Framework For Threat Assessment/Behavior Intervention Team (BIT)
Source: Policy and framework adapted from the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education Report
"Threat Assessment In Schools, A Guide To Managing Threatening Situations and To Creating Safe School
Climates," July 2004.

I. BIT POLICY
        Must authorize appropriate authority and should describe:
1) The purpose and scope of the policy
2) The role of educators and the behavior assessment team in relation to the role of law enforcement
3) The identity of, and delegation of authority to, school officials concerning determination that a behavior assessment or investigation be pursued
4) The definition of the threshold of concern for initiating the behavior assessment inquiry or investigation (the description of the nature and extent of behavior or communication that would trigger a behavior assessment inquiry or investigation
5) The description of the types of information that may be gathered during the assessment
6) The designation of the individuals or group of individuals who would be responsible for gathering and analyzing information
7) The steps and procedures to be followed from initiation to conclusion of the behavior assessment inquiry or investigation

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND VARIANCES
        The BIT members should understand, in detail, what laws and regulations impact information sharing in a behavior intervention assessment. University policy should allow for exceptions to constraints on information disclosure during threatening situations.
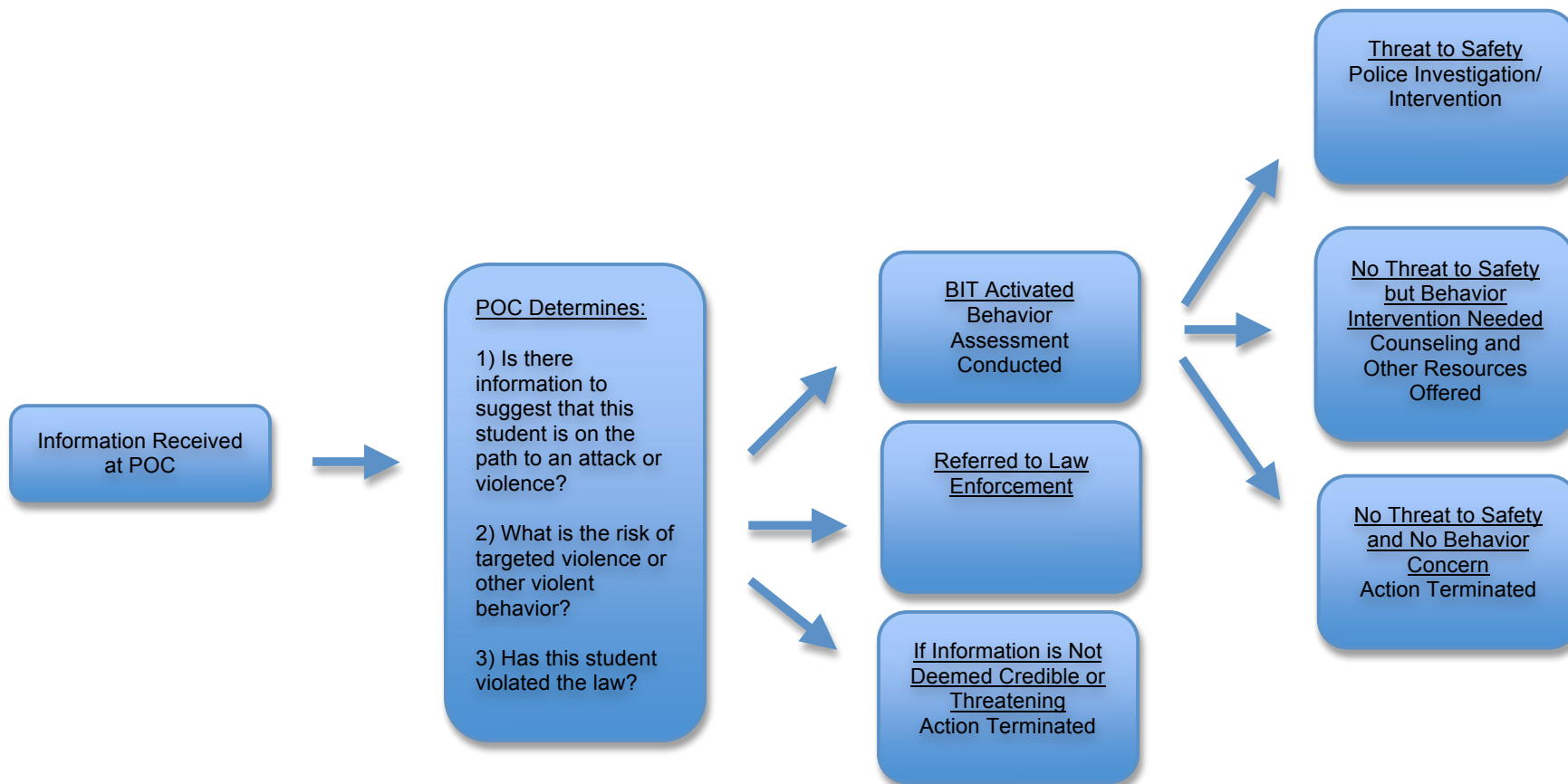
III. BIT MEMBERS
1) Senior school administrator – (this individual should serve as the point of contact for the team) Dean of Student Life Office
2) A faculty member
3) An investigator – University Police Officer
4) A mental health professional
5) Academic Affairs
6) Residence Life
7) Student Rights and Responsibilities
8) Ad hoc member(s) – Someone who knows the student or employee
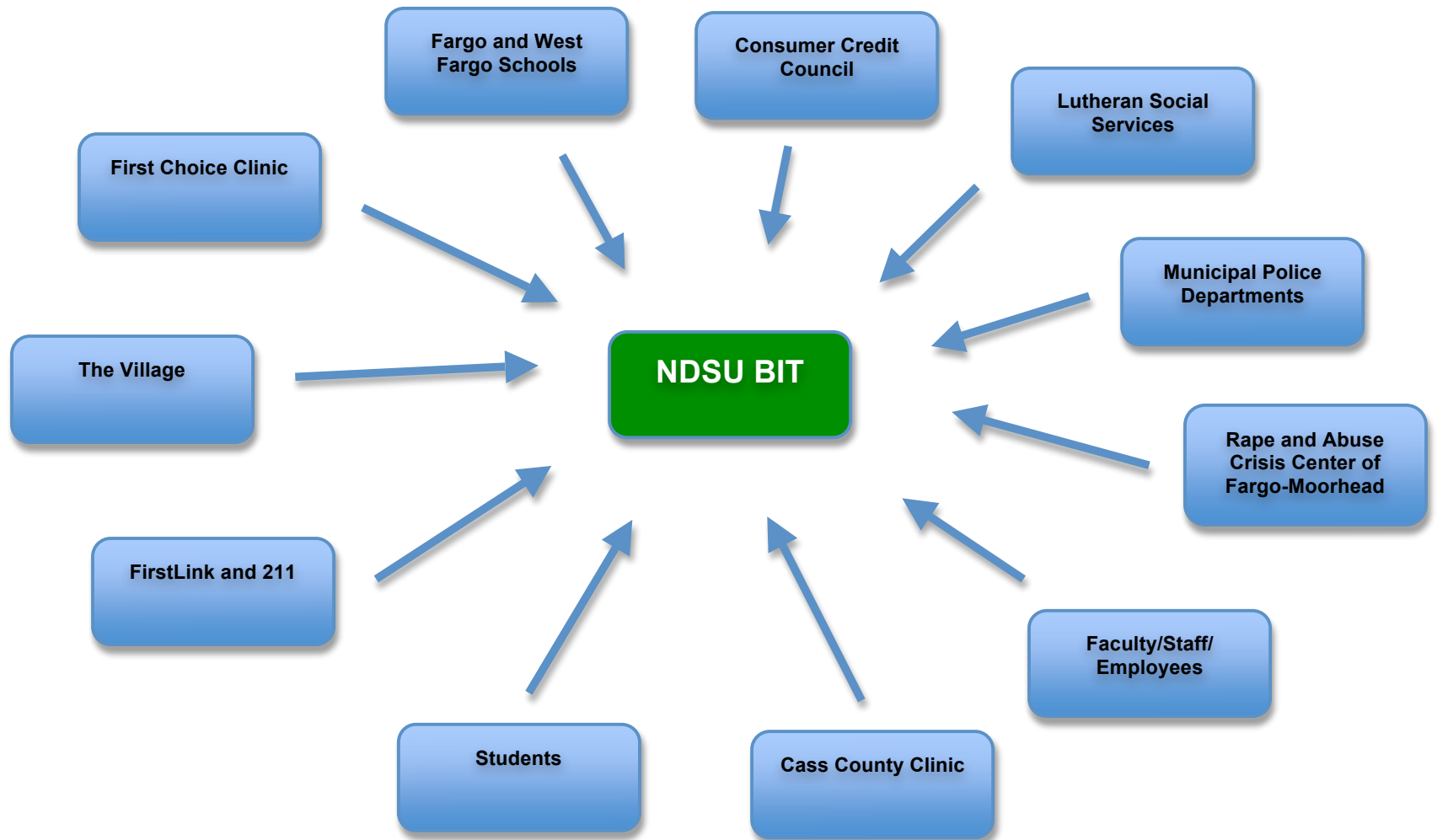
IV. TRIGGERS
        The BIT email and the Dean of Student Life Office phone are available for students or employees to report a concern. This hotline should be managed by the BIT point of contact. An acknowledgement should always be sent to the individual who reported the concern to the team if his or her identity is known.

