



***The eWAVR:  
An electronic tool for the  
workplace assessment of violence risk***

***Demonstrations of the eWAVR can be arranged by contacting  
Dr. Stephen White at [swhite@wtsthreatmanagement.com](mailto:swhite@wtsthreatmanagement.com).***

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Additional information is available at [wavr21.com](http://wavr21.com), and in the published manual, 2010 second edition, available at [specializedtraining.com](http://specializedtraining.com)

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### **What is the WAVR-21?**

The “WAVR” – *Workplace Assessment of Violence Risk* – is a scientifically-based structured professional judgment instrument for coding and assessing the risk of workplace targeted violence. The WAVR-21 consists of 19 static and dynamic violence risk factors, one buffer against violence factor, and an organizational impact factor; hence the name, “WAVR-21.” The structure and format of the WAVR-21 Coding Grid and related tools are similar to other established “structured professional judgment” instruments for assessing violence risk in different populations of subjects. Developed by Drs. Stephen White and Reid Meloy and first published in 2007, the WAVR-21 is now in its second edition. The 2010 second edition incorporates coding changes based on user feedback and the developers’ reliability research. The WAVR may also be used to assess adult students and other subjects in campus contexts.

### **What is the “eWAVR”?**

The eWAVR is the electronic, computer-based form of the WAVR-21. This digital adaptation allows for standardization across widespread and complex organizations. Designated threat management team members use the WAVR system as they share case and assessment information. Features include drop-down menus and pop-up windows and tips, offering definitions of different terms and coding criteria, unlimited note taking sections, as well as email, printing, and save functions. The eWAVR offers additional materials not included in the printed WAVR-21 manual. An electronic WAVR allows for new material to be easily added to the developing WAVR knowledge base and tools.

### **What is the technical structure of the eWAVR?**

The eWAVR exists as a set of Microsoft Infopath templates. Infopath is part of the Microsoft Office Suite for Windows pc’s. These are essentially Word templates that use a specific xml format, and can be published via Microsoft

Office SharePoint Server (MOSS 2007). MOSS 2007 is the preferred deployment option. However, the eWAVR files can be used as stand-alone templates if SharePoint Server is unavailable. Clients interested in a stand-alone option should consult with WTS to ensure the integrity of the eWAVR workflow. Support is provided if needed for the Infopath files and content, but not for SharePoint Server, as clients should have this expertise in-house. The templates are easily maintained internally. Case data can be stored as files within SharePoint or on local fileshares. Clients may incorporate the eWAVR forms into their existing case management electronic data systems.

**How is the eWAVR made secure?**

Security for the eWAVR files is determined by the client organization's internal policy and should be easily manageable. Appropriate precautions are inherently necessary. Employers should remain keenly aware of who in their organization is authorized to use and have access to the eWAVR materials, and the sensitive case information they generate. For organizations that store and/or submit eWAVR forms to SharePoint libraries, permissions are managed through the organization's Sharepoint user group controls.

### **How can the eWAVR be obtained?**

Business organizations, educational institutions, agencies, and other users can obtain a license to install and use the eWAVR templates and materials. The license is issued by the developers and consists of an initial fee for unlimited use and an annual renewal fee. There is no per-case use fee. Pricing is capitation-based, i.e., based on the number of employees or members in the organization. Demonstrations of the eWAVR can be arranged by contacting Dr. Stephen White at [swhite@wtsthreatmanagement.com](mailto:swhite@wtsthreatmanagement.com).

### **What is the rationale for the WAVR-21?**

The WAVR design attempts to bridge the gap between research and the needs of multi-disciplinary practitioners who collaborate on workplace threat cases. The developers' intent is to explain threat assessment criteria in straightforward language, as free as possible from unnecessary jargon, to assist users in more readily identifying potentially dangerous situations "in the field." The WAVR attempts to meet the need for a comprehensive yet practical screening and assessment tool that reflects the nature and challenges of managing cases in dynamic workplace contexts.

