Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
FY2021 Targeted Violence and Terrorism
Prevention (TVTP) Grantee Evaluation

Site Profile

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

Developed for:

Science and
Technology

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List of Abbreviations

ABR	Aberrant Behaviors Recognition
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BTAM	Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management
CBTAM	Community-based Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management
CP3	Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DT/VE	Domestic Terrorism/Violent Extremism
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
FY	Fiscal Year
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IMP	Implementation and Measurement Plan
PST-VCSCS	Division of Public Safety Training and Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
SSSS	See Something, Say Something
TTT	Train-the-Trainer
TVT	Targeted Violence and Terrorism
TVTP	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention
VA DCJS	Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
VA CA	Virginia-Specific Community Awareness
VFC	Virginia Fusion Center
VSP	Virginia State Police

Executive Summary

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) Science and Technology Directorate contracted RTI International to conduct research and evaluation of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (VA DCJS) Fiscal Year 2021 (FY2021) Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant, aimed at increasing the capacity of citizens in Virginia to identify radicalization and violent extremism and for public service–oriented teams to engage in community-based threat assessment and management (CBTAM). The evaluation team conducted a process evaluation of all components of the grant project and an outcome evaluation of five VA DCJS training offerings.

VA DCJS developed, adapted, and delivered two briefings and five trainings. The two briefings included a Virginia-specific Community Awareness (VA CA) briefing and a Domestic Terrorism and Violent Extremism (DT/VE) briefing. VA DCJS intended these briefings to raise awareness about targeted violence and terrorism (TVT) and to empower community members to intervene before violence occurs. The five trainings included (1) Aberrant Behaviors Recognition (ABR), (2) See Something, Say Something (SSSS), (3) CBTAM, (4) CBTAM Train-the-Trainer (TTT), and (5) Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams. Through its trainings, VA DCJS sought to provide members of behavioral health, law enforcement, and other public service teams with information about risk and protective factors to TVT and the necessary skills to assess and manage individuals of concern. Lastly, through its CBTAM TTT training, VA DCJS sought to increase the reach and sustainability of the CBTAM training. VA DCJS delivered its briefings and trainings online and in person across Virginia, reaching hundreds of individuals. VA DCJS developed eLearning modules for the ABR and SSSS trainings, which VA DCJS completed and made available on its website after the grant's period of performance. Additionally, VA DCJS drafted a CBTAM Practitioner's Guide for near-future publication.

Overall, the evaluation team found that participants in ABR, SSSS, CBTAM, and Legal Considerations trainings demonstrated statistically significant knowledge gain, ranging from averages of 10% to 17%. The VA CA, DT/VE, and CBTAM participants provided positive feedback in surveys administered months after attendance, suggesting long-term relevance and usability of the content. The CBTAM TTT training produced 16 trainers certified to independently conduct CBTAM sessions.

Despite facing implementation challenges, such as ambitious and ultimately unattainable training targets and staff turnover, VA DCJS established pathways for continuous training and support for professionals interested in implementing CBTAM teams beyond the grant's period of performance.

Table ES-A. Summary of Findings

Objectives	• Raise community members' awareness of the radicalization process and signs of TVT.
	• Improve community members' understanding of risk factors for and protective factors against radicalization to TVT.
	• Promote partnerships between community members and diverse local stakeholders to enhance communication about radicalization and individuals on the pathway to violence.
	• Empower community members to respond to at-risk individuals before violence occurs and report concerns to CBTAM teams.
Outputs	• Curricula for four new statewide trainings developed.
	• 25 combined VA CA and DT/VE briefings held with 396 participants.
	• 12 ABR training sessions held with 261 participants.
	• 20 SSSS training sessions held with 454 participants.
	• 26 CBTAM training sessions held with 276 participants.
	• 15 Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams training sessions held with 151 participants.
	• 1 CBTAM TTT session held with 16 participants.
	• CBTAM Practitioner's Guide drafted.
	• 2 eLearning modules drafted for the ABR and SSSS courses.
Outcomes	• ABR participants demonstrated a statistically significant 10% average increase in knowledge.
	• SSSS participants demonstrated a statistically significant 10% average increase in knowledge.
	• CBTAM participants demonstrated a statistically significant 17% average increase in knowledge.
	• Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams participants demonstrated a statistically significant 16% average increase in knowledge.
	• 16 CBTAM TTT participants demonstrated competence in delivering CBTAM content and were certified to independently conduct CBTAM trainings.
Challenges	• Project staff turnover and a lengthy process to hire the Grant Program Coordinator delayed the overall project timeline.
	• VA DCJS was unable to meet its ambitious training attendance targets. Its efforts to meet these targets led VA DCJS to deliver many trainings in quick succession, which strained resources.
	• The data collection procedures and instruments employed precluded VA DCJS from measuring the extent to which some of its trainings reached the intended audience or contributed to intended outcomes.
Recommendations	• Set targets for training outputs based on staff and vendor capacity and anticipated community interest.
	• Build flexibility into project design to accommodate potential resource challenges.
	• Provide targeted support for CBTAM team development to ensure that grant resources are delivered to those most likely to use them and are sustainable.
	• Design data collection instruments to align with activities' purpose, content, and targets.

Site Profile: Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (VA DCJS) was awarded a 2-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) in 2021 and was selected to undergo an independent evaluation by RTI International. This site profile reviews VA DCJS's grant design,[1] implementation, accomplishments, challenges, and relevant recommendations for future programming in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP).

After completing an evaluability assessment, evaluators conducted a process and outcome evaluation of VA DCJS's FY2021 TVTP grant, the findings of which are detailed in this report. The evaluation team examined the processes VA DCJS followed when implementing this grant to learn what mechanisms may contribute to a project's effectiveness and to detail project accomplishments at the output level. Evaluators also conducted an outcome evaluation of the project's training offerings to examine whether the trainings were effective in improving knowledge about radicalization, concerning behaviors, and threat assessment and management, as the grant intended. This report examines the evaluation findings, challenges encountered, and recommendations for the TVTP grant program.

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

VA DCJS is a state government agency responsible for planning and carrying out programs and initiatives to improve the functioning and effectiveness of Virginia's criminal justice system. VA DCJS offers several services to government and community-based organizations, which include (1) conducting research and evaluation on criminal justice issues; (2) developing short- and long-term criminal justice plans; (3) distributing federal and state funding to localities, state agencies and nonprofit organizations for various criminal justice-related activities; (4) licensing and regulating the private security industry in the state; (5) establishing and enforcing minimum training standards for law enforcement, criminal justice and private security personnel; and, most relevant to the present evaluation, (6) providing training, technical assistance and program development services to all segments of the criminal justice system.

VA DCJS's FY2021 TVTP grant was specifically awarded to the Division of Public Safety Training and Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (PST-VCSCS). Established in 2000, the division is dedicated to enhancing safety across Virginia law enforcement, schools, and higher education institutions. As a resource and training center, the PST-VCSCS caters to K-12 schools, higher learning institutions, and their respective law enforcement agencies.

Grant Summary

The grant project began in October 2021 and ended in March 2024, including a two-quarter no-cost extension. VA DCJS's FY2021 TVTP grant was designed to increase awareness of targeted violence and terrorism (TVT) and knowledge on how to report concerning behaviors, and to develop and train community-based behavioral threat assessment and management (CBTAM) teams across Virginia (Figure 1 displays the geographic areas where trainings and briefings took place).[2] Through its grant, VA DCJS provided five types of trainings and two types of briefings for law enforcement and the broader community. Additionally, VA DCJS planned to offer technical assistance to CBTAM teams, if requested.

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1 Contact DHS for VA DCJS's full Implementation and Measurement Plan, which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan.

2 Behavioral threat assessment and management (BTAM) is a systematic process for identifying and responding to concerning behaviors to prevent targeted violence. Organizations can perform BTAM in community settings (i.e., across multiple community-based organizations) or institutional settings (i.e., within an organization, such as a law enforcement agency or a school). Teams operating in community settings are referred to as CBTAM teams.

Figure 1. Map of VA DCJS's Training Areas

The grant was intended to complement existing legislative efforts in Virginia related to school-based threat assessment and management (TAM) teams. Since 2008, higher education institutions in Virginia have been required to establish teams to assess potentially threatening behaviors and develop intervention plans to prevent campus violence.[3] In 2013, this requirement was extended to include all public schools, making Virginia one of the few states that mandates the establishment of TAM teams for both K-12 and higher education institutions.[4] To support schools in meeting these requirements, PST-VCSCS previously published model policies and procedures for BTAM teams, provided basic training in BTAM, and offered technical assistance to schools. Building on these efforts, VA DCJS's FY21 grant focused on raising awareness of TVT beyond school settings and on enhancing the capacity of other organizations to develop CBTAM teams to address TVT. For the purposes of this evaluation, VA DCJS's grant project is divided into the following four components.

