

Bias Mitigation in BIT/CARE



Chris Taylor, PhD
President, InterACTT
Chris@interactt.org

BIT/CARE Framework Certification

A two-day series for
growing and
developing new and
seasoned teams

Helping Students Thrive: Meeting Basic Needs

A two-part virtual
series on supporting
struggling college
students

Violence Risk and Threat Assessment

A virtual course
addressing violence
risk and threat
assessment

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Practical experience
using live actors to
simulate real-world
scenarios.



DPrep Safety's BIT/CARE team assessment rubric looks at thirty-five key items for optimal team functioning. This document provides descriptions for each item and the supporting research for why it is included as essential in the development of a BIT/CARE or threat assessment team framework.

The rubric is divided into four categories:

- **Team definition** outlines the team's purpose and scope of activities.
- **Team operation** defines how the team is organized to meet team goals.
- **Case processing** describes how the team manages a case through the initial report, contextual information gathering, risk assessment, interventions, and documentation.
- **Continuous improvement** supports the ongoing functioning of the team and ensures the membership is supervised and trained and that processes are reviewed and maintained.

		Receiving Concerns	
		Concern Form	
		Information Standards	
		Information Sharing	
	Frequency of Meetings	Case Discussion	
	Leadership	Level of Risk	
	Budget	Violence Risk Assessments	Supervision and Guidance
Mission	Policy & Procedures	Psychological Assessments	Training and Development
Scope	Cultural Awareness	Interventions	Case Evaluation
Name	Disability Awareness	Bias Mitigation	End-of-Term Reports
Team Process	Website	Case Management	After Action Reports
Membership	Team Presentation	Record Keeping	Needs Assessment
Multiple Teams	Other Marketing	Database Utilization	Stress Management
Team Definition	Team Operations	Case Processing	Continuous Improvement



A four-man cell meets at a rural Colorado compound with anti-government ties.

**The compound has extensive
CCTV cameras and no-trespass
signs.**

Over the past decades, millions of dollars were donated to the compound by a known violent extremist.

**The group purchases
supplies at a local Walmart,
including ammunition and
food.**

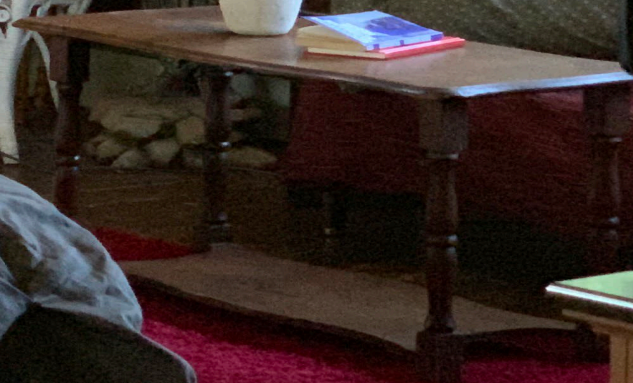
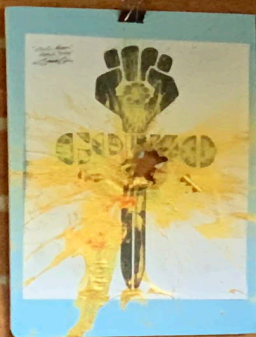
**They practice shooting on
BLM public lands, firing at
animals and a brief case with
several hand guns.**

**They write the outline to a
manifesto with a goal to bring
about radical change in the
United States.**



























Ticket . Ride . Here .





