

Pre-Incident Indicators

PAGE 1 - NOTICE IN CONTEXT

Recognizing and Reporting Concerning Behavior

PURPOSE

Pre-Incident Indicators are reasons to notice, document, and report behavior in context. This reference helps ministry workers share useful information early so the appropriate people can decide what attention or response is needed.

The examples on Page 2 are prompts for attention - not a checklist, score, or way to predict violence. A behavior or statement does not establish that someone intends harm. Context, meaningful changes, and the sequence of events matter. Threat-assessment guidance cautions that no single behavior establishes a path to targeted violence; multiple concerning behaviors may warrant attention.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU OBSERVED

Describe what someone said or did, when and where it occurred, and what happened next. Keep your observations separate from your interpretation.

- Record exact words when possible.
- Note specific actions and changes over time.
- Identify what you know firsthand and what someone else reported.
- Include relevant context without guessing at motive.

A complaint, emotional distress, unfamiliarity, appearance, or unusual action by itself does not establish an intent to harm. Do not speculate about someone's health or motive.

KNOW YOUR ROLE

Your role is to notice, document, and report through the organization's established process. You do not have to decide whether someone is dangerous before reporting; share what you observed and let the designated people assess it.

Do not investigate someone or confront a person to test a concern. Assessment should follow the organization's established process and be handled by its designated decision-makers, with professional assistance as appropriate.



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PAGE 2 - EXAMPLES TO REPORT

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These examples may help you recognize behavior worth reporting in context. Do not count indicators or wait for a certain number. Report what you observed; leave decisions about meaning and connection to the designated people.

COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT HARM

A statement, message, image, or other communication that refers to harming a person or group, describes a plan to do so, or may reasonably be understood as doing so. Record the exact words or content and the circumstances. If you are unsure what a communication means, report what you received and the surrounding context. Do not decide its credibility or seriousness.

REPEATED UNWANTED CONTACT OR PURSUIT

Repeated unwanted contact after a clear request to stop, following someone, or repeated efforts to reach a named person may be important to report - especially when you also observe communications about harm. Describe the contact or actions, the timing, and any request to stop. Do not label the behavior or decide whether it is connected to another observation.

ACTIONS FOLLOWING A COMMUNICATION ABOUT HARM

If you observe specific actions after a communication about harm - for example, an attempt to reach the named person or place - report the communication and the actions separately, including their sequence. Do not conclude that one caused or explains the other. Let the designated people assess the information together.

ACCESS AND PROCEDURE CONCERNS

Respond to access violations according to established ministry procedures. An access violation alone does not establish an intent to harm. If a person communicates a threat and then attempts to reach the named person or area, report both the communication and the observed access attempt through the appropriate channel.

WHEN YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE OBSERVATION

Provide the facts in the order they occurred. You do not have to decide whether the observations form a pattern or are related. The designated people assess reports in context.



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PAGE 3 - REPORT CLEARLY. GET HELP.

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WHAT TO INCLUDE

Share the details that help others understand what happened and what is happening now.

- What you personally saw, heard, or received
- Exact words or content, when available
- When and where each event occurred
- What happened before and after
- Whether you know something firsthand or heard it from someone else
- Who else may have observed or received it
- What you did and who you notified

Preserve messages or records according to your organization's procedures. Do not circulate rumors or add conclusions about someone's intent.

WHO TO NOTIFY

Use your organization's established reporting channel. Contact the designated leader, safety/security contact, or authorized decision-maker promptly.

If the concern involves the person you would normally notify, use another approved reporting channel. Do not send the report only to the person who is the subject of the concern.

Immediate threat: If there is an apparent immediate threat to life or safety, follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services as appropriate. Do not delay urgent action to complete a written report.

FIELD EXAMPLE

A volunteer receives a message threatening to harm a named ministry leader. The next day, another volunteer reports that the same person asked when that leader would leave the building.

REPORT: the exact message, the question asked, when and where each occurred, who received or heard it, and who was notified.

DO NOT: decide that the events are connected, assess the person's intent or credibility, investigate further, or treat the report as proof of a planned attack.

NEXT: promptly notify the designated decision-maker through an approved channel. If the circumstances indicate an immediate threat, follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services as appropriate.

KEEP THE PURPOSE CLEAR

A report shares observations for follow-up. It is not a prediction or conclusion about a person.