Combined Virginia-Specific Community Awareness (VA CA) and Domestic Terrorism and Violent Extremism (DT/VE) Briefings. VA DCJS partnered with the Virginia Fusion Center (VFC) and an extremism subject matter expert to deliver two back-to-back briefings for community members and educational and law enforcement professionals to increase their awareness of radicalization, violent extremism, and appropriate response options.

Aberrant Behaviors Recognition (ABR) Trainings. VA DCJS partnered with Dr. Gene Deisinger—a BTAM expert and advisory board member of the VFC—to develop and deliver a 4-hour in-person training to teach community members about behaviors corresponding with the pathway to violence and options for early, community-based interventions.

See Something, Say Something (SSSS) Trainings. VA DCJS partnered with the VFC to deliver virtual trainings to enhance community members' situational awareness in public settings and their familiarity with suspicious activities. The training also provided attendees with guidance on reporting any concerns about suspicious behaviors to the VFC.

CBTAM Team Trainings and Technical Assistance. VA DCJS partnered with Dr. Deisinger and an attorney specialized in threat assessment to develop and deliver two trainings focused on building community capacity for BTAM. The first training aimed to equip professionals with the essentials of conducting threat assessments and forming CBTAM teams. The second training provided individuals interested in developing such teams with the legal knowledge needed to navigate federal and state laws related to BTAM.

3   See https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title23.1/chapter8/section23.1-805/

4   See https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-79.4/

Process and Outcome Evaluation Design and Methods

The research team conducted process and outcome evaluations of VA DCJS's grant program, focusing on the components described above. The evaluations aimed to assess both the implementation of the briefings and trainings and their effectiveness in enhancing participant knowledge.

The process evaluation examined how the trainings were implemented and assessed the achievement of identified outputs. It utilized data from regular meetings with the project team, project documentation, training observations, participant and project staff interviews, and surveys. The outcome evaluation focused on assessing the effectiveness of the trainings in achieving the desired knowledge gain among participants. The evaluation process included quantitative and qualitative analyses of pre- and posttest data for the CBTAM, Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams, ABR, and SSSS trainings; CBTAM TTT skills assessment rubrics; and surveys that captured participant application of training content.

Findings

Combined VA CA and DT/VE Briefings

This section examines process and outcome evaluation findings regarding the VA CA and DT/VE briefings, which correspond with Goal 1, Objective 1, in VA DCJS's IMP.

> **Objective 1.1:** The local community has awareness of the radicalization to violence process and what the threat of targeted violence and terrorism looks like.

VA DCJS Hosts Awareness Briefings for Virginia Communities

From May 2022 through January 2024, VA DCJS delivered 25 in-person 1.5-day combined VA CA and DT/VE briefings to 396 participants across the Commonwealth of Virginia. These briefings were promoted to a diverse audience, including law enforcement officers, school and campus security personnel and administrators, mental health professionals, individuals from faith-based organizations, and community members interested in gaining a deeper understanding of TVT. VA DCJS encouraged participants to attend both the VA CA and DT/VE briefings, although they could choose to attend only one. Law enforcement officers who attended both briefings were eligible to receive partial in-service credit hours upon completion.

The first briefing covered DHS's Community Awareness Briefing materials, in addition to Virginia-specific content developed by the VFC. The VA CA briefings were delivered by Virginia State Police (VSP) staff assigned to the VFC and covered a range of topics related to early TVT recognition and response, as outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2. VA CA Briefing Topics

→ **The importance of identifying early signs of radicalization before violence occurs by fostering community-wide information-sharing**

→ **The role of multidisciplinary teams in preventing violence**

→ **The significance of schools and community organizations in spotting and addressing radicalization**

→ **Distinguishing between hate speech, hate crimes, and lawful protest within the framework of the First Amendment**

→ **The process by which individuals escalate from grievances to violent actions and how communities can intervene**

→ **The factors that increase or mitigate the risk of radicalization and the importance of monitoring behavioral changes**

→ **Extremist movements and recent domestic extremist attacks**

Figure 3. Slide from DT/VE Briefing

Throughout the VA CA briefing, participants were presented with videos including case studies of various forms of violent extremism. The evaluation team observed one of these briefings in January 2024, noting that the trainer engaged participants by asking about their professional experiences, although the trainer provided limited clarity on how the content could be best applied by each participant within their professional roles.

On the second day, the focus shifted to the DT/VE briefing (Figure 3), delivered by an extremism subject matter expert with more than 19 years of law enforcement experience. This session provided a deeper dive into topics covered in the VA CA briefing, with a focus on understanding prominent domestic terror groups and distinguishing between First Amendment–protected activities and unlawful behaviors. The DT/VE briefing sought to offer real-world perspective on the subject matter and information tailored to the needs of law enforcement, community, and faith-based organizations.

The DT/VE briefing explained how certain beliefs, while protected under the First Amendment, can become dangerous when they motivate individuals to commit crimes. Participants thus learned to identify potential indicators of radicalization or signs of escalating radical behavior. The briefing also explored various forms of extremism, how ideological beliefs can drive individuals toward radicalization, and extremist ideologies prominent in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

VA CA and DT/VE Briefing Participant Feedback

As part of the evaluation team's observation of the VA CA and DT/VE briefings, the team interviewed four briefing

participants: two at the conclusion of the VA CA briefing (Day 1) and two at the end of the DT/VE briefing (Day 2). Both participants interviewed after the VA CA briefing felt it was applicable to their needs, particularly in understanding the role of the VFC, radicalization trends, and extremist group behaviors. The sections they deemed most relevant included those on specific extremist groups, case studies comparing extremist groups, and discussions tailored to identifying indicators of TVT in educational settings. Suggestions for improvement included reducing the use of acronyms, which participants felt would have made the content more accessible.

Both participants interviewed after the DT/VE briefing found the content relevant and useful. One participant appreciated the training's descriptions of symbols associated with radical groups. This participant also provided constructive feedback, suggesting that the training include more practical exercises. They mentioned that, across the two days of briefings, there was an overlap of topics and a lack of continuity, and they recommended better coordination between the different presenters of the two briefings. They also expressed a desire for future trainings on cyber and social media investigations. The other DT/VE participant, initially uncertain of the briefing's relevance, found it valuable for monitoring online activities and threat assessments and planned to apply the knowledge to their work. Both participants praised the facilitators and viewed the briefings as beneficial for enhancing awareness and preparedness in their respective roles.

Follow-Up Surveys Indicate VA CA and DT/VE Briefings Were Perceived as Relevant and Useful

VA DCJS and the evaluation team distributed a follow-up survey to gather feedback from VA CA and DT/VE briefing participants 3 months after their briefings, aiming to understand whether and how they had applied the content. Between November 2023 and May 2024, the survey was distributed to participants 3 months after they attended the VA CA and DT/VE briefings.

Of the 52 VA CA and DT/VE briefing participants who received the survey, 34 (65%) responded. Key topics that respondents highlighted as the most relevant included learning how to identify extremists through their online behaviors; understanding the terminology, symbols, and codes used by such groups; and recognizing the prevalence of different extremist organizations.

Respondents came from varied backgrounds, such as probation, fire safety, and education. The majority (n = 28; 82%) agreed to some extent that the training taught them something new, and 26 (76%) indicated that it was applicable to their jobs and personal lives. Respondents anticipated applying their new knowledge in numerous ways, such as enhancing public safety decision-making, training coworkers, identifying threats in public interactions, and increasing awareness of extremist behaviors.

A few participants (n = 4; 12%) did not believe the training to be relevant to their personal or professional lives. Overall, follow-up survey results indicated that the VA CA and DT/VE briefings were well received, with most respondents intending to apply the knowledge to their professional roles. However, these findings represent only a small portion of briefing participants.