NIU Shooting

Tucson Shooting

Virginia Tech

DEFINING BIAS

- A preference or to like or dislike
- A cognitive process
- A habit learned over time through repeated personal experience
- Implicit or expressed
- Can be intentional, but generally unintentional
- Formed from stereotypes, societal norms, cultural experiences, expectations of the people around you

THE PROBLEM

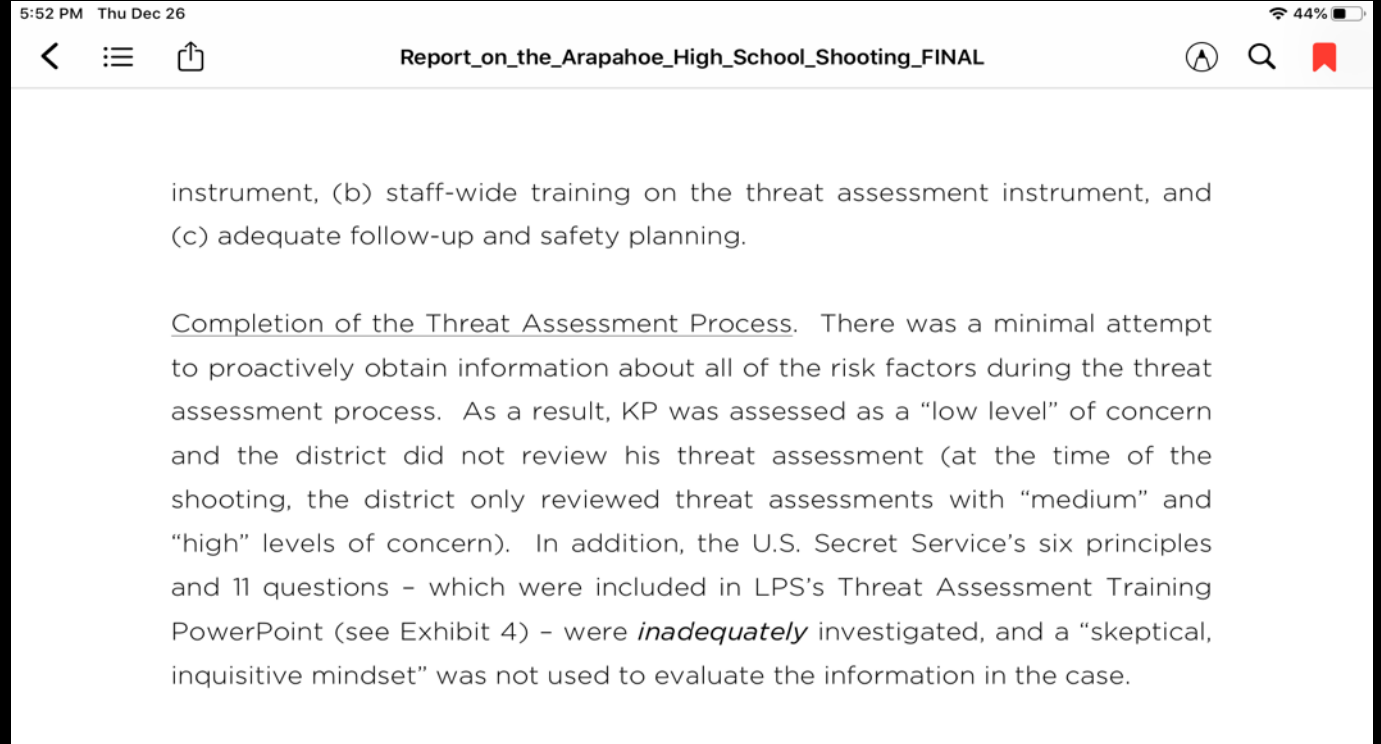
- Impacts our memory and process
- Potential to ignore evidence
- Creates assumption driven process
- Capricious and arbitrary decisions
- Creates “blinders,” limits perspective
- Reduces group buy-in to the process
- Impacts the ability to build rapport create safe space
- Creates risk for the school in terms of documentation of a fair and reasonable process