        The BIT should make their existence and the process for reporting information to the BIT known to all members of the university and local community. The BIT should be capable of receiving and interpreting information from any source.

```
Information Received
at POC
        │
        ▼
POC Determines:

1) Is there
information to
suggest that this
student is on the
path to an attack or
violence?

2) What is the risk of
targeted violence or
other violent
behavior?

3) Has this student
violated the law?
        │
        ├──────►  BIT Activated
        │         Behavior
        │         Assessment
        │         Conducted
        │              │
        │              ├──────►  Threat to Safety
        │              │         Police Investigation/
        │              │         Intervention
        │              │
        │              ├──────►  No Threat to Safety
        │              │         but Behavior
        │              │         Intervention Needed
        │              │         Counseling and
        │              │         Other Resources
        │              │         Offered
        │              │
        │              └──────►  No Threat to Safety
        │                        and No Behavior
        │                        Concern
        │                        Action Terminated
        │
        ├──────►  Referred to Law
        │         Enforcement
        │
        └──────►  If Information is Not
                  Deemed Credible or
                  Threatening
                  Action Terminated
```

BIT Inputs

Fargo and West Fargo Schools

Consumer Credit Council

Lutheran Social Services

First Choice Clinic

Municipal Police Departments

The Village

NDSU BIT

Rape and Abuse Crisis Center of Fargo-Moorhead

FirstLink and 211

Faculty/Staff/ Employees

Students

Cass County Clinic

V. <u>THE BIT ASSESSMENT</u>
    The Process of The Assessment:
1) Determine the facts that drew attention to the student, the situation, and possibly the targets:
    a. What behaviors and/or communications were reported, and by whom?
    b. What was the situation?
    c. Who, if anyone, witnessed the reported behavior?
2) Information about the student:
    a. Identifying information:
        i. Name
        ii. Physical description
        iii. Date of birth
        iv. Identification numbers (social security number, student ID, etc.)
    b. Background information:
        i. Residences
        ii. Family/home situation
        iii. Academic performance
        iv. Social networks
        v. History of relationships and conflicts
        vi. History of harassing others or of being harassed by others
        vii. History of violence toward self and others
        viii. History of having been a victim of violence or bullying
        ix. Known attitudes toward violence
        x. Criminal behavior
        xi. Mental health/substance abuse history
        xii. Access to an use of weapons
        xiii. History of grievances and grudges
    c. Current life situation:
        i. Present stability of living and home situations
        ii. Nature and quality of current relationships and personal support
        iii. Recent losses or losses of status (Shame, humiliation, recent breakup or loss of significant relationship)
        iv. Current grievances or grudges
        v. Perceptions of being treated unfairly
        vi. Known difficulty coping with a stressful event
        vii. Any 'downward' progression in social, academic, behavioral, or psychological functioning
        viii. Recent hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair, including suicidal thoughts, gestures, actions, or attempts
        ix. Pending crises or change in circumstances
    d. Does the student have a trusting relationship with an adult who is connected with the student? Can they provide any information on the student?
3) Information about the threatening behaviors:
    a. Ideas or plans about injuring him/herself or attacking a school or persons at school
    b. Communications or writings that suggest that the student has an unusual or worrisome interest in school attacks
    c. Comments that express or imply that student is considering mounting an attack or violent behavior at school
    d. Recent weapon-seeking behavior, especially if weapon-seeking is linked to ideas about attack or expressions about interest in attack or violent behavior
    e. Communications or writings suggesting the student condones or is considering violence to redress a grievance or solve a problem
    f. Rehearsals of attacks, ambushes, or violent behavior
4) Information from students or adults who know the student in question and witnessed questionable behaviors or actions:
    a. What was said? To whom?
    b. What was written? To whom?

      c.   What was done?

      d.   When and where did this occur?

      e.   Who else observed this behavior?

      f.   Did the student say why he or she acted as they did?