VA CA and DT/VE Briefing Pre-/Posttest Content Inappropriate for Measuring Knowledge Gain

The original evaluation plan included the collection of pre-, post-, and 3 month follow-up tests to assess participants' short-term knowledge gain from the VA CA and DT/VE briefings and their knowledge retention over time. Although VA DCJS

and the evaluation team collaborated to distribute these tests, it became evident during data analysis that these instruments did not effectively measure the intended outcomes for a number of reasons. For the VA CA portion of the tests, participants were asked to respond to questions that were not appropriate measures of meaningful knowledge gain (e.g., "The Virginia Fusion Center's email address is…" and "The State Police breaks down the Commonwealth of Virginia into how many divisions?"). For the DT/VE–focused test questions, results indicate that participants entered the briefing with high baseline knowledge of the content, as respondents answered the majority of the pretest questions correctly. This suggests that the information provided in the DT/VE briefing was not new to participants.

Additionally, the evaluation team learned during its observation in January 2024 that the knowledge-based questions did not effectively capture the briefings' key learning objectives and that some of the DT/VE content fluctuated over time and based on the briefings' geographic location. These fluctuations further complicated the use of a standardized test. Considering these factors, the evaluation team determined that pre-, post-, and follow-up test data unfortunately cannot provide meaningful insights into the VA CA and DT/VE briefings' intended outcomes, and therefore excluded these data from its evaluation.

Aberrant Behaviors Recognition Training

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding VA DCJS's ABR training component, which corresponds with Goal 1, Objective 2, in VA DCJS's IMP.

Objective 1.2: The local community has awareness of both the risk factors for—and the protective factors against—radicalizing to violence.

VA DCJS Partners with CBTAM Consultant to Develop and Deliver ABR Training

In partnership with Dr. Deisinger, VA DCJS developed a 4-hour ABR training to promote community awareness and reporting of precursors to TVT. The in-person training debuted in November 2023 and ran through March 2024, with a total of 12 sessions. Additionally, VA DCJS began developing a virtual, asynchronous version with translations into three languages: Spanish, Mandarin, and Korean. However, due to delays in finalizing the training curriculum, VA DCJS was unable to complete the online training before the end of the grant.

Facilitators of the in-person training included Dr. Deisinger and other individuals working in threat assessment across Virginia. The ABR training was primarily intended for leaders in local government and private organizations (e.g., public health officials, campus administrators) in addition to professionals working with members of the public (e.g., teachers, law enforcement officers), but VA DCJS did not restrict registration or track participants' organizational affiliations. Thus, evaluators could not confirm whether the training reached its intended audience. A total of 261 individuals participated across the 12 sessions delivered.

The ABR training focused on two primary lessons: (1) how to recognize and respond to concerning or threatening behaviors related to targeted violence; and (2) the importance of engaging first responders and community agencies who can provide intervention, referrals, and follow-up for individuals displaying concerning or threatening behaviors. As part of the first lesson, the ABR training described the differences between predatory and reactive violence and between concerning and threatening behaviors. In its second lesson, the training outlined the role and steps of CBTAM and provided guidance for engaging in these steps in accordance with legal privacy regulations. It also discussed key elements when determining whether someone exhibiting aberrant behaviors is at risk for escalating to violence. Finally, trainees were instructed on how to facilitate reporting among community members and were apprised of existing reporting infrastructures including through VA DCJS's partner, the VFC.

Pre-/Posttests Indicate ABR Training Modestly Increased Participant Knowledge

VA DCJS administered a pre- and posttest to measure associated knowledge gain from the ABR training. Of the 261 participants who attended, 214 (82%) completed both tests. Participants, on average, performed 10% better on the posttest than they did on the pretest, with the average score increasing from 69% to 79% (Figure 4). These data showed statistically significant improvements between the pre- and posttest. Participants demonstrated the greatest knowledge gain on questions related to the steps of the CBTAM process (question 4 [Q4]), characteristics of targeted violence perpetrators (Q6), and aberrant behavior identification (Q11). Conversely, participants demonstrated a decrease in knowledge on two questions: Q2, which asked participants to distinguish terrorism from targeted violence, and Q17, which asked participants to discern when medical information can be shared with law enforcement. These topics may have received inadequate coverage during the training, or facilitators may have discussed the topics in a manner that confused participants.

Figure 4. ABR Training Pre-/Posttest Results

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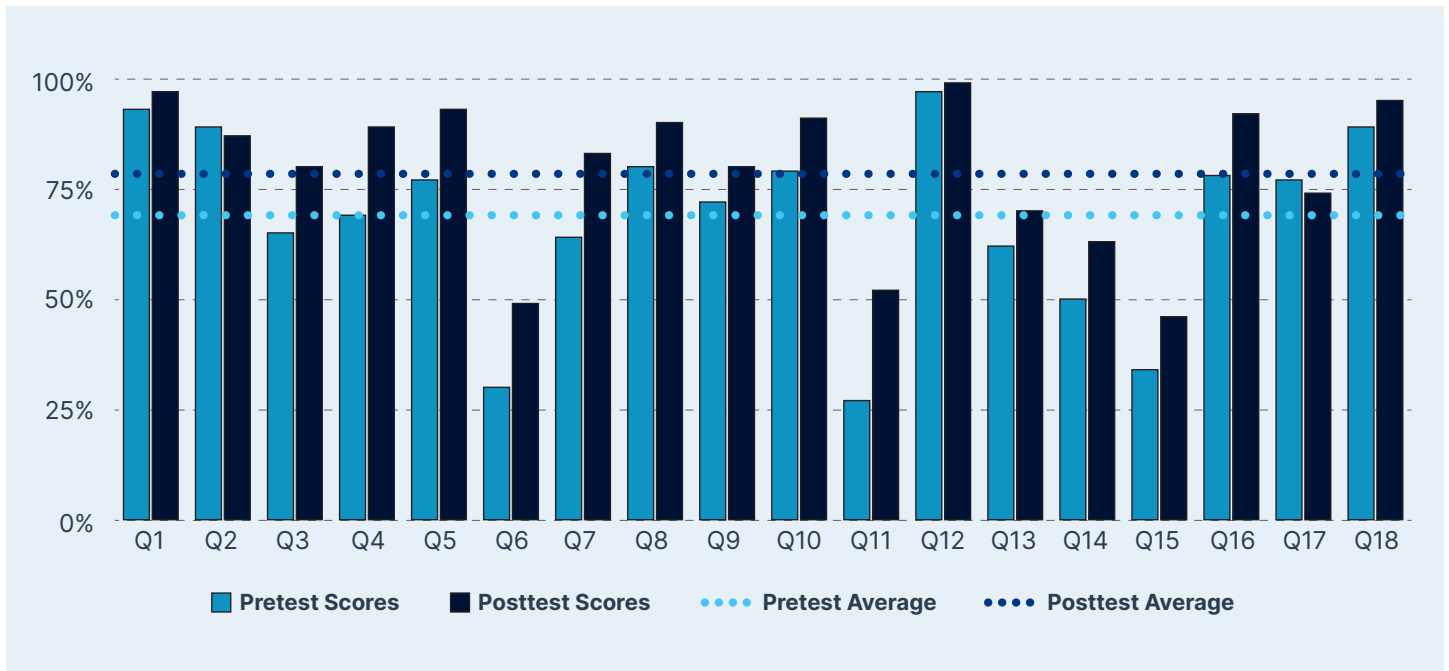
5 Based on a paired samples t-test, there was an improvement in scores from the pretest (M = 0.68, SD = 0.16) to the posttest (M = 0.79, SD = 0.13). The t-test results indicate a significant change, with $t(213) = 9.61$, $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [0.51, 0.80], meaning that the observed improvement is unlikely to be due to random chance. The effect size was moderate (d = 0.65), suggesting that the ABR training had a meaningful and moderate impact on participant posttest scores.

See Something, Say Something Training

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding VA DCJS's SSSS training component, which corresponds with Goal 1, Objective 4, in VA DCJS's IMP.

Objective 1.4: Members of the local community have the ability to act on their awareness training and help members of their community before they threaten other members of the community by knowing how to contact—and understanding the role of—threat assessment and management teams.

VA DCJS Delivers SSSS Trainings in Partnership with the VFC

From July 2023 through March 2024, VA DCJS offered 20 SSSS training webinars in partnership with the VFC. The VFC developed the SSSS course prior to VA DCJS's FY21 TVTP grant; VA DCJS therefore used its FY21 grant to promote the training on its website, deliver the training in a webinar format, and begin developing an eLearning version to share with individuals interested in completing the training asynchronously. Due to the eLearning vendor's delay in module development, VA DCJS was unable to make the asynchronous SSSS module publicly available before the end of the grant.

