InterACTT
— INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE —
FOR CARE AND THREAT TEAMS

TODD: Multiple Teams: How Do We Choose?

One of the challenges facing schools, colleges and universities is sorting through the needs of multiple teams operating in connection with one another. These teams are often focused on safety and security issues for various populations including students, visitors, faculty, staff and others who may use the buildings or campus resources. Teams often include:

- Behavioral intervention team (BIT) and CARE team
- Threat assessment team
- Retention and bias response teams
- Crisis response team or critical incident management team (CISM)
- Faculty and staff focused teams
- Various teams on satellite campuses

Having multiple teams makes sense on first examination. Teams are constructed to meet existing needs within the community. Narrowly defined teams with focused missions and scope initially make sense. These teams often increase the privacy of information sharing when it comes to sensitive issues, have experienced staff focused on a more narrowly defined mission and have a higher accountability to ensure their smaller scope of practice is accomplished.

However, the downside of multiple teams is that they can lead to difficulties with information sharing amongs the multiple teams, different databases that are not compatible or shared amongst teams, infrequent meetings, and less focus on training. Team members who are typically intervention and solution focused do not always attend to the need for detailing their decision-making process or around how information is shared with them via initial reports and operationalized processed on when and how to coordinate with other teams on campus.

Having a single, multi-disciplinary, collaborative team made up of diverse members (think race, age, gender, socio-economic status, political beliefs, region, sexual orientation and position) creates a better process to reduce implicit bias, increase cultural competency, avoid blind-spots and develop robust and innovative threat management plans. A single team also allows for increased clarity in terms of marketing and advertising (key factors in obtaining reports and information needed for assessment and intervention), less policy and procedure paperwork and brings together those with threat and subject matter expertise with those who have case management and counseling skills .

If you have multiple teams in your organization, engage in cross membership amongst the teams to reduce siloing of information and clarify how information is shared with each team and amongst the existing teams. Each team should meet regularly, at least twice a month if not weekly, clearly document each stage of the team's process and use a shared database amongst those teams where information sharing is an essential part increasing accuracy and breadth of the assessment and the effectiveness of the interventions.

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