stage 1 meeting to share relevant information and participate in the overall data collection and assessment process. If the individual assigned is not VTRA trained, then they will need to be supported by a manager who is [VTRA Level 1 trained](#).

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*It is imperative that all individuals attending a Stage 1 VTRA be trained in VTRA Level 1 and maintain a collaborative, supportive and wrap-around approach to the data collection. Furthermore, each member will attend with knowledge of the reason and rationale for the meeting, including their ability and commitment to sharing information.*

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## School Boards

The majority of VTRA's are activated by school boards. If another partner agency activates the protocol, they will contact the school board of record.

### The School Board will:

- Confirm if the student is enrolled at their school board.
- If the student is registered, the school board will support the Stage 1 Team meeting as discussed and agreed upon with the agency activating the protocol.
- If the Lead Agency is hosting the Stage 1 meeting, the school board will ensure a member of their staff and/or the Lead, attend the meeting to support data collection and sharing of information.
- If the student is not registered, any historical information will be shared with the Lead Agency.

## Other Partner Agencies

If it is clear that another partner agency, who is signed onto the protocol, is involved, they will be contacted for information and/or Stage 1 participation as appropriate. See "[Roles and Responsibilities](#)" (p.17).



## Parents/Guardians/Caregivers of the “Individual of Concern”

Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s) of the threat maker should be notified at the earliest opportunity by *(if in school)* the school Principal or *(if in service with community agencies)* the person best positioned to communicate with Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s). Notification should occur after the VTRA Team has collected enough initial data to confirm that a threat or violent incident has occurred and has determined the current level of violence potential.

In the case of threat/risk assessment, the Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s) are also part of the assessment process as they are necessary sources of insight and data regarding the "*bedroom dynamic*", "*increases or decreases in baseline*", and other contextual factors that may be either "*risk-reducing*" or "*risk-enhancing*". As such, notification of Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s) is meant to activate a collaborative process between home and VTRA partners to assess the child/youth more fully, and collaboratively plan for appropriate intervention where necessary.

## Parents/Guardians/Caregivers of Target(s)

The Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s) of the target(s) should be notified at the earliest opportunity by *(if in school)* the school Principal or *(if in service with community agencies)* the person best positioned to communicate with Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s). Often the target and their Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s) are fearful or traumatized by the situation; therefore, notification should be done with skill, tact and planning. A plan should be made for any emotional support(s) the family may need. As such, if the threat is "clear, direct, and plausible" or the VTRA Team feels violence may be imminent, notification will occur after the target is secured/protected *(if the case is unfolding during school hours and the target is present at school)* from potential harm. If the initial threat is not "clear, direct, and plausible", the VTRA Team will continue to collect data to determine the level of risk before the Parent(s), Guardian(s) or Caregiver(s) are notified: this is to prevent unnecessarily traumatizing individuals when no risk is present.

## Stage 1 Team Meeting

This process gathers case-specific data using the Violence Threat/ Risk Assessment Report Form. It is completed with the development of an immediate plan to reduce risk. **No consents are required if the Stage 1 is activated within 24 hours of knowledge of the threat or violence.** It is the responsibility of the Agency activating the meeting to secure a location, chair the meeting *(it is highly recommended that at least one chairperson be a mental health professional)* and fill in the Stage 1 Report form. **The Stage 1 report form will not be copied, shared or completed by anyone other than the chair.** The Lead Agency will retain a secured copy of the Stage Report form in psychology or social worker files, following all privacy and access requirements as laid out by their respective regulatory bodies.

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*There may be cases where the recipient of the threat has been engaged in high-risk behaviours that may lead to the threat(s) in the first instance. In those situations, the recipient of the threat(s) may need to be assessed for high-risk behaviour.*

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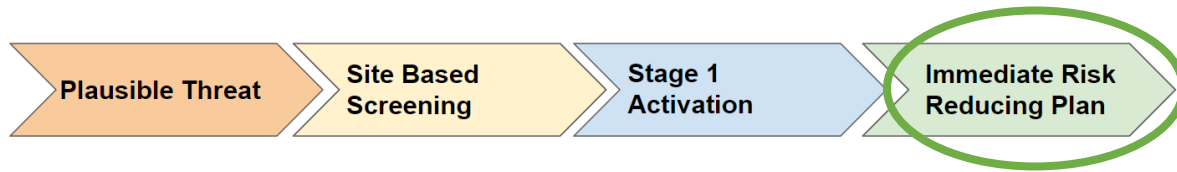


## Supporting Targeted or Victimized Child/Youth or Staff

A clinical member of the VTRA Team is responsible for ensuring that the recipient(s), victim(s) or target(s) of the threats are assessed with respect to their current needs for support. This should be done by available clinically-trained staff (*e.g.*, *Social Worker, Psychologist, Therapist*) and services or referrals for services should be provided as necessary. As the threat may be directed towards one or more child(ren) and/or youth, entire groups, or an entire agency or school, the circumstances will dictate how far-reaching an intervention may be. The clinically trained staff and VTRA Leads should determine if crisis counselling or crisis response is needed to re-establish calm.



## VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT: INTERVENTION & SUPPORT PLAN



Following a thorough assessment of all contextual information, risk factors, responsible information sharing and careful consideration of data and information provided by the family, the VTRA Team evaluates the threat or risk posed by the person of concern. A level of risk is assigned in consideration of all information and with the following questions in mind:

- ***“Based on the facts and data collected, to what extent does the person(s) pose a threat to an individual(s) or site(s)?”***
- ***“Does the person pose a threat to themselves or someone beyond who was originally threatened?”***

The Stage 1 Team will create a risk-reducing plan that may include immediate and/or short-term strategies to support safety and risk reduction.

