SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

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Welcome

We are so glad that you have accessed this booklet! School safety, prevention and intervention efforts are near and dear to our heart. We hope this toolkit can support and guide your school or school district in formulating effective policies and procedures to enhance your school's safety BEFORE a traumatic event or violent act occurs.

Please note that much of the material presented here is based upon our personal experience in addition to being backed by current research. We have tried to include as many resources as possible in order that you know where to go should you want more detailed information or explanations. This toolkit is not meant to be prescriptive, but to provide the research and offer potential strategies to be individualized by each district or school entity.

As we continue to develop this toolkit, we'd love your feedback on what you've read so far – We'd appreciate your completing a brief (3 question) survey that can be found here. Thank you!

The Authors

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Troy L. Brindle, LCSW is the Vice-President and Partner of Springfield Psychological. Troy received his Master's Degree in social work in 95' from Rutgers University. Troy has been providing outpatient behavioral health services and treating trauma in children, adolescents and adults for over 25 years. Troy has been a responder to numerous traumatic school and workforce events including the World Trade Center Attack in 2001. Brindle has served on the National Association of Social Work- Pennsylvania Board of Directors since 2011 including, most recently, as President. In 2015, Brindle received the Alumni Recognition of the Year Award from Cairn University. Troy also is adjunct faculty for the Cairn University School of Social Work program. In 2018, Brindle was featured on the nationally televised *Informed Series* hosted by Rob Lowe for his pioneering work in developing, implementing, directing, and integrating behavioral health services within 70 primary care and medical specialty practice settings throughout southeastern, Pennsylvania.

A huge thank you to Suzanne Brindle for her expeditious review and editing of this toolkit!

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Please note: *This toolkit is meant for reference. It is a compilation of the research available and is not the original work of the authors in most cases. Links are available throughout for readers to find these original sources and resources are provided at the end of the toolkit.*

SECTION I: BACKGROUND

Part I: Introduction

This toolkit is meant to be utilized as a practical guideline for schools to create their own policies and procedures in assessing threats. Every school and school district is unique and will therefore present with characteristics requiring an individualized approach. Every school should have policies in place to properly manage school threats, identify, assess, and intervene with students who pose a risk, and effectively deal with the aftermath of a violent school act, including the complex trauma and grief that follow. We hope this toolkit serves as a resource to support safer schools in assessing threats.

We would like to emphasize that violent acts at school are extremely rare and schools continue to remain very safe. However, when a violent act does occur this results in a significant impact on the school and surrounding community leaving far-reaching and long-lasting effects.

Schools are Safe

Despite the horror experienced in United States schools, schools remain one of the safest places for children. These attacks remain rare: In any given year, the number of mass school shooters is estimated to be one out of 10 million to 20 million people or more. These tragedies are, however, happening more frequently in the United States. While there were three school shootings from 1966 to 1975, that number increased steadily to 19 from 2006 to 2015 (Langman, 2013). The news media highly publicizes tragic events, particularly those involving our youth in schools. More children die from accidental deaths, but school violence, when it occurs, is tragic for not only those involved, but for all of us across the nation.

As safe as the school setting is, the number of school shootings and acts of violence are increasing. Countless articles and reports have stressed the urgency of schools to implement policies and procedures that can prevent or mitigate violent incidents. School systems across the country have partnered with many organizations including community agencies, emergency management services, law enforcement, local health departments, mental health providers, and the National Guard to improve coordination, response, and recovery from a violent incident. As these efforts have increased, two realities remain apparent. First, violent incidents continue to take place in school settings across the country. Second, there is a need to further shift the focus to prevent violent incidents.

A significant part of prevention is effectively identifying and addressing the mental health needs of students, families, and school personnel within the community. If violent acts are to be prevented in school settings, it is imperative to identify underlying emotional issues and intervene to manage behaviors before they escalate. To that end, this Threat Assessment Tool Kit is a first step in providing schools the necessary information, recommendations, resources, and tools to equip schools in developing policies and procedures to assess threats and enhance safety. Traumatic events adversely impact students, families, school personnel, and the

surrounding community. When a violent act occurs within a school setting, it often results in post-traumatic symptoms for students, families and school personnel who are directly impacted. It can also create a secondary traumatic response for those in the community who are indirectly impacted. Two researchers, Corey L. Keyes and Carol D. Ryfe (1995), have identified the following three domains and several indicators that place an individual at potential risk of committing an act of violence.

- **Emotional well-being** – perceived life satisfaction, happiness, contentment, and peacefulness.

- **Psychological well-being** - safety, self-acceptance, personal growth including openness to new experiences, optimism, hopefulness, purpose in live, control of one's environment, spirituality, self-direction, positive and healthy relationships.

- **Social well-being** – social acceptance, beliefs in the potential of people, personal self-worth, usefulness to society, and a sense of community.

Part II: Background Information

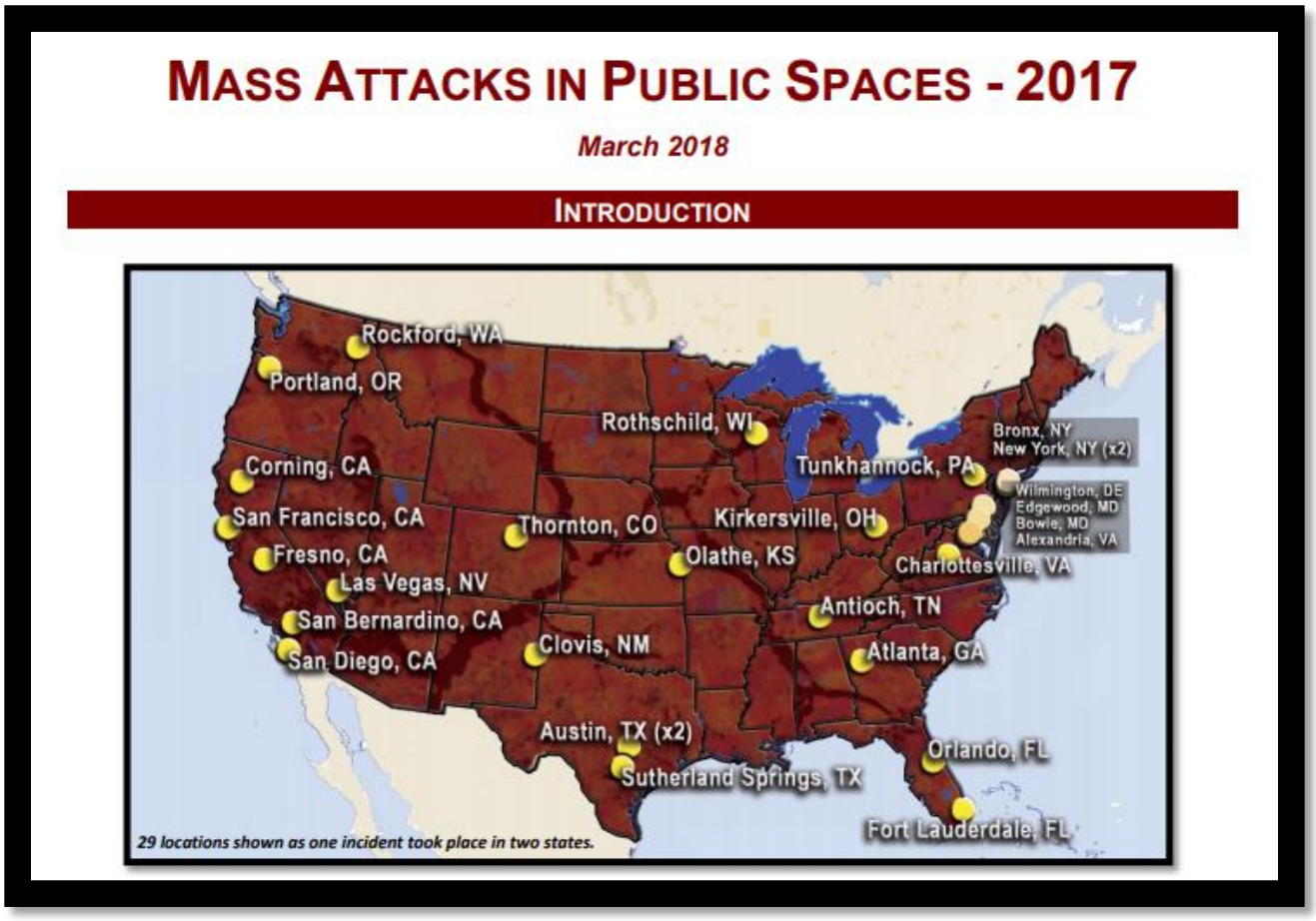
The report *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2015* reported 31 homicides of students aged 5-18 occurring at school or traveling to or from school between July of 2012 and June of 2013. The report indicated that a student's likelihood of being killed at school is less than one in a million! In a joint U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education study entitled *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative* the findings concluded that school shootings are an extremely rare, but highly significant, component of the problem of school violence.

Per the U.S. Secret Service document, Mass Attacks in Public Spaces "Between January and December 2017, 28 incidents of mass attacks, during which three or more persons were harmed, were carried out in public spaces within the United States (see map for locations). These traumatic acts violated the safety of places we work, learn, shop, and relax. These attacks resulted in the loss of 147 individuals and injury to almost 700 others leaving a devastating impact on our nation. Of these incidents, 46% occurred at places of business, 32% occurred at public events, and 14% were carried out in school-based settings."

The United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) conducted a thorough review of these 28 incidents to identify key themes to enhance threat assessment and investigative practices. Regardless of where the attacks occurred, similar themes emerged.

- Nearly half were motivated by a personal grievance related to workplace, domestic, school-based or other issue.
- Over half had histories of criminal charges, mental health symptoms, and/or illicit substance use or abuse.

- All had at least one significant stressor within the last five years, and over half had indications of emotional or financial instability in the timeframe.
- Over 75% made concerning communications and/or elicited concern from others prior to carrying out their attacks. On average, those who did elicit concern caused more harm than those who did not.



These findings support existing best practices that the U.S. Secret Service has established around assessing threats and will be expanded upon later in this resource guide. As this toolkit was being developed, another fatal shooting occurred taking the lives of five newspaper staffers and wounding others on June 28th, 2018 in Annapolis, Maryland at the Capital Gazette Newspaper. Jarrod W. Ramos, a 38-year-old male, explicitly targeted the newspaper and entered the front door working his way through the office shooting victims directly in his path. Workplace violence and threats has also received increased attention from human resources, law enforcement, and mental health professionals over the past few years. Over the years, some shocking acts of school violence have called significant attention to school settings demanding for enhanced threat assessment and interventions to improve school safety.

- **Case example 1**: *On March 21, 2005, Jeffrey Weise, a 16-year-old student at Red Lake High School, Minnesota, killed his grandfather and his grandfather's girlfriend. Next, he drove his grandfather's squad car to the high school and fatally shot a security guard. Before mortally wounding five students and a teacher and injuring seven others, Jeffrey smiled and waved. He then died by self-inflicted gunshot wound.*

- **Case example 2**: *On April 16, 2007, the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history occurred at Virginia Tech when a student, Seung-Hui Cho, gunned down 32 students and teachers and wounded another 25 before taking his own life.*

The U.S Secret Service consistently research mass attacks in public spaces and offers a variety of publications that promote school safety. In their publication "*The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States*" the U.S Secret Service (2004) highlighted the following:

- Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
- Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack.
- Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.
- There is no accurate or useful "profile" of students who engage in targeted school violence.
- Most attackers engaged in some behavior, prior to the incident that caused concern or indicated a need for help.
- Most attackers were known to have difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures.
- Most had considered or attempted suicide.
- Many attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.
- In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention.

Historically, it is important to highlight:

- School shootings are typically thought out and planned.
- Prior to most school shootings other students knew the shooting was going to occur but failed to notify an adult.
- The most common goal was retribution. The justifications and excuses offered indicated this stemmed not from an absence of values but from a well-developed value system in which violence was acceptable.
- Be aware of the subject's online videos, blogs, and social networking activities.

- Many offenders experienced a significant personal loss in the months leading up to the attack, such as a death, breakup, or divorce in the family.
- Many offenders engaged in repetitive viewing of violent media and were often fascinated with previous school shootings. Repeated viewing of movies depicting school shootings, such as "Zero Day" and "Elephant," may indicate a fascination with campus attacks.

MOTIVES & STATISTICS, WARNING SIGNS, and RISK FACTORS

The following information on motives, statistics, and warning signs is compiled from the Safe School Initiative Report, Threat Assessment in Schools, School Violence Threat Management, and School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective, CIRG/NCAVC, (1999).

Motives & Statistics

- 24% motivated by desire for attention or recognition.
- 27% motivated by suicide or desperation.
- 34% motivated by attempt to solve a problem.
- 54% had multiple motives.
- 61% motivated by desire for revenge.
- 75% felt bullied/persecuted/threatened by others.
- 27% of attackers exhibited interest in violent movies.
- 37% of attackers exhibited interest in violence in their own writings, poems, essays, and journal entries.
- 59% of attacks occurred during the school day.
- 63% of attackers had a known history of weapons use.
- 68% acquired the weapon used from their own home or that of a relative.
- 93% of attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the attack that caused others to be concerned.
- 93% of attackers planned out the attack in advance.
- 95% of attackers were current students.
- Odds are one in 1 million that a student will die at school because of a violent act.

Warning Signs

- Investigators should probe to discover if the subject has engaged in research, planning, or preparation (e.g., researched weapons or made attempts to obtain a weapon). Movement from thought to action represents a severe escalation of the risk of violence.
- In around 80% of school shootings at least one person had information that the attacker was thinking about or planning the school attack. In nearly 2/3, more than one

person had information about the attack before it occurred. In nearly all these cases, the person who knew was a peer, a friend, schoolmate, or sibling.

- Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most attacks were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention.
- Be conscious of the "Werther Effect," defined as a duplication or copycat of another suicidal act. School shootings are typically well-publicized, sensationalized events that can trigger an increase in similar acts for roughly days or weeks after the attack.

Risk Factors: compiled from Making Prevention a Reality:

Risk factors are existing realities about the person of concern that increase the potential or risk of violence he or she possesses in a given situation. They are already in place at the time of assessment. Risk factors, as opposed to the *behaviors* a person may demonstrate can either be static or dynamic. Static risk factors are historical or dispositional. Static risk factors will not change over time or will change very slowly, and are not amenable to intervention (e.g., gender, history of prior violent acts). Dynamic risk factors are situational or clinical. Dynamic risk factors can change rapidly (e.g., weapons possession, illegal drug abuse). Some risk factors are highly interrelated with behaviors (e.g., current access to a gun (risk factor) and actively attempting to acquire more guns (behavior).

Violence History

History of violence**:** The best predictor of future violence is past violence. Past violence might not be indicated in a criminal history report, so it is important to cover this in interviews, social media reviews, personnel file reviews, or other available sources.

Childhood exposure to violence**:** Violence in a person of concern's family of origin or adolescent peer group has also been identified as a risk factor for adult violence.

Health/Mental Health

Substance abuse or dependence**:** Psychostimulants continue to be a concern and are encountered as both illicit and prescription drugs. Psychostimulants can increase the fight or flight response, and for targeted violence assessment, they can increase grandiosity or paranoia in some. Side effects are variable and can sometimes include violent ideation and altered thought processing. Alcohol lowers serotonin levels in the brain, potentially leading to irritability and aggression. The use of non-prescription substances could be evidence of self-medicating a diagnosed or undiagnosed issue. However, there is evidence that drug and alcohol abuse is significantly lower among those engaged in targeted violence than those engaged in impulsive/reactive violence.

Personality disturbance or disorder: Paranoia, narcissism, borderline personality, psychopathic or significant antisocial tendencies, or significant and sustained anger manifestations, can all increase risk of targeted violence and should be taken seriously. They can cause a student to believe violence is justified and acceptable. Facets may include low empathy for others, abdication of personal responsibility, habitual projection of blame onto others, persistent belief that others are malevolent, or chronic belief in one's own superiority over others. If personality disturbance or disorder appears to be a factor in a threat assessment case, a qualified mental health professional should be consulted immediately to assist the team in potential management strategies.

Severe mental illness: Severe mental illness can increase the risk of violence toward others. Psychosis, in particular, can escalate concerns depending upon the nature of the symptoms; however, psychosis alone is neither necessary nor sufficient to assign a high level of concern. Its importance as a risk factor should be connected to how logically linked the symptoms are to future violence. Major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders can all feature psychotic symptoms which may increase risk. Symptoms of special concern include command hallucinations, delusional beliefs of persecution or control, hostility, and grandiosity. When these symptoms *co-occur with* additional risk factors, particularly substance abuse or dependence, or a confirmed history of violent acts and/or childhood exposure to violence, the concern may increase.

History of suicidality: If a student has threatened or attempted suicide in the past, this should escalate concern. Suicidal and homicidal violence are more closely linked than many realize. Evidence of suicidal thoughts is reflective of lost hope, and it may be accompanied by acceptance of the consequences for behaving violently toward others. Suicide is often contemplated by targeted violence offenders before they decide to attack; instead, they choose to punish those they feel drove them to their plight.[44] In a study of 160 active shooter incidents in the United States between 2000 and 2013, in 64 incidents (40%), the offender died by suicide.

Organized: If a student has demonstrated an ability to organize behavior, regardless of any superficial appearance of illogical or incoherent speech or personal presentation, then he or she is potentially able to plan and carry out an act of violence.

Weapons:

Firearms and edged weapons: It is easier and more lethal to engage in targeted violence, particularly toward multiple targets, with a firearm. Possession of, access to, experience or familiarity with weapons are all risk factors because they improve a student's ability to carry out the act. Unfortunately, this can be

difficult to determine in many cases. Edged weapons and stabbing instruments have been used in attacks as well. Edged weapons are more easily accessible than firearms.

Explosives**:** Fascination or experimentation with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is another serious risk factor. They, too, increase ability to do harm and may also indicate study of past targeted violence incidents where IEDs were used or their use was attempted.

Problematic Behavioral History

History of stalking, harassing, threatening, or menacing behavior: This spectrum of behavior may indicate low empathy, general disregard for rules and limits, or defiance of authority. These behaviors may indicate the student has become habituated to engaging the world in an aggressive manner, potentially lowering inhibitions about escalating to violence. This is particularly relevant in the majority of mass murders which began with a family homicide. Several known targeted violence offenders engaged in stalking behavior before they engaged in mass violence.

History of non-compliance with limits and boundaries**:** Violations of protective orders or terms of probation (in furtherance of harassing activities, for example), and disregard for rules at school or work, all fall within this category of behavior. Such a history may bode poorly for a threat management strategy that is based on limit-setting, because the student may not be willing to comply with limits.

Social/Environmental

Negative family dynamics and support system**:** An unhealthy family or social environment can escalate risk. If there is tacit or active endorsement of violence within the home or family unit, this can affect how the student views violence. Similarly, if law-breaking or other negative tendencies are the norm in a person's family unit or social environment, it can influence behavior in negative ways. A toxic family or peer dynamic could fuel a student to act out in a violent manner. Irresponsible families can also contribute to easier access to firearms in the home.

Isolation: Living in physical or emotional isolation from others can deprive the student of emotional support often needed to work through life's difficulties and challenges. The student has no one to rely upon.

Instability: Financial, residential, professional, familial and/or social instability can contribute with the student's ability to remain grounded and feel emotionally safe and secure. Instability in these spheres of life can often lead

to grievance formation, exacerbate stressors, and erode one's capacity to cope.