In total, 454 individuals attended the 20 live, 2-hour SSSS webinars, all of which were facilitated by the VFC's training and outreach coordinator. VA DCJS did not collect information regarding trainees' professional backgrounds, so actual attendee professions are unknown. However, the training was intended for law enforcement and other first responders, individuals in frequent contact with the general public, and interested community members.

As described at the webinar's outset, the training's purpose was to enhance situational awareness among and improve suspicious activity reporting by attendees. To this end, the training covered suspicious activities for trainees to look out for (as shown in Figure 5), where those activities might fall on the pathway to violence, how and why to report suspicious activities, and how to minimize bias-based reporting. It also described how the VFC handles reports in a manner that addresses legitimate concerns while respecting individual privacy and civil liberties. Lastly, the facilitator provided practical tips for increasing situational awareness and encouraged trainees to use available platforms, including the See/Send app, to report concerns to the VFC.

Figure 5. Suspicious Activities Outlined in SSSS Training
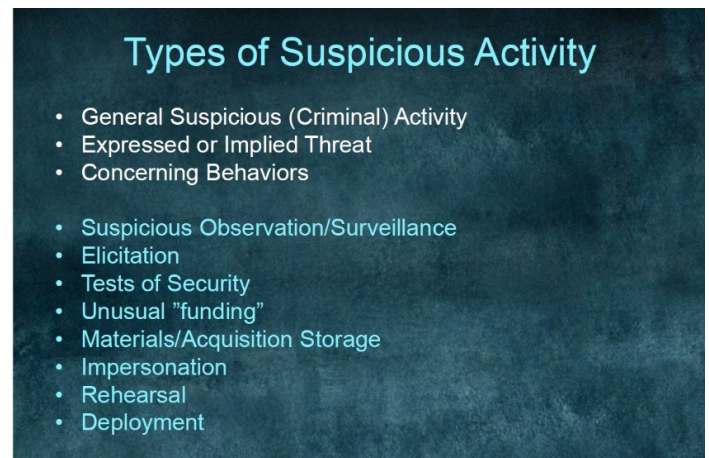
Throughout the training, the facilitator polled participants on several of the discussed topics to encourage them to share their perspectives and apply the skills the training intended to impart. During its February 2024 SSSS training observation, the evaluation team noted that participants were engaged through this process and that the facilitator took time to review poll responses with participants. In this way, the training provided a low-stakes environment for trainees to practice their skills and receive immediate feedback.

SSSS Participants Show Knowledge Gain in Key Areas

Of the 454 individuals who attended an SSSS training, 194 (43%) completed both pre- and posttests, making them eligible for analysis.[6] A statistically significant difference of 10% was observed between the average pretest score (65%) and posttest score (75%), as depicted in Figure 6.[7] However, these results are skewed by trainees' responses to Q9, which asked participants, "Which of the following phases is a part of

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6 In total, 262 trainees completed the pretest and, of those, 194 completed the posttest.

7 Based on a paired samples t-test, there was an improvement in scores from the pretest (M = 0.65, SD = 0.12) to the posttest (M = 0.75, SD = 0.13). The t-test results indicate a statistically significant change ($t[193]$ = 9.45, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.52, 0.83]) meaning that the observed improvement is unlikely to be due to random chance. The effect size was moderate (d = 0.68) suggesting that the SSSS training had a meaningful and moderate impact on participants' posttest scores.

the terrorist attack cycle?" Fewer than 8% of participants answered this question correctly on either the pretest or posttest. This relatively low result is likely because the curriculum ultimately delivered to trainees did not explicitly discuss this topic. Pre- and posttest scores for another question were also substantially lower than the average test score: Q7 received correct answers from 28% and 34% of pre- and posttest respondents, respectively. This question asked trainees to consider a scenario describing an individual's behavioral changes and then to identify which behaviors, if any, could indicate that the individual is on the pathway to violence. This lower score suggests that respondents may have struggled with this material or that the question or response option wording may have confused them.

Conversely, questions pertaining to situational awareness (Q3), the bystander effect (Q4), and suspicious activity reporting procedures (Q8) showed substantial increases from pre- to posttest scores (differences of 23%, 29%, and 30%, respectively). Minor increases in knowledge (1% to 6%) were observed for the remaining questions. Among these, pretest results trended high, which suggests that participants had existing knowledge of this training content.

Figure 6. SSSS Training Pre-/Posttest Results
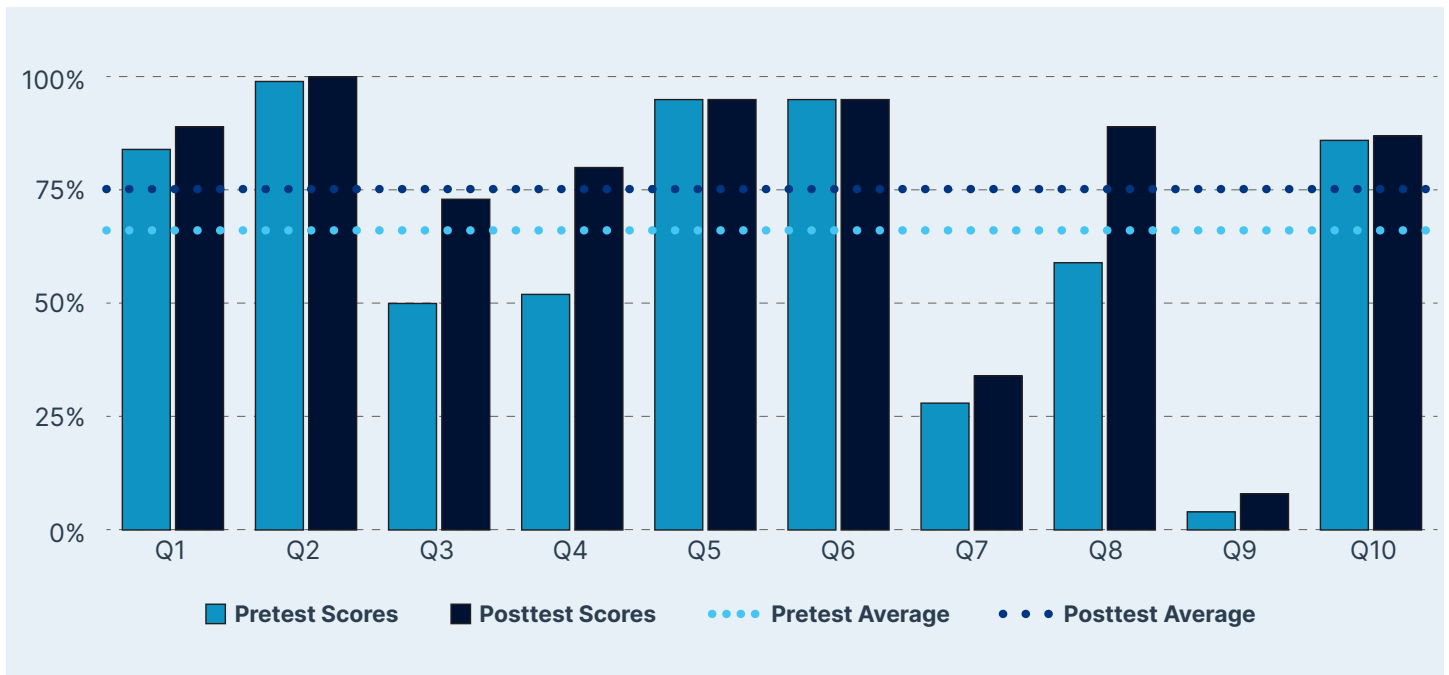
CBTAM Team Training and Technical Assistance

This section examines process and outcome evaluation findings regarding VA DCJS's CBTAM Team Training and Technical Assistance component, which corresponds with Goal 1, Objective 3, in its IMP.

Objective 1.3: Members of the local community engage among the broadest set of local stakeholders that sustain trusted partnerships and increase communications addressing radicalization to violence.

VA DCJS Develops and Delivers CBTAM Trainings

From January 2023 to March 2024, VA DCJS delivered 25 2-day in-person CBTAM trainings across Virginia in partnership with Dr. Deisinger—with nearly half being delivered in the final 3 months of the grant period of performance. In total, 276 participants attended the trainings. VA DCJS's intended training audience was law enforcement, mental health professionals, and the broader community, but it did not collect participants' professional roles or organizational affiliations and therefore could not confirm whether it reached this audience.

