



CREATING AN EFFECTIVE SECURITY RISK ASSESSMENT TEAM

A well-organized security risk assessment (SRA) team is essential for completing a meaningful SRA and developing an effective risk mitigation strategy. A cross-sectional team from information technology (IT), operations, human resources, and clinical staff often provides the best real-world perspective on the current state.

SRA QUESTION CATEGORIES

- **SRA Basics:** Current practices related to the SRA process.
- **HIPAA Security:** Security Officer responsibilities and related policies and procedures (P&Ps).
- **Human Resources:** Job roles, staff training, and sanction P&Ps.
- **Access Control:** P&Ps for managing access to electronic protected health information (ePHI).
- **Facility Security:** Measures to control and manage physical access to the facility.
- **Data Management:** Practices related to encryption and data integrity.
- **Asset Management:** Inventory tracking and procedures for sanitizing or disposing of devices.
- **Third Party Management:** Oversight of Business Associate Agreements.
- **Contingency and Disaster Recovery:** Emergency planning and recovery procedures.

The SRA process typically involves answering a series of questions based on the standards and implementation specifications identified in the HIPAA Security Rule. The assessment covers basic security practices, security failures, risk management, and personnel issues.

PREPARING THE TEAM FOR THE SRA

Before starting the SRA, each team member must understand their role and the scope of the SRA. The SRA Summary gives a brief overview of what an SRA is for those unfamiliar with it. The Behavioral Health Connect team can also provide SRA education to your team upon request.

Timelines and processes, such as policy documentation systems, should also be discussed. Embrace diverse perspectives and foster open communication.

Members of the team may wear many “hats” in the organization, especially in small to medium-sized behavioral health organizations. Assigning one or two staff members to prepare each item on the planning checklist can help streamline the process. Similarly, designating one to two individuals to enter information into the SRA tool ensures consistency, with the option to consult other team members as needed.