Others are concerned: When behaviors exhibited by the student cause fear in others, stakeholders should take notice. After all, individuals close to the student are often best positioned to observe alarming behaviors. They may not be able to precisely articulate all of the behaviors which concern them; they just know that something is terribly wrong.

Warning Behaviors

Unlike risk factors, warning behaviors represent changes in patterns of behavior that may be evidence of increasing risk. When warning behaviors are evident, they require a threat management strategy and operational response. They are proximal behaviors, occurring more closely in time to a potential act of targeted violence.

The body of knowledge about warning behaviors is based upon research with attackers and assassins of celebrities, politicians, and other public figures. Other research has been conducted on psychiatric patients who have engaged in violence; adolescent mass murderers and school shooters. For each "successful" targeted violence offender with any given behavioral past, there are likely many more who exhibited similar behaviors, but never attacked. Warning behaviors cannot *predict* targeted violence but are useful in identifying accelerating risk which should elevate concern.

Pathway to violence warning behavior

This set of behaviors refers to the pathway to violence. The pathway begins with a grievance and often proceeds to violent ideation. "Pathway warning behavior" may be any behavior that is part of research, planning, preparation, or implementation of an attack.

Research and planning: Once a student decides that violence be used to seek justice for perceived wrongs, under most circumstances he or she must then begin to think and plan. The student considers when, how, and where to commit the act of violence. He or she can craft and refine their plan by researching methods, the planned target, past offenders, and previous targeted violence incidents. The student may consider both practical and symbolic reasons when selecting potential targets.

Preparation: The student may acquire the equipment, skills, and/or any other resources necessary to conduct the attack. This can include obtaining weapons and gear as well as familiarization with various weapons. The person may conduct an actual or virtual rehearsal of any aspect of the attack (e.g., walking the intended route of the attack).

This stage can also include farewell writings or other end of life planning, or creation of artifacts meant to be left behind to claim credit and explain motive.

Breach: This step involves circumvention of security measures or boundaries at the target location. Breach activities can include conducting dry runs, engaging in approach behaviors to include stalking, and testing security at the target location. Breach behavior may occur immediately prior to an attack, or earlier.

Attack: An attack may involve violence against preplanned and opportunistically chosen targets. Both practical and symbolic acts may occur. The violent offense is the culmination of a highly personalized quest for justice which may only be fully understandable to the perpetrator.

Fixation warning behavior

Any behavior that indicates an increasing preoccupation with a person or a cause may be fixation warning behavior. It can be demonstrated by an increased focus on an individual or cause or an increasingly negative characterization of the same. Further, the frequency and duration of the student's communications about the fixation may significantly increase.

Identification warning behavior

The person may adopt a "pseudo-commando" identity or warrior mentality, often with the goal of targeting unarmed civilians in a non-military encounter. A preoccupation with firearms and a desire to use them for revenge may be present. The student may view him or herself as an agent to advance a cause or belief system. The practical aspect of identification warning behavior may feature an unusual fascination with weapons or other military or law enforcement paraphernalia. This can be demonstrated through actual weapons, ammunition or paraphernalia purchases, or through virtual activities such as intense preoccupation with and practice on first-person shooter games, or in-depth internet research of weapons. Conversations or writings may indicate a desire to "copycat" and "one up" previous attacks or mass shootings.

Novel aggression warning behavior

This is an act of violence which appears unrelated to any "pathway" behavior *and* which is committed for the first time. The student may be engaging in this behavior in order to test his or her ability to actually engage in and commit a violent act. This can also be referred to as "experimental aggression". Examples of acts of novel aggression may include animal cruelty, vandalism, assault, firearm discharge, arson or bombing, or rehearsed violence with inanimate objects fantasized to be human targets.

Energy burst warning behavior

This is demonstrated by an increased pace, duration, or range of any noted activities related to a potential target, even if the activities themselves seem harmless. These can be overt or covert behaviors and often occur more typically in the hours, days, or weeks before a targeted violent incident. For example, a student may make more frequent trips, errands, purchases, or communications as he or she rushes to finalize plans prior to carrying out an attack.

History of School Shootings:

The following information regarding the history of school shootings can be found here:

School shootings are not a recent phenomenon. The earliest known United States school shooting occurred on July 26, 1764 in Greencastle, Pennsylvania on the school property commonly known as Pontiac's Rebellion. Four Lenape American Indian entered the schoolhouse, shot and killed schoolmaster Enoch Brown, and then shot and killed nine other children. Two children survived this massacre. The following record of school shootings highlights that violent acts in school settings have been occurring for centuries.

On November 2nd, 1853 a student in Louisville, Kentucky shot and killed his schoolmaster for punishing his brother the prior day.

On June 8th, 1867 a 13-year-old boy shot and injured a fellow classmate at Public School No. 18 in New York City.

On April 9th, 1891, 70-year-old James Foster, fired a shotgun into a crowd of students on the playground of St. Mary's Parochial School in Newburgh, New York injuring several students.

On February 24, 1903 Edward Foster, a 17 year-old-student at Inman High School, of South Carolina shot and killed his teacher.

On March 11th, 1908 a teenage girl was shot to death by another teenage girl at the Laurens Finishing School in Boston, Massachusetts. The shooter then turned the gun on herself and took her own life.

On May 18th, 1927 Andrew Kehoe blew up the Bath Consolidated School in Bath, Michigan by detonating dynamite in the basement of the school, killing 38 people (mostly children) and then detonated his car in front of the school killing himself and four others. This is the deadliest massacre in a school setting to date in the United States.

On June 4th, 1936 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a college student shot and killed his Lehigh University Instructor over failing him. The student then took his own life.

On June 26th, 1946 a 15-year-old boy was shot and killed by a gang of seven youth in the basement of Public School 147 in Brooklyn, New York.

On October 2nd, 1953 a 14-year-old boy was shot to death by another 14-year-old in a classroom at Kelly High School in Chicago, Illinois.

January 11, 1955 in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania Bob Bechtel, a 20-year-old student at Swarthmore College, returned to his dorm (after a student urinated on his bed) with a shotgun killing fellow student Holmes Strozier.

On January 30th, 1968 a 16-year-old shot and killed a fellow student at Miami Jackson High School in Miami, Florida.

On December 30th, 1974 a 17-year-old who was armed with a rifle kills three adults and wounds 11 others at his high school in Olean, New York.

On January 29th, 1979 a 16-year-old female opens fire in Grover Cleveland Elementary School killing 2 and wounding 9.

On January 20th, 1983 an eighth grader, during study hall, opened fire killing one student, wounding another, and then took his own life at the Parkway South Middle School in St. Louis, Missouri.

On September 26th, 1988 a 19-year-old student killed one student and wounded 8 other children with a 9 round 22 caliber pistol at Oakland Elementary in Greenwood, South Carolina.

On January 17th, 1989 a single gunman, firing over 100 rounds into a schoolyard from an AK-47 killed 5 children and wounded 29 others in Stockton, California at Cleveland School.

With advances in social media and the national attention gained through the Columbine school massacre in 1999, school shootings have become all too familiar. School shootings have been a recurring theme in the wake of massacres at Virginia Tech in 2007, Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, and most recently Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018.

On February 14th, 2018 a mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, in Parkland Florida, left 17 people dead and over a dozen injured**.** This shooting was the 18th gun-related incident on the grounds of an elementary, middle, or high school (including colleges and universities) since January 2018, according to the Gun Violence Archive (GVA), a non-profit organization that tracks gun-related violence in the United States.

Predicting violent acts based on individual characteristics remain challenging. However, much has been learned over the years based on acts of violence and school shootings. It is important to analyze school shootings by looking closely at the type of offender perpetrating the act of violence. For example, if we look at Columbine High School it is clear that this traumatic event involved students who acted against peers and faculty. However, in the Amish school shooting that occurred in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania in 2006 a 32-year-old milk truck driver entered a

one room schoolhouse killing 5 girls and then taking his own life. The gunman shared that his actions were not directed at either the Amish or the school but came as a result of an early life painful incident and being angry at God.

When an adult enters a school and commits an act of violence toward students and staff, motives often vary greatly. A student perpetrator is often motivated by school administration, teacher, staff, or peer factors that influence an act of violence. These student motivations have little or no bearing on school shootings when the perpetrator is an adult. Despite school shootings committed by students differing from those committed by adults, there are two warning signs that characterize both kinds of violent acts. The first is that perpetrators often have had a fascination with weapons and access to guns. The second is that perpetrators disclose of their plans of committing an act of violence, referred to as *leakage*, prior to committing the act. We will discuss leakage in further detail later in this toolkit.

Part III: Legal and Ethical Issues

HOUSE BILL No. 2493: INTRODUCED BY ORTITAY, BARRAR, BOBACK, DeLUCA, MURT, STEPHENS AND VAZQUEZ, JUNE 14, 2018 REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JUNE 14, 2018.

AN ACT Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An act relating to the public-school system, including certain provisions applicable as well to private and parochial schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the laws relating thereto," providing for threat assessment.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public-School Code of 1949, is amended by adding an article to read: ARTICLE XIII-B THREAT ASSESSMENT Section 1301-B. Threat assessment teams and oversight committees in public school entities.

(a) Adoption of policies.

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, each governing authority shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students consistent with the model policies developed by the Office for Safe Schools. The policies shall include procedures for referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment, when appropriate.

(b) Committee.

The chief school administrator may establish a committee charged with oversight of the threat assessment teams operating within the public-school entity, which may be an existing committee. The committee shall include individuals with expertise in human resources, education, school administration, mental health and law enforcement.

(c) Threat assessment team.

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, each chief school administrator shall establish, for each school, a threat assessment team that shall include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration and law enforcement. Threat assessment teams may be established to serve one or more schools as determined by the chief school administrator.

Each team shall:

(1) Provide guidance to students, faculty and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, the school or students.

(2) Identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported.

(3) Implement policies adopted by the governing authority under subsection (a).

(d) Report of threat.

Upon a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to the student or others, a threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the chief school administrator or his designee. The chief school administrator or his designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude school entity personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.

(e) Report.

Each threat assessment team established under this section shall report quantitative data on its activities according to guidance developed by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

(f) Definitions.

As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise: "Governing authority." A local board of school directors, or the equivalent, of a public-school entity. "Public school entity." A school district, intermediate unit, area vocational-technical school, charter school, regional charter school or cyber charter school.

Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

Legal Implications for Schools

Reeves and Brock (2017) indicate that parents and students have at times questioned if their First Amendment rights have been violated in the aftermath of threat assessment inquiries and subsequent disciplinary actions. However, the student is not protected under the First Amendment if the student's speech has caused substantial disruption to school activities. These authors cite the Ninth Circuit court in United States v Orozco-Santillan (1990) that asserts:

"Whether a particular statement may properly be considered to be a threat is governed by an objective standard - whether a reasonable person would foresee that the statement would be interpreted by those to whom the maker communicates the statement as a serious expression of intent to harm or assault."

In most cases, courts are in favor of school districts acting to protect students from violence. Always consult school district legal counsel.

Boim v Fulton County SD (2007)
United States Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
It was determined that Fulton County School District did not violate a student's right to free speech when they suspended her from school after a written narrative was discovered that described her shooting her math teacher. This case can be found at

Pace v. Talley (2006)
United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit
It was determined that the school did not violate a student's constitutional right to privacy by reporting an alleged threat to law enforcement without first providing the student a chance to respond to the allegation. This case can be found at

Foreseeability & Negligence:

When students carry out their threats in schools, and other students get hurt, are school districts or school personnel liable for the injuries to other students? Suppose the school district had warning signs of the dangers, teachers heard the threats or saw students acting out in unmistakably threatening ways?

Foreseeability Case Example:

The following details highlight both *foreseeability* and *negligence* in the Marjory Stoneman High School mass shooting. Prior to the shooting at Marjory Stoneman High School, Nikolas Cruz had a long history of disciplinary issues and disturbing behaviors. He was adopted at an early age by an older couple, Roger and Lynda Cruz, because of his biological mother's inability to care for him due to her mental health history and struggles with drug addiction. Cruz suffered additional trauma the loss of Roger Cruz, who passed away when Cruz was very young, and later the loss of Lynda Cruz who passed away due to Pneumonia a few short months prior to the parkland shooting. Cruz had struggled with behavioral outbursts, getting into fights, school discipline issues, bullying, and abusing/killing small animals. He was well known in both the community

and school as a "troubled" child. Nikolas Cruz had numerous behavioral and learning problems throughout his life, along with a fascination with guns and his own problems with alcohol and drug abuse.

It was known that Nikolas Cruz killed squirrels with a pellet gun. He often would steal neighbors personal mail and picked fights with other kids in the neighborhood. Cruz was negatively known by the community and neighbors, often having the police involved for issues around vandalism, trespassing, fighting, and other random complaints.

Cruz received mental health treatment throughout his life however, the last year leading up to the shooting he was not receiving active therapy or treatment. During that tumultuous year, he was expelled from school for disciplinary problems, made disturbing posts to Instagram involving themes of violence, isolated himself further from peers, lost his mother, and living at a friend's house showing increased signs of depression. Prior to Cruz's expulsion, Jim Gard, a math teacher at Stoneman Douglas High School, said in an interview that school administrators became concerned over the last year about Mr. Cruz's behavior and alerted the faculty. "We received emails about him from the administration," Mr. Gard said in an interview, adding that he did not recall the specific issues. After the shooting occurred, Mr. Gard said that several students told him that Mr. Cruz was taken with a girl at Stoneman Douglas High School "to the point of stalking her." In an interview with a Miami news station (WFOR-TV), following the shooting, one of Cruz's classmates commented that students would often joke that if anyone were to open fire inside the school, it would be Cruz. Because of that, students feared him and mostly stayed away from him. "A lot of people were saying that it would be him," the student told WFOR-TV. "They would say he would be the one to shoot up the school."

Cruz always had a fascination with guns and weapons. Prior to his expulsion from high school a 17-year-old student, Dakota Mutchler, told the Washington Post during an interview that Cruz "started progressively getting weirder." Cruz, he said, was selling knives out of a lunchbox, posting on Instagram about guns and killing animals, and eventually "going after one of my friends, threatening her." Screenshots of an Instagram page said to belong to Nikolas Cruz showed many photos of a man holding firearms and ammunition used in a semi-automatic AR-15 rifle. Another photo showed several guns, including rifles with scopes, lying on a bed. Another appeared to show a frog that had been mutilated and killed. After his expulsion, Cruz legally purchased an AR-15 assault rifle which was used on February 14th, 2018 to carry out one of the nation's deadliest school shootings. The family who Cruz was living with was aware of the purchase and allowed him to keep the weapon on the condition that remained locked up.

Negligence:

Prior to Cruz's expulsion, Jim Gard, a math teacher at Stoneman Douglas High School, said in an interview that school administrators became concerned over the last year about Mr. Cruz's behavior and alerted the faculty. "We received emails about him from the administration," Mr. Gard said in an interview, adding that he did not recall the specific issues. He recalls the emails urging faculty to keep a close and watchful eye on Cruz. Fourteen months prior to the school

shooting, Cruz was denied counseling services and therapeutic accommodations in the school despite evidence that he was mentally unstable, a discipline problem, and struggling both academically and socially.

Two months after Cruz was expelled, he requested to be moved to a special education school setting and return to Cross Creek School. His mother shared that "He had come to realize that the only way he would achieve his goal of graduating from high school would be to return to Cross Creek," the report says. The district had 15 years of paperwork on Cruz but determined he would have to be evaluated and found eligible for exceptional student education services, a process Douglas High estimated would take six weeks. Special education specialists at Cross Creek, Stoneman Douglas and at Riverside, where he was a student, all were involved in his request to return to Cross Creek's special education campus. Ultimately, the administrators at Stoneman Douglas, where he was to re-enroll for a new evaluation, refused to accept him back. Both above mis-steps would be deemed as negligence on the part of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Schools can easily become a common location for negligence issues since the care of children are placed in the hands of the school. To a certain extent, the employees of a school and the school district itself are liable for the safety of all students while they are on the grounds of the school or on a school supervised outing. In legal terms, this reasonable expectation of protection is known as a duty of care, which, if breached, can lead to charges of negligence in schools. Legal cases of negligence in school are typically civil torts that are resolved through the issuance of damages as the court decides. This means that there must be measurable loss or damage to the defendant, whether through physical or mental injuries, or through the loss of opportunities or property caused by negligence. In relation to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, two specific instances were identified in a follow up report where school officials did not follow the requirements of Florida statute or federal laws governing students with disabilities.

Two specific instances of administrative negligence:

-- According to the Sun Sentinel, School officials misstated Cruz's options when he was faced with being removed from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School his junior year, leading him to refuse special education services.

-- When Cruz requested to return to the therapeutic environment of Cross Creek School for special education students, the district "failed to follow through," this report reveals.

School Liability and Litigation:

There are numerous factors that may help determine whether a school or its employees are liable if an act of violence was committed. In regard to the school itself, the lawyers and courts will need to resolve several matters of concern, including whether the school was negligent and, as a result, could be held liable. Attorneys and the courts will also need to resolve whether sovereign immunity excuses a public school from responsibility, whether immunity shields

school employees from liability, and to determine which school employees (if any) may be legally accountable.

The first legal question for education and personal injury attorneys is, what is the school's liability in the event of a school shooting? Historically, the answer to this question centered on foreseeability; that is, whether, in the case of a student perpetrator, the school had knowledge of the student's propensity for violence, was aware of any mental illness of the student or had any reason to believe that the student may bring a gun to school with the intent of shooting others. While foreseeability remains the standard, such arguments have become rare, and currently inquiries primarily focus on the school's duties, what is required to make a school safe, and how a school may breach those duties.

School districts are responsible for the safety and welfare of students. Schools remain legally responsible for ensuring the safety of all students, and they have a duty to exercise care in ensuring the safety of each student. Schools have a duty to protect the students while at school from the foreseeable acts of third parties, which includes protecting students from violence perpetrated by a fellow student or another adult. A breach in this duty renders schools legally responsible for failing to protect students against acts of violence. Catherine Michael states "This is not to suggest that most families and attorneys involved in these cases do not deeply feel for the schools and teachers who must endure what has become a sad and horrible epidemic of violence. Of course, they do. However, this doesn't absolve a school or its staff of the legal duty to protect the students against foreseeable harm."

The issue of school liability for a shooting has had varied outcomes depending on the state. For example, family members of the victims of an Ohio school shooting sued the school and its administrators for negligence. One day after the Florida shooting, an Ohio judge ruled that the administrators could not be held liable, and the court had previously decided that the school itself was not legally responsible. In Indiana, however, an appellate court held that a school was not immune from liability when a shooting occurred on its premises.

Public schools are often treated like government agencies when litigation ensues often resulting in the school invoking sovereign immunity as a defense to litigation. According to the Sheriff of Broward County, where the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting occurred, the school and several teachers were aware of the shooter's past threatening behavior and had expelled him for disciplinary reasons.

Liability of school/personnel is an authentic concern of many districts. In litigation, experts are often used to testify regarding premises liability, negligence, security, education, and government immunity to assist in determining a school bears any legal responsibility for acts of violence occurring. Additionally, specific experts in educational administration play a pivotal role in offering expert opinion. They can be useful in assessing if any individual(s) may have had a duty to warn or protect individuals on school premises. They can also be used to examine whether those duties were properly carried out. Foreseeability is often a prime factor in premises liability cases involving violent acts, and experts are often used to address to what extent it is relevant to potential claims against a school or its employees.