### Guidelines for Re-Entry

When the data suggests that a student poses a threat to others, they may be suspended from school until a more comprehensive assessment can be conducted. In Stage 1, the VTRA Team guides the process from initial threat assessment to undertaking steps to decrease risk, to planning for re-entry into a school where a suspension has occurred. This is best accomplished when the VTRA Team outlines in writing the steps the student, family, school, and others need to follow for re-entry to school.

### Records Retention

The Lead Agency will retain a copy of the Stage 1 VTRA Report Form. No one else will utilize the report form for their notes or keep, retain, or make a copy of the original document. The Form will be stored in regulated professional files, (e.g., Social Work or Psychology) and will be protected under the guidelines of the respective regulatory bodies. Any requests to receive a copy of the Stage 1 form must follow the agency's formal process for freedom of information requests.



## VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT: STAGE 2 PROCESS

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*There can be long-standing variables (risk enhancers) that have weakened a person to the point of posing a risk of serious violence, such as childhood trauma, drug or alcohol abuse, early caregiver disruptions, etc. This means that a Stage 2 will likely be initiated to support a more fulsome risk assessment and identify areas of need to reduce risk enhancers.*

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Stage 2 involves further data collection, assessment of risk and protective factors, and identification of processes in place to reduce risk and enhance protective factors. The Stage 2 may involve referral for further assessment. **Consent is required for the Stage 2 process (see [Appendix D](#)).**

***This is a collaborative, supportive and wrap-around process and is not about questioning the fact that a VTRA has been done or how we got here, but rather how we can reduce risk factors and enhance protective factors. All agency partners are there to support wrap-around, identify where they can support and participate, recognizing that the VTRA process is helpful, not harmful.***

The Stage 2 meeting is chaired by the Lead Agency VTRA designate and follows the Stage 2 Report Form. It is highly recommended that the Stage 2 Chair have a clinical background.

Consent may be given to bring agencies to this meeting, even if they are not already involved, as a way to provide information about supports available and a bridge to services where appropriate.

The “Individual of Concern” and their Parent(s), Guardian(s), or Caregiver(s) will be invited to the Stage 2 meeting. The person of concern's developmental level and unique profile will be used to inform how this process will be most effective and supportive.

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*All members of the Stage 1 team are there to support the community protocol process, which in turn, is there to support the “Individual of Concern”. It is the responsibility of each partner agency to ensure those attending the Stage 2 meetings have a solid understanding of the shared ownership of these meetings and respect for the VTRA process. Divisiveness between protocol partner agencies, especially in the presence of families and youth, is highly detrimental to the process and contrary to the fundamental tenet of VTRA, which is that the process is **helpful, not harmful**.*

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## VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### All Community Partners who are signatories to the protocol commit to the following:

- Each agency identifies a Lead\* that organizes their internal response when another agency activates the protocol. This needs to include appropriate training on the legislation allowing for the fulsome sharing of information in a timely manner, as well as the need to potentially attend a meeting at short notice
- Each agency that initiates a Stage 1 must have a Lead to gather background information, organize the meeting, chair the meeting, collect the Stage 1 Report Form information and store the form securely
- Each agency is responsible for ensuring that their internal staff are aware of the purpose, intention and expectations around both Stage 1 and 2 meetings, as well as the importance of knowing that this is NOT an agency calling a meeting, but rather an agency activating a previously agreed upon community response
- Commitment to a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach to identify, investigate and respond to threat-related and worrisome behaviour
- Sharing of necessary and **relevant** information that they have the lawful authority to disclose under their respective legislative regimes
- Exchange of appropriate information without delay while respecting an individual's rights to privacy
- Following the process set out in this protocol in undertaking a Violence Threat Risk Assessment to determine if a person actually poses a threat
- A commitment to agency representation at the VTRA Regional Committee
- A commitment to the required training

### Agency Leads

Each agency signing onto the protocol will identify a "Lead" in their agency and an identified designate for when they are absent.

### The role of the Agency Leads will be:

- To complete Level 1 VTRA Training ([see Appendix B](#))
- To participate on the VTRA Regional Committee three times per year
- To ensure their organization has an internal process for activation of the protocol upon receiving a threat
- To ensure there is a process in place to receive calls from other partners requesting information when a Stage 1 is activated. This needs to include appropriate training on the legislation allowing for the fulsome sharing of information in a timely manner, as well as the structures in place to support, if applicable, attendance at a Stage 1 meeting on short notice
- Each agency that initiates a Stage 1 must have a Lead to gather background information, organize the meeting, chair the meeting, collect the Stage 1 Report Form information and store the form securely



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- Each agency is responsible for ensuring that their internal staff are aware of the purpose, intention and expectations around both Stage 1 and 2 meetings, as well as the importance of knowing that this is NOT an agency calling a meeting but rather an agency activating a previously agreed upon community response
- Staff should be trained that a collaborative, wrap-around process is vital to the supportive nature of a VTRA and be provided with information/pathways on how to share with their agency Lead should any concerns arise

### VTRA Regional Committee

Each signing agency will designate a Lead to attend the regional meetings and represent their agency and our shared commitment to support the important work outlined in this community protocol. Consistency of membership on the Committee is highly recommended whenever possible.

