

October 14, 2024

Matthew Guerrero
Dean of Students

Dr. Guerrero,

Please find an initial draft of the violence risk assessment report related to student Damien Thorn. I completed an online interview on 10/12/24.

Thank you,



Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D.
Director of Behavior and Threat Management
brian@dprep.com
603-491-3215

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Dr. Brian Van Brunt and DPrep Safety received a request on 10/11/24 to conduct a violence risk assessment on a first-year student, Damien Thorn. Mr. Thorn is a STEM scholar, a program that supports minority students who may have financial barriers to their education. He is currently on interim suspension following an incident of vandalism on campus, which involved odd and paranoid thoughts and speech and led to an inpatient hospitalization. The university provided me with incident reports, emails, and text messages to review. I conducted a violence risk assessment interview via Zoom with Mr. Thorn on 10/12/24.

Timeline of Events

Damien Thorn is an 18-year-old Columbian male studying liberal arts as a first-year student at UC Sunnydale. The events are outlined as follows:

Late September: The student sent some unusual text messages to others in his Fellowship of Christian Athletes chat group (FCA is a Christian group loosely connected to campus) in which he participates. He wrote, *"I don't feel safe in 3rd floor Stevenson Hall and can someone come to my dorm if possible? Someone with farm experience? It's not scary I promise. Their eggs"* and *"Read apocalypse, I'm the prophecy."* He also talked to his roommate about the eggs, causing the roommate anxiety.

9/29/24: Campus police and residential life responded to the student who was partially clothed and talking about the apocalypse, prophecy, angels, and how he was chosen by God. He had felt warm and removed all his clothes in the laundry room. He then turned on the washer and pulled the machine onto the floor to feel the water. He made two holes in the walls with his knee and left the laundry room. The door locked behind him, so he then went outside (fully naked). Another student gave him a pair of gym shorts. On-campus police then interviewed him, and he was transported for a medical clearance and psychiatric hold. The walk out the front door of Stevenson Hall toward Dunwirth Hall was public, with several students noticing Mr. Thorn in handcuffs. There were many videos of the incident on the college's Fizz account.

9/29/24: Mr. Thorn's roommate shared some concerns with the residential life staff about his behavior prior to the hospitalization. He shared, *"At one point this weekend Damien woke him up at 3 or 4 AM because Damien was punching Damien's' mattress, allegedly "for lacrosse practice" of sorts."* The roommate said Damien seemed overconfident in his skills and that his mother had called him dozens of times without Damien answering. His roommate said Damien's' parents seemed worried.

10/9/24: Released from the hospital.

General Information

Mr. Thorn reports no previous history of this type of behavior. While his family (mother, father, and younger brother Angel [16]) attend a local Pentecostal-type church, Mr. Thorn said the family wasn't overly religious. His father works at a local packaging plant, and his mother is a homemaker. They live about an hour from the college, and he is currently staying with his parents following his hospitalization. Both parents can speak and understand some English but struggle

and would benefit from an interpreter. Mr. Thorn is fluent in English and Spanish and has been studying Japanese.

During his initial week at UC Sunnydale, he shared that he was excited to be at the school. He shared, *"I was really doing all my work. I was ahead of the, I was ahead of everyone in class. I was doing really well, really well."* He is currently enrolled in religious studies, World History, Mathematics, and a general science course. He would like to return to campus and drop his religious studies and mathematics courses. He also expressed interest in staying connected to his FCA group and the Lacrosse team.

Interview with Dr. Brian Van Brunt

During our 10/12/24 interview, Mr. Thorn logged on a few minutes early, and was genuine, affable, and easy to talk with throughout our time. He answered my questions without hesitation, showed insight into how others saw his behavior, and was flexible and understanding toward the interim suspension and resulting time at home with his parents. However, he remains convinced that he had a profound religious experience that involved seeing visions, being possessed by the holy spirit, and being called as a prophet of God. He did clarify that he did not think he was Jesus Christ, but he shared, *"I can assure you I'm not. I was born in, in 2006. You know, I believe I'm being used by him, not him."*