A second type of liability is commercial liability. After a mass shooting, the question is often asked how a shooter(s) obtained weapons and ammunition used in the violent act. In the Florida shooting, the perpetrator legally purchased an AR-15 assault rifle and multiple magazines that were used in the school shooting. Currently, gun manufacturers and dealers have a very large degree of legal immunity from lawsuits due to the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCA), a federal law passed in 2005. It is important to note that federal law immunity is not universal and has a few exceptions. One of these exceptions is referred to as "negligent entrustment." Negligent entrustment is where one party is held liable for negligence due to providing another party with a dangerous instrument that was used to cause harm or injury to a third party. One family of a victim of the Sandy Hook school shooting is currently suing the manufacturer, wholesaler, and seller of the gun that was used in that tragic incident. That lawsuit is currently being reviewed and will be determined by the Connecticut Supreme Court.

A third type of liability is Government liability. The question has been raised if the county, state, or federal government should be held liable for mass shootings or acts of violence. For example, the FBI was alerted to a post by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooter on a 2017 YouTube video about his plan to be a "professional school shooter." The FBI was also provided information on January 5, 2018, which warned about the shooter's possession of guns, desire to kill people, erratic behavior, and disturbing social media posts, as well as the potential of him carrying out a school shooting. This information has led to consideration as to whether the US government should face litigation over the shooting.

A school's responsibility does not end with the implementation of a policy or procedure. Schools can be under scrutiny for both action and inaction. Safety of students is critical and schools must work diligently to establish a culture that addresses mutual respect, deals effectively with bullying, intervenes with peer harassment, provides effective training, supervision, and intervention in identifying students who pose a risk. As schools place more emphasis on preventative planning to ensure safety the liability risk will in turn reduce. According to Dr. Gene Deisinger and Dr. Marisa Randazzo (2017), it is important for schools to develop policies and procedures that maintain accurate records to promote safety, determine the severity of the problem, identify trends or patterns around current and future concerns, evaluate prevention/intervention strategies, and document key concerns or corrective actions taken.

The guiding principle in dealing with student threats should be safeguarding the physical welfare of students and school personnel. Any threatening communications or materials should be immediately reported to a school official who has the authority to act or investigate. The school official who receives such notification must research the reported incident and take appropriate action outlined in the school policy and procedure. "With appropriate documentation in place, the first step when a threat is made or suspected is to consult the district's student code of conduct to see whether the code itself or a district policy has been violated. If a part of the code or a policy has been violated, the designated consequence should be applied if the consequence is sufficient to deal with the severity of the issue. Any student who presents an immediate danger to school personnel or students should be removed from the school, with the assistance of school safety officers or the police if necessary, without any

hesitation over possible legal action that may follow. If the situation is deemed serious, district legal counsel should be involved as soon as possible. Courts will ultimately decide whether school personnel acted in accordance with the law, but an adverse decision many years down the line is better than risking harm because of inaction when faced with the possibility of bodily harm to a member of the school community."

Part IV: Information for Administrators

The Safe School Initiative concluded that there is no accurate or useful profile to determine which students may pose a threat and, therefore, school administrators should focus on whether a student engages in behaviors that suggest possible violence so that intervention may be possible. The study also emphasized that school officials should develop preventative measures to any emergency planning already in place to include "protocols and procedures for responding and managing threats."

School tragedies committed by third parties often involve many legal concepts, including duty, foreseeability, immunity, special relationship obligations, supervision, students with disabilities, building design and condition, actual or constructive knowledge, contributory fault, and contractual indemnification, among others. The failure to follow federal emergency management guidance has been cited in support of legal claims involving security design in schools. With the high profile of school shootings and significant incidents of violence committed in schools and on campuses, it is reasonable to expect that similar claims will continue to be alleged.

It is important that a well-planned administrative and therapeutic intervention address the needs of both the threatening student and the wider school community. The purpose of a Threat Assessment Team and having a threat assessment protocol is primarily for safety, but also to guide effective intervention.

School administrators must be committed to establishing clear policies and procedures and a systematic threat assessment protocol, with the primary goal being preventing immediate risk of harm to others (Reeves & Brock, 2017). Policies should build upon lessons learned in the aftermath of school shootings, existing best practices, and models that are consistent with accepted standards of practice. Many schools are limited in resources and personnel. This is best accomplished by the superintendent establishing a threat assessment team to assess and intervene with individuals whose behaviors may pose a threat to both the students and staff.

In their document entitled *Making Schools Safer*, The U.S. Secret Service (2018) recommends that school administrators develop a **Comprehensive Prevention Plan** that incorporates the following strategies:

- Foster a climate of respect and trust within the school
- Build relationships between faculty and students

- Promote an atmosphere of open communication
- Identify students who display concerning behaviors
- Establish and reinforce clear policies and procedures around threat assessment
- Provide resources to manage and intervene with students of concern
- Promote information sharing between the school and community stakeholders
- Liaison with law enforcement, first responders, and mental health providers
- Require consistent training among stakeholders
- Establish and maintain a threat assessment team

In July 2018, the United States Secret Service created a document entitled *Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model* in part as a response to the tragic shooting in February of 2018 in Parkland, Florida. Everyone has a role in preventing school violence and creating safe school climates. Students should feel empowered to come forward and staff should take all reports seriously. To create a targeted violence prevention plan, the US Secret Service suggests the following steps (all of which are explained in detail in the full document):

1. Establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team
2. Define behaviors including those that should trigger immediate intervention
3. Establish and provide training on a central reporting system such as an online form on the school website, an email address or smartphone application.
4. Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention
5. Establish threat assessment procedures
6. Develop risk management options
7. Create and promote a safe school climate
8. provide training to all stakeholders

Since school violence is a top concern for administrators, teachers, and school staff, how can these acts be identified, addressed and prevented moving forward? One way to prevent violent acts from occurring in school settings is to foster a school culture of respect, trust and safety. One thing that we have learned from some of the tragic school events is that there was warning signs that went unaddressed. Investigations on the Columbine (1999) massacre revealed that students knew something about the plans. Documents from the Sandy Hook (2012) shooting revealed that authorities knew about the shooter's cache of weapons. The Parkland shooting (2018) media coverage revealed that the shooter was known by administrators to have an obsession with guns and violence.

10 Best Practices for School Staff to Prevent Violent Acts:

There is a pattern in school shootings that has emerged where information was leaked along the way leaving a trail of warning signs that were either disregarded or missed all together! What can teachers and administrators do to build a culture of trust in their schools? Melissa Kelly (May 2018) has identified "10 best practices" that teachers and administrators can do to foster a culture of trust and respect in school settings to prevent school violence.

- Teachers and administrators must involve themselves beyond the classroom.
  In between classes be visible and in the hallway outside the door of your classroom to actively look and listen to what is going on. Keep your eyes and ears open. If you hear teasing or see policies being violated intervene right away. Take time to invest in getting to know your students. Spend time talking to them and listening to them.

- Do not allow inappropriate talk.
  Reinforce appropriate communication. Intervene if you hear racist or prejudice remarks. Encourage inclusivity, mutual respect and kindness in school to foster and promote a culture of psychological safety.

- Tune into "idle" chatter.
  Whenever there is downtime in your classroom listen to what students are sharing or discussing. If you hear something that raises a red flag, then bring it to your administrator's attention immediately.

- Get involved with student led anti-violence clubs or organizations.
  Getting students involved in these clubs or organizations early on, and role modeling the importance of these clubs, can be a big factor in preventing violent acts from occurring.

- Educate yourself to the warning signs.
  There are common warning signs that often show up prior to an act of violence occurring in the school setting. Teachers and administrators must be tuned into the following:

    1. Sudden lack of interest in friends or activities
    2. Obsessions with violent games or weapons
    3. Depression and mood swings
    4. Writing that shows despair and isolation
    5. Lack of anger management skills
    6. Talking about death or bringing weapons to school
    7. Violence towards animals
    8. Difficulty eating or sleeping
    9. Feelings of rejection and/or persecution
    10. Unusually intense or frequent violent content in personal writings or artwork
    11. A pattern of bullying

12. Intolerance or prejudice against certain groups of people
13. Drug or alcohol abuse
14. Membership in a gang
15. Threats of serious violence

- Discuss violence prevention directly with students.
  Address the warning signs and review this school policy on safety and dealing with potential threats. Schools should conduct lockdown and intruder drills to prepare students on what to do in a emergency situation.

- Encourage students to talk appropriately about violence.
  Be open to student questions and conversations. Make yourself available and let students know that they can talk with you about any concerns or fears pertaining to school violence. Build trust with all students by keeping lines of communication open.

- Role model and teach conflict and anger management skills.
  Teach and communicate alternate ways for student to navigate and resolve conflict. Incorporate healthy coping skills to verbally resolve issues rather than resorting to harsh language, threats or physical violence. Teach students ways to manage their anger through role-plays, simulations, and learning center activities. Teachers and administrators should take the opportunity to support activities that will help build empathy.

- Get parents or guardians involved.
  It is important to keep lines of communication open with parents. The more that teachers call parents and talk with them, the stronger the relationship. Build trust with parents so that if a concern arises, you can effectively deal with it together. Report concerns you may have.

- Engage in and promote school wide activities.
  Serve on a committee that helps develop how school staff should deal with emergencies. Actively contribute to school safety plans. Share with teachers to assist everyone becoming aware of warning signs and providing them with specific directions on what to do about them. Creating effective plans so that all staff members understand, and follow is one key to helping prevent school violence.

Beyond building a culture of trust in the school setting, many schools have also transitioned away from traditional punishments that remove kids from the classroom. Historically, punishments do not produce a positive behavioral change and oftentimes only reinforces more negative emotions and behaviors. Many schools are moving toward positive behavioral interventions and more comprehensive methods of student support. Old-fashioned suspensions and expulsions do not adequately address the root cause of the behavior that landed the student initially in trouble.

Ultimately, “old school” punishments place students further at risk. Counseling and other positive student supports provide a more productive response to misbehavior and tend to promote a healthier culture of psychological safety, mutual trust and respect.

Zero-Tolerance approaches are not the answer:

A few vignettes of no tolerance approaches:

Case example: A 4th grader is suspended for bringing a knife to school to cut his apple.
Case example: A 7th grader in Trenton, Ohio is suspended for “liking” a picture of a toy gun on social media.
Case example: A kindergarten student in Tennessee was suspended for ONE YEAR for having a toy weapon in school in 2008.

State law prohibits school districts from suspending students for “brandishing a partially consumed pastry or other food item” bitten into the shape of a weapon.

History and Background of Zero-Tolerance Approaches

The adoption of zero-tolerance policies gained popularity in the mid to late 1990s, after the passage of the federal Gun-Free School Act of 1994.

This law mandates yearlong expulsions for students who are caught possessing firearms on school property. This law also requires schools to refer students to criminal or juvenile justice authorities. However, the chief administrative officer for the school district has the power to

modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis. In 1997-98, a series of school shootings occurred in Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Springfield, Oregon, alarming school administrators across the country. This lead to pursuing tougher punishments for violent or potentially violent behaviors. In the spring of 1999, in the state of Colorado, this concern escalated greatly when two heavily armed teenage boys shot and killed 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School prior to taking their own lives.

Many Zero-tolerance policies have been adopted to mandate expulsion or suspension for a variety of infractions that include weapon possession, drug possession, fighting, threats and other acts of violence. Critics of Zero-tolerance policies state that many do not adequately or clearly define what constitutes a weapon, a drug, or a threat. This has resulted in some schools taking excessive disciplinary action against students for infractions as possessing aspirin on school property or bringing a plastic toy gun to school.

Furthermore, there is growing concern that these types of policies discriminate heavily against minority students, especially African-Americans. In June of 2001, the U.S. Department of Education released information that demonstrated school expulsion rates were higher for black students than for whites when it came to the use of zero-tolerance policies. Out of 87,000 students expelled during the 1997-98 school year, 31 percent were African- American.

The American Bar Association (ABA) passed a 2001 resolution stating that it “opposes 'zero tolerance' policies that mandate either expulsion or referral of students to juvenile or criminal court, without regard to the circumstances or nature of the offense or the student's history”.

The ABA resolution supports the development and implementation of strong policies that oppose weapons and crime in schools, however they oppose policies mandating equal punishments for varying acts or degrees of misconduct. The ABA does support policies that empower school administrators to view each case on an individual basis and provide alternatives to expulsion or referrals to law enforcement officials which has become the standard punishment under zero-tolerance policies. Robert G. Schwartz, executive director of the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia and one of the authors of the resolution, stated that he hoped the resolution and report would "remind folks that due process still applies in schools”.

Zero-tolerance policies do not account for age which is very problematic.

Case example: In Tennessee eight children were expelled for one year under zero-tolerance policies. One expulsion involved a kindergarten student who brought a toy gun to school, in their backpack, to show a friend. Another expulsion involved a middle school student who threatened to shoot his principal. The age and intent of each student was different, but the punishment was the same.

Case example: In Tennessee eight children were expelled for one year under zero-tolerance policies. One expulsion involved a kindergarten student who brought a toy gun to school, in their backpack, to show a friend. Another expulsion involved a middle school student who threatened to shoot his principal. The age and intent of each student was different but the punishment was the same.

Zero-tolerance policies can impact well-intended students with negative consequences.

> ***Case example: A 9th grade student realized that he accidentally left his boy scout knife in his backpack which he took to school. When he realized that his knife was in his backpack, he turned it into his homeroom teacher who praised him. However, his principal expelled him under the zero-tolerance policy.***

The research and our experience both suggest that Zero-tolerance policies simply do not work. They lack flexibility, impact teacher autonomy by removing choices from the equation, and can often lead to student discrimination. Zero-tolerance policies often impose severe consequences for violations that, in some situations, do more harm than good.

Manifestation Determination

Sharkey and colleagues (2004) suggest conducting a manifestation determination any time a student identified with a disability makes a threat. As the goal of threat assessment procedures is to create support plans, the manifestation determination may help school staff and administrators better understand effective intervention strategies for each individual student using a procedure with which they are already familiar.

Part V: Components of Safe Schools

According to the U.S. Department of Education report *Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide*, a safe school will have three major components:

- A school-wide foundation for the well-being and success of all students.
- A system for identifying students with acute behavior problems.
- A system for providing interventions and therapies for at-risk students.

A Call to Action

The National Association of School Psychologists (January 2013) proposes an increased need for mental health services and supports in schools. The availability of school-based mental health professionals is inadequate to meet the mental health needs of our children and youth. The recommended ratio of students to school counselor is 250:1 and the recommended ratio for school psychologists is 500-700:1.

NASP Position Statement: School Violence Prevention

The National Association of School Psychologists (2015) describes strategies to create safe schools including:

- Creating school-community safety partnerships
- Establishing comprehensive school crisis response plans
- Enhancing classroom and school climate

- Promoting positive school discipline and support
- Using non-stigmatizing school violence prevention programs
- Promoting anti-violence initiatives that include prevention programs for all students
- Providing support for students exhibiting early warning signs of disruptive behavior
- Intervening with students who experience significant behavioral adjustment problems
- Supporting policies that reduce access to firearms by youth and others who are of danger

The following are examples of effective school violence prevention initiatives directly cited from the following website:

- **Arts and Creative Youth Programs**: Young people who lack adult supervision are vulnerable to community violence and gang recruitment during non-school hours. Art programs offer some students a safe and constructive place to go. Rigorous evaluation of three citywide arts programs for at-risk youth found that these programs decrease involvement in delinquent behavior, increase academic achievement, and improve students' attitudes about themselves and their future.

- C**onflict resolution and peer mediation**: Comprehensive conflict resolution programs train selected students to serve as neutral third parties who can mediate disputes among their peers. Teachers and administrators are also trained to intervene in student conflicts in ways that cultivate team-building, problem-solving, and leadership skills. These programs can teach young people how to peacefully resolve conflicts and provide students with positive problem-solving strategies that foster a school climate of respect and caring.

- **Full service schools**: Evidence shows that after school, on weekends, and during school breaks, youth violence increases. Full service schools help to prevent youth violence by providing safe places for young people to meet and participate in meaningful activities during times when they would be at high-risk for becoming involved in crime or violence. Full service schools offer comprehensive, integrated activities to address the physical, social, emotional, and educational needs of young people, their families and communities. Full service schools also provide sports activities, job training, leadership groups, support groups, parenting classes, counseling, drama, art, and music classes.

- **Peer and adult mentoring:** Mentoring programs allow young people to build sustained, positive relationships with older peers and adults, and motivate them to emulate positive behavior. Such interactions help to significantly reduce at risk behaviors in students and create a safe and secure atmosphere in school setting. This also results in students feeling more comfortable talking to adults if they need to. Peer mentoring can

also help to increase understanding between diverse groups, strengthen the sense of community within a school, and build the self-esteem of those participating.

- **Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative:** The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative is a federal grant initiative, jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The goal of this initiative is to prevent youth violence and promote healthy child development through comprehensive educational, mental health, social, law enforcement, and juvenile justice services.

Safe schools plans must:

- Build a safe school environment
- Address substance abuse
- Focus on violence prevention efforts
- Provide mental health services (preventative and treatment) in school
- Promote education reform
- Establish safe school policies and threat assessment teams

Introduce violence prevention curriculum and resources into school settings

The curricula listed below show great promise for reducing conflict and violence in schools and building students' skills. The following curricula and programs have been highlighted as "exemplary" or noted as "promising" by the U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program.

- **Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders (AVB) Violence Prevention Curriculum**

  This curriculum examines violence among peers, including the roles that young people play in potentially violent situations (aggressor, victim, or bystander). It helps students to understand the dynamics of a situation, define their problems and establish goals to generate positive solutions that prevent acts of violence. The curriculum has been found to increase students' desire to resolve conflicts peacefully and decrease their acceptance and encouragement of aggression.

- **Lions-Quest Working Toward Peace (WTP)**

  Lions-Quest WTP brings together the school, family, peers, community, and the media in a supportive network to teach and reinforce anger and conflict management skills.

- **Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education**

  The Michigan Model brings together an array of national, state, and private resources to promote comprehensive school health from kindergarten through high school. The goals

of the program are to provide common language and approaches for parent, community, and student health programs. The Michigan Model strives to reinforce prevention messages from a variety of levels.

- **Open Circle Curriculum**

  The Open Circle Curriculum is a social and emotional learning curriculum that targets elementary school students and focuses on strengthening their communication, self-control, and social problem-solving skills. The program also aims to promote the development of relationships between students and the adults in their lives. Open Circle Curriculum also desires to build a sense of community in the classroom and school by fostering communication among and between students and their teachers.

- **PeaceBuilders®**

  PeaceBuilders® is a school-wide violence prevention program for elementary and middle schools that aims to reinforce positive behavior at school between peers, at home, and in after school settings.

- **Primary Mental Health Project (PMHP)**

  PMHP is a school-based early intervention program that identifies and support children in preschool- grade 3 who are displaying school adjustment difficulties. The program seeks to detect, reduce, and/or prevent social, emotional, and school adjustment difficulties by promoting social learning and adjustment skills. In the 40 years since it began, PMHP has been thoroughly tested. Long-term benefits for children receiving support were found lasting up to five years post intervention. PMHP has since been adopted in more than 700 school districts around the world.

