



## Comprehensive School Threat Assessment CSTAG Quick Reference (2025)

Threat assessment is (1) Identification (2) Assessment (3) Intervention



*No two threats are the same. These are guidelines.*

CSTAG is	CSTAG is not
Prevention of violence. Problem solving. Attempts to resolve the threat. Used to assess threat to harm others. CSTAG is concerned with prevention of future violent behavior.	Not a response to violence. Not a disciplinary response. A threat intervention strategy. Used to assess threats to self. Discipline is concerned with consequences for past behavior.

*Threat assessment informs the disciplinary process. It doesn't determine the discipline.*

*If violence has already occurred, then a crisis response is the necessary approach.*

Indicators for threat seriousness	
Threat that was not serious.	Threat that was serious.
The student was young and not capable. The threat was not realistic. The threat seemed a momentary expression of anger or sarcasm. The student apologized and retracted the threat.	The student seemed capable. The threat seemed actionable. The student seemed to have serious intent or was evasive about intentions. The student refused to apologize or retract the threat.

Threat assessment is a team approach. What is your team's CSTAG flow?	
Who is on your school team?	
How are decisions made?	
When do you meet?	
How do you communicate?	
What is each person's role/duty?	

### The goal of threat assessment is to resolve the threat.

When evaluating a threat use the Standard Initial Interview Questions

Build rapport; ask non-leading and open-ended questions.

1. *What happened today when you were [place of the incident]?*
2. *What exactly did you say or do?*
3. *What did you mean when you said/did that?*
4. *How do you think [person threatened] feels about what you said?*
5. *What was the reason you said that?*
6. *What are you going to do now?*

We want to assess:





- Student's intent?
- If the student can take another's perspective?
- And if they plan to carry out the threat?

### Eight CSTAG Forms

1. Threat Report.
2. Initial Interviews (subject, target, witness).
3. Key Observations.
4. Observations Suggesting Need for Intervention.
5. Threat Response/Safety Plan.
6. Threat Outcome Summary.
7. Safety Planning Interviews (subject, parent, teachers, staff).
8. Safety Assessment Report.

The level of detail needed for each form varies based on the threat classification and factors specific to that case. Keep in mind that some behavior is so trivial that it would not warrant a threat assessment meaning no documentation is needed; however, if there is sufficient concern by someone to warrant an assessment and it is determined not to be a threat, you would document the rationale and data to support that determination.

*The classification informs the process that we follow - we don't categorize students.*

<b>1st</b>	<b>Evaluate the Threat</b>	Forms	<b>No Threat:</b>
Obtain a detailed account of the threat, usually by interviewing the person who made the threat, the intended victim, and other witnesses. Write the exact content of the threat and key observations by each party. Consider the circumstances in which the threat was made and the student's intentions. Is there communication of intent to harm someone or behavior suggesting intent to harm?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat Report.</li> <li>Interview Report (6 questions).</li> </ul>	<p>No threat? You are done with CSTAG. Call parent to indicate the investigation. You may still need to provide supports to the student based on what you discover in your investigation.</p> <p>Yes, there is a threat? </p>
<b>2nd</b>	<b>Attempt to resolve as transient</b>	Forms	<b>Transient:</b>
Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be easily resolved so that there is no intent to harm? Does the person retract the threat or offer an explanation and/or apology that indicates no future intent to harm anyone?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat Report.</li> <li>Interview Report.</li> <li>Key Observations.</li> </ul>	<p>A threat was expressed but there is no risk of it being carried out. Call parent. Provide supports to student using the Key Observations Form.</p> <p>You can't resolve the threat? </p>
<b>3rd</b>	<b>Respond to a substantive threat</b>	Forms	<b>Serious Substantive Threat</b>
<p>This is a serious threat with intent to harm, not easily resolved and protective actions is needed.</p> <p>For all substantive threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Take precautions to protect potential victims.</li> <li>-Warn intended victim and parents.</li> <li>-Look for ways to resolve conflict.</li> </ul> <p><i>Discipline student, when appropriate but the CSTAG is not the discipline response.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat Report.</li> <li>Interview Report.</li> <li>Key Observations.</li> <li>Observations Needing Intervention.</li> <li>Threat Response/ Safety Plan.</li> <li>Consider a Safety Planning Interview.</li> </ul>	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific and actionable.</li> <li>Threat is repeated over time.</li> <li>Threat reported as a plan.</li> <li>Accomplice, recruitment, or audience.</li> <li>Evidence of plans (lists etc.)</li> </ul> <p>Is the threat to shoot, kill, stab, rape? Is there a weapon? </p>
<b>4th</b>	<b>Safety Planning Interview</b>	Forms	<b>Very Serious Substantive Threat</b>
<p>Screen student for mental health services and counseling; refer as needed.</p> <p>Law enforcement investigation for evidence of planning and preparation, criminal activity.</p> <p>Develop safety plan that reduces risk and addresses student needs. Plan should include review of Individual Educational Plan if already receiving special education services and further assessment if possible disability.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat Report.</li> <li>Interview Report.</li> <li>Key observations.</li> <li>Observations Needing Intervention.</li> <li>Threat Response/ Safety Plan.</li> <li>Safety Planning Interview.</li> <li>Consider a Behavior Support Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Generally completed by team member with mental health background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Identifying information.</li> <li>-Reason for the referral.</li> <li>-Sources of information.</li> <li>-Major findings. Risk/protective factors.</li> <li>-Conclusions: Recommendations to reduce the risk of violence,</li> </ul> <p></p>
<b>5th</b>	<b>Implement and monitor the plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Case Plan as result of the Safety Planning Interview with CSTAG team.</li> <li>Consider a Behavior Support Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Document the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain contact with the student.</li> <li>Monitor whether plan is working and revise as needed.</li> <li>Use your CSTAG team for regular updates.</li> </ul>