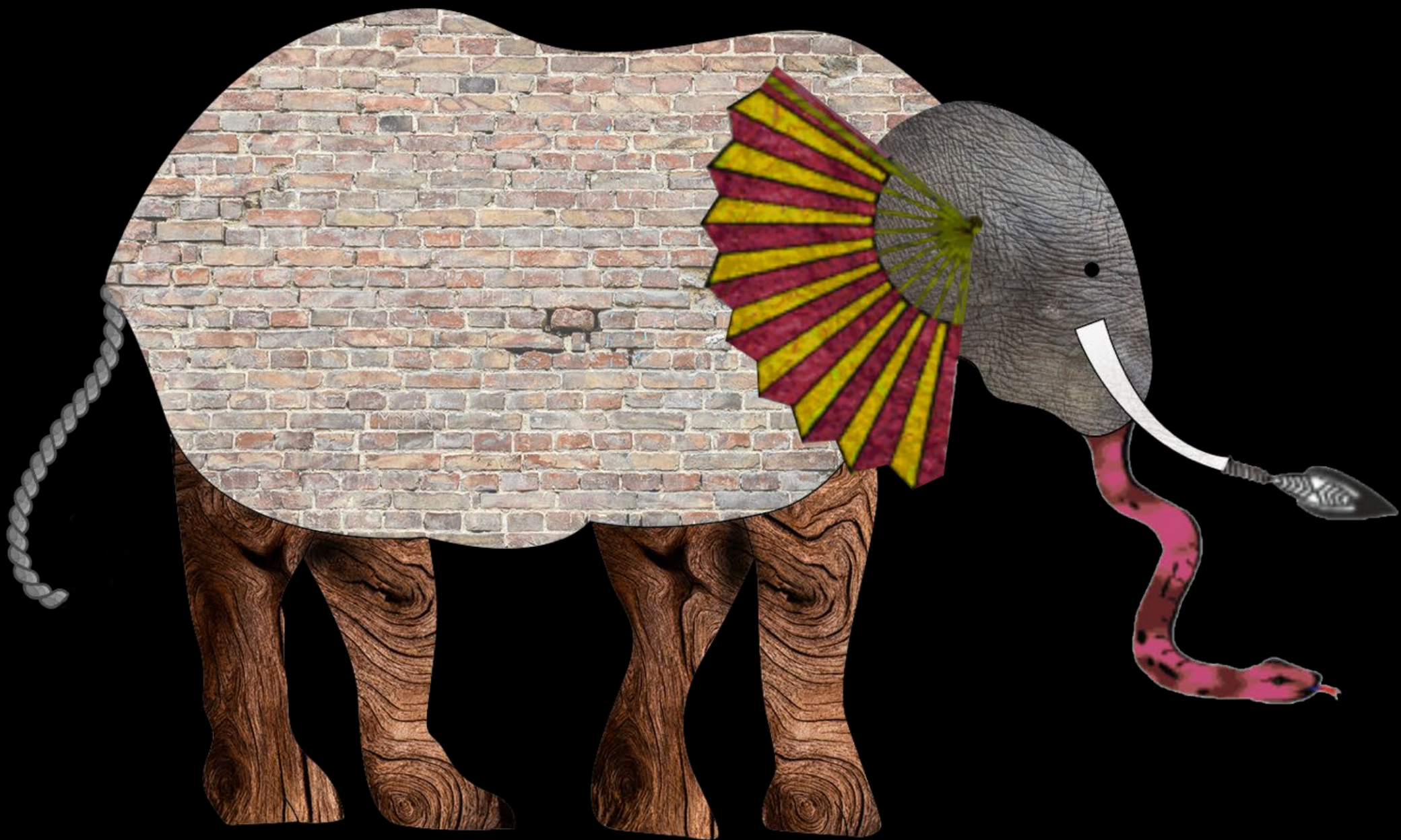
THE SOLUTION

- Become aware of bias, avoid assumptions
- Our only side in the process
- Address cognitive load
- Notice when we are uncomfortable
- Make use of a checklist or guide
- Pair with people who approach things differently
- Develop expectations early in the process
- Attend to emotions (both positive and negative)
- Document the rationale for each decision

“Skeptical Inquisitive Mindset”