- **Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP)**

  RIPP is a primary prevention program designed for middle schools. The program aims to reduce problem behaviors by implementing strategies that address specific risk factors and increase protective factors. RIPP participants were more likely to utilize the peer mediation program, and showed significantly lower rates of fighting, bringing a weapon to school, and in-school suspensions than control subjects.

- **Social Decision Making and Problem Solving**

  The primary goal of this program is to prevent unhealthy life decisions by providing elementary school students with skills necessary to effectively manage stress in emotional and socially complex situations.

- **The Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14**

  The curriculum is a universal preventive intervention designed for parents and children of all educational levels. Key objectives of the curriculum include improved parenting skills in nurturing and child management, improved interpersonal skills among youth, and improved pro-social skills among youth. SFP is recognized by many federal agencies as an exemplary, research-based family model. For more information contact Karol L. Kumpfer at karol.kumpfer@health.utah.edu.

Another Frequent School Based Program Utilized:

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS):

The following information is compiled from the following website:

PBIS is an approach schools utilize to enhance school safety and promote overall positive behavior. PBIS helps schools determine how to best respond to a child's misbehavior.

At the core, PBIS supports schools in teaching kids about behavior, just as they would teach about any other subject (such as math, social studies or science). PBIS recognizes that kids can only meet behavioral expectations if they know what those expectations are. A hallmark of a school using PBIS is that everyone knows what's appropriate behavior. Throughout the school day—in class, at lunch and on the bus—kids understand what's expected of them.

PBIS has a few important guiding principles:

- Every child can learn appropriate behavior.
- Early intervention can prevent more serious behavior problems occurring later.
- Each child is different, and schools need to provide various kinds of behavior support.
- Teaching behavior should be based on research and science.
- Following a child's behavioral progress is important.
- Schools must collect and use data to make decisions about behavior problems.

It is important to note that PBIS is not therapy or a type of treatment. PBIS is a framework for teachers, administrators and parents to follow. It is also important to emphasize that when a school adopts PBIS, it uses it for all students. That includes students who have IEPs and 504 plans.

Several studies have demonstrated that, PBIS leads to better student behavior. In many schools that utilize PBIS, students receive fewer detentions and suspensions, and

oftentimes earn better grades. Some evidence also suggests that PBIS may lead to less bullying behavior occurring.

How PBIS Works:

PBIS sets up three tiers of support for students and staff in a school.

1. Tier 1 is a schoolwide, universal system for everyone in school. Students learn basic behavior expectations, like being respectful and kind. School staff regularly recognize and praise kids for demonstrating good behavior. They may also use small rewards, like tokens or prizes, to encourage students to model good behavior.
2. Tier 2 provides an extra layer of support for students who continue to struggle with behavior. Students are provided a set of evidence-based interventions and instruction. For example, some children may interrupt class because they struggle with social interactions. A Tier 2 strategy might be a "social skills club" to help and support students in getting along better with peers.
3. Tier 3 is the most intensive level. Tier 3 is for students who require more individualized supports and services due to behavioral issues. Students who have IEPs or 504 plans can be in any of the tiers.

PBIS vs. Traditional Discipline

In a school with a traditional approach to discipline, teachers may try to correct behavior through punitive measures.

For example, during a class discussion, a student sitting in the back throws a spitball. With a traditional approach, the teacher might scold and send the student to the principal's office. After the student is punished, the student returns to class and is expected to behave. But there's no instruction on how to act appropriately. If there's more bad behavior, the school simply increases the punishment.

A school using PBIS would handle this differently. With PBIS, the school looks for minor issues to prevent them from becoming bigger behavior problems.

The school follows the student's progress in managing behavior and would adjust their strategy if something's not working. In PBIS, schools may use discipline, but the focus remains on teaching proper behavioral expectations and preventing future problems. From the beginning, all students learn about how to contribute to a class discussion. They may learn through role-playing or through actual lessons.

Additional School Safety Measures

School districts should consider implementing security measures that will have immediate mitigating effects on student-perpetrated attacks. For example, electronic systems may be implemented to lock down hallways, classrooms and other areas of the school in order to isolate students from violent offenders. These types of systems are currently in use in museums and other facilities. They are designed to quickly and effectively isolate an intruder. Other options may include outfitting doors with automatic locks activated by a central emergency button or automatically upon detection of gunfire, installing bulletproof glass in student-populated areas, and placing security and metal detectors at school entrance points.

SECTION II: THREAT ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

Part I: Threat Assessment Considerations

What is a threat assessment?

The purpose of a threat assessment is to systematically approach threats to determine which are transient and which are substantive, requiring immediate intervention. As previously noted, within the research conducted by the FBI and Secret Service, there is no identifiable "profile" of school shooters and attempting to profile students may result in misidentification of some students and missing others who may be of genuine concern. What is known is that most perpetrators of school violence did communicate their intentions to peers prior to committing the act. Students need to be aware of the importance of sharing any and all potential concerns.

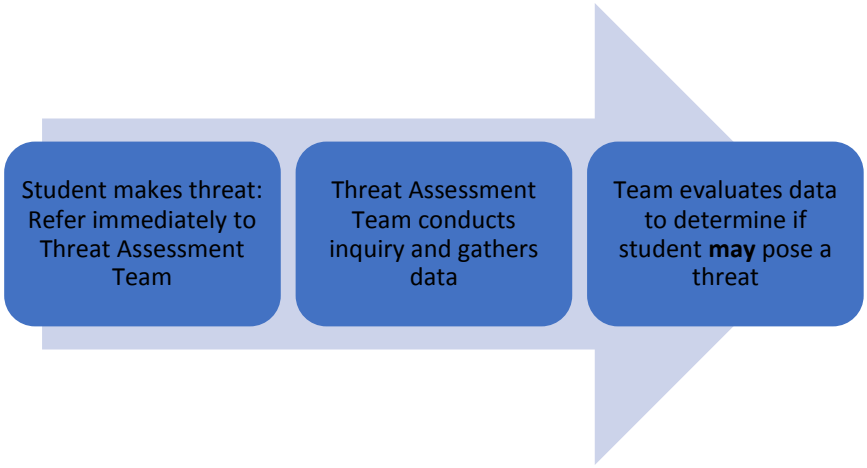
Transient Threats are often rhetorical remarks; they are not genuine expressions of intent to harm. These threats can typically be resolved quickly on the scene after which the threat no longer exists. These usually end with an apology and/or clarification (Dewey, 2013).

Substantial Threats express intent to physically injure someone beyond the immediate situation and there is at least some risk the student will carry out the threat. This requires protective action and may require police investigation. When in doubt, treat threats as substantive (Dewey, 2013).

Six Principles of Threat Assessment

School violence is rarely impulsive. There are typically warning signs indicating that a student is moving toward an attack. The process begins with the receipt of a threat by administrative personnel, who then begin to gather relevant information regarding the incident to guide in the initial and informal risk assessment. In their guide *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*, the U.S. Secret Service presents research identifying six principles that form the foundation of a threat assessment:

1. Targeted violence is the result of an understandable, and oftentimes discernible, process of thinking and behavior,
2. Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target,
3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment,
4. Effective threat assessment is based upon facts, rather than on characteristics or "traits,"
5. An "integrated systems approach" should guide threat assessment inquiries.
6. The central question in a threat assessment inquiry is whether a student poses a threat, not whether the student has made a threat. See flowchart below (*Erbacher, T.A., 2018)*:



Inquiry versus Investigation

A threat assessment *inquiry* is carried out by the school threat assessment team. An inquiry is only conducted if there is not an immediate threat presented; Remember, the safety of the school community is top priority. A threat assessment *investigation* is carried out by law enforcement officials after the initial inquiry determines that there is indeed a potential threat of school violence. As noted above, it is only the team's responsibility to determine if the student **may** pose a threat. If the data collected is convincing that the student does not pose a threat of school violence, the inquiry is concluded with follow up by school personnel suggested.

> ***Case example:*** *A teacher felt threatened upon a student stating, "Something big will happen Monday; be on the lookout." This teacher (rightly so) reported this to the Threat Assessment Team. Upon further inquiry, this student who was cognitively below average, was referring to bringing in cupcakes for his 18th birthday.*

If there is **any** data to suggest a student may be moving toward violence, a referral to law enforcement for investigation is suggested immediately.

> ***Case example:*** *A student shows an administrator a peer's social media page that states "I am bringing a gun to school on October 16th." There is a picture of a gun with this statement. This will move directly to an investigation with 9-1-1 being called immediately. This is extreme, but any evidence is directed to 9-1-1.*

Schools should error on the side of caution, particularly as many have established ongoing relationships with local law enforcement. These relationships along with ongoing communication amongst school staff, community stakeholders, parents, and students is of utmost importance. The research is clear that school climate and an environment that promotes connection, collaboration, respect, and ease of sharing information can reduce the likelihood of violence. Both students and staff should feel comfortable sharing concerning

information and know ***who*** to report it to. While schools may not be able to prevent all acts of violence, implementing an effective Threat Assessment Team, having clear procedures and policies for following up on potential threats, and providing training on these areas can mitigate this potential. Schools may refer to this inquiry as an "assessment" and this term will be used interchangeably throughout this document. Importantly, the "investigation" remains the process conducted by police departments, FBI, etc.

Types of threats

It is important that all school staff are trained on what to do should they hear of something concerning. Having one point of contact, such as the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) Coordinator, in the building is often optimal. Concerns can be indicated a variety of ways; from a student writing something in an English class to a teacher/peer overhearing verbal comments and more commonly, social media posts.

The U.S. Secret Service notes the following types of threats:

- **Direct threats** identify a specific act against a specific target and are delivered in a straightforward, clear manner "*I am going to place a bomb in the school's gym."*
- **Indirect threats** tend to be vague, unclear, and ambiguous; the plan, the intended victim, and other aspects of the threat are masked "*If I wanted to, I could kill everyone at this school."*
- A **veiled threat** is one that strongly implies but does not explicitly threaten violence "*We would be better off without you around anymore."*
- Finally, a **conditional threat** is the type of threat often seen in extortion cases *"If you don't pay me one million dollars, I will place a bomb in the school"*

Typologies of School Shooters

Peter Langman (2011) offers various typologies of perpetrators of targeted school violence. These typologies provide further evidence as to the importance of doing comprehensive background inquiries as well as interviews.

> **Traumatized:** The traumatized shooters all came from broken homes. They suffered physical and/or sexual abuse. Each had at least one parent with substance abuse problems, and each had at least one parent with a criminal history.
>
> **Psychotic:** Unlike the traumatized shooters, the psychotic shooters all came from intact families with no histories of abuse, parental substance abuse, or parental incarceration. The psychotic shooters exhibited symptoms of either schizophrenia or schizotypal personality disorder, including paranoid delusions, delusions of grandeur, and auditory hallucinations.

Psychopathic: The psychopathic shooters also came from intact families with no histories of abuse or significant family dysfunction. They demonstrated narcissism, a lack of empathy, a lack of conscience, and sadistic behavior.

Areas of Inquiry

The U.S. Secret Service has identified five areas of information needed *(note: this often requires interviewing the student, peers, teachers, family members, and potentially the target):*

- The facts that drew attention to the student, the situation, and possibly the targets
- Information about the student (background/life information, protective factors/supportive people)
- Information about the "attack-related" behaviors (weapons, plans, rehearsals, comments of intent)
- Motives (revenge, attention, suicide)
- Target selection: Most identify a target; Almost half had more than one target.

The U.S. Secret Service has also identified 11 key questions to answer:
A sample fillable form can be found at: http://www.pent.ca.gov/thr/elevenquestions.pdf

1. WHAT ARE THE STUDENT'S MOTIVES AND GOALS?
a. What motivated the student to make the statements or take the actions that caused him or her to come to attention?
b. Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
c. Does the student have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?
d. What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result? Does the potential attacker feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternative?

2. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY COMMUNICATIONS SUGGESTING IDEAS OR INTENT TO ATTACK?
a. What, if anything, has the student communicated to someone else (targets, friends, other students, teachers, family, others) or written in a diary, journal, or website concerning his or her ideas and/or intentions?

3. HAS THE SUBJECT SHOWN INAPPROPRIATE INTEREST IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?
a. School attacks or attackers
b. Weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon)
c. Incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murderers)

4. HAS THE STUDENT ENGAGED IN ATTACK-RELATED BEHAVIORS? THESE BEHAVIORS MIGHT INCLUDE:

a. Developing an attack idea or plan

b. Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons

c. Casing or checking out possible sites and areas for attack d. Rehearsing attacks or ambushes

5. DOES THE STUDENT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT AN ACT OF TARGETED VIOLENCE?

a. How organized is the student's thinking and behavior?

b. Does the student have the means, e.g., access to a weapon, to carry out an attack?

6. IS THE STUDENT EXPERIENCING HOPELESSNESS, DESPERATION AND/OR DESPAIR?

a. Is there information to suggest that the student is experiencing desperation and/or despair?

b. Has the student experienced a recent failure, loss and/or loss of status?

c. Is the student known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event?

d. Is the student now, or has the student ever been, suicidal or "accident-prone"?

e. Has the student engaged in behavior that suggests that he/she has considered ending their life?

7. DOES THE STUDENT HAVE A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH AT LEAST ONE RESPONSIBLE ADULT? *(Protective Factor?)*

a. Does this student have at least one relationship with an adult where the student feels that he or she can confide in the adult and believes that the adult will listen without judging or jumping to conclusions? *(Students with trusting relationships with adults may be directed away from violence and despair and toward hope.)*

b. Is the student emotionally connected to – or disconnected from – other students?

c. Has the student previously come to someone's attention or raised concern in a way that suggested he or she needs intervention or supportive services?

8. DOES THE STUDENT SEE VIOLENCE AS ACCEPTABLE – OR DESIRABLE – OR THE ONLY WAY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS?

a. Does the setting around the student (friends, fellow students, parents, teachers, adults) explicitly or implicitly support or endorse violence as a way of resolving problems or disputes?

b. Has the student been "dared" by others to engage in an act of violence?

9. IS THE STUDENT'S CONVERSATION AND "STORY" CONSISTENT WITH HIS OR HER ACTIONS?

a. Does information from collateral interviews and from the student's own behavior confirm or dispute what the student says is going on?

10. ARE OTHER PEOPLE CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT'S POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE?

a. Are those who know the student concerned that he or she might take action based on violent ideas or plans?

b. Are those who know the student concerned about a specific target?
c. Have those who know the student witnessed recent changes or escalations in mood and behavior?

11. WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT AFFECT THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN ATTACK?

a. What factors in the student's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that the student will attempt to mount an attack at school?
b. What is the response of other persons who know about the student's ideas or plan to mount an attack? *(Do those who know about the student's ideas actively discourage the student from acting violently, encourage the student to attack, deny the possibility of violence, passively collude with attack, etc.?)*

OTHER AREAS OF INQUIRY:

Reeves & Brock (2017) offer a few additional areas of inquiry for the student who made the threat, such as identifying possible stressors, attitudes toward weapons, attitudes toward violence, and signs of depression, helplessness or hopelessness. It is also important to identify suicidal or homicidal ideation. These authors suggest asking family and friends if the student has mentioned any plans for violence or taken any action toward plans as well as if they believe the student can carry out his/her plan. Finally, they suggest asking potential targets how well they know the student that made a threat, how seriously they take the threat, and how concerned they are for the safety of themselves and others.

Part II: Threat Assessment Teams & Procedures

Maintaining a threat assessment team can be a challenge as many schools are limited about resources and personnel. It is integral that school administrators establish a systematic threat assessment protocol, with the primary goal being to prevent the immediate risk of harm to others (Reeves & Brock, 2017). Threat assessment teams should be multi-disciplinary in nature and it is recommended to include the school psychologist, school counselor, key school administration, law enforcement personnel, first responders, and community mental health professionals (Reeves & Brock, 2017). The team would provide guidance to students, faculty and staff regarding recognition of threatening behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school or student. It would also identify members of the school community to whom the threatening behavior should be reported. The team would further assist in implementing school board policies for the assessment and intervention of individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or faculty (Deisinger, 2016).

A threat assessment, in the context of a school setting, is initiated upon school staff becoming aware (e.g. student reports, website postings, social media, written notes) of some threatening behavior exhibited by the student (Griffiths, Sharkey, and Furlong 2008). A threat assessment is conducted to evaluate the likelihood of the threat or potential threat from occurring based on the evidence, facts, and circumstances surrounding the threat. The assessment will incorporate the outcome of the evaluation into an intervention plan to address the need(s) of the student in addition to addressing the safety of others.

Threat Assessment Models

Structured Interviews:

This toolkit is geared toward helping schools create interview protocols based on the research to ensure comprehensive interviews. Comprehensive interviews with not only the student, but others in his/her home and school will garner a depth and breadth of information regarding the student's thoughts and preparatory behaviors to decide if the student may pose a threat.

The Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines by Dewey Cornell:

The Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines is an evidence-based model for schools to use in conducting threat assessments of students in K-12 schools. This model uses a comprehensive approach and was developed by Dr. Dewey Cornell and colleagues at the University of Virginia in 2001 and has been extensively examined through field tests and controlled studies that demonstrate its utility and effectiveness. The Virginia Student Assessment Guidelines has been widely adopted by schools in Virginia and nationwide. VSTAG

was recognized as an evidence-based program by the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices in 2013.

This model is intended to generate broader changes staff-student interactions around disciplinary matters and to encourage a more positive school climate in which students feel treated with fairness and respect. Consistent with this goal, a pre-post survey study of 351 school staff members who completed the Virginia workshop found that participants became less anxious about the possibility of a school homicide, more willing to use threat assessment methods to help students resolve conflicts, and less inclined to use a zero-tolerance approach (Allen, Cornell, Lorek, & Sheras, 2008). Similar effects were found for principals, psychologists, counselors, social workers, and law enforcement officers.

The Virginia guidelines follow a five-step decision-tree. In brief, the first two steps are a triage process in which team members investigate a reported threat and determine whether the threat can be readily resolved as a transient threat that is not a serious threat. Any threat that cannot be clearly identified and resolved as transient is treated as a substantive threat. Substantive threats always require protective action to prevent the threat from being carried out. The remaining three steps guide the team through more extensive assessment and response based on the seriousness of the threat. In the most serious cases, the team conducts a safety evaluation that includes both a law enforcement investigation and a mental health assessment of the student. The culmination of the threat assessment is the development of a safety plan that is designed to address the problem or conflict underlying the threat and prevent the act of violence from taking place. For both transient and substantive threats, there is an emphasis on helping students to resolve conflicts and minimizing the use of zero-tolerance suspensions as a disciplinary response.

Threat Assessment Scales:

While there are standardized threat assessment measures available, these are typically not use as standalone assessment measures, if at all. These scales can be helpful when used in conjunction with structured interviews. Standardized scales may result in false positives, indicating a student may present with risk factors for violence, but indeed may never engage in a violent act. A structured interview is the best way to determine if a student may pose a threat. Sample scales are as follows:

The PETRA (Psychosocial Evaluation and Threat Risk Assessment) is a norm-referenced scale that reorganized the FBI's four prong assessment model to assess violence risk in adolescents ages 11-18 years.

Adolescent & Child Urgent Threat Evaluation (ACUTE) is for ages 8-18 years to identify risk for near-future violence.

Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY©), by Randy Borum, Patrick Bartel & Adelle Forth is for ages 12-18 years to evaluate violence risk in adolescents.

Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (2018) by Dewey Cornell.

Suicide Risk

Interestingly, while the U.S Secret Service (2004) found that most perpetrators of school violence had considered or attempted suicide, recent research by Burnette, Huang, Maeng, and Cornell (2018) found that of a statewide sample of 2861 cases, 60% of these were threats to self, 35% were threats to others and only 5% involved threats to both self and others. These researchers thus purport a clear distinction between suicide and threat assessments.

A threat assessment inquiry can unexpectedly reveal a student's suicidal thoughts and behaviors. It is therefore suggested by these authors that at least one member of the TAT be trained in suicide risk assessment techniques to readily move into a suicide screening and subsequent suicide risk assessment should the need present itself. A sample suicide screening form is attached to this document as an appendix. More information on suicide risk assessment, screening and suicide risk monitoring is available in the text *Suicide in Schools* (2015) available on Amazon.

Model Policy, Procedures, and Guidelines

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services has created a Model Policy, Procedures, and Guidelines, 2nd Edition (2016) as a best practice standard consistent with Virginia Law. While laws differ by state, these guidelines, procedures, model board policy, and sample forms may prove useful to many school districts and can be found here:

Crisis Teams/Plans

Threat Assessment Teams and procedures should be integrated into the school district's overall crisis plan. This ensures protocols and procedures are stated clearly and provides explanations for actions taken in the event a threat assessment occurs. This will help ensure the safety and security of all involved. Knowing that the school has policies and procedures in place through which they respond to threats will help build trust in the school and community, will decrease anxiety of stakeholders, and will give comfort that the school will take immediate action when notified of a potential threat. Further, it provides a framework through which to respond, particularly if stakeholders query why certain actions were taken. And, it ensures actions are taken in a procedural manner, that steps are not accidentally omitted, and that communication flow is explicitly stated.

Team format and membership will likely vary by the size and geography of the school/district, the availability of school resource officer and police presence, and the availability of resources for training, etc. In smaller schools or districts, the Threat Assessment Team may be identical to

the overall crisis team, whereas in larger districts, the TAT might be a subsection of the crisis team. Regardless, this toolkit is meant to provide general suggestions and strategies that can be implemented in any school or district in a manner that is deemed appropriate. Our hope is that you create your own protocols based upon research-based strategies noted here.

Protocols/Policies

Procedures for inquiring about allegations of school violence should be clear. Protocols should include procedures for (NASP, 2013):

- Assigning roles for the threat assessment team ensuring a multidisciplinary approach
- Ensure procedures have protocol for addressing all threats
- Training/educating the team
- Evaluating and interviewing the potential offender
- Contacting and working with parents
- Interviewing other staff and students
- Determining the level of intervention warranted
- Brining in additional professionals (law enforcement, social services, etc.)
- Providing follow-up observation and services
- Responding to the media should the need arise
- What forms will be used and how will records be kept
- Where will records be secured
- Ensure that procedures are in accordance to federal, state and local law
- Ensure there are procedures for evaluating effectiveness of protocol

Duty to Warn / Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA: While FERPA protects student's confidentiality, the Code of Federal Regulations of 2008 modified this to allow school officials to disclose an actual, impending, or imminent threat when needed to protect the health and safety of students, staff, or others.

Duty to Warn: This is a duty to protect intended victims by either warning victims directly, notifying law enforcement directly, or taking whatever other steps to prevent harm might be needed. Law varies by state and districts are encouraged to know the laws in their state. Following a lawsuit initiated by Tarasoff's parents, The California Supreme Court found that a mental health professional has a duty not only to a patient, but also to individuals who are specifically threatened by a patient. This decision has since been adopted by most states in the U.S. and is widely influential outside the U.S. It is suggested that schools have these policies in place to deal with the issue to ensure they are not negligent. Consult school or district legal counsel as soon as possible. The guiding principle in dealing with student threats should be that the first and foremost goal and duty of all school personnel is to safeguard the physical welfare of students and colleagues.

Team Members
Suggested membership of a trained multi-disciplinary team includes no less than three members with whom to counsel, with at least two being onsite, including:

- Team coordinator (administrator or designee)
- School disciplinary or safety personnel (school resource officer)
- School psychologist (may also act as coordinator)
- At least one other mental health professional, such as a school social worker or counselor
- Social media manager
- Media liaison
- Others who may be able to contribute to the process, such as:
    - teachers, coaches who know the student well
    - teacher aides or support staff
    - nurses
    - transportation / bus drivers
    - custodial and cafeteria staff
    - representative from IEP team, if applicable
    - community members with information, such as: a) probation officers b) social service workers c) experts and consultants or d) others providing service or knowledge of the student (i.e. therapists)

Roles: It is important to determine and clarify the role of each team member. For example, the coordinator leads the team and evaluates the nature of the threat, the school psychologist may conduct the mental health assessments and the school counselor may take a lead role in follow-up interventions. Teachers are responsible for reporting threats and providing input to the team. School resource officers, along with the coordinator, responds to legal aspects of the threat. Sample roles follow below:

Threat Assessment Team (TAT) Coordinator
It is important to identify TAT leadership so that faculty and staff know to whom concerns should be reported. The TAT Coordinator's responsibilities include running team meetings, delegating tasks for information gathering, maintain records of concerns, and ensure follow up and/or monitoring of students as needed. The role of the coordinator will be discussed in more depth below under threat assessment processes.

Administrator/Principal (may also be coordinator)
The administrator often identifies team roles and members, assigns disciplinary consequences, assist in communication to the community and families, and communicate to district

administration. The administrator, along with the coordinator, ensure support plans are implemented with integrity.

School Resource Officer (SRO)
Takes necessary steps to ensure safety and security, may conduct searches if needed, and determines if legal action is necessary. If concern is indicated, the SRO may assist in interviews. The SRO may also assist in gathering background information including legal records and may assist in collaborating with juvenile justice, etc.

School Psychologist
Consults with the team to determine when a threat assessment is indicated and conducts the inquiry interview. Assists in reviewing background information including educational, special education, medical, and mental health records. Assists in conducting interviews with parents, schools staff and other students and works with the team to determine level of threat concern as well as support plan intervention ideas. Evaluates the need to conduct additional assessments such as a special education evaluation.

School Counselor / Social Worker
Assists in conducting interviews with parents, school staff and other students. Assists in reviewing school records and takes a lead role in follow up observation and intervention, ensuring that the support plan is followed.

Social Media Manager
Erbacher & Reeves (2018) discuss the importance of all schools having a Social Media Manager (SMM). The SMM is an integral part of any crisis team as efforts to monitor social media posts by students, get information to stakeholders via social media quickly, and post updates regarding critical incidents is a key part of crisis response in today's world. The SMM remains an important part of the TAT for these same reasons. Further, many technology monitoring software programs can flag a student searching concerning content and alert the SMM of potential threats of violence.

Media Liaison
As in the case of a suicide or other critical incident, school district staff should ensure they have delegated a media liaison to respond to media inquiries should a threat become made public. The media liaison will assist in communication to parents, stakeholders and the community as well. This may be the principal or administrator, particularly in smaller schools.

School Nurse
The school nurse can provide information on the student's health history, current medication, and frequency of somatic/health complaints. The nurse can conduct substance use health screenings.

Communication Considerations

- A frequent complaint from school staff is they feel unaware of the procedures. Be sure to communicate policies to all school staff and provide trainings if possible.
- Communicate with parents about how to recognize and report concerns.
- Communicate with students about how to recognize and report concerns.
- Communicate with school staff about how to recognize and report concerns.
- Educate board members about the need for procedures and protocol.
- Communicate with the community and stakeholders regarding procedures.
- An ongoing working relationship with law enforcement is critical. Communicate and collaborate frequently and involve law enforcement in protocol creation.
- Collaborate with community agencies to identify supports for students, families and the school when needed.
- Ongoing relationships with the news media is also helpful to promote the positive aspects of the school community and to work together to create safe messages.

Part III: Steps to Conducting a Comprehensive Threat Assessment

The following steps will be discussed in significantly more detail below:

Step 1: Planning and Preparation

Step 2: Inform administrator and/or TAT coordinator of any threat-related concerns

Step 3: Assemble the Threat Assessment Team.

Step 4: Gather a variety of information using multiple data sources.

Step 5: Organize and analyze the information (U.S. Secret Service).

Step 6: Determine level of risk

Step 7: Develop an Action / Support Plan

Step 8: Document the threat assessment and keep records.

Step 9: Continue monitoring the student and the effectiveness of the plan

Step 10: Reevaluate the plan and the effectiveness of procedures/protocol

STEP 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Being prepared for a potential threat is essential. Information about the behavior and communications of the student of concern should be gathered and analyzed by the authorities involved in a threat assessment inquiry or investigation. This information will permit reasonable judgments about whether the student of concern is moving along a path toward attack on an identifiable target. The following four elements are essential to the development and operation of an effective school safety threat assessment process.

Prior to the development of a Threat Assessment Team process, schools may first create a planning team to develop a comprehensive threat assessment program. This will help ensure a process is thorough and includes the specific needs of each individual school or district. While we offer many suggestions throughout this toolkit, we realize that each school varies about climate and culture, administrative access, available resources, and community supports.

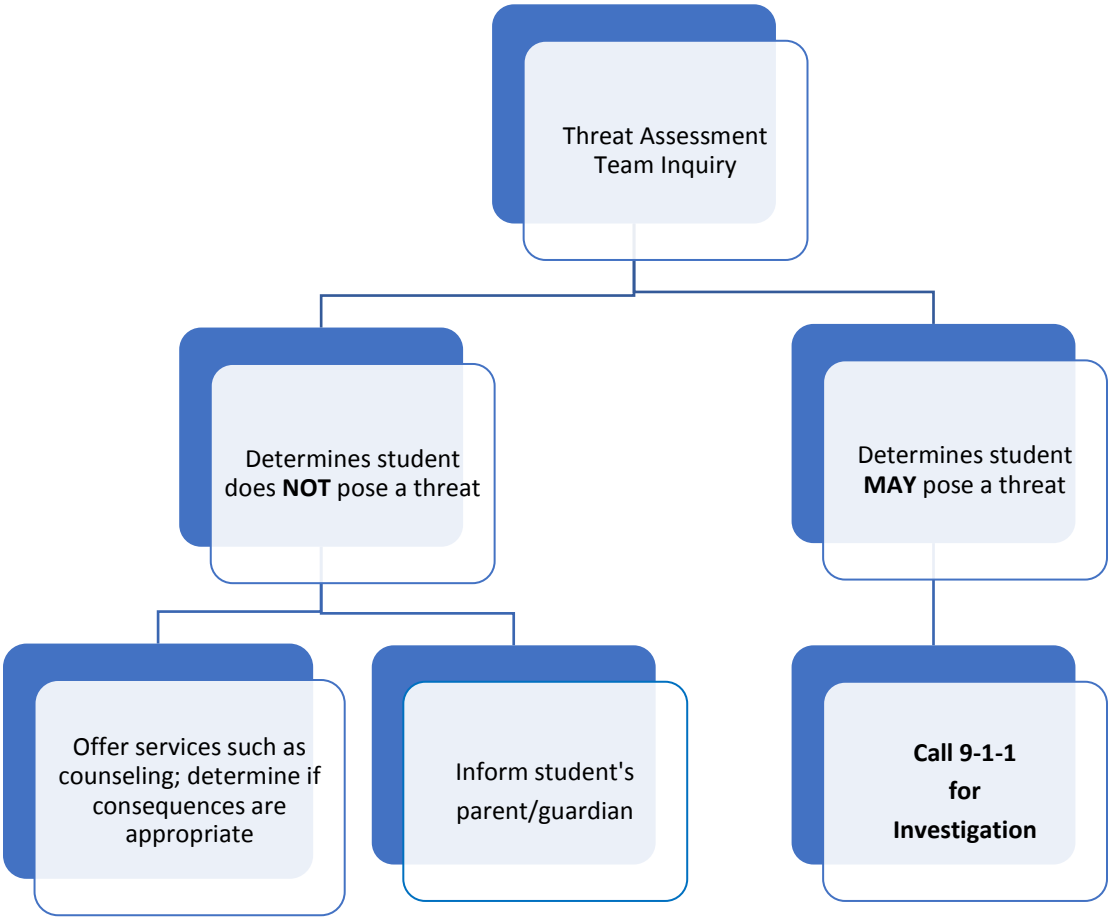
1. ESTABLISH AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY: Formal policy and procedures are recommended to authorize school officials to conduct a threat assessment inquiry when any behavior of a student deviates from the norm and may pose a threat. It is important to identify roles for school personnel as well as clarify the role of law enforcement.

2. DEVELOP A MULTIDISCIPLINARY THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM THAT IS BASED IN THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT AND PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING: The primary role of the team is to guide the

assessment and management of the situation of concern, and to provide ongoing monitoring. Teams should be trained together in the use of best practices and lessons learned.

3. ESTABLISH INTEGRATED AND INTERAGENCY SYSTEMS RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS TO RESPOND TO PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS.As indicated, multi-agency of county departments of human / social services and other mandatory agencies including local judicial districts, including probation; the local health department, the local school districts(s), and community mental health may help to develop action/support plans or to provide needed community services.

4. PROVIDE AWARENESS TRAINING FOR STAFF, STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN WARNING SIGNS OF VIOLENCE AND REPORTING PROCEDURES. Behavior of concern or threat to public safety, the safety and welfare of a student, the school or community must be reported to school officials in a timely manner. Reporting procedure must be clear and use a common language. Multiple means of reporting should be encouraged, particularly if it appears you are not being heard. Breaking the Code of Silence must be reinforced: Telling keeps people safe. Training should be updated and repeated yearly.



Erbacher, T.A. (2018)

Threat Assessment Team Training: Threat Assessment Team members should be provided with ongoing training related to threat assessment, suicide risk and assessment, etc. Ongoing support should also be provided due to the serious and intense nature of this team.

Staff Education: Pre-planning also includes ensuring that all teachers and school staff know the importance of reporting concerns *immediately* and are familiar with the process for reporting concerns.

Student Education: Students should also be educated on the importance of telling an adult should they have ***any*** concern that a student may potentially be planning violence. It is important that they be aware of the difference of tattling and telling. Schools can encourage parents to discuss this with their children in order that parents support this mission of sharing critical information in a timely fashion.

STEP 2: INFORM ADMINISTRATOR AND/OR TAT COORDINATOR OF ANY THREAT-RELATED CONCERNS IMMEDIATELY

It is important that all school staff have contact information for the administrator or TAT coordinator to expedite reporting.

Example: After school, a teacher overhears a concerning statement where a student tells a peer he plans to "shoot up the school" and identifies a date. The teacher rushes into the principal's office the next morning after homeroom to inform him**. What is the problem?**

Example: At 9:00PM, a student, Marty, tells his mother that a peer posted a picture of a gun on social media and told Marty to stay home on Friday to stay safe. The mother immediately emailed the school principal with an urgent message to call her. **Is this better?**

In the first example above, the teacher waited until the following day to inform her administrator of the concern. What if it had been too late? In the second scenario, the parent immediately reached out to the school principal, which is excellent. It does bear the question regarding the principal's access to the email. Does the principal check email with frequency? Should there be an emergency tip line available on the school's website for potential school threats, so they can be reported and heard immediately? Should the school use an app in which students can anonymously report concerns that immediately alerts the superintendent, principal, or TAT coordinator for such emergencies? These are all issues for each school/district to consider.

STEP 3: ASSEMBLE THE THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM (TAT)

Ensure TAT Coordinators have contact information to reach team members.

Once the administrator of TAT Coordinator is alerted of a potential threat, they need to quickly assemble the TAT team. It is important to have numbers to readily contact team members. TAT Coordinators will decide regarding when to assemble the TAT team. If an alert comes in over a weekend, it might be important to assemble the team outside of school hours. As threat assessments are time sensitive, moving quickly is important and much information can be gathered initially including information from the school disciplinary officer as well as from a school mental health professional who may have known the student, as well as from a teacher. It might be important to plan for substitute teachers the following week if the classroom teacher of a student is needed as a part of the team.

STEP 4: GATHER A VARIETY OF INFORMATION USING MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES

Under this section #4 above, the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) designed an innovative model and notes that those "tasked with assessing threats must be trained in the basic concepts of threat assessment, personality assessment, and risk assessment…" Threats must be assessed in a timely manner. This model realizes that ALL aspects of a threatener's life must be considered when evaluating the potential of a threat. Four major areas are considered via this model to determine if a student has the motivation, means, and intent to carry out a proclaimed threat.

Considerations of threat Assessment Inquiries

Issues to be considered include:

(1) Consider the ethics code relevant to a professional's position
(2) When and who to notify parents/guardians of an interview
(2) Whether or when to invite parents/guardians to be present during an interview
(3) Whether and how to use information from an interview for criminal justice proceedings
(4) Whether and when legal representation should be allowed, offered or provided
(5) The search of a student in any context is a sensitive and complex issue that should be examined thoroughly by school administrators and their legal counsel and should be addressed in school policies and in accordance with law

A. Evaluate Threat Risk Indicators

Similar to suicide risk, we need to determine degree and nature of risk.

- Expression of lethally violent or suicidal behaviors.
- Identification of a victim other than self.
- Violent or suicidal behavior involving a note.
- Access to firearms or other lethal weapons.
- Evidence of an executable and likely lethal plan.

• Expressions of dire predictions (e.g., “being dead” or “stopping the pain pain”).
• Behavior reflecting “black & white” thinking (e.g., words like only, forever).
• Expressions of fantasies of death (e.g. “eternal sleep” or “reunion with family”).

ACUTE from PAR (Copeland, 2005) suggests the following **predisposing characteristics** that influence carrying out a threat of violence

• History of arrests before age 15, aggression, verbal cruelty, violence, or antisocial behavior
• History of suicidal behavior with self-inflicted injury
• History of sexual delinquency or sadism
• History of self-injurious behavior
• Soft tissue neurological signs, coordination or language difficulties, or sub-average IQ
• Diagnosis of ADHD or Conduct Disorder
• Diagnosis of Paranoid Personality Disorder
• Family history of mental illness or suicide
• Family history of violence or substance abuse
• Unstable home environment
• Escalation of rage outbursts if present
• Pattern of poor social relationships, few family ties, personal losses of peers, or problems in school
• Acquisition of behavior and skills of a delinquent peer group
• Likelihood to support follow-up plan

Obtain School Information: A school threat assessment inquiry should begin with what is known about the student from school records, teacher interviews, classmates and other information such as history from previous schools. Out of school information, including technology sources, parents/families’ information, law enforcement, and mental health records, if available, are also important. In utilizing information from school records in a threat assessment inquiry, the threat assessment team should follow school policies and relevant laws regarding information-sharing.

Interview the Student of Concern: Interviews with a student of concern oftentimes are critical in a threat assessment inquiry. School administrators and law enforcement officials and their respective legal counsels should follow existing policies or develop policies regarding interviews with students of concern. The primary purpose of a student interview is to learn about the student’s thinking, motives, and behavior. The tone of the interview should be professional, neutral, and non-confrontational, rather than accusatory or judgmental. Student safety should be maintained as a priority while waiting for or during the interview.

