

VTRA Scale

Violent Threat Risk Assessment
Scale

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Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Scale



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Violent Threat and Homicide Ideation Assessment

Assessing for violent threats and homicidal ideations is can pose a complexity. Many of the domains and factors of assessing for violent threats are similar to that of assessing for suicide. However, an important aspect when assessing for violent threats is differentiating the difference between a threat and expressed anger. This is because a threat includes anger and is usually expressed in conjunction with anger. However, threats are different from anger in that they incorporate a target of the anger and a desire to harm another individual.

The Violent Threat Assessment Scale has been devised to address the lack of a measure for assess a client's risk of acting out on their thoughts of wanting to harm another person by rating the client on the similar scale of their level of desire, intent, capability, the client's history, and protective factors. Unlike research on risk assessment for suicidal behaviors, research on the assessment of violent threat or homicidal ideations is limited. However, the research conducted have found that common factors of assessing for violent threats that are similar to that of those that are assessed for in suicide risk. The Violent Threat Assessment Scale was developed by implementing similar domains found by Joiner et al. (2007) and combining the assessment questions found in the RAGE-V and DANGERTOME assessment, along with the risk assessment level published by the Critical Incident Response Group of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Brunt, 2015; Juhnke, 2010; O'Toole, 2000).

Although the Violent Threat Assessment Scale provides a form of assessing for violent threats and homicidal ideations, it is important to take into consideration cultural factors when assessing for these thoughts. These factors include the fact that expressing anger can be see differently depending on cultures and in some cultures, it is not abnormal to state "I am so mad at them, I will kill them". Therefore, cultural sensitivity is required when clarifying the underlined meaning of the client's statement. Additionally, the Violent Threat Assessment Scale should not be used in replacement of clinical judgment and all ethical and legal guidelines including guidelines for consultation and documentation should occur.

Contents That Follow

Through literature reviews and the numerical quantitative structured rating scale for violent threats assessment was devised as established as a means for assessing clients at crisis hotlines. The content that follows are to be used to evaluate and assess clients, patients, callers, or individuals who may or may not be presenting ideations or thoughts of violent threats, harm to others, and/ or homicidal ideations and its severity.

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