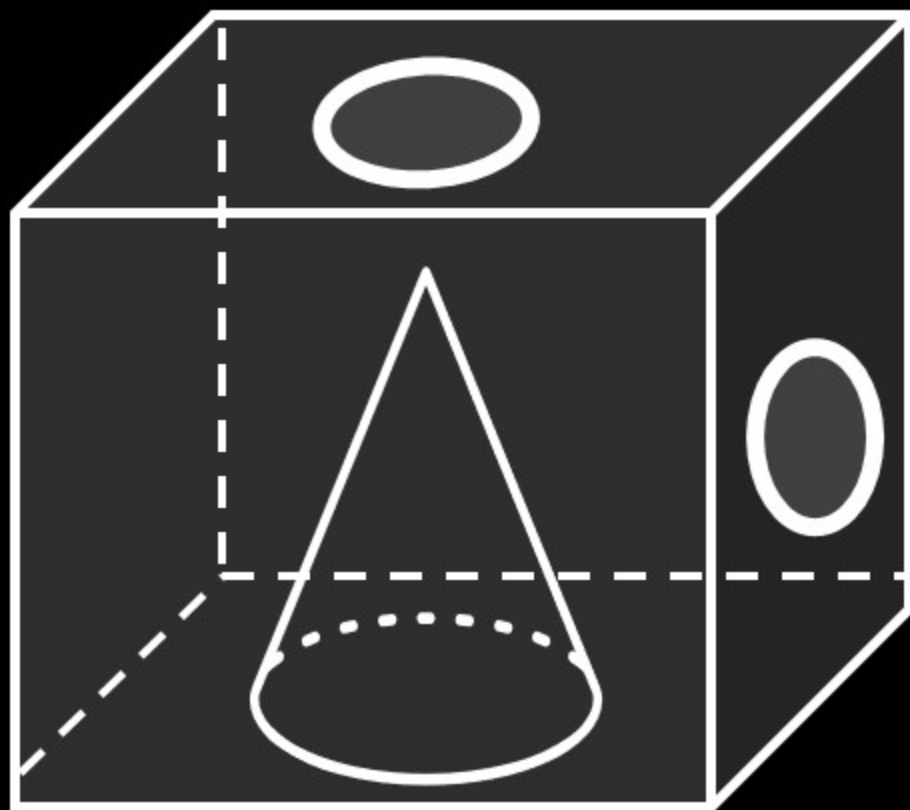
To evaluate the information in the case





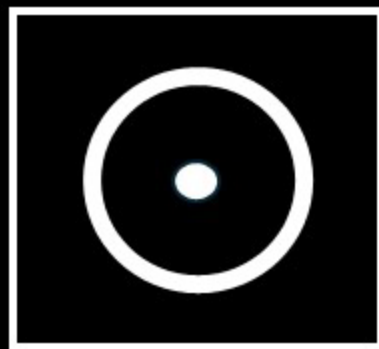
The Cone-in-the-Cube

Peephole A

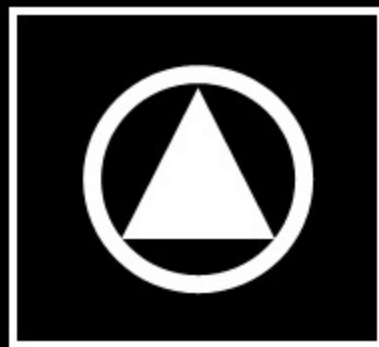


Peephole B

Peephole A



Peephole B



Assumption vs. Hypothesis

Assumptions

Are based on subjective information

Lack evidence and support

Arrived at quickly by one person

Stay static and rarely shift from initial thoughts

Close off other possibilities

Hypothesis

Are based on objective data and facts

Have evidence and support

Arrived at more carefully and thoughtfully

May include multiples; ruled out with data

Looks at rival plausible hypothesis (red teaming)

Confirmation Bias

LET'S BEGIN THE MEETING, BUT BE AWARE THAT I AM DOCUMENTING ALL OF YOUR BULLYING BEHAVIOR.



Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com

UM... I'M NOT EVEN CLOSE TO BEING A BULLY, BUT NOW YOUR CONFIRMATION BIAS WILL MAKE EVERYTHING I SAY SOUND LIKE BULLYING TO YOU.