When conducting an interview with a student of concern, the threat assessment team should:

- Be well acquainted with the facts that brought the student to the attention of school administrators and others
- Have reviewed available information concerning the student’s background, interests, and behaviors. Knowledge of background information concerning the student prior to

the interview may help the threat assessment team judge whether the student is forthcoming and straightforward. Generally, a student should be asked directly about his or her intentions. An interview can also send the message to the student that his or her behavior has been noticed and has caused concern.

- Gather information as quickly as possible. Share information amongst team members.
- May not be able to assess every area. Once the team has sufficient information to decide, can move forward, particularly once determine to be high risk. If the threat appears to be serious AND the student is struggling in the 4 prongs, take the threat more seriously. Determine IF the student is capable (has the means and the intent) AND if they have the motivation.

Interview Others Who Know the Student of Concern: Students and adults who know the student who is the subject of the threat assessment inquiry should be asked about communications or other behaviors that may indicate the student of concern's ideas or intent.

Interview the Parent/Guardian: The parents or guardians of the student of concern should be interviewed in most cases. Parents may be protective of their children, frightened and/or embarrassed about the inquiry and the possibility that their child may be contemplating a violent act. The threat assessment team therefore should make it clear to the student's parent or guardians that the objective of the threat assessment inquiry is not only to help prevent targeted school violence and diminish the chance that the student and possibly others would be harmed, but also to help their child and protect the safety of others. The threat assessment team should seek the help of the student's parents in understanding the student's actions and interests, recognizing that parents may or may not know much about their child's thinking and behavior.

Obtain Outside Sources of Information: Information may come to the attention of schools through outside sources such as community organizations, clubs, other schools, parents, etc.

Interview the Potential Target: Individuals who have been identified as potential targets of the student of concern should also be interviewed. The primary purpose of that interview is to gather information about any possible situation of concern.

B. Evaluate Characteristics of the threat

The degree of detail may reflect the level of risk associated with the threat being carried out." – FBI

- Does person indicate date, time, and/or place?
- Does person indicate method and or means?
- Does person have access to means?
- Has the person rehearsed / practiced?
- Has the person accessed school plans / maps?
- Has the person mapped out logistics (bell schedules, lunchtimes, etc.)?

C. Evaluate Characteristics of the Threatener

The Four-Pronged Assessment Model
The following four prong model and subsequent list of behaviors and traits was identified via NCAVC's experience in assessing threats, the intensive investigation of 18 school shootings, and the 1999 Leesburg symposium.

The Four-Prongs:
- ➢ Personality
- ➢ Family
- ➢ School
- ➢ Social

It is important to remember that the following assessment indicators do not PREDICT violent behavior. Thus, these prongs should ONLY be assessed AFTER a student has made a threat. Then, it is important to remember that no personality traits are indicative of a "school shooter." Rather, an assessment seeks to identify students who have already made a threat and are also struggling on most items in each of the four areas. The more problems that are identified, the greater the concern.

Prong One: Personality of the Student

If an assessor has not had the opportunity to assess the student's personality firsthand, query those who know the student (teachers, peers, etc.).
**It is important that a mental health professional evaluate mental illness. Personality as conducted by a Threat Assessment Team is to assess behaviors. Referral to a mental health professional may be indicated for diagnostic evaluation. Signs of substance abuse or mental illness may exacerbate the risk of violence. According to the FBI report in the link above, clues to a student's personality can come from observing behavior when the student is:*

- *Coping with conflicts, disappointments, failures, insults, or other stresses encountered in everyday life.*
- *Expressing anger or rage, frustration, disappointment, humiliation, sadness, or similar feelings.*
- *Demonstrating or failing to demonstrate resiliency after a setback, a failure, real or perceived criticism, disappointment, or other negative experiences.*
- *Demonstrating how the student feels about himself, what kind of person the student imagines himself or herself to be, and how the student believes he or she appears to others.*
- *Responding to rules, instruction, or authority figures.*

- *Demonstrating and expressing a desire or need for control, attention, respect, admiration, confrontation, or other needs.*

- *Demonstrating or failing to demonstrate empathy with the feelings and experiences of others.*

- *Demonstrating his or her attitude toward others. (For example, does the student view others as inferior or with disrespect?)*

*Assessors who have not been able to observe a student first-hand should seek information from those **who knew the student before he or she made a threat**.*

The following list of behaviors and traits, grouped in the four areas of the assessment model, was developed from three sources: NCAVC's extensive experience in assessing threats for over two decades, including current cases of threats made in schools; ideas presented at the 1999 Leesburg symposium; and NCAVC's intensive review of eighteen school shooting cases.

Subject to the cautionary points mentioned previously, the following list identifies behaviors, personality traits and family, school and social dynamics that may be associated with violence.

- **Leakage:** A student reveals clues that may signal an impending violent act, such as subtle threats, predictions, or ultimatums. These clues may come in the form of drawings, poems, letters, social media postings, journal entries, notes, stories shared with peers, or verbal boasting or providing innuendos with friends.

  Leakage often involves deception in misleading friends or naive classmates in helping with preparations for an act of violence (example, a student requesting that a friend borrow his father's gun and ammunition because he wants to go target shooting). Leakage is often seen as a cry for help, sign of inner conflict, or boasts. **THIS is one of the MOST important clues that may precede a violent act.**

Example of Leakage: *A student writes about guns and weapons in an English essay. It appears to be about fantasy, but the teacher is concerned about the obsessive and detailed nature of the gun references.*

- **Low Frustration Tolerance:** Student is easily insulted, angered, or hurt by real or perceived injustices and has difficulty tolerating frustration.

- **Poor Coping Skills**: The student consistently shows little if any ability to deal with frustration, criticism, disappointment, failure, rejection, or humiliation. His or her response is typically inappropriate, exaggerated, immature, or disproportionate.

- **Lack of Resiliency:** The student lacks resiliency and is unable to bounce back even when some time has elapsed since a frustrating or disappointing experience, a setback, or put down.

- **Failed Love Relationship:** The student may feel rejected or humiliated after the end of a love relationship and cannot accept or come to terms with the rejection.

- **Injustice Collector:** The student harbors resentment over real or perceived injustices. No matter how much time has passed, the "injustice collector" will not forget or forgive those wrongs or the people he or she believes are responsible. The student may keep a hit list with the names of people he feels have wronged him.

- **Signs of Depression:** The student shows symptoms of depression such as lethargy, physical fatigue, a dark outlook on life, a sense of malaise, and loss of interest in activities that he or she once enjoyed. Adolescents may show different signs than those normally associated with depression. Some depressed adolescents may display unpredictable and uncontrolled outbursts of anger, a generalized and excessive hatred toward everyone else, and feelings of hopelessness about the future. Other behaviors might include irritability, psychomotor agitation, restlessness, inattention, sleep and eating disorders, and a markedly diminished interest in activities that previously occupied and interested him or her. The student may have difficulty articulating these extreme feelings.

- **Narcissism:** The student is self-absorbed, displays poor insight into others' needs and/or feelings, and often blames others when things go wrong or do not work out. This type of student may embrace the role of a victim to elicit sympathy and to feel temporarily superior to others. He or she often can display signs of paranoia and assumes an attitude of self-importance or grandiosity that masks feelings of unworthiness or low self-esteem (Malmquist, 1996). A narcissistic student may be either very thin-skinned or very thick-skinned in responding to criticism.

- **Alienation:** The student consistently displays behaviors as though he or she feels different or estranged from others. This sense of separateness is more than just being a loner and often involve feelings of isolation, sadness, loneliness, not belonging, and not fitting in.

- **Dehumanization of Others:** The student consistently fails to see others as human. He or she typically views other people as "non-persons" or objects to be thwarted.
  This pervasive attitude may appear in the student's writings and artwork, in interactions with others, or in comments during conversation.

- **Lack of Empathy:** The student shows an inability to understand the feelings of others and appears unconcerned about anyone else's feelings. When others show emotion, the student may ridicule them as being either weak or stupid.

- **Exaggerated Sense of Entitlement:** The student constantly expects special treatment or consideration, and often reacts negatively if he/she doesn't get the treatment he/she feels entitled to.

- **Attitude of Superiority:** The student has a sense of superiority towards others. He or she often presents as smarter, more creative, more talented, more experienced, and worldlier than others.

- **Exaggerated or Pathological Need for Attention:** The student shows an exaggerated (even pathological) need for attention, whether positive or negative, no matter what the circumstances. This is often an extreme form of attention seeking.

- **Externalizing Blame:** The student consistently refuses to take responsibility for his or her own actions and typically blames other people, events or situations for any failings or shortcomings. In placing blame, the student frequently seems impervious to rational argument and common sense.

- **Masks Low Self-Esteem:** Though the student may display an arrogant, self-glorifying attitude, the student's conduct often appears to struggle with an underlying low self-esteem. He or she often will avoid high visibility or involvement in school activities, and other students may consider the student being invisible or a nonentity.

- **Anger Management Problems:** Instead of expressing anger in appropriate ways and in appropriate circumstances, the student consistently tends to display outbursts via temper tantrums or melodramatic displays, or to brood in silence. The anger may be noticeably out of proportion to the cause or may be redirected toward people who had nothing to do with the original incident. This anger may come in unpredictable and uncontrollable outbursts, and may be accompanied by expressions of unfounded prejudice, dislike, or even hatred toward individuals or groups.

- **Intolerance:** The student often expresses racial or religious prejudice or intolerant attitudes toward minorities or displays slogans or symbols of intolerance in such things as tattoos, jewelry, clothing, bumper stickers, or book covers.

- **Inappropriate Humor:** The student's humor is consistently inappropriate. Jokes or humorous comments tend to be macabre, insulting, belittling, or mean.

- **Seeks to Manipulate Others:** The student consistently attempts to con and manipulate others and win their trust, so they will rationalize any signs of aberrant or threatening behavior.

- **Lack of Trust:** The student is untrusting and suspicious of others' motives and intentions. This lack of trust can often result in a paranoid state. The student may express the belief

that society has no trustworthy institution or mechanism for achieving justice or resolving conflict, and that if something bothers them, they have to settle it their own way. This can often result in a “vigilante style” thought process.

- **Closed Social Group:** The student appears introverted, with acquaintances rather than friends. He or she often interacts with only with a small group of kids who seem to exclude others. Students who threaten or carry out violent acts are not necessarily loners in the classic sense, and the composition and qualities of peer groups can be important pieces of information in assessing the danger that a threat will be acted on.

- **Change of Behavior:** The student's behavior changes dramatically. Academic performance may decline, or he or she may show a strong disregard for school rules, schedules, dress codes, and other regulations.

- **Rigid and Opinionated:** The student appears rigid, judgmental and cynical, and voices strong opinions on subjects about which he or she has little knowledge. The student often disregards facts, logic, and reasoning that might challenge these opinions.

- **Unusual Interest in Sensational Violence:** The student demonstrates an unusual interest in school shootings and other heavily publicized acts of violence. They may declare admiration for those who committed the violent act or may criticize the perpetrator for failing to kill more people. He or she may express a desire to carry out a similar act in their own school, possibly as an act of "justice."

- **Fascination with Violence-Filled Entertainment:** The student demonstrates an unusual fascination with movies, TV shows, computer games, music videos or printed material that focus intensively on themes of violence, hatred, control, power, death, and destruction. The student may obsessively view one movie or read and reread one book with violent content, perhaps involving school violence. Themes of hatred, violence, weapons, and mass destruction recur in virtually all his activities, hobbies, and pastimes. The student spends inordinate amounts of time playing video games with violent themes and seems more interested in the violent images than in the game itself. Utilizing the Internet, the student consistently searches for web sites involving violence, weapons, and other disturbing subjects. There is often evidence that the student has downloaded and kept material from these sites.

- **Negative Role Models:** The student may be drawn to negative, inappropriate role models such as ISIS, Aryan Brotherhood, Hells Angels, Pagans, Hitler, Satan, or others associated with violence and destruction.

- **Behavior Appears Relevant to Carrying out a Threat:** The student appears to be increasingly occupied in activities that could be related to carrying out a threat -- for example, spending unusual amounts of time practicing with firearms or on various violent websites. The time spent in these activities has noticeably begun to exclude

normal everyday pursuits such as homework, attending classes, going to work, and spending time with friends.

Prong Two: Family Dynamics

Understanding family dynamics and how these dynamics are perceived by both the student and the parents is key in understanding circumstances and stressors in the student's life that could play a role in any decision to carry out a threat.

- **Turbulent Parent-Child Relationship:** The student's relationship with his parents is very conflicted and turbulent. This difficulty is often visible following a variety of factors, including recent or multiple relocations, loss of a parent, divorce or the addition of a step parent through remarriage, etc. The student often expresses contempt for his parents and dismisses or rejects their role in his life. There is evidence of violence occurring within the student's home.

- **Acceptance of Pathological Behavior:** The failure of parents to react to behavior that most would find concerning, disturbing or abnormal. They appear unable to recognize or acknowledge problems in their children often responding in a highly defensive manner if they perceive their child is being criticized. If contacted by school officials or staff about the child's troubling behavior, the parents appear aloof, unconcerned, minimize or reject the concerns altogether.

- **Access to Weapons:** The family owns guns, other weapons or explosive materials in the home which the student has access. Most importantly, the weapons are treated carelessly, without normal safety precautions; for example, guns are not locked away and are left loaded. Parents or a particular role model may handle weapons casually or recklessly and in doing so may convey to children that a weapon can be a useful and normal means of intimidating someone else or settling a dispute.

- **Lack of Intimacy:** The family appears to lack intimacy, connectivity or closeness.

- **Student "Rules the Roost":** The parents set few or no limits on the student's behavior, and frequently give in to the student's demands. The student insists on a high degree of privacy, and parents have little information about his or her activities, school life, friends, or other relationships. The student is frequently guarded and defensive. The parents appear to be intimidated by their child. They may fear he or she will attack them physically if they confront or frustrate them. The parents are clearly unwilling to face an emotional outburst, or they may be afraid that upsetting the child will spark an emotional crisis. Traditional family roles are reversed: for example, the child acts as if he were the authority figure, while parents act as if they were the children.

- **No Limits or Monitoring of TV or Internet:** Parents do not supervise, set limits or monitor the student's television watching or Internet usage. The student may have a TV

in their room or is free to spend as much time as they want to watch violent and inappropriate shows. The student spends a great deal of time watching television or YouTube rather than interacting with family or friends. The parents do not monitor computer use or Internet access. Typically, the student knows more about computers than their parents. The computer may also be considered off limits to the parents while the student remains secretive about his or her o computer use, which may involve violent games or Internet research on violence, weapons, or other disturbing subjects.

Prong Three: School Dynamics

While the research here is not empirically established, it is important that educators assess the climate of their own schools and understand the dynamics as perceived by students. Schools should maintain records of all prior incidents involving students to be considered in future threat assessments.

- **Student's Attachment to School:** The Student appears to be "detached" or disconnected from school, including students, teachers, and school activities.

- **Tolerance for Disrespectful Behavior:** The school fails to prevent, intervene or discipline disrespectful behavior between individual students or groups of students. Bullying is part of the school culture and school administration/staff seem oblivious to it, seldom or never intervening or doing so only selectively. Students frequently assume the roles of bully, victim, or bystander. The school culture promotes racial or class divisions unfortunately allowing them to remain unchallenged.

- **Inequitable Discipline:** The use of discipline is inequitably applied or is perceived to be inequitably applied by students and/or staff.

- **Inflexible Culture:** The school's culture is out of step with the current times and insensitive to the changes in society as well as to the changing needs of the students. These rigid patterns of behavior negatively impact the relationship among students, teachers, and administrators.

- **Pecking Order Among Students:** Certain groups of students are officially or unofficially given more prestige and respect than others. Both school officials and the student body treat those in the high-prestige groups as though they are more important or more valuable to the school than other students.

- **Code of Silence:** A "code of silence" prevails among students. Few feel they can safely tell teachers or administrators if they are concerned about another student's behavior or attitudes. Little trust exists between students and staff.

- **Unsupervised Computer Access:** Access to computers and the Internet is unsupervised and unmonitored. Students are able to use the school's computers to play violent

computer games or to explore inappropriate websites such as those that promote violent hate groups or give instructions for bomb-making.

Prong Four: Social Dynamics

A student's beliefs and attitudes, choice of friends, entertainment, activities, and reading material on topics such as drugs, weapons, and violence will all reflect his overall views and potential for violent behavior.

- **Media, Entertainment, Technology:** The student has unmonitored access to movies, television shows, computer games, and Internet sites with themes and images of extreme violence.

- **Peer Groups:** The student is intensely and exclusively involved with a group who share a fascination with violence or extremist beliefs. The group excludes others who do not share the same interests or ideas. This leads to the student spending little or no time with anyone who thinks differently and is shielded from any "reality check" that might come from hearing other views or perceptions.

- **Drugs and Alcohol:** Knowledge of a student's use of drugs and alcohol and their attitude toward these substances is very important. Any changes in his or her behavior involving these substances are very important.

- **Outside Interests:** A student's interests outside of school are important to note, as they can mitigate the school's concern when evaluating a threat or increase the level of concern.

- **The Copycat Effect:** School shootings and other violent incidents that receive intense media attention can generate threats or copycat violence elsewhere. Copycat behavior is very common, in fact, anecdotal evidence strongly indicates that threats increase in schools nationwide after a shooting has occurred in the United States. Students, teachers, school administrators and law enforcement officials should be more vigilant in noting disturbing student behavior in the days, weeks, and several months following a heavily publicized incident elsewhere in the country.

STEP 5: ORGANIZE AND ANALYZE ALL DATA / INFORMATION *(U.S. Secret Service)*

Information gathered should be examined for evidence of behavior and conditions that suggest the student of concern is planning for an attack.

- Is the behavior of the student consistent with movement on a path toward attack?
- Do the student's current situation and setting incline him or her toward or away from targeted violence?