### **What is in the WAVR-21 tool kit?**

The original WAVR manual includes the Case Intake and Information Form, a Short Form for use by non-professional users on employer threat management teams, the 21-item Coding Grid, and a Coding Grid Worksheet allowing for note taking on each item. The manual also includes explanations of each of the items and how they relate to workplace targeted violence, as well as case examples in an appendix. The eWAVR includes all the contents in the manual, as well as an eWAVR User Guide, a Short Form Expanded version with queries related to the risk parameters, and a Short Form Protect that delineates buffers against targeted workplace violence.

### **Who can appropriately use the WAVR-21?**

Anyone with the responsibility for addressing and managing workplace and campus threats of violence may use the WAVR-21 manual and tools as a reference source. The manual is written in an accessible and user-friendly style. “Professional Users” – qualified clinical and forensic professionals – may use the full Coding Grid to formally assess violence risk. Law enforcement officials in threat assessment roles may also use the Coding Grid. “Corporate Users” – typically in human resources, legal, security, medical, or EAP departments who manage workplace threat cases – may use the Short Forms to organize their data and to screen cases for apparent level of seriousness. The Short Form enables these users to focus on the most relevant risk parameter information, and to communicate more effectively with “Professional Users” who are assisting with the threat assessment process. Users should always be cognizant of whether their level of experience is sufficient for the threat management duties they undertake, and function within their realm of recognized competency. A wise tenet to remember is, “When in doubt, confer.”

### **Is the WAVR-21 a quantitative instrument?**

No. The WAVR-21 is not a psychological test or scale, and does not generate a quantitative “score.” However, its construction reflects the growing trend in risk assessment technology toward more transparent “structured professional judgments” (SPJ) of violence risk in differing contexts. Practitioners using this approach refer to a checklist of factors, each of which has some form of coding criteria with a demonstrated relationship to violent behavior. Other structured guides exist to assess the violence risk associated with psychopathy, spousal abuse, released violent offenders, sex offenders, youth offenders, and discharged mental patients. In the case of the WAVR-21 the items reflect the static and dynamic risk factors known to predict workplace targeted or intended violence, with its emphasis on the notion of a “pathway to violence”. The item domains include psychological, behavioral, historical, clinical, and situational

factors associated with workplace violence, including intimate partner violence posing a threat to the workplace or campus.

### **Is the WAVR-21 a risk management intervention guide?**

No, not directly. The manual does offer some basic principles of prevention and risk mitigation, and the case examples in the appendix include intervention suggestions. Certain intervention strategies are also posed in the discussion of the individual risk factor items in chapter 5. However, the manual and accompanying tools are not risk management strategy decision guides *per se*. Training, experience, and access to consultation resources bring competence to the practice of resolving cases safely and wisely.

### **How is the WAVR-21 and eWAVR used in case management?**

The WAVR-21 tools should ideally be used from the beginning and throughout a workplace or campus threat management case. Their use is intended to be consistent with the dynamic flow of workplace threat management, the differing degrees of urgency which cases present, and the need for flexibility by threat management teams. In practice, threat assessment and threat management are intertwined. Dynamic risk factors become the focus of ongoing interventions intended to reduce risk. Assessment and monitoring are ongoing, and an individual's response to various interventions (e.g., escalation, de-escalation, or no apparent change) become part of the evolving opinion of risk level. Use of the tools, data sources, and documentation considerations are explained in chapter 4 of the manual under *Basic Procedures*.

### **What training is available on use of the WAVR materials?**

Training in using the WAVR-21 is highly recommended, as well as access to professional consultation commensurate with the potential seriousness and complexity of a given threat scenario.

Drs. Stephen White and Reid Meloy, co-developers of the WAVR-21, with assistance from their WTS colleagues, provide training to users in various formats. Training content can be tailored to the specific needs and challenges of a client-organization, as well as to the experience level of its internal threat management resources.