7-2-11 © 2011 Scott Adams, Inc. /Dist. by Universal Uclick

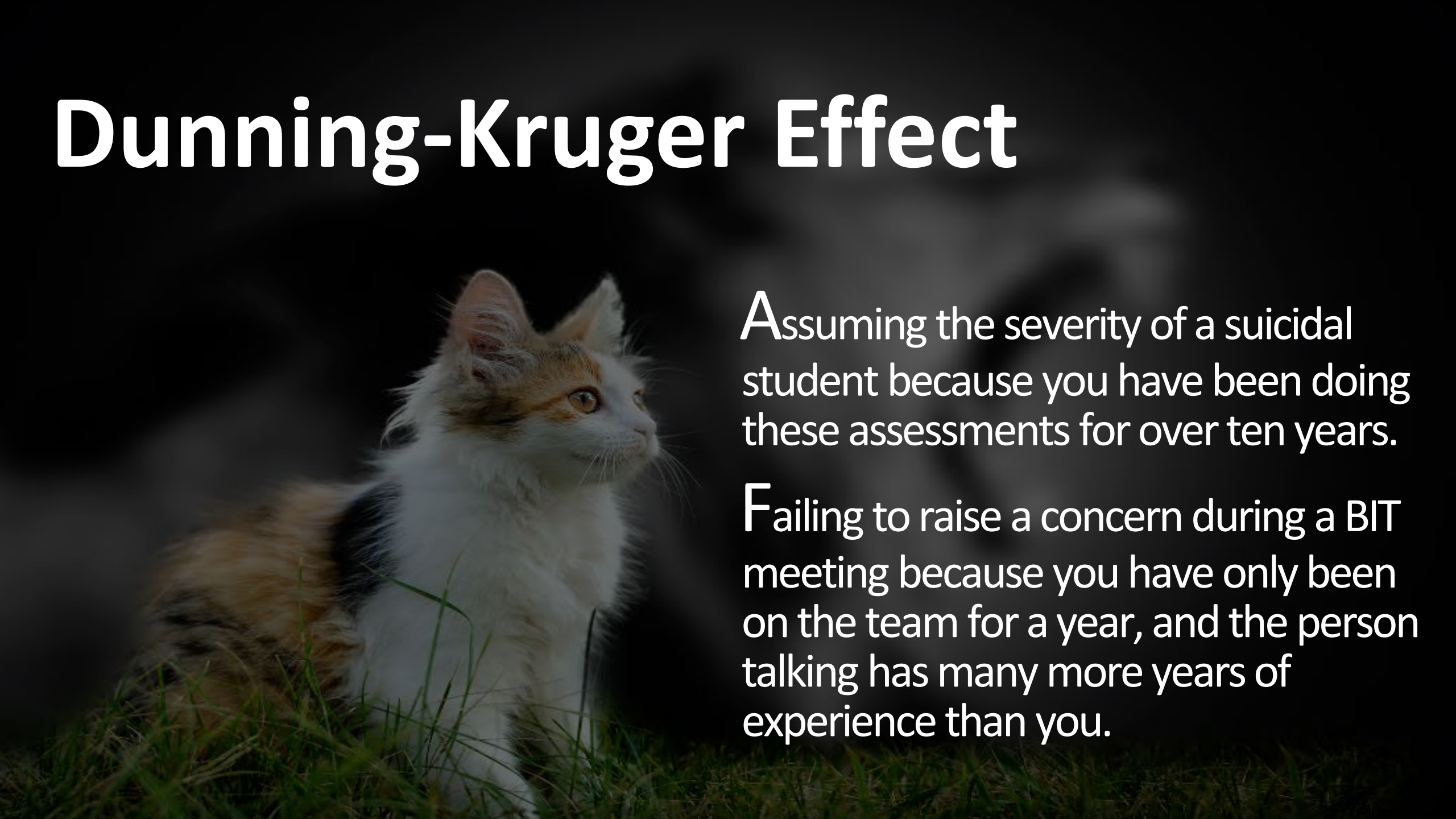
CAN YOU REPEAT THE PART AFTER YOU IMPLIED THAT I'M A DELUSIONAL WITCH?