He explained that he had experienced the holy spirit connecting with him on 9/29/24 and decided to fast for 24 hours before 9/29. I clarified that this is a practice commonly taught in Pentecostal churches to increase clarity and connection with God. He explained he took off his clothes because he started to feel an intense heat in his body. He said, *"I undressed myself because I felt this heat, this intense heat. I literally felt like I was John (from Revelation). I just felt this intense heat trapping me. I was able to hear, uh, noises, um, plane noises that were about to crash, you know, and I was able to hear all this negative energy and staring me."*

He pulled the washing machine over and, during this time, hit the wall with his knees, causing two holes. When asked why he pulled that machine over, he said, *"You know, there was water that was being spouted all over the place. And that refreshes me. I was in the washing machine. I was speaking tongues¹."*

I asked him if this happened before or if anyone in his family had experienced this. He said that it was his first time speaking in tongues. He said this had happened sometimes in church but never with him or anyone in his family.

When asked for more details about what happened in the laundry room, he shared, *"I shut myself in an area where I was secure, and I just knocked, and it wasn't my strength. Right now, I wouldn't*

¹ Speaking in tongues, also known as glossolalia, is a practice where people speak words or sounds that are thought to be languages they don't know. In Christianity, it is considered a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit. Some say that speaking in tongues is a way to express to God things that are difficult to put into words

be able to do it. Like, I wouldn't consider it, like, my own strength. And so I just knocked, something, some, like, spirit took, uh, control of me."

He explained to me that water was important to him. And food – he referenced a bible quote (without knowing the chapter or verse) about God covering your thirst and hunger. He stresses his connection to and the power of water in his life. He said he carries a 62 oz container around campus and always drinks water. He was drinking water throughout our interview and excused himself to go the bathroom about an hour into the interview. He sees water as a power given to him by God. When asked about the literary reference in the Bible to water being “the river of life and such,” he denied that was something he connected to. He said, *“And this was before knowing, having all of this knowledge that I have now. So now more than ever, I'm going to have to carry my water, but I won't be consuming jugs and jugs of water. It'll be like, Little bits, you know?”*

Throughout the interview, Mr. Thorn explained the importance of his faith and the intensity of his religious feelings but also offered that he had not read the Bible and was unfamiliar with many of its stories. For example, when I referenced the Tower of Babel and the flames that came upon the men in different languages, he admitted that he wasn't as familiar with that.

After leaving the laundry room naked, the door shut behind him. *“If I knew the door behind me was gonna shut with my clothes in there, I wouldn't have, you know, I wouldn't have.”* He met someone outside who had some gym shorts in a bag that he loaned to Damien.

He shared some odd experiences prior to this event. In one incident, he was in the shower and felt as if two negative spirits were coming for him. Campus police responded. He described the events as follows:

“I was in a shower. I was taking my shower and I felt these two voices, uh, like they were, they were in narcotics. They were drugged. Um, because I was shaking too, because I was able to smell like they were going to do something bad. I contacted 9 11 and I was on them on the line. I was like, yeah, these, and I told them to send one police officer. Or if one or two, I'm not sure how many, because I never saw anything of it. I was in the shower, just like shaking until they approached me. And the people who approached me were the security of US Sunnydale.”

“I was able to smell the evil. And they were shocked as well. They were also shocked. Everyone who I've interacted with, and I talk about the Lord, they, they, they get shocked. And, um, they were like, they, I told them, can I have a hug? And they gave me a hug. I gave the those people hug and they were like, Oh, where's your stuff? And then I was like, I'm, I'm like a super-fast person when it comes to my, because I'm a very straightforward.” Campus safety had asked him for his ID and he went back to his room and provided it.”

When asked more about this incident, he shared that he had overheard a male student talking with the female student and that the male was trying to get her in his room and said, *“Are you down?”* and she said, *“I'm not sure.”* This story was difficult to follow as he also said two people came into the bathroom shower area looking for him. He became upset and they left when they figured out he wasn't who they were looking for. An initial hypothesis is the worry he had about

the woman being talked into an unwanted sexual relationship could have been a catalyst for the stress and anxiety that led to the hallucinations and delusions.

