The FBI's Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC), Behavioral Analysis Unit 1 (BAU-1), Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG), offers the following general set of proposed considerations for targeted violence (including terrorism) related interviews. This list is offered for use by investigators in attempting to gather information necessary to methodically assess the threat and to develop effective management strategies. This document is intended primarily for interviews of family members, friends and close associates of the person of concern. It may be beneficial to consider only interviewing those who will maintain the confidentiality of this process, and not reveal the interview to the subject of inquiry. This product is not intended to be all-inclusive, and portions of it may not be applicable in all interviews.

Administrative

This product was prepared by members of BTAC. Observations, opinions, and suggestions contained herein are the result of the knowledge drawn from the personal investigative experience, educational background, specialized training, and research conducted by members of BTAC and others. This list and the analyses upon which it is based are not substitutes for a thorough, well-planned investigation, and should not be considered all-inclusive. Research and operational experience indicate there is no one demographic profile, including gender, for persons of concern. However, for ease of reading, only the singular male pronoun is used in this publication.

The recommendations herein serve as an investigative and operational tool which may assist in identifying possible areas of interest concerning the motivation behind potential or, planned violence; they are neither intended nor suitable for inclusion in an evidentiary or testimonial document. This document may not be disseminated outside your agency without authorization by BTAC.

Interview Themes

This section represents overarching themes of concern for investigators, regardless of whether the person of concern or his associates are being interviewed. These themes focus on a person’s capacity and desire to engage in violence, overall mental health, coping mechanisms and supports, stress responses, and other relevant factors. Specific questions are proposed in the next section.

- Organized vs. disorganized thought processes
  - (U) Does Subject demonstrate the ability to plan and engage in predatory behaviors?
  - (U) Does Subject routinely demonstrate the ability to design and successfully implement complex actions or projects?

- Fixed vs. variable themes
  - (U) Does Subject demonstrate any behaviors related to revenge, violence, or bizarre ideations?
  - (U) Is there one theme that appears consistently throughout disclosures or interactions with others?
- **Focused vs. general target identification**
  - (U) Does Subject ever identify specific individuals or groups as targeted for violence?
  - (U) Why does he have disdain or hatred for these specific persons?

- **Violent action imperative vs. alternative coping means**
  - (U) Does Subject have the ability to perceive and choose non-violent alternatives?
  - (U) How does he deal with stress, rejection, disappointment, and anger?

- **Short time imperative vs. lack of urgency**
  - (U) Are there any indicators of evaporating buffers to violence, such as losing interest in normal activities, impatient for relief from pain and suffering, engaging in “end of life” planning (e.g., creating a will, giving away prized possessions)?

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**Interview Questions**

(U) Only the interviewing officer or agent can evaluate whether each question listed below should be asked, and the specific wording for each question. Therefore, BTAC recognized not every item below may result in information provided by the interviewee. However, this question set is based upon research and the collective experience of BTAC, and as many questions as practicable should be posed to the interviewee. Though some of the below questions appear to require only a yes or no answer, when appropriate, it is suggested that the interviewee be asked to describe responses in more detail. Under no circumstances should the interviewee be provided with an opportunity to view this document.

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**Clinical**

- (U) What is Subject’s mental health history? Included in the discussion should be:
  - (U) Hospitalizations: when and under what circumstances has he been hospitalized in the past? What were his diagnoses?
  - (U) Did the Subject ever participate in outpatient treatments?
  - (U) What is his attitude toward mental health treatment?
- (U) If treated, what treatment strategies were effective? What strategies were ineffective?
- (U) When Subject has been treated for mental health issues and seemed to be doing well or at least better, what was he like then? The goal here is to identify what his healthiest self looks like.
- (U) Who is/was Subject’s current treating mental health care provider?
- (U) If Subject is currently receiving or has recently received psychiatric treatment, whether voluntary or involuntary, how does Subject feel about it now?
- (U) If committed psychiatrically, what are Subject’s plans after he leaves the hospital?
- (U) What aftercare and treatment plans are recommended by his doctor? Does he feel comfortable complying with them? If not, why not? Probe to learn if there is anything law enforcement or social services can do to make him feel comfortable with it.
• (U) If applicable, has Subject complied with follow-up care recommendations in the past? If not, why not? Clarify if compliance was partial or total.
• (U) Has Subject ever thought he could effect change on the national level or world stage?
• (U) Has Subject ever felt special powers or connections to world leaders or famous individuals?
• (U) Has the Subject ever felt like he has special knowledge of world affairs?
• (U) Has Subject ever felt the need to punish people for their inadequacies?
• (U) Has Subject ever been involved with politically motivated confrontations/conflicts/disagreements?
• (U) Were odd or bizarre behaviors ever observed? When?
• (U) Has Subject ever heard or seen something that no one else could hear or see?
• (U) Has Subject ever been commanded to do something by a voice that no one else could hear?
• (U) Did Subject ever act out on that command?
• (U) Describe Subject’s eating and sleeping habits. Have these changed over time?
• (U) Has Subject’s general personal or environmental hygiene/cleanliness changed over time?
• (U) Has Subject ever suffered from any traumatic brain injury or head trauma?
• (U) Has Subject ever experienced major medical issues or injuries, including significant surgeries?
• (U) Has Subject ever been physically or sexually abused?
• (U) How resilient is Subject and what specific coping strategies has he used to deal with stress?
• (U) What is the biological family’s mental health history?
• (U) Has Subject ever discussed homicidal or suicidal thoughts?
• (U) Has Subject ever been prescribed medication for a thought or mood disorder, or if he has used OTC medication, supplements, or substances to self-medicate?
• (U) Has Subject ever used drugs, alcohol, or other substances?
• (U) Do you know if Subject ever abused substances, to include alcohol, illegal drugs, prescriptions, etc.?