- Consider if the student behavior is:
    - normal behavior,
    - boundary probing behavior,
    - attack-related behavior, or
    - attack behavior

As the Threat Assessment Inquiry moves to an Investigation Status, and law enforcement has been notified, the team might continue to ask themselves the following questions:

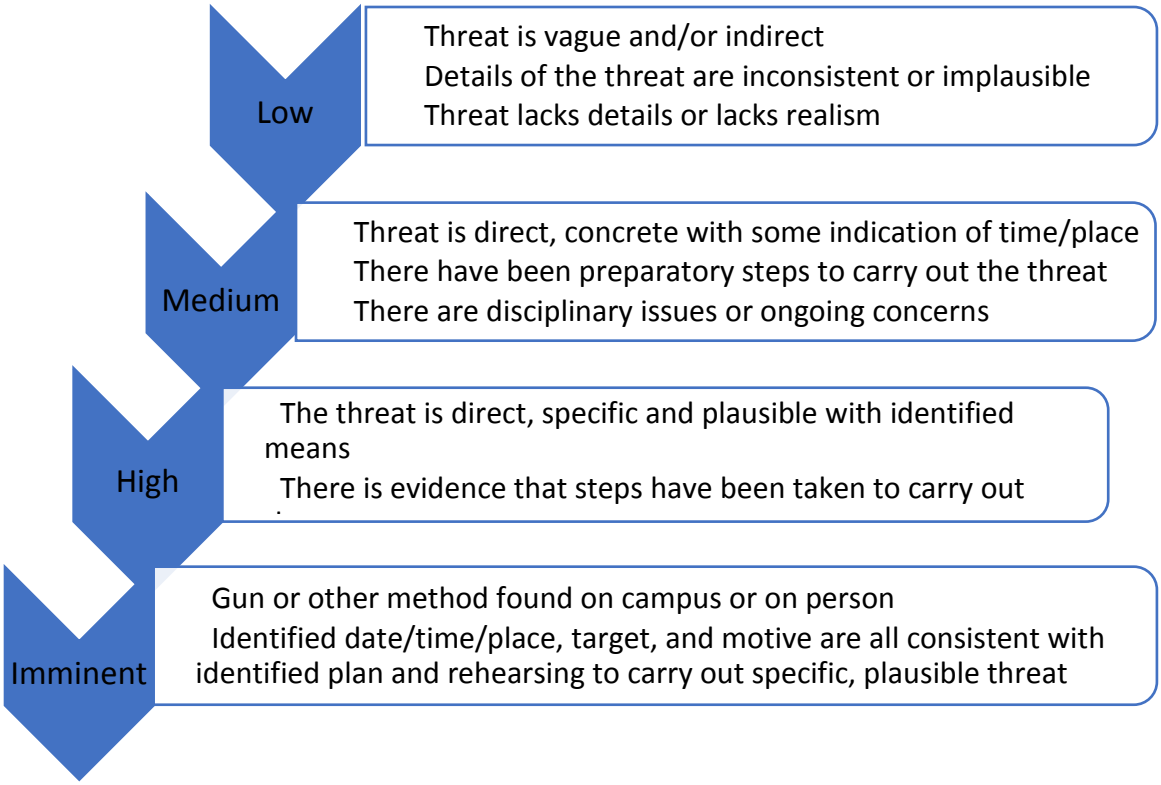
- Does the information collected prompt more concern or less concern about the possibility that a student is moving on a path of attack?
- What information might prompt less concern?
- What information might heighten concern?
- What options exist for intervening in the behavior of or redirecting the student away from ideas of or plans for a school attack?
- How should potential targets be contacted, warned, and protected?
- It is suggested that you consult with your school district's attorney about the "duty to warn and/or protect." *Note: Some district protocols may suggest additional possibilities. Consult with school district legal counsel as you move through the steps for your school or district. Teams should be monitoring all students for whom a threat assessment is warranted regardless of the level of threat. Do not allow your team to get so focused on determining the level of threat that careful planning does not go into your Support Plan.

<u>Questions</u>:
Does the student feel they belong?
What is the quality of the student student's social life?
Does the student have friends?
Does the student feel liked by peers?
Is the student accepted by classmates?
Is there easy access to guns?
Is the student conflict-oriented?
Does the student ever carry a weapon?
Does the student think about hurting people?
Does the student get mad easily?
Is the student destructive?
Does the student like to fight?
Is there a fascination with violence?
What is the student's mood?
Does the student feel sad or depressed most of the time?
Are there feelings of anhedonia?

What is the estimated risk of suicide?
No history? Previous attempt? Current thoughts?
Does the student exhibit feelings of grandiosity?
Does the student demonstrate empathy?
Is the student attention-seeking?
Does the student brag about themselves?
Does the student feel that they are better than their peers?
How is the relationship between the student and their parents?
Does the student follow rules at home?
Are the parents good role models?
Is there an open line of communication at home?
Do the parents keep track of what the student does with their friends?
Is the student an active part of the school community?
Does the student like the school?
Are the teachers perceived as fair?
Are drugs a problem on campus?
How is the security on campus?
Does the student feel he or she could sneak a weapon into school?
Has the student been picked on or bullied at school?
Is lack of money or resources causing stress?
Is the student sad or depressed most of the time?
Is there a recent loss of a loved one?
Is the student alienated?
Has the student been abused?
Is the student involved in the school community?
Is the student experiencing thoughts of death?
How is the student's health?
Are family matters a source of stress?
Is school the source of stress?
Is the threatening student open to remediation?
Are they optimistic or pessimistic?
Will they ask for help?
Is the student impulsive?
Does the student use drugs?
Are there issues related to poor locus of control?

STEP 6: DETERMINE LEVEL OF RISK

It is important that this determination be a team decision. Integrating all data that team members have gathered throughout the process will enable the team to determine whether a potential perpetrator may be moving toward an attack. Careful consideration should be made in considering input from all those interviewed. When in doubt, err on the side of caution.



LOW Concern

(1) If there is enough reliable information to answer the 11 Key Questions, and (2) The weight of the information is convincing that the student does not pose a threat of targeted school violence nor display any indicators of proactive violence, then (3) The threat assessment team may conclude the threat assessment inquiry at this time and continue monitoring. It is determined that the threat is a minimum risk to the individual and to the public; the threat may be vague and indirect, implausible, inconsistent or lacks detail, lack realism, and may have content that indicates that he person will not likely carry it out. These are often transient threats that do not express a lasting intent to harm someone (For example *"I'm going to kill you"* said in the heat of an argument but then retracted once the student calms down). All low risk threats end in an apology or explanation that makes it clear that the threat is over.

MEDIUM Concern

If a threat is not retracted or resolved, it should be considered substantive. This may include the above example *"I'm going to kill you,"* but it is not retracted. This is a threat that could be carried out but may not seem realistic. This threat may be more direct and concrete than a low risk threat; the wording given may indicate more thought as to how the act will be carried out, and a possible place and time may be given (but not a detailed plan). At this level, preparatory steps would not have been taken, although there may be veiled references that are ambiguous (such as referencing the ease with which weapons can be obtained). The potential perpetrator

may state that they are serious in order to convey that the threat is not empty. The Threat Assessment team may decide to close the assessment process but conclude that the student is still in need of assistance with problems or behaviors. An Action and Support Plan needs to be developed and documented. In this case, the team should work with school and district administrators, school and district services, community partners, and others to ensure that these individuals receive assistance, continued support, and monitoring. A IEP process is separate from both the threat assessment and an Action and Support Plan. The plan should be reviewed periodically, and monitoring should continue while the student remains in the system.

HIGH Concern

Law enforcement is notified immediately. The threat here appears to be an imminent danger to the safety of others. This threat is direct, specific, and plausible. Concrete steps appear to have been taken in the preparation of carrying out the threat. The individual may have secured a weapon, practiced with it, and may have a victim under surveillance. May also include written plans, notification of a planned date of attack, lists of intended victims, and/or securing of school architectural plans.

(1) If there is sufficient information for the threat assessment team to be reasonably certain that the student poses a threat to self or others, or (2) The student appears to be on a path to attack, then (3) The team should immediately refer to the appropriate law enforcement agency for a threat assessment investigation or mental/behavioral professionals for evaluation and/or hold. (4) A re-entry meeting must be conducted before the student returns to school to develop a school and community-based Action and Support Plan. The plan should establish review dates, provide connection to district and community mental health professionals and provide monitoring measures. This may also require mandatory reporting and Duty to Warn.

STEP 7: DEVELOP AN ACTION/SUPPORT PLAN

An Action and Support Plan can be developed for any situation but should be developed if evaluation indicates medium level concern and/or upon re-entry of student of high concern. The purpose is to provide management of the situation, to protect and aid possible targets, and to provide support and guidance to help the student deal successfully with his or her problems. The plan also aids in monitoring of the student in the short-term and long-term. Strategies selected should have the best potential for long-term preventative power.

A Sample Action/Support Plan can be found here.

The focus of the action/support plan process is to connect the student to services and support systems that reduce the likelihood of future threatening behavior.

- Select actions and interventions related to the level of concern.
- Notify the potential target and their parents.
- Consider the history of previous actions, consequences, and interventions and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Start with as intense of a plan as needed, and then adjust based on progress. Timelines for review of progress can be short, if needed.
- Specify consequences, monitoring and supervision strategies, support for skill development and relationship building.
- Maximize the resources of the student, family, community agencies, other intervention providers, etc.
- Use community collaborative teams for intervention planning or further assessment, as indicated.
- If additional formal assessment is part of the plan, obtain parent permission as necessary.
- Build-in formal follow-up meetings to review progress and response to the plan.
- Adjust plans as necessary.

It is important to use this information to guide immediate action and implement targeted interventions in a timely manner to ensure the present and future safety of everyone on the school campus.

Determine interventions/actions taken (examples):
School administrators notified (mandatory)
Parents contacted (mandatory)
Intended victims warned
Law enforcement contacted
Action Plan developed
Suicide Risk Assessment completed
Safety plan developed
Special Education Evaluation recommended
IEP / 504 meeting recommended
Behavior Intervention Plan
Disciplinary action taken
Referral to Student Assistance Program (SAP)
Schedule modification recommended
Anger management training recommended
Social skills training recommended
Conflict resolution training recommended
Follow up by school mental health staff
Referrals to outside providers/agencies
Follow up meeting scheduled (date/time):

Other School-based accommodations/interventions (describe):

After a threat assessment, it is important that the student be monitored by teachers and office staff to monitor threatening behavior and to watch out for additional threatening behavior (e.g., verbal, nonverbal, written, artistic, etc.).

School Based Interventions

Discipline Measures might include, apology letter(s), removal of privileges, and/or use of discipline policies for detention, suspension and/or expulsion.

Law enforcement contact, arrest, detainment, and or incarceration.

Daily or random check of person, backpack (clear backpack if allowed at all), and locker for any items of concern related to the threat.

The student restricted from coming early to school or staying late.

Monitor attendance utilizing a check-in, check-out procedure.

Daily check ins are instituted at the beginning of each school day with an administrator or counselor. This is to provide the student an opportunity to discuss how they are feeling and if any challenges are presenting themselves for the day. This relationship will help the student feel more connected in school and the student should be able to check in whenever needed throughout the day.

The student's unsupervised time at school should be restricted; the student should be escorted by an adult whenever leaving the classroom.

Student assigned a 1:1 aide (details: meets at bus, shadows student all day until placed back on bus)

Are scheduling changes needed? Is the student to return to the situation in which the threat occurred? Is a teacher worried or concerned about his/her safety that should result in a course change?

If another threatening letter is written, school personnel may follow school board discipline policy which might include home instruction pending action, alternate educational setting, or expulsion.

Student will participate in academic remediation.

Student will be referred to expedited evaluation to determine special education eligibility and a meeting will be held to discuss the results.

Behavioral & Therapeutic Interventions

School based guidance and/or mental health service to address any underlying psychosocial concerns related to the threatening behavior (e.g., social stress, alienation, peer conflict, coping skill development, etc.).

Student will self-manage. (e.g., will request to see a counselor if he needs help with frustration).

Parent has agreed for school-based psychologist / mental health professional to consult with outside (parent referred) mental health provider. Release of Information form is signed.

A Functional Behavioral Assessment, Behavior Intervention Plan, and/or behavior contract has been developed and is in force.

Identify an adult family member that the student agrees to confide in and go to as needed to address difficulties the student may be having.

Encourage and/or facilitate school connectedness through participation in school based extracurricular activities.

Home & Community Based Interventions

Parents have been provided community mental health contact information and have agreed to pursue mental health intervention in the community.

Encourage and/or facilitate participation in community-based programs (e.g., church groups, mentoring, Boys and Girls Club of America, volunteer work, etc.) to foster social connectedness.

Parents have agreed to make sure he/she does not have access to materials that may facilitate the implementation of the threat (i.e., inspection of bedroom and computer for evidence of plans, maps, lists, or materials to implement a violent act).

Parents have agreed to allow law enforcement officers to search students belongings (bedroom, computer, etc.) to help determine progress toward threat development (physical or digital plans, maps, lists, weapons etc.)

Future internet access will be limited and/or monitored (i.e., computer use will be in a public area of the household).

Parents make efforts to assure that student does not bring items related to the threat to school.

Parents agreed to notify the school administration if student makes further threatening statements about school personnel immediately.

STEP 8: DOCUMENT THE THREAT ASSESSMENT AND KEEP RECORDS

Regardless of the outcome of the Threat Assessment Inquiry, the Threat Assessment Team should document the behavior of concern, the inquiry process, and any actions taken. Keeping accurate records will protect a school in the event of litigation to help defend their decision. It will also guide the school in support planning and create a record should the same student engage in future acts. Be as detailed as possible with all communications and use exact quotes in interviews. The school and/or district should have a central area for record-keeping, such as an administrator and/or team who would have previous records and information if future concerns are raised.

a. This should be carried out in compliance with any applicable school or other relevant policies and/or legal considerations and should include a record of sources and content for all key information considered in the threat assessment, as well as the date that the information was acquired.
b. It also is important to document the reasoning that led the threat assessment team to its decision.
c. A well-documented record provides baseline information and can be useful if the student comes to authorities' attention again, or if at some point in the future, investigators or school personnel need to determine whether the subject has changed patterns of thinking and behavior.
d. This documentation can also be an asset in demonstration that a threat assessment process was conducted properly and in compliance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures.

Further issues to consider:
Where are records to be kept?
How will those involved in the threat be notified?

STEP 9: CONTINUE MONITORING THE STUDENT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PLAN

It is important that school staff continue to monitor the student and ensure that support plans are being carried through with fidelity. School connections are great protective factors for children; the very act of checking in with the student to gauge their feelings on the safety plan can help facilitate this connection. Monitoring may be daily or weekly depending on the severity of the need and the individual needs of each student. If a plan is not working, it is important to make needed changes to create interventions that will allow the student to be as successful as possible.

STEP 10: REEVALUATE THE PLAN AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESS/PROCEDURES

How responsive and effective is the protocol? All crisis plans, including threat assessment procedures should be evaluated at least annually. As positions/roles change, these should be updated each year. Further, in the event the protocol is implemented, it is integral to evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures. All team members should be involved in discussing strengths and needs of the protocol with changes to the protocol made as appropriate. It is also suggested that student liaisons, parent liaisons, as well as school staff and teachers are provided opportunities to give input from their varied perspectives. It is through these discussions that teams often discover how to improve communication, tighten procedures, or suggest interventions that might be more practical in classrooms.

Appendix A

Youth Suicide Risk Screening Form

Student name _____ Date of screen _____

	Past 24 hours	Past week	Past Month
1. Have you wished you were dead?	❑	❑	❑
2. Have you felt that you, your friends, or your family would be better off if you were dead?	❑	❑	❑
3. Have you had thoughts about killing yourself?	❑	❑	❑
4. Have you tried to kill yourself? ❑ No ❑ Yes	❑	❑	❑

a. If yes, how?

b. If yes, when and where?

c. Did you stop yourself, or did someone stop you?

d. How do you feel now that they stopped you?

5. Do you plan to kill yourself? ❑ No ❑ Yes

a. If yes, how, when, and where?

If student checks "past 24 hours" or "past week" to any question, reports a suicide attempt at any time, or checks "yes" to question 5, a full suicide risk assessment **must** be conducted for safety. This may be done by school-based mental health staff or by referral based on school district policy.

Parents contacted? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Full assessment completed by school staff? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Outside referral for assessment made? ❑ Yes ❑ No

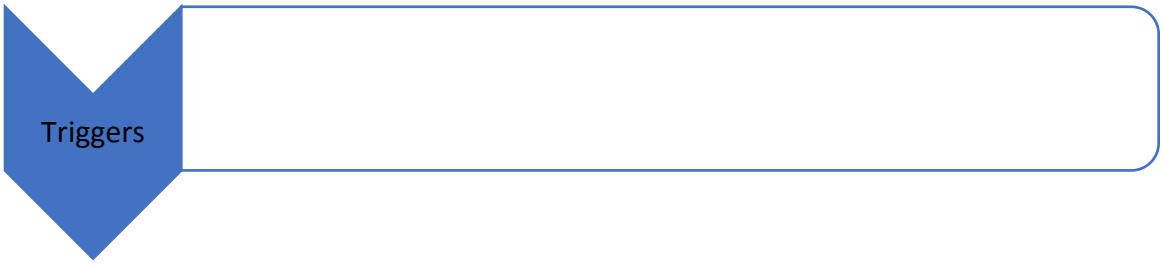
Referred to: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____

_____ _____
Screener name and credentials Date

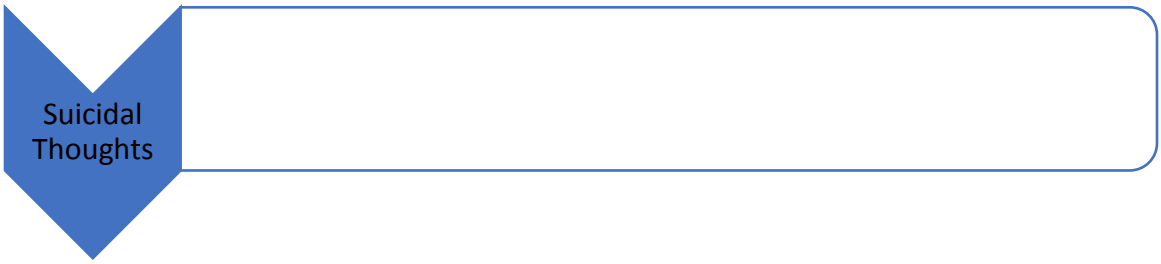
Adapted from the Ask Suicide-Screening Questions form (ASQ; Horowitz, 2012), the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS; Posner 2009) and the Suicide Ideation Questionnaire-JR (SIQ-JR; Reynolds, 1997). © Terri A. Erbacher, Jonathan B. Singer & Scott Poland. *Suicide in Schools: A Practitioner's Guide to Multi-Level Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, and Postvention.* Routledge, 2015. Permission to reproduce is granted to purchasers of this text.

Appendix B
Safety Plan

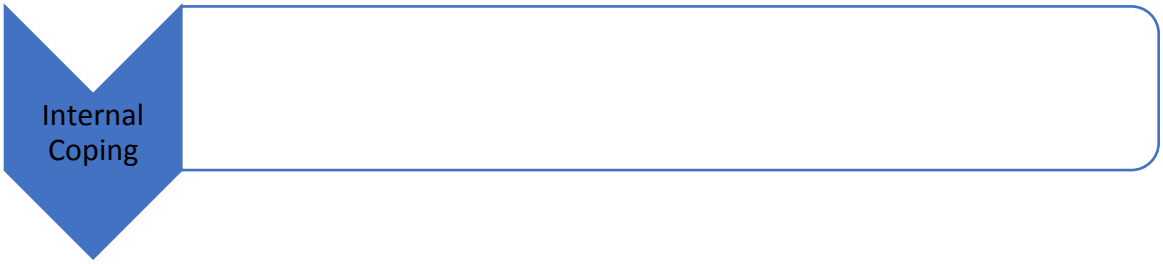
Think of the most recent suicidal crisis. Write a one to two sentence description of what triggered the suicidal crisis.



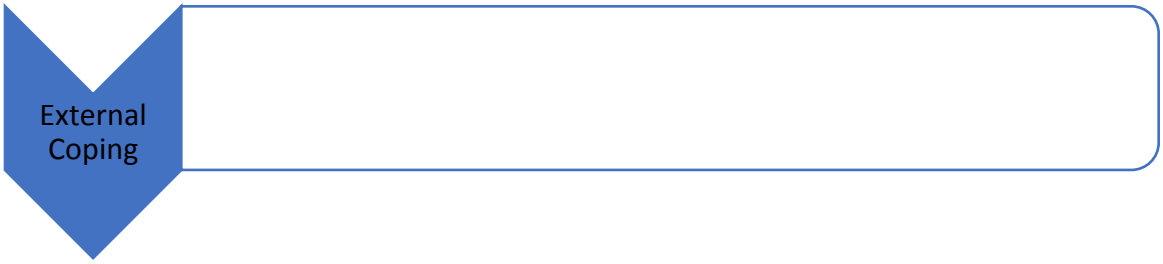
Suicidal thoughts and behaviors: What are the thoughts, emotions, or behaviors that let you (and those around you) know that you were in crisis?