He shared he has extraordinarily fast reflexes, *“My reaction my reflexes are really fast like naturally even with I don't want to say without God because I'm you know he's always with me, but You know what? My reaction is like really fast. And so that morning I had my door open and students were walking by and I reacted extremely fast and they were like, I felt like they were shocked by how fast I was reacting and they probably thought, or I don't know this, uh, they never said this by word, but I felt like they thought I'd harmed them, I, or either something bad happened to them or they got arrested.”*

After going back to his room, he recounts looking out of the window and seeing angels. He described it this way, *“And, on the window, I saw like a troop of angels stacked one by one, like at least 20. And, and then there was red angels coming. It was the first trumpet, and there was red angels coming out. There was red angels coming out. And I was like, whoa, what is, what is he trying to communicate with me here? There's white angels, there's a trumpet, and there's like red angels coming out. And then it was a line stacked together. And then there's just a light going around and around and then I was like, okay, what is this? Let me decipher this.”*

He shared what happened after the vision of the angel, saying, *“And when I saw that, I closed my blinds and I went to sleep. And when I say I went to sleep, I didn't go to sleep that night. I didn't go to sleep because I couldn't it was the intensity Of it and I heard eggs crack in my in my fridge. There's eggs that pop They did this exact noise something like that and you know, I I opened the uh The fridge and I and so I literally got them and I and I broke them all And then, that morning, I left the, because I was, I was terrified, yeah, I was, I was in shock, and, and terrified, um, because it said something evil was gonna hatch. And so I covered it with a basket, and in the morning, I got a white, um, towel, and I cleaned it up. I cleaned that mess up, because it was my mess. I cleaned it up with a towel, I got on the floor, I cleaned it up. And I told my roommate, do you see these stains? Because it was like black. And he said, and he said, yeah, he could see them be, but I knew he was lying to me, like the way I could tell like people, the egg on the towel or what was the black part? Later when he returned the eggs, “And I was like, I was like, whoa, this means I was only able to see it when it had stains. When, you know, that negativity was happening. But when I, when I saw it later, It was it was clean. I couldn't see it because I wasn't in that in that mindset.”*

During the hospital stay, he shared other experiences. In one, he was watching the television, and it started to glitch and show static. He also felt a connection to shows with superheroes because he was like a superhero in many ways. He shared that his parents visited him on the unit, as did his pastors and members of the church.

He shared an experience when he saw Maggie Walsh on the hospital unit in a brightly colored suit. He explains, *“I told them, are you, uh, Maggie? Are you Maggie? I told her, I told her on purpose just to, uh, Like make her realize that, Oh, I know I am aware about Maggie Walsh. And so, um, you know, uh, I, I kind of ran, I did this a little fast movement and I was like, I said, Mama, I said, Mama, you know, and then they were, they, they were laughing at me. They put me down, they laughed at me and then they injected me with, uh, with medication. However, however, I will say that medication doesn't have an effect on me. I realized that God was able to do something*

in my life where I just need water and food and I'll be. I'll calm down. That's why I always need to have water."

When asked about leaving the hospital with hopes to return to campus, he said, *"I don't think I'm crazy. Uh, and when I was in that mental institution, like, My whole vibe I was always like at night when in my privacy in my private time I was like, oh, you know help me Lord, right?"*

He said he was interested in dropping two of his classes to reduce the stress related to college. He shared that mathematics was hard for him. His mathematics class was very close in time to his religious studies class; he had arrived late for the class and had to sit in the front. He explained this made him anxious, saying, *"So I was rushing to I got it, um on time on the last minute and all the students the majority they like to sit on the back or The middle but not in front and there was only space in the front So I sat in the front and then um ever since then I've I felt like people have because my name is Damien It means, you know Damien in English, right?"*

Violence Risk Assessment

Mr. Thorn denies any intent to harm others or himself. He made no threats to others during his religious experience and expressed regret for the damage he did to the washing machine and walls. He also regrets being naked on campus and talking to his roommate about the eggs in the middle of the night. He understands that his roommate has chosen to move to another location on campus.

Prior to the fasting, he reports normal eating and sleeping (*"a solid eight hours"*). He denies any feelings of depression or sadness and is hopeful about the future. He denies any suicidal thoughts or plans for action. He says he works out several times a week and enjoys this activity.