Category	Criteria	Who	Forms	Permission	Discipline Dashboard Documentation
No Threat	False rumor	Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat Report.</li> <li>Interview Report.</li> <li>Forms go into Red Folder in Principal's Office.</li> </ul>	None, but need to call parent after investigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document MINOR in Discipline Dashboard.</li> <li>Type of Offense= Add "GENERAL NOTE."</li> <li>ACTION=Parent Contact.</li> </ul>
Transient	Expression of anger. Easily resolved No intent to harm	Administration.  Determine classification with at least one other team member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat report.</li> <li>Interview report.</li> <li>Key observations.</li> <li>Forms go into Red Folder in Principal's Office.</li> </ul>	None, call parent. Provide student support where needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document OFFICE REFERRAL in Discipline Dashboard.</li> <li>Type of Offense= TRANSIENT THREAT.</li> <li>ACTION=CSTAG Threat Assessment.</li> </ul>
Serious Substantive	Evasive Intent to fight	Administration.  Determine classification with at least one other team member.  Law enforcement notified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat Report.</li> <li>Interview Report.</li> <li>Key Observations.</li> <li>Observations Needing Intervention.</li> <li>Threat Response/ Safety Plan.</li> <li>Consider a Safety Planning Interview.</li> <li>Forms go into Red Folder in Principal's Office.</li> </ul>	Safety Planning Interview requires parent permission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document OFFICE REFERRAL in Discipline Dashboard.</li> <li>Type of Offense =THREAT SERIOUS SUBSTANTIVE.</li> <li>Action=CSTAG Threat Assessment.</li> <li>If referred for Safety Planning Interview, then add action=CSTAG Threat Assessment and use comments to indicate referred for "Safety Planning Interview and with whom."</li> <li>Wellness Staff will document in SEL Dashboard-and provide team with Safety Planning Report.</li> </ul>
Very Serious Substantive	Intent to shoot, stab, kill, rape. Reference or implied weapon.	Administration.  Determine classification with at least one other team member.  Law enforcement notified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Threat report.</li> <li>Interview report.</li> <li>Key observations.</li> <li>Observations Needing Intervention.</li> <li>Threat Response/ Safety Plan.</li> <li>Safety Planning Interview.</li> <li>Consider Behavior Support Plan.</li> <li>Forms go into Red Folder in Principal's Office.</li> </ul>	Safety Planning Interview requires parent permission.  Searches are conducted by law enforcement or admin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document OFFICE REFERRAL in Discipline Dashboard.</li> <li>Type of Offense=THREAT VERY SERIOUS SUBSTANTIVE.</li> <li>Action=CSTAG THREAT ASSESSMENT.</li> <li>Add action=CSTAG Threat Assessment and use comments to indicate referred for "Safety Planning Interview and with whom."</li> <li>Wellness Staff will document in SEL Dashboard and provide team a Safety Planning Report.</li> </ul>

*Following recognized standards, reasonable decisions made with the CSTAG model, and your record keeping is your liability protection.*