**Education and/or Workplace**

• (U) How would Subject describe his experiences in elementary, middle, and high school as well as in college?
• (U) Did Subject ever have any disciplinary problems in school?
• (U) How would Subject’s classmates have described him?
• (U) How would Subject’s teachers have described him?
• (U) Did he ever display anger, hostility, or aggressive feelings toward any school peers?
• (U) Describe Subject’s academic performance and abilities.
• (U) How does Subject feel he was treated by the school’s staff and/or administration?
• (U) Did Subject ever consider harming anyone at school? Were particular individuals selected or did he just have general thoughts of harm?
• (U) Describe Subject’s experiences at work, including all environments in which he engages in work activities.
• (U) Has Subject ever been disciplined or reviewed by his employer or a state licensing entity or ethics body?
• (U) Has the subject ever been placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)?
• (U) How would Subject’s work peers describe him?
• (U) How would subordinates describe him?
• (U) Did Subject ever display anger, hostility, or aggressive feelings toward any coworkers?
• (U) Describe Subject’s professional performance and abilities.

Sexual History and Behaviors

• (U) How many intimate partners has Subject had? Did Subject consider them to be healthy relationships?
• (U) Does Subject ever allude to any romantic relationships with others?
• (U) At any point has Subject experienced negative issues with others, e.g., feelings of extreme discomfort or anxiety in approaching or socially engaging?
• (U) Almost everyone has been rejected or rebuffed at some point in their lives. Was Subject ever rejected or rebuffed by others that he pursued romantically? If so, how did he react?
• (U) After a rejection, did Subject ever engage in harassing behaviors (e.g., unwanted telephone calls, messages)?
• (U) Has Subject ever spoken about objects of affection or romantic interest in a disparaging or degrading manner?
• (U) Were there any times when subject engaged in odd or concerning behaviors that did not result in law enforcement intervention (e.g. watching/surveilling that person, trespassing, throwing things, battery, trespassing, etc….)?
• (U) Has Subject ever viewed or downloaded pornography? Were there ever any specific themes observed?
• How would the Subject describe his/her ideal romantic/intimate partner?

**Family and Other Relationships**

• (U) What other family members does Subject have in the area? Outside the area?
• (U) Describe Subject’s relationships with his mother, father, and any siblings.
• (U) Does Subject ever speak about family members? If so, what kinds of things does he say?
• (U) Are any of Subject’s family members or guardians terminally ill?
• (U) Have any family members died? If so, how did Subject react to that loss?
• (U) How do family members perceive or react to Subject?
• (U) Has subject ever been violent towards his family?
• (U) Are family members concerned that Subject may become violent?
• (U) Does Subject have good friends in the area? Outside the area?
• (U) Are any of those friends, people Subject can lean on in times of stress or difficulty?
• (U) Are any of his friends concerned that Subject may become violent? Are they worried he might harm himself?
• (U) Has Subject lost any good friends in recent years?