Dunning-Kruger Effect



Dunning-Kruger Effect

A fluffy orange and white cat is sitting in green grass, looking towards the right. The background is dark and out of focus.

Assuming the severity of a suicidal student because you have been doing these assessments for over ten years.

Failing to raise a concern during a BIT meeting because you have only been on the team for a year, and the person talking has many more years of experience than you.

Groupthink



Groupthink

The background of the slide is a dark, moody image of a large field of umbrellas. Most of the umbrellas are dark grey or black, creating a sea of uniformity. In the lower-left foreground, one umbrella is a vibrant red, standing out prominently from the rest. The sky above is dark and filled with heavy, swirling clouds, suggesting an overcast or stormy day. The overall atmosphere is one of conformity and a single point of difference.

The chair starts the meeting with the statement “I know you all have other important things to do, so let’s get through this meeting quickly.”

Alternative opinions are discounted, or people are made to feel like they should “stay in their lane” rather than raise alternative ideas or analysis.

Availability Bias



Availability Bias

A large shark, likely a Great White, is shown swimming in deep blue water. The shark is angled towards the right, with its head in the foreground. Its mouth is slightly open, revealing rows of sharp, white teeth. The shark's skin is a mottled grey-blue color. The background is a solid, deep blue, suggesting the ocean's surface is far away.

A threat case involving an abusive voicemail left for a faculty member is given a level of risk without reviewing the audio or transcript because the police haven't released it to the team.

Bandwagon Effect



Bandwagon Effect

A group of puppies, some black and some brown, are sitting in a red wooden crate. They are looking out from the crate, with some having their tongues out. The background is a blurred green field and distant hills.

The team reaches a quick decision on the case, and rival plausible hypotheses aren't considered, as everyone agrees with the assessment, which seems to be the most likely and straightforward interpretation.

In/Out Group Bias



In/Out Group Bias

A background image showing three children in superhero costumes. On the left, a child in a Batman costume (black mask and suit with a yellow bat logo) is looking towards the right. In the center, a child with curly hair is looking towards the right. On the right, a child in a Spider-Man costume (red and blue suit with a spider logo) is sitting and looking towards the left. The background is a stone wall with a red railing.

It is decided before a threat assessment to take a more assertive approach during the interview with a men's basketball player, as the team has had several incidents of bullying and violence this semester.

There is pushback on rating a student's drinking behavior as a concern, as they are well-known in student activities as a "good" student to several members of the team.

Anchor Bias



Anchor Bias

A report comes into the BIT from a first-year, white, female student's parent concerning several black students congregating outside a campus building. The assumption is they are "up to no good."

A threat has been made by a student who is a member of the forensic debate team and a key player on the men's tennis team. The BIT immediately starts from the premise that the threat is transient.