He denies access to any firearms and says there are none kept in the home. He talked about playing video games in the past but said that he had unplugged his PlayStation 4 and wasn't sure where the wires were now. He played *Fortnite* and *Red Dead Redemption*, which he said he knew was violent, but he liked the story. He mostly played games for social connection. He said he stopped playing because he was falling behind in his schoolwork in high school, *"You know, the PlayStation got a little too distracting. You know, one hour becomes two, two hours, three, four, five."* He told me he had a 3.7 GPA in high school and had several friends despite being a bit introverted. He shared, *"I noticed it wasn't the video game that was as valuable. It was the connections that I had with my friends. Absolutely. Um, that was like what re what really made it fun. 'cause if you don't have any people to interact with, then Right. You know, it gets kind of lonely."*

He described a good relationship with his younger brother and has been talking to him more about Jesus and religion. He denied any alcohol or drug use. I explained that part of the reason for asking these questions was to rule out a drug that may have caused his symptoms of hallucinations, feeling intense heat, and seeing visions.

When asked to clarify a statement he had made about Maggie Walsh, the Dean of the Psychology and Research Department, it was reported that he had said, *"He's on the one responsible for all of this."* Mr. Thorn clarified he had only met Maggie at one point, *"The only time I saw her in person was in that little, um, uh, time where she talked to us, uh, students at orientation, but I*

never seen her since. And I think, I think she knows, I think she knows that I'm, that I know. And so, that's why, um, she's fighting for me."

Mr. Thorn denies any previous counseling, medication, or inpatient hospitalizations. He shared no one in his family had any mental health issues. He is open to meeting with a counselor at US Sunnydale to help him adjust back on campus but does not want to take any medication. The only medication he said helped was something for sleep at night.

He describes several friends on campus, including his roommate and a girl he was friends with. He denies any dating relationship and tells me that this would need to wait until marriage. There was an implication this woman he was friends with may be interested in something more. There is a concern that as people talk with him in FCA and other classmates on campus, they have grown more distant given the unusual behavior (texts to groups, conversations with peers) and to the extent that people around the washing machine incident talked about what was happening with Mr. Thorn.

Mr. Thorn is hopeful to return to campus and understands that his roommate has moved out. When confronted with the idea that he may need to move to another location because of what happened, he understood but still wished to return to that location.

I spoke briefly with his mother on camera with Mr. Thorn translating for us. I had made a joke about how much he enjoys her cooking and asked what was for dinner tonight. She shared he has been doing well at home, eating and sleeping, and desires to be back at school. It seems he has been without incident based on my questions to both Mr. Thorn and his mother.

Based on my review of materials and interview, there is no evidence to support Mr. Thorn would act violently towards others or himself. There are several behaviors that raise concern that would be "hot spots" I would recommend the college and counseling staff address as he returns to campus. These are outlined in [Appendix A](#).

Pathways²

This triage assessment is included in this report and consists of thirty items scored on a three-point scale (1 for low concern, 2 for moderate concern, and 3 for high concern). Low scores were given on academic trouble, anxiety, harassing behaviors, and affective violence. Moderate scores were given for social problems and vandalism. The overall rating of Pathways is high, with indications that a VRA should be completed through DarkFox.

Guidance from Pathways includes:

- Conduct an immediate screening by clinical staff, law enforcement, or the emergency department [emergency process completed by police]
- Explore the medical leave policy and available off-campus treatment
- Consider a referral to academic support
- Discuss any interruption of academics, relationships, and life skills

² The full Pathways generated report is available in [Appendix B](#)

- Make an immediate referral to counseling and walk the individual to the clinic
- Discuss the social and conduct implications of their behavior
- Set clear conduct limits and monitor for compliance
- Identify any immediate safety risks or conduct violations
- Address how his behavior puts their enrollment at risk
- Consider the conduct policy to address disruptive behavior
- Explore stressors and identify escalation triggers
- Contact emergency contacts/guardian under FERPA

DarkFox³

Assessment documentation is forthcoming.