The CBTAM training was designed to (1) enhance participants' awareness of potential threats of targeted violence, (2) improve their response capabilities through BTAM, and (3) outline steps and considerations for developing CBTAM teams (see Figure 7 for the full agenda). The training's first section, *Overview of Threat Assessment and Management*, outlined the systematic and multidisciplinary approach to this practice. It defined concerning and aberrant behaviors and discussed various forms of targeted violence. The *Overview of Targeted Violence Impacting Communities* section discussed data trends of several types of targeted violence. The *Nature and Process of Targeted Violence* section advised trainees to focus on grievances and stressors when assessing threats; discussed emotional and psychological factors; and highlighted the importance of bystanders, effective communication, and integrating fragmented information.

The *Essential Elements of an Effective CBTAM Process* section provided trainees with a comprehensive understanding of BTAM. It covered logistical aspects such as forming a multidisciplinary team, using frameworks like "STEP" (Subject, Target, Environment, Precipitating Events) for identifying and managing vulnerabilities, conducting contextual assessments, developing case management plans, and understanding legal frameworks (e.g., Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA], Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

Figure 7. CBTAM Training Agenda

→ **Introduction**

→ **Overview of Threat Assessment and Management**

→ **Overview of Targeted Violence Impacting Communities**

→ **The Nature and Process of Targeted Violence**

→ **Essential Elements of an Effective CBTAM Process**

→ **Next Steps in Developing a CBTAM Process**

→ **Case Scenarios and Applications**

[HIPAA]). The training then taught participants how to develop their own processes during the *Next Steps in Developing a CBTAM Process* section and provided participants with guidance on adapting the training to their specific settings.

Lastly, in a 90-minute exercise, participants practiced a multidisciplinary BTAM team approach to assessing and responding to a report of concerning behaviors. Participants were provided a hypothetical scenario and asked to individually evaluate all available case information before reconvening as a group to discuss their findings and perspectives—a process intended to mimic the recommended steps to CBTAM. This exercise began with an initial triage and screening based on case details. Participants then discussed their individual assessments, scanned social media data, and outlined the questions they would seek to answer in interviews with subjects, victims, and witnesses. To guide their assessments, participants were asked to apply frameworks described in the training. The exercise concluded with a collaborative case review and reassessment of the level of concern presented in the scenario, as informed by earlier training lessons.

VA DCJS Intended to Offer Training and Technical Assistance to CBTAM Teams

In its grant proposal, VA DCJS anticipated that the organizations represented by the CBTAM training participants might request further training and technical assistance to develop or enhance their own CBTAM teams. To support this effort, VA DCJS planned for its CBTAM instructor, Dr. Deisinger, to consult with requesting organizations. Dr. Deisinger provided his direct contact information at each CBTAM training and encouraged participants to reach out for support beyond the training. Ultimately, no organizations requested this service. VA DCJS attributed this result to the absence of supportive legislation mandating CBTAM teams in non-school settings and authorizing information sharing for CBTAM purposes. It felt that this circumstance contributed to local governments and other stakeholder organizations being unprepared to develop and execute on plans to establish these teams during the grant's period of performance.

Pre-/Posttests Indicate Increase in Participant Knowledge Following the CBTAM Training

VA DCJS administered 15-question pre- and posttests to assess participants' knowledge change as a result of the CBTAM training. Though the trainings began in January 2023, VA DCJS began using revised pre-/posttests in October 2023, which contained a different set of questions to measure knowledge-related

outcomes more effectively. When that change was made, VA DCJS no longer had access to the pre-/posttest data for CBTAM trainings that occurred prior to that date and were unable to share the data with the evaluation team. VA DCJS began using a new learning management system in July 2023. Once this system was implemented, the site was unable to retrieve prior test data from its legacy system. Therefore, the evaluation team only used pre-/posttest data obtained using the revised pre-/posttest as of October 2023. A total of 117 participants completed these pre-/posttests. An analysis of the results indicated a statistically significant 17% increase in knowledge, with participants' scores improving from an average of 54% on the pretest to 71% on the posttest,[8] demonstrating that the CBTAM training expanded participants' knowledge (Figure 8).

However, participants' scores on individual questions revealed variations in knowledge gain. Differences between pre- and posttest scores were most pronounced on questions that asked participants to differentiate between aberrant, concerning, and threatening behaviors (Q9) and to identify risk factors for violence (Q6) and elements of predatory violence (Q11). However, participants scored an average of less than 50% on two questions in the posttest: Q7, which asked participants to determine whether a particular risk factor constituted a general or proximal risk factor for violence, and Q10, which asked participants to identify key elements on the pathway to violence. This suggests that trainees were either confused about question wording or that the facilitators did not adequately discuss the questions' content. Given the volume of information covered during the 2-day course, it is also reasonable to expect that participants may have had difficulty recalling all training content.

Figure 8. CBTAM Training Pre-/Posttest Results

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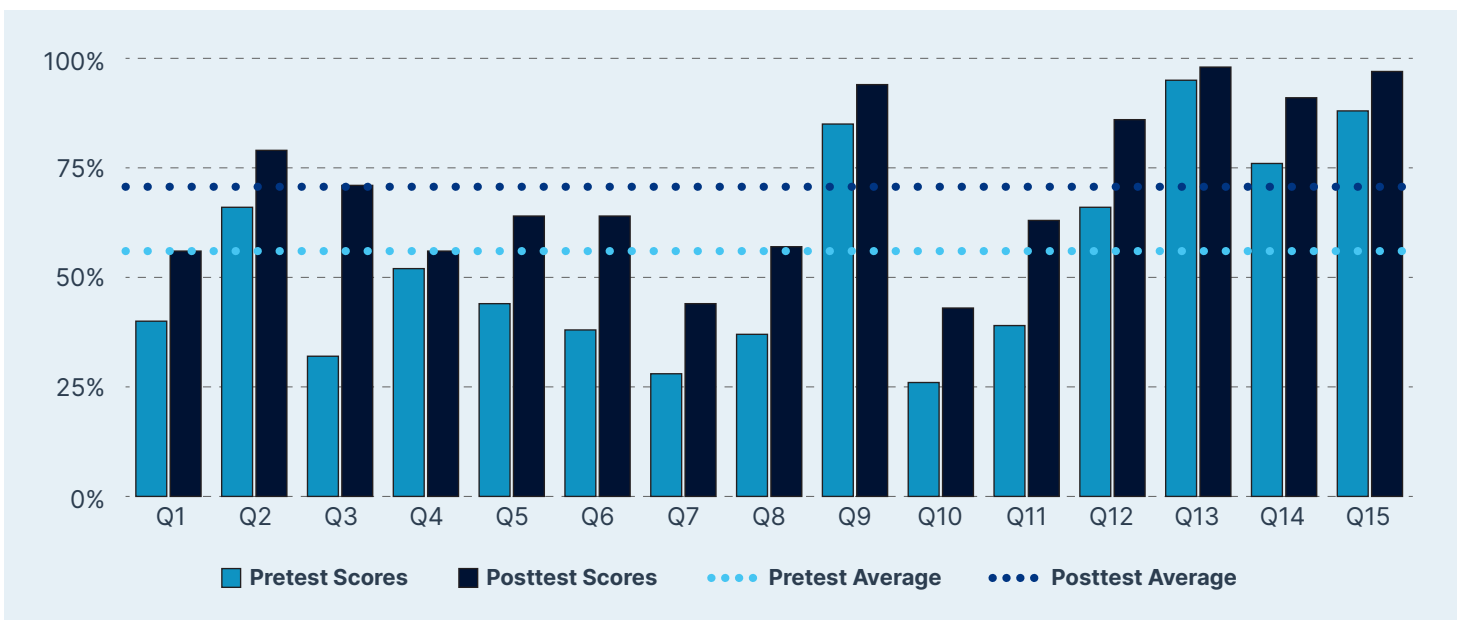
8   A paired samples t-test showed that posttest scores (M = 70.98, SD = 16.77) were significantly higher than pretest scores (M = 54.19, SD = 16.27), t(116) = 12.89, p < .001, 95% CI [0.95, 1.42]. The effect size was large (d = 1.19), indicating that the CBTAM training had a substantial impact on the posttest scores.

