



Vermont Violence Prevention Project Situational Awareness



Situational awareness involves being mindful and attentive to your surroundings, recognizing potential threats, and understanding how to respond effectively. It's about staying present and being aware of what's happening around you to keep yourself and others safe.

1. Stay Present

Avoid Distractions: Limit the use of phones and other distractions when you're out in public.

Be Mindful: Pay attention to the people, activities, and environment around you.

2. Trust Your Instincts

Unsafe vs. Uncomfortable: Understand the difference between feeling unsafe and simply being uncomfortable.

Take Action: If something feels off or unsafe, take it seriously and act accordingly.

3. Observe Your Surroundings

Notice Unusual Activities: Pay attention to any unusual activities, sounds, or movements.

Watch for Concerning Behaviors: Be alert to behaviors that seem out of place or potentially harmful.

4. Promote Community Safety

Avoid Assumptions: Don't label people threats simply because they are different.

Value Differences: Recognize that differences strengthens and makes the community more resilient and add valuable perspectives in a crisis.



Be Attentive

- Keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings.
- Take note of exits and safe places in case of an emergency.

Communicate

- Share any concerns about unusual or concerning behavior with others.
- Report suspicious activities to appropriate authorities.

Educate Yourself

- Learn about common safety risks in your area.
- Stay informed about safety protocols and emergency procedures.

Shared Responsibility

- Keeping each other safe is a collective effort. Everyone plays a role in maintaining a secure environment.
- By being aware and proactive, we can build a safer, more supportive community for everyone.

Situational awareness is crucial for personal and community safety. By staying present, trusting your instincts, staying open to differences in opinion and observing your surroundings, you contribute to a safer environment. It's not just about protecting yourself; it's about looking out for everyone.

Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP





Vermont Violence Prevention Project

Recognizing Concerning Behavior



1. Behavioral Changes

- Sudden/extreme changes in mood, personality, or social interactions.
- Notable shifts in performance at work or school.
- Disruptions to daily routines.

2. Signs of Withdrawal or Isolation

- Withdrawing from social interactions.
- Avoiding friends, family, or usual activities.

3. Aggression and Hostility

- Exhibiting verbal or physical aggression.
- Using hostile or violent language.

4. Manipulative Behavior

- Isolating someone from their social support system.
- Attempting to control aspects of another person's life.

5. Threats and Intimidation

- Making threats or engaging in behavior that causes fear to many around them.
- Patterns of intimidation or coercion.

6. Pay Attention

Early Intervention: Recognizing concerning behavior early allows for timely intervention and support, potentially preventing harmful situations.

Building a Safer Community: By showing care and empathy towards those exhibiting concerning behaviors, we can build a stronger, more supportive community.



Observe

- Pay attention to changes in behavior, mood, and social interactions.
- Notice signs of withdrawal, aggression, or manipulative behavior.

Listen

- Listen to what people are saying and how they communicate.
- Look out for anger, hostility, or violent language.

Share Observations

- Report what you observe from a sincere desire to help, no judgement.
- Communicate your concerns to appropriate authorities.

Empathy and Support

- Through empathy and support, we can prevent harm and work towards a community where everyone feels safe and valued.

Compassionate Focus

- Building a community where compassion is the focus helps create a safer, more supportive environment for everyone.

Concerning behavior refers to actions or conduct that raise alarm due to their potential to lead to harmful situations or violence. Recognizing concerning behavior is crucial for preventing violence and ensuring community safety. By staying alert, being empathetic, and sharing observations, we can foster a supportive and secure environment for all.

Learn more: [UVM.EDU/VVPP](https://uvm.edu/vvpp)





Vermont Violence
Prevention Project

Using Understanding & Empathy to Counteract Hate



Hateful actions and incidents target individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other characteristics. These incidents can take many forms, including speech, harassment, discrimination, social exclusion, vandalism, and violence.

1. Recognize the Impact

Forms of Hate: Hate can be expressed through speech, harassment, discrimination, social exclusion, and violence.

Types of Violence: Both physical and psychological violence cause significant harm.

Never the Victim's Fault: It is crucial to understand that victims are never to blame for the violence they experience.