- A school board Lead (from either UGDSB or WCDSB) will co-chair with one of the core agency partners (Child and Youth Mental Health or Child Protection) for a two-year time frame, at which point new chairs will be [appointed](#) (see Roles and Responsibilities)
- Agency Leads will attend three meetings a year (fall and late spring in-person) and a virtual meeting during the winter months
- Agency Leads will share statistics and information
- All training requirements will be monitored and tracked at the Regional Committee
- Materials, resources and in-house communications relating to VTRA will be shared at the Regional Committee
- Challenges and successes will be discussed at the Regional Committee where necessary and appropriate, although all partners are encouraged to have ongoing professional consultations and dialogues as needs arise

### VTRA Regional Executive

The VTRA Regional Executive consists of the core agency members:

Child and Youth Mental Health Agencies  
Child Protection Agencies  
Police Services  
School Boards  
VTRA Regional Coordinator/Treasurer

#### The Executive will:

- Meet virtually every six weeks as needed
- Bring any challenges, concerns or discussions from recent VTRA meetings or processes
- Share successes and areas that worked well
- Develop the agenda for the VTRA Regional Committee Meetings
- Plan/coordinate training activities



## Co-Chairs Appointment for the Executive and Regional

Both the Executive and Regional Committees will be co-chaired by a WCDSB or UGDSB lead and a member lead from either child protection or children's mental health agencies. Term will be two years at which point the co-chairs will be reassigned. As much as possible, an attempt will be made to ensure one of the co-chairs represent Dufferin and one Guelph-Wellington regions (*e.g. if Wellington Catholic District School Board is the co-chair then the second chair should be Dufferin Child and Family Services, child protection or mental health leads*). Only lead agencies should hold these roles.

Should a Co-chair unexpectedly leave or have to step down during their appointed two-year term, the VTRA Executive will appoint an Interim Co-chair for the remainder of the current year. A new permanent co-chair will be appointed in the spring of the effected year to ensure leadership is in place for the next fall term.

## VTRA Regional Coordinator

In our regions, Dufferin Child and Family Services have historically provided in-kind staffing allocation to support the coordination, budget and administrative functions of the Regional Committee.

### The role of the Coordinator is to:

- Participate in the VTRA Regional and Executive committee meetings
- Prepare correspondence and communication as needed for the Regional and Executive Committees
- Maintain database of VTRA statistics shared at the Regional Committee meetings
- Maintain a current contact list for all members
- Manage and reconcile VTRA funds incoming/outgoing (held in-kind by DCAFS)
- Maintain up-to-date data on training requirements for protocol partner agencies
- Coordinate in-person and virtual training events as required



## VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT: TRAINING

### VTRA Trainers

Upper Grand District School Board and Wellington Catholic District School Board are committed to providing a Certified VTRA Level 1 trainer to the community. Other agencies are encouraged to consider getting a staff member/agency lead trained as a trainer where possible. As of the writing of this Protocol update 2022, Compass Community Services also has a Certified VTRA Level 1 trainer to support the community training needs. Agencies offering trained trainers are committed to recertifying at their own expense per the schedule outlined by CTIP. Our hope is to provide at least two training opportunities through our partner organization trainers annually. This will be provided in-kind and significantly reduce the financial burden for partner agencies to access the required training. In the absence of trainers, CTIP will be hired to provide the necessary training, and the cost of this will be added to the fee for attendees.

### Training Requirements

- All agency Leads will have at minimum [Level 1 VTRA training](#)
- All agencies commit to ensuring that appropriate staff are trained in Level 1 VTRA (*note: clinicians, workers, staff and officers who regularly attend and participate in Stage 1 and/or 2 meetings should be trained*)
- Approximately two half-day refresher sessions will be offered annually by our Regional Trainers
- All trained partners and their teams will be required to take a refresher every two years
- The refresher will not be a replacement for a full Level 1 VTRA Training, and those not fully trained in Level 1 will not be able to attend a refresher
- The VTRA Regional Committee will track training completed by agencies as well as refresher timelines
- Anyone who was trained more than five year ago, as of September 2022 will be required to enroll in a full training if refresher sessions are not available

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*Anyone who was trained more than five years ago as of September 2022 will be required to start their refresher sessions between September 2022 and June 2023*

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## APPENDIX A: CLEAR, DIRECT, PLAUSIBLE

### Plausibility-Baseline-Attack Related Behaviour (PBA)

Plausibility is vital when determining whether or not a threat (verbal/written/digital) should be taken seriously enough to screen the case for a VTRA. When determining plausibility consider whether the threat is “Clear, Direct, and Plausible”:

“**CLEAR**”: What words are actually stated, written, posted, etc.? Is there evidence of personal escalation (increase in baseline) and/or intent to instill fear in a target(s)? It may be worrisome if someone says, “I swear revenge is coming”, but as a standalone statement there is no clarity. “I’m gonna get my brother’s knife and stick it in your gut” is clear.

“**DIRECT**”: Was the threat-making or threat-related behaviour delivered in a way that suggests it was meant as a conscious or unconscious cry for help? Was it delivered with language of commitment and clarity to the target or someone who the person of concern believes will communicate to the target? Someone who believes they are privately mumbling to themselves “I swear I’ll kill him” may simply be expressing their frustration.

