

Tarasoff and Dangerousness Checklist

Stage 1: Assessment

- Does the patient have a history of violent behavior?
- Does the patient have a history of violent conduct with a previous assessment or diagnosis of mental illness?
- Does the client have a history of arrests for violent conduct?
- Does the individual have a history of threats associated with violent conflict?
- Has the patient ever been diagnosed with a mental disorder for which violence is a common symptom?
- Has the individual had at least one inpatient hospitalization associated with dangerous conduct?
- Does the patient have any history of dangerous conduct, apparently unprovoked and not stress-related?
- If there is a history of dangerous conduct, how long ago was the incident?

If the patient is considered dangerous:

- Note any threats
- Notify the person who might be harmed
- Determine if any serious threats are related to drug or alcohol intoxication
- Ask the individual direct and focused questions:
 - “What is the most violent thing you’ve ever done?”
 - “How close have you come to becoming violent?”
- Use collateral reports
- Has the client threatened others?
- Does the patient have access to weapons?
- What is the patient’s relationship to the intended victim”?
- Does the patient belong to a social group that condones violence?

Stage 2: Deciding a Course of Action

- If the danger is not imminent
 - Keep the patient in intensive therapy
 - Deal with aggression as part of treatment

- If compliance is not good, consider the danger level to be higher
- ☐ Invite the patient to participate in the disclosure decision
 - Contact the third party in the presence of the patient, if possible
- ☐ Attempt environmental manipulations
 - Medication may be initiated, changed, or increased
 - Get rid of all lethal weapons and medications
- ☐ Keep careful records
 - Note the source of the information
 - Note the content
 - Note the date of disclosure
 - Include rationale for all decisions
- ☐ If warning a third party is unavoidable, disclose only the minimum amount necessary to protect the victim or the public.
 - State the specific threat
 - Reserve any opinions or predictions
- ☐ Consult with supervisor/colleague

Stage 3: Monitoring

- ☐ Constantly monitor any course of action to ensure the objectives of the initial implementation are satisfied.
- ☐ Follow-up procedures should be scrupulously adhered to.