2. Understand and Empathize

Motives Behind Actions: Trying to understand the reasons behind hateful or violent actions can open the door to dialogue and education.

Power of Empathy: Empathy and understanding are powerful tools in counteracting hate and fostering positive change within the community.

3. Take Action

Reporting Incidents: Always report any hateful actions you witness. Reporting is essential for promoting safety and well-being in the community.

Community Focus: By focusing on compassion and understanding, we can build a safer, more supportive environment for everyone.



Tips

Be Observant

Stay Engaged: Pay attention to your surroundings and be aware.

Note Details: When witnessing an incident, try to remember key details such as descriptions and the nature of the incident.

Report Incidents

Timely Reporting: Report incidents as soon as possible to appropriate authorities.

Provide Information: Share all relevant information to effectively help in addressing the incident.

Support Victims

Offer Support: Show empathy and support to victims. Let them know they are not alone.

Right to Report: Remind victims of their right to report the incident and seek help.

Check in: Not everyone feels safe to intervene in the moment. Check in with a victim after an incident to see how they are.

Education & Dialogue

Engage in Conversations: Encourage open discussions about fostering respect and understanding in the community.

Educate Others: Share information and resources about the importance of empathy, inclusion, and standing against harmful actions. importance of empathy and inclusivity.

Hateful actions harm individuals and the broader community. By recognizing the impact, understanding the motives, taking action, and fostering empathy, we can create a community where compassion and safety are prioritized.

Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP





Vermont Violence Prevention Project Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to those in the relationship. IPV is a serious issue that can have lasting effects on a person's well-being.

1. Recognize the Signs

Forms of IPV: IPV can include physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual violence, and controlling behaviors.

Warning Signs: Look for signs such as unexplained injuries, frequent absences from work or school, personality changes, and isolation from friends and family.

2. Understand the Impact

Physical Effects: IPV can result in injuries, chronic pain, digestive issues and other physical health problems.

Psychological Effects: Victims of IPV often experience anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other mental health issues.

Social and Economic Impact: IPV can lead to social isolation, loss of employment, and financial instability and can mean that victims need more community support and resources.



Be Aware

Educate Yourself: Learn about the different forms of IPV and signs to better recognize when someone might be in an abusive relationship.

Stay Observant: Pay attention to changes in behavior or appearance that may indicate IPV.

Take Action

Report Abuse: If you witness IPV or suspect abuse, report it to the appropriate authorities, and tell the victim you've done so if you can.

Provide Resources: Share information on local shelters, hotlines, and support groups. Offer a listening ear as people in abusive relationships tend to be isolated.

Promote Awareness

Raise Awareness: Talk about IPV in your community to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding it.

Encourage Open Conversations: Foster an environment where people feel safe discussing their experiences and seeking help.

Intimate Partner Violence is a serious issue that affects many individuals and communities. By recognizing the signs, understanding the impact, supporting victims, and taking action, we can work towards preventing IPV and supporting those affected by it.

Learn more: [UVM.EDU/VVPP](https://uvm.edu/vvpp)





Vermont Violence Prevention Project Recognizing Crisis



1. Understanding Crisis

Community Role: We each have a vital part in promoting and supporting the mental health of all community members.

Awareness: Recognizing the signs of a mental health crisis or self-harm is the first step in providing help.

2. Recognizing the Signs

Changes in Appearance: Noticeable alterations in hygiene, attire, or general appearance.

Behavioral Shifts: Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses, withdrawal from social interactions, aggression, or dependency on others.

Performance Decline: Sudden drops in performance at work or school, failing to follow through on commitments.

Family History: Awareness of a family history of self-harm or mental health issues can be crucial.

Emotional Red Flags: Expressions of feeling like a burden, recent public embarrassment or immense feelings of shame or increasingly harsh "inner critic", inappropriate emotional reactions.

Substance Abuse: Increased or new substance abuse can be a significant indicator.

Preparatory Behaviors: Actions like giving away possessions, tying up loose ends, and writing a will can indicate a crisis.



Tips

Immediate Action

If someone has a plan, means, and intent to carry out suicide or homicide, get help immediately.

Resource Sharing

Provide information about local mental health resources, crisis lines, and support groups.

Create a Supportive Environment

Foster understanding, compassion, and support within your community about mental health and substance use.