“**PLAUSIBLE**”: While the first two variables in “clear, direct, and plausible” bring some focus to the case, the single most important variable is plausibility. An individual threatening to call down a Martian UFO to vaporize us all is not a plausible threat. An elementary student threatening his teacher that he is going to drive “a Sherman Tank through this school” may be clear and direct but it is certainly not plausible. One girl threatening another girl that “I’m gonna beat you with a lead pipe” is plausible.

**Baseline Behaviour** is important when determining if the person of concern poses a risk to act out violently. Serious violence is an evolutionary process and any significant increase or shift in baseline denotes evolution.

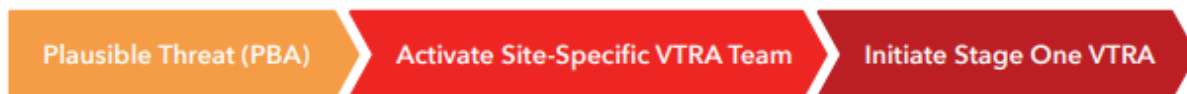
**CAUTION:** Even with training in VTRA, some professionals continue to underreact to cases without considering the elements of Baseline Behaviour, which include: History of Human Target Selection, History of Site Selection, Frequency of Past Violence, Intensity of Past Violence and Recency of Past Violence (FIR).

**Attack-Related Behaviour** is critical when determining if there is any evidence that the person of concern has engaged in behaviours consistent with their threat.

**NOTE:** In schools and other programs where we have relationships with students, clients, and patients and know their overall baseline behaviour, all elements of the PBA should present at a moderate to high level of concern before activating the VTRA Protocol. In cases where the student or client is not known or little is known about them, then “plausibility” alone will activate the formal VTRA Protocol.



**If the threat is plausible, initiate VTRA Stage One**





## APPENDIX B:

### LEVEL-1 VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT TRAINING



**Guelph Wellington Dufferin**



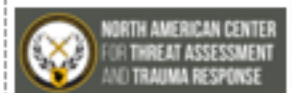
## Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment

### Level-1 Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Training

**Instructors are trained in *Violence Threat Risk Assessment* by the *Centre for Trauma Informed Practices (CTIP)*, previously the *North American Centre for Threat Assessment & Trauma Response (NACTATR)*.**

This is a two-day interactive, collaborative training that focuses on teaching community professionals the multi-disciplinary process of determining if threat makers actually pose a risk to target(s) they have threatened. Serious violence is an evolutionary process and most individuals (intentionally or unintentionally) leave signs and indicators. Teams trained to become local experts at collecting data can help to paint a clear picture of how high-risk individuals may be able to carry out acts of violence towards themselves or others and can determine what the appropriate intervention should be based on that data. Community teams can both maximize the support(s) available to individuals and families and preserve the safety of our community.

*The Guelph Wellington Dufferin VTRA Community Protocol was initially made possible by an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant. Content is based on Kevin Cameron's work at the Center for Trauma Informed Practice (CTIP), previously the North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response (NACTATR)*



GWD Rev-Apr-12-2023



**APPENDIX C:**  
**SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS**



**VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA):**  
**Supporting Individuals with**  
**Neurodevelopmental Disorders**



These guidelines are for school personnel, including site-specific staff acting as consultants to the VTRA team, interviewing students with neurodevelopmental disorders during incident screening and VTRA protocol activation.

## Purpose

Effectively gathering information from students with neurodevelopmental disorders during threat and/or risk assessment will require adapting interview strategies to accommodate each student's general communication skills (i.e., comprehension of information, vocabulary, and ability to express thoughts and feelings) without modifying the process. Combined with the interviewer's knowledge of neurodevelopmental disorders and the individual, these guidelines support effective interviewing and comprehensive assessment when the student's behaviour moves beyond their baseline.

## Planning the Interview

Individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders may react to an unexpected change in their schedule and be distressed even with a familiar adult. Advanced planning may help support the student's reaction to the change of routine.

- Choose a location for the interview that has minimal distractions (e.g., noise, light, interruptions) and ample space (some individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders dislike being touched/being in proximity to others).
- Make the situation predictable by providing advanced warning about the time, location and purpose of the interview.
- Consider a pre-interview visit if the student is not familiar with the location.
- Involve those who are familiar with/ know the student well and who can provide information about communication strategies tailored to the individual (this could be family, friends, teachers, clinicians).
- Plan to take breaks to help the student maintain attention during the interview.
- Consider breaking the interview into two or more sessions.
- Consider the student's usual response to disruptions of their routine and plan accordingly.
- Consider the strategic use of the student's "safe space" at school for the interview.







## Conducting the Interview

Individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders often display some difficulty with social communication and social interaction. The degree of difficulty with verbal and nonverbal communication varies depending on the individual's age, development, and language skills. Adjusting your verbal and non-verbal communication to meet the student's needs may help the interview be more productive.