CBTAM Trainees Provide Highly Positive Feedback

The evaluation team observed a CBTAM training session conducted in Chantilly, Virginia in January 2024. As part of this observation, the team conducted interviews with four training participants—two at the end of Day 1 and two at the end of Day 2. Overall, participants reported a positive experience. They reported learning new concepts and particularly appreciated the use of real-life cases to clarify complex ideas and threat assessment strategies. Three participants expressed interest in additional training opportunities; one specifically suggested that VA DCJS develop an advanced online version of the training. Participants viewed the training as a valuable use of resources, highlighting its role in promoting safety and awareness across various sectors (Figure 9). The training's interactive and practical approach, along with the expertise of the instructor, contributed significantly to the positive feedback.

Follow-Up Surveys Reinforce Participant Satisfaction with CBTAM Training

The evaluation team collaborated with VA DCJS to administer a follow-up survey to assess long-term satisfaction with the CBTAM training and to understand how trainees engaged with the content post-training. In April 2024, the survey was sent to all participants who completed the CBTAM training throughout VA DCJS's grant, 113 (37%) of whom responded. The amount of time between when some participants completed the CBTAM training and when they completed the follow-up surveys varies from 1 month to 15 months, which may have contributed to differences in responses.

Overall Training Feedback. Most participants (n = 92; 81.42%) provided positive feedback. Comments highlighted the informativeness and practicality of the training, particularly for those without a first responder background. Participants described the training as detailed, well organized, and beneficial in providing a solid foundation in BTAM. The instructor received widespread praise for being engaging and knowledgeable, with several participants noting his ability to enhance their understanding of the material.

Participants also valued the networking opportunities provided, connecting them with professionals from various backgrounds and roles. However, some participants (n = 9; 8%) offered neutral or negative feedback, pointing out that the content was either too specialized, alienating to those outside of certain fields, or overwhelming due to the volume of information provided over a brief period.

Application of Training Concepts. Many participants (n = 65; 57.52%) reported applying the training concepts and techniques in their professional roles by integrating content into their own training, enhancing collaboration, and incorporating threat assessment practices. Some reported that they had initiated threat assessment teams and safety protocols, while others noted improved situational awareness and recognition of early warning signs.

Progress Toward Establishing Teams. About 30% of participants (n = 33) had taken steps to join, establish, or further develop BTAM teams, including discussions with local law enforcement, schools, and other organizations. Some reported working with existing teams within their school systems, while others indicated they had proposed creating or structuring new ones within their organizations.

Figure 9. CBTAM Trainee Feedback

> "I think whatever funding is being put into this program, if it doesn't save money in litigation, it will save lives."
>
> *– CBTAM training participant*

> "The instructor... was very engaging. As a [law enforcement officer], I wanted to understand what these CBTAM [multidisciplinary teams] did, what was expected of them, and how cases get to us. The information helps me to be a better investigator. It helped me to start a discussion during a child sexual assault [multidisciplinary teams] meeting on how the schools document concerning behavior that they don't think rises to the level of informing law enforcement."
>
> *– CBTAM training participant*

Barriers to BTAM Team Implementation. Participants identified several barriers to establishing or further developing BTAM teams, including logistical challenges, resource limitations, legal concerns, and internal resistance within their organizations. They also noted time constraints, staffing shortages, and a lack of BTAM role clarity.

Additional Resources and Support Needed. Participants expressed the need for more training tailored to trainees' specific backgrounds, financial support, specialized personnel to carry out CBTAM duties, and legal guidance for effective information sharing and collaboration.

VA DCJS Drafts the CBTAM Practitioner's Guide

To complement its CBTAM training, VA DCJS continued its partnership with Dr. Deisinger to develop *A Community Approach to Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management in Virginia: A Practitioner's Guide*. The guide synthesizes peer-reviewed research, recognized standards of practice, and relevant state and federal laws (e.g., FERPA, HIPAA, Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]) to provide a framework for supporting BTAM practice in Virginia. Its primary goal is to offer guidance for identifying, assessing, and managing a wide range of concerning or threatening behaviors, beyond just expressed threats, to prevent violence and promote community safety. The guide is structured around three overarching sections (listed below), and a comprehensive list of resources and materials is also provided.

1. **Overview of BTAM:** Defines the core concepts and processes involved in BTAM.
2. **The Nature and Process of Violence:** Discusses various forms of violence, including targeted and affective violence, and identifies a range of concerning behaviors that may need assessment.
3. **Guidelines for BTAM:** Provides detailed, step-by-step instructions for conducting comprehensive threat assessments, from identifying concerning behaviors to managing cases.

The guide emphasizes a preventative, community-focused approach, encouraging early intervention, collaboration across sectors, and continuous professional development. While Dr. Deisinger drafted the guide during VA DCJS's period of performance, VA DCJS did not finalize it until after the grant period. It has not yet been made public as of the writing of this report.

VA DCJS Expands the CBTAM to a TTT Model

VA DCJS continued to work with Dr. Deisinger to develop and deliver a TTT version of the CBTAM training. In October 2023, three individuals from the VSP BTAM team completed an informal, accelerated TTT session specifically to assist Dr. Deisinger in delivering five of the then-remaining CBTAM trainings. Additionally, through an application and vetting process, VA DCJS selected 13 individuals from VSP's BTAM team and previous CBTAM training participants to participate in a 2-day TTT training in March 2024. These individuals were required to demonstrate expertise in a field related to CBTAM, possess prior teaching credentials, and be available to facilitate future CBTAM trainings on behalf of VA DCJS.

On the first day of the 2-day TTT training, participants were introduced to a condensed version of the original CBTAM training. Dr. Deisinger provided guidance on establishing multidisciplinary teams, highlighted usual challenges in CBTAM implementation, and offered strategies for building an effective community-based process to address threats. On the second day, discussed further below, trainees participated in coaching and a teach-back session to prepare them to deliver the training themselves.

TTT Trainees Are Assessed on Their Ability to Deliver the Training

During the teach-back exercise on the second day, the trainer assigned participants specific topics from the CBTAM curriculum to present, while a VA DCJS staff member used a rubric to evaluate trainee performance across six categories (Figure 10). Each category was rated as "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," or "Needs Improvement," with criteria assessing the trainee's clarity, organization, engagement, resource use, question handling, and time management. The rubric also provided space for open feedback on strengths and suggestions for improvement.

All 13 of the 2-day TTT trainees completed the assessment, and each participant was assigned two topics to present. Assigned topics included reporting, compliance with laws and policies, standards of practice, the nature and process of violence, establishing a BTAM team, and the BTAM process, among others. Trainees generally performed well, with an average score of "Good" across all five categories. No trainees scored "Fair" or below on any category. As such, VA DCJS deemed all trainees ready to conduct their own CBTAM

Figure 10. Teach-Back Performance Categories

① **Communication skills: The trainee's effectiveness in delivering the training, including voice control, eye contact, and listening skills**

② **Organization: Logical structure and flow of the presentation**

③ **Use of resources: How well the trainee utilized available course materials to support their presentation**

④ **Impact on the audience: The trainee's ability to engage and maintain audience interest**

⑤ **Responsiveness to questions: The trainee's confidence and clarity in addressing questions**

⑥ **Timing: Adherence to the allotted time**

trainings. Following each training, VA DCJS certified all 16 participating TTT trainees to facilitate future CBTAM trainings. Because the TTT trainings occurred at the end of the no-cost extension period, only the trained VSP staff were able to deliver additional CBTAM trainings during VA DCJS's period of performance.

VA DCJS Develops and Delivers Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams Training

Complementing its CBTAM training, VA DCJS provided a 1-day training to equip individuals working in or considering developing CBTAM teams with information on navigating the legal environment of CBTAM practice in Virginia. In June 2023, VA DCJS debuted an initial version of the legal training developed by one of its attorney vendors, holding five 1-day sessions with a total of 47 participants. However, VA DCJS suspended the training after reviewing the curriculum and observing its delivery across those sessions, as it felt that the training was insufficiently detailed and that the content did not align with the intended course objectives.

VA DCJS then recruited another attorney vendor to substantially revise the curriculum. In January 2024, the final version of the Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams training was debuted using the revised curriculum. Through March

2024, VA DCJS held 10 additional 1-day training sessions with a total of 104 participants. The training's overarching purpose was to teach participants how to balance legal obligations with public safety. It focused on (1) sources of potential liability exposure for CBTAM teams, potential causes of action, and immunities; (2) laws and professional standards governing the sharing of information with and within CBTAM teams; and (3) promising practices for minimizing legal exposures and conducting effective, legally compliant CBTAM. Within this framework, facilitators focused on the evolving legal expectations for CBTAM teams and privacy laws like FERPA and HIPAA. Lastly, facilitators stressed the importance of following best practices, maintaining objective documentation, and fostering clear communication and strong community relationships with guidance from legal counsel.