Initial Recommendations

1. Request the hospital intake, treatment, and discharge summaries for all locations where he was admitted (there was likely a holding unit where he stayed briefly prior to being admitted to the unit). He referenced two separate uses of restraints, once being tied to the bed and the other when he approached someone he thought was Maggie Walsh on the unit. As both incidents required intense actions (e.g., medication and physical straps to restrain him), it would be helpful to understand the context better. It would also be useful to determine the diagnosis, any treatment recommendations the hospital staff may have had, and any medications he was given. Ideally, these records would be released to the counseling center on campus, summarized, and then shared (with an additional release) to aid in the conduct process and determination of sanctions.
2. In the same vein, verifying there is no criminal history would be useful if this is something on-campus law enforcement could do. This is often part of a 5150 process, but it was unclear if this involved off-campus police for the transport and if this criminal history was checked.
3. There are reports of many videos of this incident on the social media app Fizz tagged with UC Sunnydale. Rumors are also circulating that Mr. Thorn was arrested for public nudity. The college should take steps to contact Fizz and request these videos be removed. This could come from legal counsel or from the police department. Fizz has a long history of complying with these requests from colleges.
4. Mr. Thorn has requested to reduce his course load to his history and science courses, dropping mathematics and religious studies. While I would support this for him to reduce his stress, I am unsure of the policy at UC Sunnydale related to living on campus with a reduced course load. Additionally, I would recommend Mr. Thorn meet with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to look at any accommodations he may need to drop those two classes and ensure his World History and General Science professors are able to work with him to accommodate the missed time due to the medical treatment and

³ The full DarkFox generated report is available in [Appendix D](#)

school required interim separation. If there is a restriction on reducing the course load of students living in the residence halls, it would be reasonable to require Mr. Thorn to engage in other activities (e.g., trying out and/or connecting with the Lacrosse team, going to the gym, participating in FCA) to ensure he is actively involved on campus.

5. Mr. Thorn should be offered counseling support if he returns to campus. The initial focus should be on harm reduction (see [Appendix A](#)) and change theory-based conversations around his understanding of these religious experiences as they may relate to a potential paranoid or delusional experience. Based on recent behavior in the home and how he conducted himself during the interview, I recommend that on-campus counseling be an initial connection to stabilization this semester and perhaps a useful “passing of the referral baton” to a deeper exploration of a thought disorder. This counseling support also establishes a connection in case his behaviors return and offer an additional evaluation or care is needed.
6. The student conduct process should meet to review the damage done in the laundry room and the disruptive behaviors in the community (e.g., running naked on campus). These conduct violations would likely result in restitution for the damage and a probationary status. This would establish a baseline for behavior and if other concerns arise during the semester, they would then be addressed through due process and with these behaviors as a baseline.
7. As Mr. Thorn returns to campus, there should be regular check-ins with someone from the student conduct office, wellness, or BIT/CARE teams. These should ensure some basic monitoring of his behavior to confirm there is no building up of multiple concerns and stresses as outlined previously and that he is taking full advantage of mental health resources and academic accommodations at UC Sunnydale. A case manager would prove useful in this capacity, along with a referral to career counseling to explore support while on campus.

At this time, the behaviors exhibited by Mr. Thorn appear to have subsided, and the lack of threat or violent action toward others would lead toward allowing him to return based on the above conditions (e.g., signing a release for hospital records and the CARE/BIT and/or conduct office to receive a summary, attending counseling on campus weekly, meeting with a case manager or other student affairs staff member, meeting with ODA, and successfully completing the conduct process).

A secondary plan could be taking either of his classes online and slowly allowing Mr. Thorn some limited access to campus, social connections, and campus services (e.g., counseling) throughout the semester for a return next semester. This is, however, not what he is requesting at this time, and given the lack of threat and the limited nature of the disruption, this should only be considered failing an appeal of the reduced course load living on campus requirement (if there is one).

Thank you,

Brian Van Brunt

Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D.
Director of Behavior and Threat Management
brian@dprep.com
603-491-3215

Appendix A

Belief	Suggested Interventions
Focus on water and consuming water related to a connection to god and potentially giving him comfort and insight.	Staff should have an awareness that water is a potential support/triggering item for Mr. Thorn and share with case management and the CARE/BIT if there are any further issues around water.
A belief that he enters a certain state and is stronger, faster, and able to see things other people can't see.	Further monitoring of this line of thinking and beliefs would be useful to explore in counseling with a focus on both listening and understanding, as well as introducing plausible, reasonable alternative explanations for his experiences and abilities. This, paired with his overconfidence about lacrosse, should be monitored for escalations in thoughts (e.g., confidence in more dangerous activities or lacking impulsive control when choosing his behavior).
Having a reaction to religious content and ideas. An example of this is experience in the religious class leading to anxiety and paranoia.	Taking a break from his religious studies class would certainly help at this stage, and further monitoring and avoidance of religious triggers would be useful.
Special connection to Maggie Walsh in the psychology department.	The CARE/BIT may review this report and have further dialogue to explore some of the history with Maggie Walsh related to these events. The balance here will be upsetting the Dean vs. engaging with him to share any further correspondence or connection with him by the student.
He does not wish to be on medication.	This should be respected at this stage, given his ability to talk during the interview and express his desire to return to school.
Embarrassment upon return from campus (e.g., from rumors, video on Fizz).	Support for Mr. Thorn is suggested through counseling and residential life services. The college should also take steps to have the videos taken down.