- Let the student choose where they sit/stand/pace in the interview space.
- If the student uses a communication system, have it available for the interview.
- Use plain language to explain what will happen during the interview, the types of questions you will be asking, how long you expect the interview to last, and if/when breaks will be provided.
- Explain that you may have to ask the same question more than once.
- Before asking interview questions, ask unrelated questions to assess the student's ability and potential for providing accurate or correct information.
- Use short, clear sentences and to the extent possible match the student's use of vocabulary, syntax, and grammar.
- Speak slowly and allow the student time to process what you say (10-15 seconds) before moving on.
- Phrase "WH" questions to support understanding.
  - When: relate to the context of the student's daily or weekly activities;
  - Who: tell me about the people that were there;
  - What: tell me what people did (actions), tell me about what things were there;
  - Where: tell me about the place.
- Use closed-ended questions (i.e., questions requiring a yes-no response) to clarify information provided.
- Avoid sarcasm, idioms, inuendo, satire, slang, allusions, irony, and metaphors.
- Consider using interview supports, such as objects, pictures, illustrations, gestures, written questions, etc., to support memory and to help the student understand what is happening, the questions you ask, and what information you want.
- Use the student's name or other queuing strategies to indicate you are speaking to them and/or to alert them to the need to attend to what you are saying.
- Be patient, remain calm, and use a non-threatening voice.
- Ask one question at a time (i.e., avoid compound questions), using short, simple sentences, and allow the student time to process what you say and formulate a response before asking the next question or asking for more information.
- Cue the student to the language you are about to use, to help prepare them for the instructions or questions that will follow. For example, "Alex, I am going to ask you a question."
- Avoid questions that include a choice (e.g., were you at home or at the park). Some students with neurodevelopmental disorders tend to always respond with the first or second choice regardless of the accuracy of the response and they would provide the opposite response if you repeated the question but reversed the choices. A better approach is to ask for specific information (e.g., "Where were you at lunchtime?").



- Avoid leading questions (i.e., questions that prompt toward a predetermined answer). For example, “you saw the knife, didn’t you?” tells the student what the answer should be and may lead to false information.
- Ask specific questions (e.g., “Tell me what you did when...”) rather than more general questions that allow for free recall (e.g., “tell me what happened yesterday.”).
- Watch the student’s reactions and adjust the volume of your voice, the pace of the interview, how much you move while speaking, etc.
- Watch for signs of confusion. The student may not tell you when they don’t understand the information/question. Instead they may repeat your statement/question, provide a response unrelated to the questions you’ve asked, give no response, or become noisy or agitated.
- Plan for and announce breaks. As breaks may help the student maintain attention during the interview, don’t ask if the student needs/wants a break. The frequency and duration of breaks will depend on how long the student is able to maintain focus. Consider using a visual to let the student know how many questions will be asked/how long before a break is provided.
- Provide behaviour-specific praise throughout the interview to acknowledge the student’s cooperation and other positive behaviour. Behaviour-specific praise acknowledges the student’s effort by referencing a specific behaviour and identifying the outcome or potential results (e.g., “I know this is hard for you. You are doing a great job answering my questions and you are helping me to understand the situation better”).

## Supporting the Student’s Communication

Students with neurodevelopmental disorders may have difficulty expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings even if they appear to have normal language skills. Communication skills may weaken when the individual is stressed. The following may help to support the student respond to instructions and questions.

- Organizational difficulties may result in responses that are not in chronological order. Break the situation down into parts and ask about the details of each part one at a time. Write each response and allow the student to see what you’ve written.
- Ask for more information/get more detail by using “tell me/explain/describe”.
- Speech patterns, inflections, and accent may make it hard to understand what the student is saying. If you don’t understand a response, ask for clarification either by having the student repeat their response or by asking them to say it in a different way.
- Do not expect an immediate response. The student may need time to process what was said and formulate a response. Don’t rush the answer. Don’t re-word your question, the student must then process if you are asking the same thing.





## Understanding and Reacting to Student Specific Behaviour

The student may exhibit atypical behaviours during the interview. Understanding the message behind behaviour (e.g., fear, anger, confusion), may help the interviewer respond and reduce the level of stress.

Behaviour	What this behaviour may imply/indicate?	Interviewer Response
Covering ears or eyes or looking away from the interviewer	<p>May be a sign the student is overwhelmed</p> <p>May also be a sign that the student is distracted by or experiencing sensitivity to noise or light or other sensory stimuli in the environment (e.g., objects, images, odours, noise, light, etc.).</p>	<p>Allow the student time and space to calm without intervening (i.e., do not try to stop the behaviour).</p> <p>Reduce distractions to the extent possible (lower the lights, close doors and windows to reduce noise, etc.).</p>
Hand-flapping, pacing, rocking, self-injury, vocalizations (e.g., screaming, groaning, repeating strings of words, other vocal sounds), or silence (i.e., no verbal response)	<p>May indicate anxiety - this is sometimes a self-calming strategy and is likely to subside when the student understands what is happening</p> <p>May also indicate confusion - individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders may not understand what is expected of them</p>	<p>Allow the student time and space to calm without intervening (i.e., do not try to stop the behaviour) unless it poses a risk of serious injury.</p> <p>Be patient, remain calm, and use a non-threatening voice to reassure and explain what is happening.</p>
Repeating the interviewer's statement, providing a response unrelated to the questions being asked, giving no response, or becoming noisy or agitated	<p>May indicate confusion or fatigue</p> <p>The student may not understand the implications or consequences of their actions and confabulate a response (i.e., make up a response they believe to be true) or agree (i.e., say yes) to an untrue statement to please the interviewer</p> <p>Good rote memory could result in misleading responses as the student is able to repeat details about a situation after hearing or reading about it, even if they did not directly witness it.</p> <p>A student may experience memory impairment that may impact how they perceive, understand, interpret, and reconstruct events.</p>	<p>Take a break.</p> <p>Consider interview supports, such as objects, pictures, illustrations, gestures, written questions, etc., to help the student understand what you are asking and to formulate their response.</p> <p>Ask for more detail by using "tell me/explain/describe". The student may be better at expressing these details than understanding them.</p>
Attempting to escape, becoming combative or argumentative or shutting down	<p>May indicate stress/anxiety/feeling overwhelmed</p>	<p>Take a break.</p> <p>Consider having a support person sit in on the interview as the presence of a familiar person may help the student calm.</p>