Contact Information

**National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline:**
9-8-8

Crisis Text Line:
Text VT to 741741 (24/7 support)

Emergency Services: Call 911

By staying vigilant and recognizing the signs of a mental health crisis or self-harm, we can create a supportive and safe community for everyone.

Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP





Vermont Violence Prevention Project Threatening Behavior



1. Understanding the Importance

Community Role: Each of us plays a vital role in maintaining the safety of our community.

Awareness: Recognizing threatening behavior is crucial for preventing potential harm.

2. Identify Threatening Behavior

Verbal Threats: Pay attention to language that seems threatening or suspicious, whether spoken or written (e.g., emails, texts, social media). This also includes Explicit threats, Patterns of “joking” threats, Implied immediate threats (e.g. “You’ll be sorry”)

Physical Intimidation: Even without physical contact, aggressive behaviors like lunging or yelling over someone can indicate a threat.

3. Responding to Threats

Prioritize Safety: Always ensure your own physical safety first.

Wait and See: Perhaps someone’s behavior is newly concerning, but you don’t have enough information to intervene. Look for patterns of escalation in chaotic or increasingly harmful behaviors.

Report Concerns: Once safe, report any threatening behavior to the appropriate authorities for intervention and support.

Empathy and Understanding: If safe, approach individuals displaying concerning behavior with empathy.



Anonymous Reporting
Utilize community tools for anonymous reporting to connect individuals with a team for managing concerns and providing help.

Community Focus

Building a community focused on compassion and understanding can prevent threatening behavior and create a safer environment.

Open Communication

Encourage open communication and ask open-ended questions to understand their perspective.

Professional Assistance

Connect them with professional help to address the root causes of their behavior.

Check In

Sometimes people are extremely isolated and need to remember that someone else cares about them.

Contact Information

Local Authorities: For immediate threats, contact local law enforcement.

Community Resources: Use available anonymous reporting tools to report concerns and connect individuals with help.

By recognizing and addressing threatening behavior with empathy and understanding, committing to caring relationships and not leaving people behind, we can create a safer and more supportive community for everyone.

Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP





Vermont Violence Prevention Project Suspicious Packages



1. Importance of Vigilance

Community Role: Everyone plays a crucial role in maintaining the safety of our community.

Staying Mindful: The best way to keep each other safe is to stay present and mindful.

2. Recognize Suspicious Packages

Indicators of Suspicion: Incorrect address information, bad or distorted handwriting, unusual smells, excessive postage, irregular shapes, unusual noises and when the package arrived and who delivered it.

3. Actions to Take

Immediate Action: If a package makes you concerned, take action immediately.

Call Authorities: Contact the appropriate authorities without handling or altering the package.

4. Understanding Risks

Potential Consequences: While rare, life-threatening packages can cause death, injury, and property destruction.

Target Considerations: Think about whether you or your organization could be a target due to motives like revenge, business disputes, extortion, or terrorism.

Community Safety



Prompt Reporting

Any suspicion of a package, no matter how small, should be reported promptly.

Awareness and Action

Your vigilance and quick response are key to keeping our community safe.



By recognizing and responding to suspicious packages with awareness and prompt action, we can create a safer and more secure environment for everyone.

Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP



Vermont Violence Prevention Project Safety Planning



A Safety Plan addresses various situations such as navigating difficult relationships, dealing with thoughts of self-harm, concerns about personal safety, or managing emotional pain. Along with this, personal preparedness and community involvement help to navigate life's challenges and prepares you for difficult situations which contribute to a stronger, safer community overall.

1. Triggers & Warning Signs

Identify personal triggers and warning signs that may indicate when you need additional support.

2. Coping Strategies

Develop and document coping skills that help you manage stress and emotional challenges. If you are having a hard time coming up with these, you may want to ask for help.

3. Safe Places & Social Support

Include safe places or positive social settings where you can find support. List trusted individuals or professionals to contact in emergencies.

4. Reasons for Living

Acknowledge and list your reasons for living as a motivational reminder.

5. Make a Crisis Plan

Who would you call in a personal crisis? What resources or supports can you lean on?



Review Regularly

Regularly review and update your Safety Plan to ensure it remains relevant to your current needs.