Appendix B: Pathways Report

10/13/24, 9:11 PM

College | Pathways from D-Prep



Home | Pathways-K12 | Pathways-HE | Pathways-HR | Suicide Wayfinder | Case Example | Resources

Pathways Higher Ed

Your Responses

Suicide	Social Problems: 2	Anxiety: 1	Harassing Behaviors: 1	Affective Violence: 1
Depression:	Academic Trouble: 1	Intense Thought/Action: 3	Stalking Others:	Trolling Actions:
Self-Injury:	Financial Insecurity:	Hallucinations/Delusions: 3	Acts of Partner Violence:	Transient Threats:
Alcohol/THC:	Adjusting to Change:	Intimidating Behaviors:	Sexual Violence:	Substantive Threats:
Serious Drug Use:	Loss or Bereavement:	Vandalism: 2	Incel Behavior:	White Supremacy:
Being Teased:	Being Stalked:	Being Controlled:	Eating/Sleeping:	Weapons Interest/Access:
Are they without housing? No				
Are they a veteran? No				

Rating: HIGH

Based on the information shared, it is recommended to complete a suicide assessment using the [Suicide Wayfinder](#).

Based on the information shared, it is recommended to complete a full violence risk assessment. The [DarkFox Violence Risk Assessment Tool](#) is the recommended system to use. Please contact info@dprepsafety.com to learn more about access.

COUNSELING/CASE MANAGEMENT

Anxiety

- Normalize their feelings and offer support and care
- Identify triggers and any comforts or reducers
- Discuss a voluntary referral to counseling services

Intense Thought/Action

- Make an immediate referral to counseling and walk the individual to the clinic
- Identify any immediate safety risks or conduct violations
- Contact emergency contacts/guardian under FERPA

Hallucinations/Delusions

- Conduct an immediate screening by clinical staff, law enforcement or the emergency department
- Explore the medical leave policy and available off-campus treatment
- Contact emergency contacts/guardian under FERPA

Academic Trouble

- Offer support, normalization, and advice/guidance
- Consider a referral to academic support
- Consider a referral to counseling
- Explore goals and strategies for improvement

RESIDENTIAL LIFE/CONDUCT

Social Problems

- Encourage counseling referral and offer to walk them to the clinic
- Discuss any interruption of academics, relationships, and life skills
- Encourage social connection, clubs, sports, activities

Vandalism

- Set clear conduct limits and monitor for compliance
- Consider parental/emergency contact or emergency contact notification
- Identify high risk behaviors and engage in harm reduction

TITLE IX/CONDUCT

Harassing Behaviors

- Identify the range of behaviors and parties involved
- Consider the conduct process to address their behaviors
- Consider Title IX/EEO involvement
- Offer both parties referrals to counseling support

POLICE/CONDUCT

Affective Violence

<https://www.pathwaystriage.com/college>

1/2

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College | Pathways from D-Prep

- Explore stressors and identify escalation triggers
- Consider the conduct process to address their behaviors
- Offer support, normalization, and advice/guidance

Print

[Back to Answers](#)

[Reset Tool](#)

No data is stored in this online system related to your entries. Users are encouraged to print and save the outcome to a PDF and maintain this according to your institution's data privacy standards.

For more information, contact brian@dprep.com

Pathways is an expert system that takes observations and user input and generates suggested interventions based on user input and research from psychology, criminology, threat, and law enforcement fields. Pathways provides support to threat teams and law enforcement in the summary and development of a risk mitigation plan. Information provided by Pathways should be used in conjunction within the context of the experience, research and expert judgement of law enforcement, counseling and threat assessment professionals.

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