Legal Considerations Trainees Report Improved Understanding of Expectations for Information Sharing

In January 2024, the evaluation team conducted interviews with three Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams training participants. The interviewees spoke positively about the training, noting that the instructor provided sufficient information they could apply directly to their fields, including public safety in K-12 schools and police–behavioral health co-response. Each interviewee reported greater awareness of the parameters for information sharing in their organizational contexts, bolstered by the facilitator's use of case examples to demonstrate the connection between the law and practice. The interviewees noted that the content was especially dense, considering the training's length. One suggested removing the discussion on how to create CBTAM teams and instead focusing explicitly on the law. Another suggested using a historic incident of TVT, the 2007 Virginia Tech mass attack, and its legal outcomes to situate training lessons in a case with which trainees—as Virginia residents—would be familiar.

Legal Considerations Trainees Gain Knowledge

VA DCJS administered a pre-/posttest to gauge baseline and concluding knowledge of key training topics covered during the Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams training. The test contained 11 questions and was accessible through VA DCJS's online training platform. Participants were required to complete the posttest to receive a course completion certificate.

VA DCJS did not survey participants who attended the first five training sessions, as the curriculum developer had not developed the pre-/posttest instrument prior to the training delivery dates. Of the 104 individuals who attended the trainings delivered after January 2024, 60 trainees (58%) completed both the pre- and posttest.[9] The results indicate a statistically significant increase in knowledge among participants.[10] Participants scored an average of 54% on the pretest and 70% on the posttest. Figure 11 displays the questions that had the greatest knowledge gain. Conversely, a slight decrease (2%) in knowledge was observed for Q2, which focused on legal negligence. This result could be attributed to participant confusion about the question or the subject matter itself. For the full pre-/posttest results, see Figure 12.

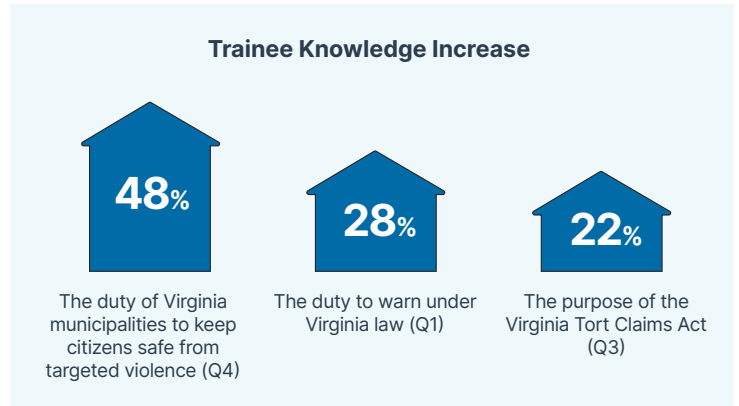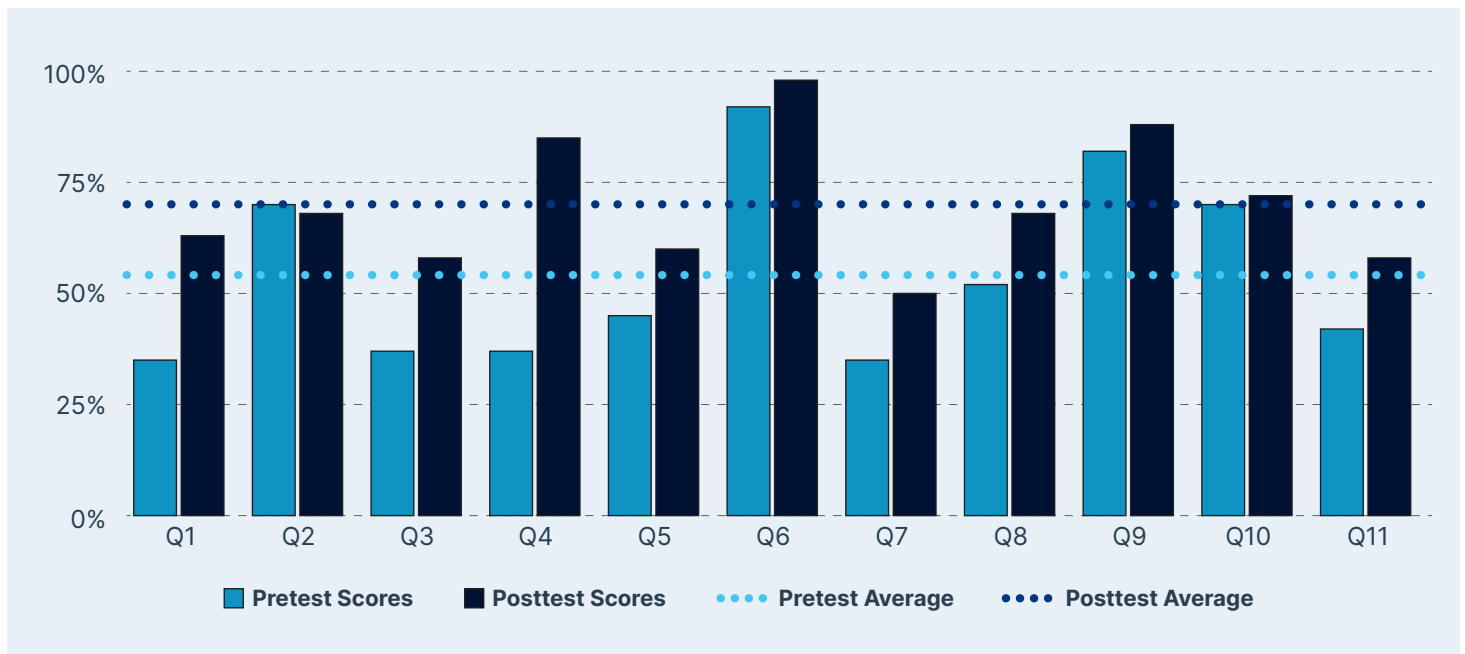*Figure 11. Pre-/Posttest Topics with Highest Average Increase*

Trainee Knowledge Increase

48% The duty of Virginia municipalities to keep citizens safe from targeted violence (Q4)

28% The duty to warn under Virginia law (Q1)

22% The purpose of the Virginia Tort Claims Act (Q3)

Figure 12. Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams Training Pre-/Posttest Results

_____

9   To allow for individual-level comparison of test results, only matched pre-/posttests were analyzed among those collected.

10 Based on a paired samples t-test, there was a significant improvement in scores from the pretest (M = 0.54, SD = 0.15) to the posttest (M = 0.70, SD = 0.19; t(59) = 5.83, p < 0.001; 95% CI [0.46, 1.04]), meaning that the observed improvement is unlikely to be due to random chance. The effect size was moderate to large (d = 0.75), indicating that the Legal Considerations training had substantial impact on the posttest scores.

Challenges

Staff Turnover. VA DCJS initially planned to hire a TVTP Grant Program Coordinator to manage vendor contracts and oversee training coordination and delivery. Although a coordinator was hired early in the project, they resigned in July 2022, and their replacement was not hired until February 2023. In the period preceding the new coordinator's hiring, project staff were overextended and could not devote the time necessary to execute the grant project as intended. Progress resumed once the new coordinator was in place, but at that point, VA DCJS had fewer than 8 months to complete activities that were planned to occur much earlier in its period of performance. This, in part, ultimately led to VA DCJS requesting and receiving a 6-month no-cost extension to complete its grant activities.

Ambitious IMP Targets for Training Sessions and Attendee Counts. In its IMP, VA DCJS set ambitious targets for its training session and participant counts, some of which it was ultimately unable to meet. For example, the site originally aimed to conduct 21 VA CA and DT/VE briefings, through which it would engage 1,300 stakeholders. Upon receiving its no-cost extension, VA DCJS adjusted these targets at DHS's direction, instead striving to hold 25 briefings for 1,200 stakeholders. While VA DCJS met its final target by holding 25 briefings, they convened a total of 396 participants. Despite being far from their target, convening 396 participants is not a trivial accomplishment. Nonetheless, VA DCJS surmised that the time and travel expense costs to participants associated with training attendance may have contributed to the lower-than-expected participant counts.