- 2-day WAVR-21 Workshop. Drs. White and Meloy lead an interactive session on the assessment and management of workplace and/or campus threats of violence. The centerpiece of the training is learning how to use the WAVR-21. Case studies of actual workplace and campus homicide, including video interviews with perpetrators, are presented and discussed. Attendees work with case vignettes of commonly encountered threat scenarios and debrief their findings, judgments, and decisions with the presenters. Risk factors and topics addressed in depth include affective vs. predatory violence, stalking, mental and personality disorders, intimate partner violence, bullying, and psychopathy. Dynamic case management decision-making and multidisciplinary collaboration among threat assessment team members are promoted as both core values and skills for the participants.
  - This two-day workshop is available to any corporation, institution, or university as an “in-house” training opportunity
  - This workshop may also be offered once or twice a year in the US or Europe as an open training for professionals. These trainings will be posted at [specializedtraining.com](http://specializedtraining.com), [wtsthreatmanagement.com](http://wtsthreatmanagement.com), and [wavr21.com](http://wavr21.com).
  - This workshop is highly recommended as the most advantageous for becoming very familiar with the WAVR-21, as well as the complex process of dynamic case management decision-making.
  
- 1-day WAVR-21 Introduction Workshop. This introductory workshop, provided by either Dr. White or Dr. Meloy, is available to any corporation, institution, or university. The WAVR-21 principles are introduced and

instruction given on use of the Short Form. Case studies are presented and discussed. Attendees work vignettes and debrief them with the presenter.

- This workshop is not a substitute for, nor an adequate abbreviation of the two day training.

- Pre-training Orientation and Program Development Consultation. WTS has long provided program and training development consultation to its threat management clients. Drs. White, Meloy, and Jolee Brunton are available for these services, by telephone or onsite.
- Training on Specific Topics or Case Study Debriefings. Training is available in special topics such as stalking, bullying, mental disorders, domestic violence in the workplace, psychopathy, and sexual deviance. Review and debriefing of client's cases for team training and protocol improvement purposes may be conducted by telephone or web session, including in an ongoing seminar format.

### **Further Description of the eWAVR Contents**

1. The WAVR-21 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition manual. The manual may be considered a reference and educational resource for all users.
2. eWAVR User Guide. The guide explains how to use the various electronic tools in the case management process, data sources and documentation considerations.
3. Case Intake and Information Form. This form helps users to collect identifying information and raw data about cases – the “who, what, when, where, and how,” chronologies of threat scenarios, and actions taken.
4. Short Form. This form and its variations are intended for “Corporate Users” to identify and organize risk-relevant information to screen cases for violence

potential. Collectively the first letters of the 12 parameters spell the acronym “Violence Risk”.

5. Short Form: Expanded Version. This form, designed since the original manual was published, includes queries related to each of the risk parameters comprising the Short Form. It also provides a “Notes” section under each parameter for the user to document case-specific information.
6. Short Form: Protect. New for the eWAVR edition, this list of buffers that may reduce violence risk allows Corporate Users to consider the “good news” in a case, suggesting that violence may be less likely. An appropriate cautionary note is included. Collectively the first letters of the seven indicators spell the acronym “Protect.”
7. Coding Grid. The Grid is intended for Professional Users when conducting formal assessments, and for law enforcement, and consists of the 19 risk factors, one protective factor, and an organizational impact-of-threats factor comprising the WAVR-21. The eWAVR Grid coding is revised from the original manual, replacing, for more precision, the “Absent/mild” category with an “Absent” category. The three categories for coding the Grid are now “Absent,” “Present,” and “Prominent,” as well as an indication for “Recent Change.” On the second page of the Grid Professional Users may record their risk opinion narrative and other findings and recommendations.
8. Worksheet. This form incorporates the Grid and provides Professional and other Users with many features: an expandable “Notes” section for each of the 21 items, links to the item queries and full item descriptions, and dropdown menus and pop-up windows showing the definitions of the three coding categories and other terms. Professional Users may document their narratives, opinions and recommendations on the last page of the Worksheet.