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## APPENDIX C2:

### APPUYER LES PERSONNES AYANT DES TROUBLES NEURODÉVELOPPEMENTAUX



ÉVALUATION DU RISQUE ET DE LA MENACE DE VIOLENCE :  
**Appuyer les personnes ayant des  
troubles neurodéveloppementaux**



Ces lignes directrices s'adressent au personnel des écoles, y compris les membres du personnel du milieu agissant en tant que consultants au sein de l'équipe d'évaluation du risque et de la menace de violence (ÉRMV), qui rencontrent les élèves atteints de troubles neurodéveloppementaux lors du dépistage des incidents et de l'activation du protocole d'ÉRMV.

## Objectif

Pour recueillir efficacement des renseignements auprès des élèves atteints de troubles neurodéveloppementaux pendant l'évaluation de la menace ou du risque, il faudra adapter les stratégies d'entretien pour tenir compte des aptitudes générales à la communication de chaque élève (c.-à-d. la compréhension de l'information, le vocabulaire et la capacité d'exprimer ses pensées et ses sentiments) sans modifier le processus. Combinées aux connaissances de la personne chargée de l'entretien au sujet des troubles neurodéveloppementaux et de la personne, ces lignes directrices favorisent un entretien efficace et une évaluation complète lorsque le comportement de l'élève dépasse la base de référence.

## Planification de l'entretien

Les personnes atteintes de troubles neurodéveloppementaux peuvent réagir à un changement inattendu de leur emploi du temps et ressentir de l'anxiété même avec un adulte qui leur est familier. Une planification préalable peut aider à encadrer la réaction de l'élève au changement de routine.

- Choisir un endroit pour l'entretien où les distractions sont minimales (p. ex. le bruit, la lumière, les interruptions) et où il y a suffisamment d'espace (certaines personnes atteintes de troubles neurodéveloppementaux n'aiment pas être touchées ou être à proximité des autres).
- Rendre la situation prévisible en prévenant de l'heure, du lieu et du but de l'entretien.
- Envisager une visite préalable à l'entretien si l'élève ne connaît pas bien le lieu.
- Solliciter la participation de personnes qui connaissent bien l'élève et qui peuvent fournir des renseignements sur les stratégies de communication adaptées à la personne (famille, amis, enseignants, cliniciens).
- Prévoir des pauses pour aider l'élève à maintenir son attention pendant l'entretien.
- Envisager de diviser l'entretien en deux ou plusieurs séances.
- Tenir compte de la réaction habituelle de l'élève aux perturbations de sa routine et planifier en conséquence.
- Considérer pour l'entretien l'utilisation stratégique d'un « espace sûr » pour l'élève à l'école.
- Consider the strategic use of the student's "safe space" at school for the interview.





## Réalisation de l'entretien

Les personnes atteintes de troubles neurodéveloppementaux présentent souvent des difficultés de communication et d'interaction sociales. Le degré de difficulté de la communication verbale et non verbale varie en fonction de l'âge, du développement et des compétences linguistiques de la personne. Adapter votre communication verbale et non verbale pour répondre aux besoins de l'élève peut favoriser l'efficacité de l'entretien. Laissez l'élève choisir l'endroit où il va s'asseoir, se tenir debout ou se déplacer dans le lieu de l'entretien.

- Si l'élève utilise un système de communication, ayez-le à disposition pour l'entretien.
- Utilisez un langage simple pour expliquer ce qui se passera pendant l'entretien, le type de questions que vous poserez, la durée prévue de l'entretien et quand il y aura des pauses si celles-ci sont prévues.
- Expliquez à l'élève que vous devrez peut-être poser la même question plus d'une fois.
- Avant de poser des questions d'entretien, posez des questions sans rapport avec le sujet afin d'évaluer la capacité et le potentiel de l'élève à fournir de l'information précise ou correcte.
- Utilisez des phrases courtes et claires et, dans la mesure du possible, adaptez votre vocabulaire, votre syntaxe et votre grammaire à ceux de l'élève.
- Parlez lentement et laissez à l'élève le temps de comprendre ce que vous dites (10 à 15 secondes) avant de poursuivre.
- Formulez des questions QU pour favoriser la compréhension.
- Quand : se situer dans le contexte des activités quotidiennes ou hebdomadaires de l'élève;
- Qui : parler des personnes présentes;
- Quoi : expliquer ce que les gens ont fait (actions), les choses qu'il y avait là;
- et où : donner des détails sur l'endroit.
- Utilisez des questions fermées (c.-à-d. des questions exigeant une réponse par oui ou par non) pour clarifier les renseignements fournis.
- Évitez les sarcasmes, les expressions idiomatiques, les sous-entendus, les satires, le jargon, les allusions, l'ironie et les métaphores.
- Envisagez l'utilisation d'aides à l'entretien, comme des objets, des images, des illustrations, des gestes, des questions écrites, etc., pour stimuler la mémoire et aider l'élève à comprendre ce qui se passe, les questions que vous lui posez et l'information que vous cherchez à obtenir.
- Utilisez le nom de l'élève ou d'autres stratégies de communication pour indiquer que vous vous adressez à lui pour l'avertir de la nécessité de porter attention à ce que vous dites.
- Faites preuve de patience, demeurez calme et employez une voix non menaçante pour rassurer et expliquer ce qui se passe.
- Posez une question à la fois (évitez les questions composées), en utilisant des phrases courtes et simples, et laissez à l'élève le temps d'assimiler ce que vous dites et de formuler une réponse avant de poser la question suivante ou de demander plus de précisions.
- Indiquez à l'élève le langage que vous allez utiliser, afin de le préparer aux instructions ou aux questions qui suivront. Par exemple : « Alex, je vais te poser une question. »
- Évitez les questions qui comportent un choix (p. ex. « Étais-tu à la maison ou au parc? »). Certains élèves atteints de troubles neurodéveloppementaux ont tendance à toujours répondre par le premier ou le deuxième choix, quelle que soit l'exactitude de la réponse, et ils donneraient la réponse opposée si vous répétiez la question, mais inversiez les choix. Une meilleure approche consiste à demander des renseignements précis (p. ex. « Où étais-tu à l'heure du dîner? »).