These high targets, paired with delays in finalizing the training curricula, led VA DCJS to deliver a high number of trainings in rapid succession across the state. VA DCJS' commitment to providing its trainings to geographically dispersed audiences, while important, placed an additional strain on vendor resources. As a result of these lofty targets and timelines, the high demand on one training vendor slowed delivery of the ABR curriculum and development of the corresponding eLearning module. It also delayed the delivery of a final version of the CBTAM Practitioner's Guide. However, when delays became apparent, VA DCJS alleviated some of the demand on its vendors by contracting additional vendors to facilitate the CBTAM and Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams trainings.

Ineffective Data Collection Methods. VA DCJS was unable to measure some of its intended outputs and outcomes due to ineffective data collection methods. First, as discussed throughout this report, the pre-/posttests administered for some trainings were unable to effectively measure outcomes related to knowledge change due to discrepancies between the content of the trainings and the pre-/posttest questions. Second, evaluators were unable to confirm whether the trainings reached VA DCJS's intended audiences because VA DCJS did not consistently collect demographic data, such as professions or disciplines, from its training participants. Third, difficulties transitioning to new learning management system software inhibited VA DCJS from sharing data collected through its previous software, which included all pre-/posttest results for trainings conducted prior to July 2023.

Discussion

IMP Accomplishments

VA DCJS achieved many of its IMP targets across its objectives but, as already discussed, it struggled to reach its ambitious participant count targets. For Objective 1.1, VA DCJS successfully hired a part-time TVTP grant coordinator and completed all 25 VA CA and DT/VE briefings as planned; however, it only reached 396 participants out of the 1,200 targeted.

Objective 1.2 involved the development and delivery of the ABR curriculum. VA DCJS conducted 12 of its planned 14 training sessions, reaching 261 participants (short of its 700-participant target). While VA DCJS worked to develop the ABR eLearning module during the grant period, it was not finalized by the end of the grant. VA DCJS extended this work beyond its period of performance, adding versions of the module translated into Spanish, Mandarin, and Korean.

Under Objective 1.3, VA DCJS aimed to deliver 26 CBTAM trainings and 14 Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams trainings. VA DCJS met session targets for both trainings. With respect to participants, VA DCJS exceeded its target of 235, reaching 276 participants. For the Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams training, VA DCJS reached 104 individuals either working in or considering developing CBTAM teams, though that was below their target of 700. VA DCJS successfully developed a TTT program, certifying 13 individuals to instruct future CBTAM courses, with an additional 3 certified through an informal TTT session. The CBTAM Practitioner's Guide was completed shortly after the grant period ended and will be made available online for future participants.

Notably, no technical assistance was requested by or provided to CBTAM teams. While VA DCJS cited a lack of legislation in Virginia mandating the implementation of CBTAM practice as a barrier to team creation, follow-up survey results collected from CBTAM training participants indicated that 33 individuals took steps toward establishing or joining a team. This suggests that increased targeted outreach or promotion of VA DCJS's technical assistance services might have been beneficial.

For Objective 1.4, VA DCJS completed all 20 planned SSSS trainings, reaching 454 out of 880 targeted participants. VA DCJS also developed an SSSS eLearning module, but the module and its translations to Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin were completed and delivered after the grant period. As VA DCJS prioritized module content development, translations to Spanish, Korean, and Mandarin were also not finalized.

VA DCJS did not provide sign language interpretation or other translations during in-person or webinar training sessions, as it had planned to do under Objectives 1.1 through 1.4. VA DCJS had planned to provide sign language interpretation and other translations during its in-person and webinar training sessions, in accordance with Objectives 1.1 through 1.4. However, VA DCJS did not receive any requests for language accommodations and therefore provided no translation services to its training participants. To support webinar participants, each of VA DCJS' SSSS and ABR presentations used the closed capturing feature available through the software.

Sustainability

VA DCJS plans to continue delivering several of the trainings it developed under this grant, including CBTAM and Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams. To sustain these efforts beyond the FY21 grant, VA DCJS certified 13 trainers through their TTT program as well as 3 additional trainers from the VSP BTAM team. These trainers will continue delivering 1-day CBTAM sessions throughout Virginia, ensuring the ongoing availability of this training in both rural and urban areas. As they deliver these trainings, facilitators will also be able to share the CBTAM Practitioner's Guide with participants to guide their team development and processes. Additionally, VA DCJS secured and certified a local trainer for the Legal Considerations for CBTAM Teams course, which was previously taught by an out-of-state instructor. Having a local trainer will enable the continued delivery of this training while reducing costs and logistical barriers.

After its period of performance, VA DCJS finalized the eLearning modules for its SSSS and ABR trainings and began offering them online. These eLearning modules are available as on-demand resources with translations into three additional languages—Spanish, Mandarin, and Korean—thereby increasing their accessibility and VA DCJS' ability to reach more diverse communities in Virginia.

Lastly, VA DCJS reported that it is in discussions with the VFC to develop a live webinar format of the VA CA briefings, which were previously delivered exclusively in person alongside the DT/VE briefings. Transitioning to a webinar format would enable continued delivery of the VA CA briefings while reducing associated costs. Although creating a webinar was not included in its IMP, this effort emerged from VA DCJS's collaboration with the VFC throughout its FY21 grant period.

Recommendations for the TVTP Grant Program

✓ Encourage realistic targets during project design.

Prospective grantees should consider elements such as project staff capacity, vendor availability, geographic scope, and anticipated community interest when designing output and outcome targets. While unexpected factors may arise during implementation that ultimately affect the achievability of certain targets, this will ensure that the project design is as realistic as possible based on the project's known context and capacity. DHS can encourage realistic project design by discussing such parameters with selected grantees during its initial and any subsequent IMP reviews, such as for a no-cost extension.

✓ Build flexibility into project design to accommodate potential resourcing challenges.

If a prospective grantee's project delivery is contingent upon certain staff and/or vendor resourcing, it should build flexibility into project planning and timelines accordingly. As part of a comprehensive risk management strategy, prospective grantees can identify alternative staff members or external resources to take over key project tasks if primary personnel are unavailable. This contingency planning helps to ensure that critical activities are not delayed due to unforeseen personnel changes or vendor limitations. Additionally, when developing the project timeline, prospective grantees should consider structuring it to allow for the completion of multiple tasks concurrently—which will also require accounting for staff and/or vendor capacity to manage simultaneous tasks. This parallel task management approach will help mitigate the impact of delays in any single task, maintaining overall project momentum and increasing the likelihood of achieving project goals within the expected period of performance.

⊘ Provide targeted support for BTAM team development.

While VA DCJS's FY21 grant aimed to lay the groundwork for CBTAM teams through broad-reaching awareness and development trainings, members of community organizations indicated that their organizations were reticent to independently establish these teams. In light of this, prospective grantees seeking to support BTAM teams without a legislative mandate or preexisting framework should consider leveraging existing networks to identify organizations that have a need for BTAM team training and technical assistance. In addition, they should collaborate with subject matter experts to develop, implement, and monitor their own BTAM teams. This more focused approach would ensure that project resources are delivered to those most likely to use them. To facilitate this focused approach, prospective grantees could consider incorporating the following activities into their grant project:

- Engage with organizations that have successfully established their own BTAM teams to glean insights on effective practices and obstacles encountered during early development and implementation. Grantees can leverage resources such as the TVTP Grantee Symposia and grantee networks to identify such organizations.

- Connect with professionals who routinely conduct threat assessments to tap into their networks for additional resources and support.

- Leverage the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals' conference, resources, and networking opportunities to support knowledge and collaboration within the threat assessment community.

- Consult known BTAM implementation resources and encourage use of such resources among BTAM teams.

⊘ Design data collection instruments to align with activities' purpose, content, and targets.

To effectively measure its outputs and outcomes, grantees should carefully consider the intended purpose, content, and audience of the intervention and should design data collection instruments accordingly. For example, if a grantee seeks to engage a particular audience, it should gather relevant participant data through activity registrations or surveys (collected anonymously if necessary). This also applies to the design of instruments such as pre-/posttests or other methods to measure outcomes to ensure that the data collected will reflect the intended outcomes. This is particularly important if the grantee is engaging with a third party, such as a training vendor, to design or deliver its interventions, as it will help ensure that grantees and their partners understand each other's intentions for the intervention. Moreover, it will enable grantees to produce data that speak directly to an intervention's effectiveness. Grantees would also benefit from periodically reviewing the data collected to assess (1) whether the data is measuring the necessary outputs and outcomes, and (2) whether those intended outputs and outcomes are being achieved. After completing periodic reviews, grantees might adapt their method for soliciting participation or reconsider their approach to providing the intervention, as appropriate.

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