Survivorship Bias

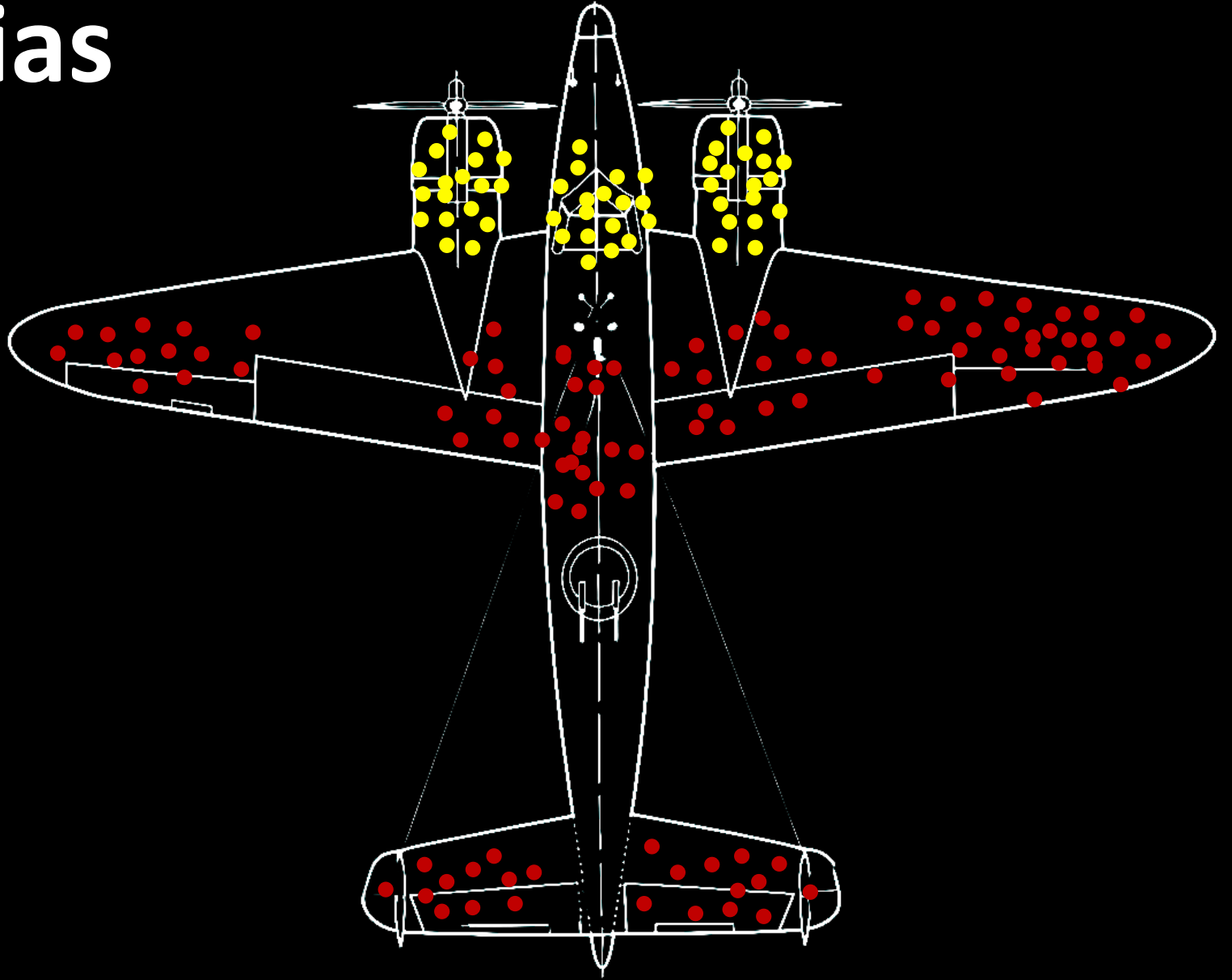
Survivorship Bias



Abraham Wald



Survivorship Bias





If you work hard, and believe in your start up, you'll succeed like Elon Musk and the creators of Airbnb.


These are extreme outliers. The vast majority of college dropouts do not become billionaires. Most successful people who drop out often had unique opportunities, support systems, or pre-existing advantages.





My grandfather smoked
and drank every day and
lived to be 95.

Those who died younger
from the same behaviors
don't get to share their side
of the story. We only hear
from the survivors, skewing
perception of risk factors.

A photograph of Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder of Facebook, wearing a dark blue crewneck sweater and looking slightly to his left.

You don't need a college degree—just look at
Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, or Bill Gates.

For every successful startup, thousands quietly fail.
The stories of failed companies are rarely publicized,
giving the illusion that success is more common
than it really is.





**Survivorship bias can grow
when you are member of the
“winning” team.**



**Everyone focuses on success
stories. Few dig in the
graveyards of the unsuccessful.**

Survivorship Bias in Threat Assessment

1. Focusing Only on Completed Attacks

This creates a skewed perception of the warning signs and pathways to violence. We miss situations where intervention worked, and violence was averted. These are the cases that could provide insight into effective prevention strategies.