- Évitez de poser des questions suggestives (c.-à-d. des questions qui influencent l'enfant vers une réponse particulière). Par exemple, une question comme « Tu as vu le couteau, n'est-ce pas? » oriente l'élève vers une réponse précise et peut mener vers des renseignements erronés.
- Posez des questions précises (p. ex. « Dis-moi ce que tu as fait quand... ») plutôt que des questions plus générales qui permettent de se souvenir librement (p. ex. « Dis-moi ce qui s'est passé hier »).
- Observez les réactions de l'élève et modulez le volume de votre voix, le rythme de l'entretien, vos mouvements pendant que vous parlez, etc.
- Soyez à l'affût de signes de confusion. Il est possible que l'élève ne soit pas en mesure de vous dire qu'il n'a pas compris une question ou une information. Au lieu de cela, il peut répéter votre affirmation ou votre question, donner une réponse sans rapport avec la question posée, ne pas répondre, ou devenir bruyant ou agité.
- Prévoyez et annoncez les pauses. Les pauses peuvent aider l'élève à maintenir son attention pendant l'entretien, mais ne lui demandez pas s'il a besoin d'une pause ou s'il en veut une. La fréquence et la durée des pauses dépendront de la capacité de l'élève à rester concentré. Envisagez l'utilisation d'un support visuel pour indiquer à l'élève le nombre de questions qui lui seront posées et le temps qui s'écoulera avant qu'une pause ne soit accordée.
- Félicitez l'élève, tout au long de l'entretien, pour sa coopération et ses autres comportements positifs. Les commentaires positifs sur un comportement particulier permettent de reconnaître l'effort de l'élève et de préciser les résultats potentiels (p. ex. « Je sais que c'est difficile pour toi. Tu fais un excellent travail en répondant à mes questions et tu m'aides à mieux comprendre la situation »).

## Soutien à la communication de l'élève

Les élèves atteints de troubles neurodéveloppementaux peuvent avoir des difficultés à exprimer leurs pensées, leurs idées et leurs sentiments, même s'ils semblent avoir des compétences linguistiques normales. Les capacités de communication peuvent s'affaiblir lorsque la personne est en situation de stress. Les éléments suivants peuvent aider l'élève à répondre aux instructions et aux questions.

- Des difficultés organisationnelles peuvent entraîner des réponses qui ne sont pas dans l'ordre chronologique. Décomposez la situation en plusieurs parties et posez des questions sur les détails de chacune d'entre elles. Écrivez chaque réponse et permettez à l'élève de voir ce que vous avez écrit.
- Demandez plus de détails en disant : « Dis-moi, explique-moi, décris-moi. »
- Les modes d'expression, les inflexions et l'accent peuvent rendre difficile la compréhension de ce que dit l'élève.
- Si vous ne comprenez pas une réponse, demandez des précisions, soit en demandant à l'élève de répéter sa réponse, soit en lui demandant de la formuler différemment.
- Ne vous attendez pas à une réponse immédiate. L'élève peut avoir besoin de temps pour assimiler ce qui a été dit et formuler une réponse. Ne le pressez pas pour obtenir une réponse. Ne reformulez pas votre question, car l'élève devra alors se demander si vous lui posez une autre question ou la même.







## Comprendre le comportement particulier des élèves et y réagir

L'élève peut présenter des comportements atypiques pendant l'entretien. Comprendre le message derrière le comportement (p. ex. la peur, la colère, la confusion) peut aider la personne qui mène l'entretien à réagir et à réduire le niveau de stress.