5) Motives:
   a. Are any motives present?
6) Target selection:
   a. Has the student identified a target or targets and can anything be learned from these potential targets?
7) Consider student interview:
   a. Directly ask student about his or her intentions
8) Consider potential target interview:

The Evaluation:
1) Determine:
   a. Is the behavior of the student consistent with movement on a pathway toward an attack or violent behavior?
   b. Do the student's current situation and setting incline him or her toward or away from violence?
2) What are the student's motive(s) and goals?
   a. What motivated the student to make the statements or take the actions that caused him or her to come to attention?
   b. Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
   c. Does the student have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?
   d. What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result? Does the student feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternatives?
3) Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to carryout violent behavior?
   a. What, if anything, has the student communicated to someone else (targets, friends, other students, teachers, family, others) or written in a diary, journal, or Web site concerning his or her ideas and/or intentions?
   b. Have friends been alerted or 'warned away'?
4) Has the subject shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?
   a. School attacks or attackers
   b. Weapons
   c. Incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murderers)
5) Has the student engaged in attack-related or violent behaviors? Including but not limited to:
   a. Developing an attack idea or plan
   b. Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons
   c. Casing, or checking out, possible sites and areas for attack
   d. Rehearsing attacks or ambushes
6) Does the student have the capacity to carry out an act of violence or targeted violence?
   a. How organized is the student's thinking and behavior?
   b. Does the student have the means, e.g. access to a weapon, to carry out an attack or violent act?
7) Is the student experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?
   a. Is there information to suggest that the student is experiencing desperation and/or despair?
   b. Has the student experienced a recent failure, loss and/or loss of status?
   c. Is the student known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event?
   d. Is the student now, or has the student ever been, suicidal or 'accident-prone'? Has the student engaged in behavior that suggests that he or she has considered ending his or her life?
8) Does the student have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?

    a. Does the student have at least one relationship with an adult where the student feels that he or she can confide in the adult and believes that the adult will listen without judging or jumping to conclusions?

    b. Is the student emotionally connected to or disconnected from other students?

    c. Has the student previously come to someone's attention or raised concern in a way that suggested he or she needs intervention or supportive services?

9) Does the student see violence as an acceptable, desirable, or only way to solve problems?

    a. Does the setting around the student (Friends, fellow students, parents, teachers, adults) explicitly or implicitly support or endorse violence as a way of resolving problems or disputes?

    b. Has the student been 'dared' by others to engage in an act of violence?

10) Is the student's conversation and 'story' consistent with his or her actions?

    a. Does information from collateral interviews and from the student's own behavior confirm or dispute what the student says is going on?

11) Are other people concerned about the student's potential for violence?

    a. Are those who know the student concerned that he or she might take action based on violent ideas or plans?

    b. Are those who know the student concerned about a specific target?

    c. Have those who know the student witnessed recent changes or escalations in mood and behaviors?

12) What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?

    a. What factors in the student's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that the student will attempt to mount an attack at school?

    b. What is the response of other persons who know about the student's ideas or plan to mount an attack? (Do those who know about the student's ideas actively discourage the student from acting violently, encourage the student to attack, deny the possibility of violence, passively collude with an attack, etc?)

The Conclusion and Action:

IF: There is insufficient information for the BIT to be reasonably certain that the student does not pose a threat;

OR: The student appears to be on the path to violent behavior;

THEN: The team should recommend that the matter be referred to law enforcement.

OR

IF: The weight of the information is convincing that the student does not pose a threat of violent behavior or targeted school violence;

AND: The information collected and analyzed indicates the student requires behavioral assistance;

THEN: The BIT may recommend counseling services with the support of the appropriate university office and may conclude the behavior assessment.

OR

IF: The weight of the information is convincing that the student does not pose a threat of violent behavior or targeted violence;

AND: The information collected and analyzed indicates that the student does not require behavioral assistance;

THEN: The BIT may conclude the behavior assessment.