**Perceptions, Mood, Social Functioning, and Motivations**

• (U) What are or were Subject’s favorite movies or TV shows?
• (U) Has there been a particular movie or tv show that the Subject has watched repeatedly over the last several months?
• (U) What characters does Subject most relate to?
• (U) What are Subject’s favorite video games?
• (U) How much time each day does Subject spend watching TV/movies and playing video games?
• (U) What are his online activities, and how much time does he devote to them?
• (U) Does Subject seem to more easily interact with persons online than in person?
• (U) Does he use online resources to research mass attacks, murder, suicide, shootings, revenge-oriented stories, or other violently themed material?
• (U) Has or does Subject keep a journal, blog, or diary?
• (U) Does Subject participate in any social media forums?
• (U) Does the Subject have multiple online identities or personas?
• (U) Does Subject feel the same emotions other people seem to (e.g., happiness, anger, sadness) at appropriate times?
• (U) Does Subject ever feel contextually inappropriate emotions (e.g. laughing during solemn
moments)?

- (U) Has he ever been sued?
- (U) Has he ever filed for bankruptcy?

**Beliefs, Religiosity, and Ideology**

- (U) Does Subject participate in or subscribe to any organized religion?
- (U) Does Subject consider himself to be spiritual or religious?
- (U) Does Subject routinely attend spiritual or religious services?
- (U) Has Subject’s interest in religion changed over the years?
- (U) What is his family’s religious background?
- (U) Does the Subject consume extremist or ideologically based propaganda?
- (U) Is the Subject’s behavior consistent with his religious beliefs?
- (U) What are Subject’s views about violence in support of his/her ideology and/or to drive social, political or religious change?
- (U) Has Subject ever expressed views supporting idea that others are less than human or less worthy of life due to their contrary beliefs?
- (U) Does the Subject express loyalty and benevolence towards his self-identity (i.e. “in-group”) by effecting violence towards those who fall outside his belief system (e.g. "out-group")?
- (U) Has the Subject indicated a belief about an approaching apocalypse, end-time, or existential crisis?

**Interests in Weapons and History of Violence**

- (U) What kind of interest does Subject have in weapons and firearms?
- (U) Has Subject’s interest in firearms changed over time?
- (U) Does Subject ever obtain military garb, equipment, uniforms, or other paraphernalia? For what purpose?
- (U) Does Subject show an interest in paramilitary, pseudo commando, or tactical related activities (e.g. martial arts, paintball, airsoft, etc.….)?
- (U) Has the Subject ever received military or specialized training?
- (U) Does Subject ever research notorious figures, either real or fictional?
- (U) Does Subject ever research prior attacks?
- (U) Does Subject ever research prior serial bomber cases?
- (U) Does Subject currently have short term and/or long-term goals for his life?
- (U) What will Subject do if he feels overwhelmed or distracted with thoughts of violence?
- (U) What can law enforcement do to help the subject resist any urges or thoughts of violence?
Explosives

- (U) Has Subject ever built explosive devices?
- (U) Where did Subject acquire the knowledge/skills needed to build an explosive device(s)?
- (U) How were the explosives and/or other components for these devices acquired? Were they bought online, from a store, borrowed?
- (U) What is the quantity of explosive material and/or components acquired by the Subject?
- (U) What did Subject do with explosive device(s) built? What was the purpose for the device(s)? Why did the Subject prefer to use explosives versus other forms of weaponry?
- (U) Did Subject test prototypes device(s)?
- (U) Where did the Subject build explosive device(s)?
- (U) Where did Subject maintain bomb making materials?
- (U) Did Subject ever view online instructions for making explosive devices?
- (U) Has anyone ever assisted the Subject in making explosive device(s)?

Changes in Behavior

- (U) Has there been any change in the Subject's level of frustration, tolerance for stress, and/or resiliency under pressure?
- (U) Does the Subject seem pre-occupied or disengaged from normally pleasurable activities or responsibilities, as if working on a major project?
- (U) Has the Subject’s computer usage changed?
- (U) Has the Subject’s spending habits changed to include purchases of unusual items?
- (U) Does the Subject engage in efforts to conceal activities (e.g., online searches/history, financial expenditures, space for construction of devices)?
- (U) Has the Subject been evasive or vague in describing whereabouts, activities, or associates?
- (U) Has the Subject experienced stressors (e.g., financial strain, interpersonal conflict, employment issues, health) in his life, particularly within the last 12 months?
- (U) Were you ever concerned about the Subject and his well-being?
  - Were you ever concerned with the Subject’s:
    - Interpersonal interactions
    - Leakage of violent intent
    - Quality of thinking or in communications
    - Work performance
    - Threats/confrontations
o Anger
o Physical aggression
o Risk-taking
o Firearms ownership or use
o Consumption of violent media or violent images
o Weight/diet/eating
o Drug use/abuse
o Impulsivity
o Alcohol use/abuse
o Physical health
o Sexual behavior
o Quality of sleep
o Hygiene/appearance

• (U) If yes to any of the above, what did you do about it?
• (U) If subject was ever confronted about any of these concerns, what was his reaction?