2. Misinterpreting Profiles of “Attackers”

This neglects failed attempts, attackers who died by suicide, or potential perpetrators who disengaged. It also risks creating overgeneralized “profiles” based on a narrow sample, leading practitioners to mistakenly look for a specific type of person, while missing broader patterns or contextual factors.

Survivorship Bias in Threat Assessment

3. Overlooking Succussing in Threat Management

This leads to an overrepresentation of failure and crisis, making prevention efforts appear less effective than they are. Teams may become reactive instead of proactive, relying too heavily on visible red flags rather than earlier, more subtle signs of risk.

4. Relying on Known Attack Pathways

This path is based largely on the survivors of past assessments and well-known attackers. But it may miss atypical cases or those who conceal intent well. It causes practitioners to look only for those who “fit the script,” while overlooking creative, silent, or ideologically driven actors who don’t follow the common trajectory.

Ask Yourself...

- **What am I not seeing?**
- **Am I only looking at part of the data?**
- **What assumptions am I making?**

a person
are six contestants

context / 'kɒnteks
the words that
another word or a
understand the
looking at its co

A scientist wearing safety goggles and a lab coat is holding two test tubes filled with a red liquid, likely representing blood. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

“Blood is thicker than water”

**The blood of the
covenant is thicker than
the water of the womb.**

“The early bird gets the worm”

**...but the second
mouse gets the
cheese.**

“Curiosity killed the cat”

**...but satisfaction
brought it back.**





“Great minds
think alike”

...though fools
seldom differ.

**“The customer is
always right”**

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a gold-colored credit card over a black payment terminal. The terminal has a numeric keypad and a small screen. The background is blurred, showing a wooden table and a laptop.

...in matters of taste.

D·PREP BIAS MITIGATION

Bias is our tendency to see the world from our lens of experience. It can lead us to ignore evidence or make assumptions not based on evidence. It can create blinders for those involved in the threat analysis or mitigation process and impact our ability to build rapport, connect with students, and create safe/neutral spaces. While we can never remove bias, we can train to make us more aware of how bias can affect decision making.

Sources of Bias



Gender, gender identity experiences, and sexual orientation



The friends, family, and peers around us



Experiences with mental illness or physical disabilities



Religious beliefs and political experiences



Economic differences and experiences of wealth and poverty



Race/ethnicity, world view, and generational expectations



Exposure to different cultures or geographic areas

Common Types of Bias



Anchor Bias. This bias can impact a team member when they become anchored or locked on a particular piece of data or first impression on a case and are unwilling to consider rival, alternative hypotheses. The bias occurs when we rely too heavily on the first piece of information we are given about a topic. We can manage this by having group discussions and display a willingness to look behind our first impressions on a case.



Availability Bias. This occurs when we lean into an over-reliance upon readily available (most recent) information. When gather information about a case, team members should guard against focusing solely on the low-hanging fruit and data around us, but rather finding the information needed to best assess the case and develop culturally competent interventions.



Blind Spot Bias. This involves a team member's tendency to miss crucial elements of a case because they are unable to see the data from a balanced and reasonable perspective. These team members may be very good at spotting systematic errors in others' decisions but are unable to see their own mistakes. One way this is addressed is through having a diverse team with varied perspectives.



Confirmation Bias. Here the team member may form an early assumption and progress with the case seeking to overvalue evidence that fits with and/or confirms their assumption. When gathering information, team members are encouraged to consider the question: are you interviewing or validating?



Dunning-Kruger Effect. This is the tendency for team members to over-estimate their abilities in certain areas such as threat assessment, counseling, or law enforcement. They make assumptions that since they have had some training, they are able to reach further than they really should. This can also happen in reverse, where people who are good at a task are hesitant to share because they under-estimate their competence in the task.



In Group/Out Group. Here a team member tends toward gathering data and making decisions that are favorable toward the someone who is like the team member. This could be a shared activity, place of birth, love of a sports team, or connection to a group, club, or organization. We guard against this by leaning into the team experience and being aware of our personal connections, either for the good or bad, on a given case that is presented to the team.



Chris Taylor, PhD
President, InterACTT
Chris@interactt.org