Seek Support

Connect with trusted friends, family, or professionals to help create and refine your personalized Safety Plan.

Acknowledging the Need for Help

Seeking support for yourself shows courage and a commitment to your health and wellness.

Community Support

By prioritizing your safety and emotional well-being, you contribute to a safer and more supportive community.

Building and maintaining a Safety Plan enhances your resilience and ensures you have the resources and support needed during challenging times.

Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP





Vermont Violence Prevention Project Reporting Concerns



It is our collective duty to report any act of violence, threat of violence, or concerns about someone potentially hurting themselves or others. Recognizing and reporting concerns early allows for timely intervention, potentially preventing harm to individuals or others.

1. Types of Concerns

Concerns may not always fit neatly into categories. They could include threats of violence, unusual or concerning behavior, or any situation that seems unsafe or likely to escalate.

2. Details to Include

When reporting, provide as much relevant information as possible to ensure appropriate assistance. This includes describing the behavior, why it concerns you, and any relevant context.

3. How to Report

Emergency Calls: Use emergency services like 9-1-1 for immediate threats.

iPhone: Utilize the emergency SOS feature.

Android: Use the emergency call function.

Anonymous Reporting: Many organizations and communities offer anonymous reporting tools. Share your concerns through these channels if you prefer to remain anonymous.



Tips

Empathy and Compassion

Report concerns with empathy. The person you are concerned about may be struggling with their own issues, and understanding their situation helps in providing appropriate support.

Community Care

Reporting concerns demonstrates that you care about the safety and well-being of others in your community.

Awareness and Safety

By reporting concerns, we contribute to a safer and more supportive environment for everyone.

Learn more at UVM.EDU/VVPP





Vermont Violence
Prevention Project
Active Threat Response
Run, Hide, Fight



An active threat is any individual whose actions pose an immediate risk of death or serious injury, such as an active shooter or someone wielding a weapon. The duration of these situations are often unpredictable and typically last between 10 to 15 minutes.

1. Response Options

Run: Evacuate the area as quickly and safely as possible. If you can't evacuate immediately, find a safe place to hide until you can move.

Hide: Find a secure location to shelter yourself from the threat. Barricade yourself if possible and stay out of sight. Remain quiet and avoid making noise.

Fight: As a last resort, if you are confronted by the threat, use anything available to defend yourself. Employ makeshift weapons or anything at your disposal to protect yourself and others.

2. Immediate Actions

Scan, Assess, Act: Evaluate your surroundings and make the best decision based on the situation. Scan the area, assess your options, and act according to what seems safest.



Tips

Familiarize Yourself

- When in a new environment, take note of exits, hiding spots, and potential weapons.
- Understanding your surroundings helps in making quick decisions during an emergency.

When Police Arrive

- Remain calm and follow police instructions.
- Put down any items, raise your hands with fingers spread, and keep your hands visible. Avoid sudden movements.

Training

- Consider attending Active Threat Response training.
- Google "FBI Run Hide Fight" for additional information and resources.

Build a safer community through awareness and preparedness. By being informed and prepared, we contribute to a safer and more secure environment for everyone.

Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP





Vermont Violence
Prevention Project
**Close It, Lock It,
Don't Prop It**



1. Security Practices

Close It: Always ensure doors are closed when leaving a room or building. Prevent unauthorized access and maintain security.

Lock It: Secure doors with locks when required. Protect sensitive areas and control access to restricted spaces.

Don't Prop It: Never prop doors open that should be locked. Ensure that security measures are in place and functioning properly.

2. Why It Matters

Increased Security: Locked doors and closed entrances act as a deterrent to unauthorized access and potential threats.

Safety: Properly secured doors help maintain a safe environment by preventing uninvited guests from entering non-public areas.

Community Responsibility: Each person plays a role in maintaining security. Be proactive in securing doors and reporting any issues like broken locks or damaged windows.



Report Issues

- Report any broken lights, doors, locks, or windows immediately.
- Prompt reporting helps address security concerns and ensures a safer environment for everyone.

Build a Safer Community

- Stay vigilant and mindful of your surroundings.
- Closing doors, locking them, and not propping them open contributes to the physical security of your environment.



Learn more: UVM.EDU/VVPP