



PART TWO

E-ALERT

Tumbler Ridge Community Tragedy

For all Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) trained professionals.

VTRA Application

We decided to delay this section of the E-Alert until we had police confirmation that the IOC in the Tumbler Ridge Community Tragedy was transgender. As many VTRA trained professionals work with colleagues (and others) who are **not** trained in VTRA, it is essential that we stay true to what our experience in violence prevention and intervention has taught us. It is also necessary that we remain poised, as we may need to educate some of our colleagues on what VTRA is and the data-driven variables that help to determine risk and plan interventions.

Remember:

1. Serious violence is an evolutionary process, no one just snaps.
2. No two cases are alike. “Ten people can engage in the exact same type of violence and do it for ten different reasons”. Sadly, this includes shootings at schools. Our task as VTRA teams is to identify the real risk enhancers contributing to the current case(s) we are working on.
3. Similarly, ten transgender people can engage in an act of serious violence for ten different reasons. The common denominator in most mass shootings that have occurred in our schools across North America has been emotional pain and immaturity, where school is sometimes the recipient of the IOCs rage.
4. The vast majority of high-profile tragedies have occurred at the hands of boys and men, but some girls and women have been perpetrators, as well including a very small group of transgender individuals.
5. Mental health can be a risk enhancer but is rarely the primary cause of serious violence. People can struggle for years with their mental health, but it is usually a convergence of risk enhancers that becomes the tipping point for a violent tragedy. Nevertheless, in that struggle, most people give blatant pre-incident signs and indicators through conversations, writings, online postings, and other communications.
6. As well, many non-VTRA trained professionals from different agencies who are, or have been, involved with an IOC do not realize their concerns are the missing piece of the puzzle that confirms the level of dangerousness an individual (or group) may pose. In these situations, it is always “better to be safe than sorry”. Our multi-agency

VTRA teams and protocols must be activated and expanded to include additional community professionals, who may not yet be protocol partners.

7. There are significant family factors that can contribute to risk, and we are seeing an increase in family-generated dynamics being acted out at schools. We are observing more clearly the effects of quarantine in post-pandemic mental health. To be clear, quarantine did not create the violent dynamics we are seeing in families, workplaces, schools, and communities; rather, it “intensified already existing symptom development” in those human systems.

Crisis and Trauma Response

“The fields of violence threat risk assessment and crisis-trauma response are inseparably connected”.

This is a very heightened “Critical Period” for transgender people. VTRA professionals need to be aware that online threat-related behaviours have already begun, primarily targeting members of the transgender community or those who are supportive. We also need to recognize that any transgender person, like anyone else, who has been an IOC in a VTRA case, needs to be supported and “wrapped around.” We have consistently taught that “the more a troubled individual caught within the impact zone can identify with the aggressor, the more it will increase their symptom development.”

Do not shy away from activating your VTRA protocols because of social media’s intensification of this high-profile “Traumatic Event”. VTRA is meant to be helpful, not hurtful.

Because “the higher the anxiety, the greater the symptom development,” the country is now seeing the full force of those who do not specialize in this work grappling with the cause of the Tumbler Creek shootings: “Why did an 18-year-old young person do it”?

Social media is flooded with causes. Many opinions are fairly balanced, and others are passionately single cause; “The person (IOC) did it because they were trans!”

School professionals and others can help children and youth across the country process this through a VTRA lens without saying it. For example, in discussion:

1. Ask, “Why would a student skip class?” The answer is, “Ten students can skip class for ten different reasons. What could they be?” The same is true for why violence occurs.
2. Ask, “While that tragedy happened in a different community, are you feeling safe here?” If not, follow up with, “What needs to happen for you to be safe?”

Remember, “the first principle of crisis response is to model calmness,” but you can only model calmness with a plan.

Sincerely,
J. Kevin Cameron