Comportement	Ce que peut vouloir indiquer ce comportement	Réaction de la personne qui mène l'entretien
Se couvrir les oreilles ou les yeux ou détourner le regard de la personne	<p>Peut être un signe que l'élève se sent accablé.</p> <p>Peut également être un signe que l'élève est distrait par le bruit ou la lumière ou d'autres stimuli sensoriels dans l'environnement (p. ex. objets, images, odeurs, bruit, lumière) ou y être sensible.</p>	<p>Laissez à l'élève le temps et l'espace nécessaires pour se calmer sans intervenir (c.-à-d. sans essayer de faire cesser le comportement).</p> <p>Réduisez les distractions dans la mesure du possible (baissez les lumières, fermez les portes et les fenêtres pour réduire le bruit, etc.).</p>
Agiter les mains, faire les cent pas, se balancer, se blesser, émettre des sons (p. ex. cris, gémissements, répétition de séries de mots, autres sons vocaux) ou demeurer silencieux (c.-à-d. absence de réponse verbale).	<p>Peut indiquer de l'anxiété – il s'agit parfois d'une stratégie d'auto-apaisement, et elle est susceptible de s'estomper lorsque l'élève comprend ce qui se passe.</p> <p>Peut également indiquer une confusion – les personnes atteintes de troubles neurodéveloppementaux peuvent ne pas comprendre ce que l'on attend d'elles.</p>	<p>Allow the student time and space to Laissez à l'élève le temps et l'espace nécessaires pour se calmer sans intervenir (c.-à-d. sans essayer de faire cesser le comportement) à moins que le comportement représente un risque de blessure grave.</p> <p>Faites preuve de patience, demeurez calme et employez une voix non menaçante pour rassurer et expliquer ce qui se passe.</p>
Répéter les propos de la personne qui mène l'entretien, donner une réponse sans rapport avec les questions posées, ne pas répondre, être bruyant ou agité.	<p>Peut signaler de la confusion ou de la fatigue.</p> <p>Il se peut que l'élève ne comprenne pas les implications ou les conséquences de ses actions et qu'il fabule (c.-à-d. qu'il invente une réponse qu'il croit vraie) ou qu'il soit d'accord (c.-à-d. qu'il dise oui) avec une déclaration fausse pour plaire à la personne.</p> <p>Une bonne mémoire par cœur peut donner lieu à des réponses trompeuses, car l'élève est capable de répéter les détails d'une situation après l'avoir entendue ou lue, même s'il n'en a pas été directement témoin.</p> <p>Un élève peut présenter des troubles de la mémoire qui peuvent avoir un impact sur la façon dont il perçoit, comprend, interprète et reconstitue les événements.</p>	<p>Prenez une pause.</p> <p>Envisagez l'utilisation d'aides à l'entretien, comme des objets, des images, des illustrations, des gestes, des questions écrites, etc., pour aider l'élève à comprendre ce que vous lui demandez et à formuler sa réponse.</p> <p>Demandez plus de détails en disant : « Dis-moi, explique-moi, décris-moi ». L'élève peut mieux exprimer ces détails que les comprendre.</p>
Tenter de s'échapper, devenir combatif ou argumentatif ou se renfermer sur lui-même	Peut indiquer du stress, de l'anxiété ou un sentiment d'accablement.	<p>Prenez une pause.</p> <p>Songez à demander à une personne de soutien d'assister à l'entretien, car la présence d'une personne familière peut aider l'élève à se calmer.</p>



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**PROTOCOL SIGNATURES**

 <p>Upper Grand District School Board</p>	 <p>Brent McDonald Executive Superintendent of Education Upper Grand District School Board</p>
 <p>Wellington Catholic DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD</p>	 <p>Michael Glazier Director of Education Wellington Catholic District School Board</p>
 <p>MonAvenir CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE</p>	 <p>Jean Magny Superintendent of Caring and Safe Schools CSC MonAvenir</p>
 <p>Conseil scolaire Viamonde</p>	 <p>Olivier St-Maurice Superintendent Viamonde School Board, Conseil scolaire Viamonde</p>
 <p>dcafs Dufferin Child &amp; Family Services</p>	 <p>Jennifer Moore Chief Executive Officer Dufferin Child and Family Services</p>
 <p>Family &amp; Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County</p>	 <p>Daria Allan-Ebron Executive Director Family &amp; Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County</p>
 <p>family transition place</p>	 <p>Norah Kennedy Executive Director Family Transition Place</p>



# Guelph Wellington Dufferin VTRA Protocol, Fourth Edition 2023

	 Terry Ward Inspector Ontario Provincial Police - Dufferin County
	 Stephen J. Thomas Inspector – Detachment Commander Ontario Provincial Police - Wellington County
	 Chief Gord Cobey Guelph Police Service
	 Debbie Bentley-Lauzon Executive Director Wyndham House
 <p>Canadian Mental Health Association  Waterloo Wellington Dufferin</p> <p>Association canadienne pour la santé mentale  Waterloo Wellington Dufferin</p>	 Helen Fishburn Chief Executive Officer Children’s Mental Health Association, Waterloo Wellington
 <p><b>Compass</b>  Community Services</p>	 Joanne Young Evans Executive Director Compass Community Services
 <p>john howard society  Waterloo-Wellington</p>	 Joan Nandlal Executive Director/CEO John Howard Society of Waterloo-Wellington



 <p>CHOICES Youth Shelter A home for today. choices for tomorrow.</p>	 <p>Erin Goodyear Director Choices Youth Shelter</p>
 <p>Ontario Children, Community &amp; Social Services Youth Justice Division</p>	 <p>Andy Makarewich Probation Manager Ministry of Children, Community &amp; Social Services (MCCSS), Youth Justice Services</p>
 <p>GUELPH - WELLINGTON WOMEN IN CRISIS</p>	 <p>Sly Castaldi Executive Director Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis</p>