Internal coping: What can you do on your own to distract yourself from suicidal thoughts? What do you like to do? What have you done in the past?



External coping: Who can help distract you from your suicidal thoughts?



Plan: List your coping strategies from above, starting with the most enjoyable.

Safety Plan

❑ I agree to remove lethal means from the house _____ (initials)

Emergency numbers I will call in the event that my suicidal thoughts continue or get worse after using the coping strategies listed above:

People to call

Safe and trusted adult: _____

School personnel: _____

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

911

If no one is available and I have tried all of the coping strategies listed above, and still I believe I might do something to end my life, I will go to the emergency room _____ or call 911.

By signing below, I agree that I have been part of the creation of this safety plan and that I intend to use it when I am having thoughts of suicide. I realize that my signature below does not make this a legal contract, but rather a plan for my continued well-being and happiness.

Student	Signature	Date
School Personnel / Credential	Signature	Date
Supervisor/Administrator / Credential	Signature	Date
Parent / Guardian	Signature	Date

Appendix C

A History of School Shootings 1996-2018

The full scope of gun violence in the U.S. and abroad is immense. In the U.S. alone there were 346 mass shootings in 2017, or about one per day. Despite attempts by nonprofits and government agencies, it is almost impossible to present every mass shooting. Rather, these are modern shootings that garnered particular attention or had a lasting cultural impact. Find the date, location, and a short description of each incident.

Feb. 2, 1996 Moses Lake, Wash.	Two students and one teacher killed, one other wounded when 14-year-old Barry Loukaitis opened fire on his algebra class.
Mar. 13, 1996 Dunblane, Scotland	16 children and one teacher killed at Dunblane Primary School by Thomas Hamilton, who then killed himself. 10 others wounded in attack.
Apr. 28-29, 1996 Port Arthur, Tasmania, Australia	Martin Bryant, age 28, opened fire at a penal colony, killing 35 people and wounding 23. It was Australia's worst mass killing.
Feb. 19, 1997 Bethel, Alaska	Principal and one student killed, two others wounded by Evan Ramsey, 16.
Mar. 1997 Sanaa, Yemen	Eight people (six students and two others) at two schools killed by Mohammad Ahman al-Naziri.
Oct. 1, 1997 Pearl, Miss.	Two students killed and seven wounded by Luke Woodham, 16, who was also accused of killing his mother. He and his friends were said to be outcasts who worshiped Satan.
Dec. 1, 1997 West Paducah, Ky.	Three students killed, five wounded by Michael Carneal, 14, as they participated in a prayer circle at Heath High School.
Dec. 15, 1997 Stamps, Ark.	Two students wounded. Colt Todd, 14, was hiding in the woods when he shot the students as they stood in the parking lot.
Mar. 24, 1998 Jonesboro, Ark.	Four students and one teacher killed, ten others wounded outside as Westside Middle School emptied during a false fire alarm. Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11, shot at their classmates and teachers from the woods.
Apr. 24, 1998 Edinboro, Pa.	One teacher, John Gillette, killed, two students wounded at a dance at James W. Parker Middle School. Andrew Wurst, 14, was charged.
May 19, 1998	One student killed in the parking lot at Lincoln County High School three days before he was to

Fayetteville, Tenn.	graduate. The victim was dating the ex-girlfriend of his killer, 18-year-old honor student Jacob Davis.
May 21, 1998 Springfield, Ore.	Two students killed, 22 others wounded in the cafeteria at Thurston High School by 15-year-old Kip Kinkel. Kinkel had been arrested and released a day earlier for bringing a gun to school. His parents were later found dead at home.
June 15, 1998 Richmond, Va.	One teacher and one guidance counselor wounded by a 14-year-old boy in the school hallway.
Apr. 20, 1999 Littleton, Colo.	14 students (including killers) and one teacher killed, 23 others wounded at Columbine High School in the nation's deadliest school shooting. Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, had plotted for a year to kill at least 500 and blow up their school. At the end of their hour-long rampage, they turned their guns on themselves.
Apr. 28, 1999 Taber, Alberta, Canada	One student killed, one wounded at W. R. Myers High School in first fatal high school shooting in Canada in 20 years. The suspect, a 14-year-old boy, had dropped out of school after he was severely ostracized by his classmates.
May 20, 1999 Conyers, Ga.	Six students injured at Heritage High School by Thomas Solomon, 15, who was reportedly depressed after breaking up with his girlfriend.
Nov. 19, 1999 Deming, N.M.	Victor Cordova Jr., 12, shot and killed Araceli Tena, 13, in the lobby of Deming Middle School.
Dec. 6, 1999 Fort Gibson, Okla.	Four students wounded as Seth Trickey, 13, opened fire with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun at Fort Gibson Middle School.
Dec. 7, 1999 Veghel, Netherlands	One teacher and three students wounded by a 17-year-old student.
Feb. 29, 2000 Mount Morris Township, Mich.	Six-year-old Kayla Rolland shot dead at Buell Elementary School near Flint, Mich. The assailant was identified as a six-year-old boy with a .32-caliber handgun.
Mar. 2000 Branneburg, Germany	One teacher killed by a 15-year-old student, who then shot himself. The shooter has been in a coma ever since.
Mar. 10, 2000 Savannah, Ga.	Two students killed by Darrell Ingram, 19, while leaving a dance sponsored by Beach High School.

May 26, 2000 Lake Worth, Fla.	One teacher, Barry Grunow, shot and killed at Lake Worth Middle School by Nate Brazill, 13, with .25-caliber semiautomatic pistol on the last day of classes.
Sept. 26, 2000 New Orleans, La.	Two students wounded with the same gun during a fight at Woodson Middle School.
Jan. 17, 2001 Baltimore, Md.	One student shot and killed in front of Lake Clifton Eastern High School.
Jan. 18, 2001 Jan, Sweden	One student killed by two boys, ages 17 and 19.
Mar. 5, 2001 Santee, Calif.	Two killed and 13 wounded by Charles Andrew Williams, 15, firing from a bathroom at Santana High School.
Mar. 7, 2001 Williamsport, Pa.	Elizabeth Catherine Bush, 14, wounded student Kimberly Marchese in the cafeteria of Bishop Neumann High School; she was depressed and frequently teased.
Mar. 22, 2001 Granite Hills, Calif.	One teacher and three students wounded by Jason Hoffman, 18, at Granite Hills High School. A policeman shot and wounded Hoffman.
Mar. 30, 2001 Gary, Ind.	One student killed by Donald R. Burt, Jr., a 17-year-old student who had been expelled from Lew Wallace High School.
Nov. 12, 2001 Caro, Mich.	Chris Buschbacher, 17, took two hostages at the Caro Learning Center before killing himself.
Jan. 15, 2002 New York, N.Y.	A teenager wounded two students at Martin Luther King Jr. High School.
Feb. 19, 2002 Freising, Germany	Two killed in Eching by a man at the factory from which he had been fired; he then traveled to Freising and killed the headmaster of the technical school from which he had been expelled. He also wounded another teacher before killing himself.
Apr. 26, 2002 Erfurt, Germany	13 teachers, two students, and one policeman killed, ten wounded by Robert Steinhaeuser, 19, at the Johann Gutenberg secondary school. Steinhaeuser then killed himself.
Apr. 29, 2002 Vlasenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina	One teacher killed, one wounded by Dragoslav Petkovic, 17, who then killed himself.

Oct. 28, 2002 Tucson, Ariz.	Robert S. Flores Jr., 41, a student at the nursing school at the University of Arizona, shot and killed three female professors and then himself.
Apr. 14, 2003 New Orleans, La.	One 15-year-old killed, and three students wounded at John McDonogh High School by gunfire from four teenagers (none were students at the school). The motive was gang-related.
Apr. 24, 2003 Red Lion, Pa.	James Sheets, 14, killed principal Eugene Segro of Red Lion Area Junior High School before killing himself.
Sept. 24, 2003 Cold Spring, Minn.	Two students are killed at Rocori High School by John Jason McLaughlin, 15.
Sept. 28, 2004 Carmen de Patagones, Argentina	Three students killed and 6 wounded by a 15-year-old Argentininan student in a town 620 miles south of Buenos Aires.
Mar. 21, 2005 Red Lake, Minn.	Jeff Weise, 16, killed grandfather and companion, then arrived at school where he killed a teacher, a security guard, 5 students, and finally himself, leaving a total of 10 dead.
Nov. 8, 2005 Jacksboro, Tenn.	One 15-year-old shot and killed an assistant principal at Campbell County High School and seriously wounded two other administrators.
Aug. 24, 2006 Essex, Vt.	Christopher Williams, 27, looking for his ex-girlfriend at Essex Elementary School, shot two teachers, killing one and wounding another. Before going to the school, he had killed the ex-girlfriend's mother.
Sept. 13, 2006 Montreal, Canada	Kimveer Gill, 25, opened fire with a semiautomatic weapon at Dawson College. Anastasia De Sousa, 18, died and more than a dozen students and faculty were wounded before Gill killed himself.
Sept. 27, 2006 Bailey, Colo.	Adult male held six students hostage at Platte Canyon High School and then shot and killed Emily Keyes, 16, and himself.
Sept. 29, 2006 Cazenovia, Wis.	A 15-year-old student shot and killed Weston School principal John Klang.
Oct. 3, 2006 Nickel Mines, Pa.	32-year-old Carl Charles Roberts IV entered the one-room West Nickel Mines Amish School and shot 10 schoolgirls, ranging in age from 6 to 13 years old, and then himself. Five of the girls and Roberts died.
Jan. 3, 2007	Douglas Chanthabouly, 18, shot fellow student Samnang Kok, 17, in the hallway of Henry Foss High

Tacoma, Wash.	School.
April 16, 2007 Blacksburg, Va.	A 23-year-old Virginia Tech student, Cho Seung-Hui, killed two in a dorm, then killed 30 more 2 hours later in a classroom building. His suicide brought the death toll to 33, making the shooting rampage the most deadly in U.S. history. Fifteen others were wounded.
Sept. 21, 2007 Dover, Del.	A Delaware State University Freshman, Loyer D. Brandon, shot and wounded two other Freshman students on the University campus. Brandon is being charged with attempted murder, assault, reckless engagement, as well as a gun charge.
Oct. 10, 2007 Cleveland, Ohio	A 14-year-old student at a Cleveland high school, Asa H. Coon, shot and injured two students and two teachers before he shot and killed himself. The victims' injuries were not life-threatening.
Nov. 7, 2007 Tuusula, Finland	An 18-year-old student in southern Finland shot and killed five boys, two girls, and the female principal at Jokela High School. At least 10 others were injured. The gunman shot himself and died from his wounds in the hospital.
Feb. 8, 2008 Baton Rouge, La.	A nursing student shot and killed two women and then herself in a classroom at Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge.
Feb. 11, 2008 Memphis, Tenn.	A 17-year-old student at Mitchell High School shot and wounded a classmate in gym class.
Feb. 12, 2008 Oxnard, Calif.	A 14-year-old boy shot a student at E.O. Green Junior High School causing the 15-year-old victim to be brain dead.
Feb. 14, 2008 DeKalb, Ill.	Gunman killed five students and then himself and wounded 17 more when he opened fire on a classroom at Northern Illinois University. The gunman, Stephen P. Kazmierczak, was identified as a former graduate student at the university in 2007.
Sept. 23, 2008 Kauhajoki, Finland	A 20-year-old male student shot and killed at least nine students and himself at a vocational college in Kauhajok, 330km (205 miles) north of the capital, Helsinki.
Nov. 12, 2008 Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	A 15-year-old female student was shot and killed by a classmate at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale.
Mar. 11, 2009 Winnenden, Germany	Fifteen people were shot and killed at Albertville Technical High School in southwestern Germany by a 17-year-old boy who attended the same school.
Apr. 30, 2009	A Georgian citizen of Azerbaijani descent killed 12 students and staff at Azerbaijan State Oil

Azerbaijan, Baku	Academy. Several others were wounded.
Nov. 5, 2009 Killeen, Tex.	A shooting at the Fort Hood army post kills 13 and injures 29. Ten of those killed are military personnel, while one is a civilian. The alleged shooter is Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, an army psychiatrist, was shot four times by an officer on the scene, but he survived the attack.
Feb. 5, 2010 Madison, Ala.	At Discovery Middle School, a ninth-grader was shot by another student during a class change. The boy, whose name was not released, pulled out a gun and shot Todd Brown in the head while walking the hallway. Brown later died at Huntsville Hospital.
Feb. 12, 2010 Huntsville, Ala.	During a meeting on campus, Amy Bishop, a biology professor, began shot her colleagues, killing three and wounding three others. A year earlier, Bishop had been denied tenure.
Mar. 9, 2010 Columbus, Ohio	A man opens fire at Ohio State University, killing two employees and wounding one other. The shooter had recently received an "unsatisfactory" job evaluation and was going to be fired on March 13.
Jan. 5, 2011 Omaha, Nebr.	Two people were killed and two more injured in a shooting at Millard South High School. Shortly after being suspended from school, the shooter returned and shot the assistant principal, principal, and the school nurse. The shooter then left campus and took his own life.
Jan. 8, 2011 Tuscon, Ariz.	Arizona Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot in an assassination attempt. At least 17 others are shot by a gunman, identified as Jared Lee Loughner, who opened fire on the congresswoman's constituent meeting outside a local grocery store. Six people are fatally wounded, including U.S. District Court Judge John Roll, and a young girl.
Jan. 5, 2011 Houston, Tex.	Two people opened fire during a Worthing High School powder-puff football game. One former student died. Five other people were injured.
Apr. 7, 2011 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	A 23-year-old former student returned to his public elementary school in Rio de Janeiro and began firing, killing 12 children and seriously wounding more than a dozen others, before shooting himself in the head. While Brazil has seen gang-related violence in urban areas, this was the worst school shooting the country has ever seen.
May 10, 2011 San Jose, California	Three people were killed in a parking garage at San Jose State University. Two former students were found dead on the fifth floor of the garage. A third, the suspected shooter, died later at the hospital.
July 22, 2011 Tyrifjorden, Buskerud, Norway	A gunman disguised as a policeman opened fire at a camp for young political activists on the island of Utoya. The gunman kills 68 campers, including personal friends of Prime Minister Stoltenberg. Police arrested Anders Behring Breivik, a 32-year-old Norwegian who had been been linked to an anti-Islamic group.

Dec. 8, 2011 Blacksburg, Va.	A Virginia Tech police officer was shot and killed by a 22-year old student of Radford University. The shooting took place in a parking lot on Virginia Tech's campus.
Feb. 10, 2012 Walpole, N. H.	A 14-year-old student shot himself in front of 70 fellow students.
Feb. 27, 2012 Chardon, Ohio	At Chardon High School, a former classmate opened fire, killing three students and injuring six. Arrested shortly after the incident, the shooter said that he randomly picked students.
Mar. 6, 2012 Jacksonville, Fla.	Shane Schumerth, a 28-year-old teacher at Episcopal High School, returned to the campus after being fired and shot and killed the headmistress, Dale Regan, with an assault rifle.
Mar. 19, 2012 Toulouse, France	Mohammed Merah, a French man of Algerian descent, shot and killed a rabbi, two of his children, and another child at a Jewish school. Police believe he had earlier shot and killed three paratroopers. Merah said he was a member of Al Qaeda and that he was seeking revenge for the killing of Palestinian children.
Apr. 2, 2012 Oakland, Calif.	One Goh, a 43-year-old former student at Oikos University, a Christian school populated by mostly Korean and Korean-Americans, opened fire on the campus, killing seven people and wounding several others.
July 20, 2012 Aurora, Colo.	During a midnight screening of the film *The Dark Knight Rises*, a gunman opens fire on the crowded theater. At least 12 people are killed and 38 others are wounded. The suspect, James Holmes, set off a smoke device in the front of the theater before opening fire. Directly after the incident, Holmes, age 24, was arrested in a parking lot behind the theater.
Aug. 5, 2012 Oak Creek, Wis.	A gunman opens fire at a Sikh temple, killing six people and wounding three. Police shot and killed the suspect, Wade Michael Page, after the attack. Page, a neo-Nazi, served in the U.S. Army from 1992 to 1998.
Dec. 11, 2012 Portland, Ore.	Jacob Tyler Roberts, 22, opened fire in the Clackamas Town Center mall, located 11 miles from downtown Portland, Oregon. Using an AR-15 semiautomatic assault rifle, Roberts killed two people and wounded one other. He then took his own life.
Dec. 14, 2012 Newtown, Conn.	Adam Lanza, 20, killed 20 children and six others at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. He killed his mother, Nancy, at her home prior to the massacre at the school. Lanza committed suicide after the rampage. The shooting was the second deadliest in U.S. history, behind the 2007 shooting at Virginia Polytechnic Institute that claimed 32 people.
Sept. 16, 2013 Washington, D.C.	Former Navy reservist Aaron Alexis, 34, killed 12 people at the Washington Navy Yard, near the U.S. Capitol. He was killed in a shootout with police. Alexis was employed at the base by a military subcontractor.

Sept. 21, 2013 Nairobi, Kenya	Shabab militants, who are based in Somalia, attacked an upscale mall, killing nearly 70 people and wounding about 175. The siege lasted for three days, with persistent fighting between government troops and militants. The attack was meticulously planned, and the militants proved to be challenging for the government to dislodge from the Westgate mall.
Oct. 21, 2013 Sparks, Nev.	A middle-school student shoots and kills Michael Landsberry, a math teacher at Sparks Middle School. The student then shot himself in front of other students.
Apr. 2, 2014 Killeen, Tex.	An Iraq war veteran opens fire at the Fort Hood Army base and kills three people before turning the gun on himself. At least 16 people are injured. The suspect, Army Specialist Ivan Lopez, was being evaluated for post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the Pentagon. Another fatal shooting at the base took place in 2009.
May 23, 2014 Isla Vista, Calif.	A gunman, identified as Elliot Rodger, kills six people and wounds 13 others in Isla Vista, Calif., a small town near Santa Barbara. He stabs three men in his apartment before driving to locations throughout the town where he kills three students from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Before the rampage, Rodger, age 22, posts a video called "Elliot Rodger's Retribution" on his YouTube Channel and writes a 137-page manifesto. In both, he expresses his anger over being rejected by women and his plans for revenge.
June 5, 2014 Seattle, Wash.	A man armed with a shotgun opens fire at Seattle Pacific University, killing one student and wounding two others. The suspect, Aaron Ybarra, 26, is not a student at the college. He was subdued by a student security guard and taken into custody.
Oct. 24, 2014 Marysville, Wash.	Jaylen Ray Fryberg, a popular freshman at Marysville-Pilchuck High School, opens fire in the cafeteria, killing two students and critically wounding three others before turning the gun on himself.
Jan. 7, 2015 Paris, France	Three masked gunmen storm the office of *Charlie Hebdo*, a satirical weekly magazine, and kill 12 people, including the paper's top editors and cartoonists, as well as two police officers. The provocative magazine is known for publishing charged cartoons that satirized Islamic terrorists and the Prophet Muhammad.
June 17, 2015 Charleston, S. C.	A white male opened fire during a prayer service at the historically significant Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, killing nine people, including Rev. Clementa Pinckney, the church's pastor and a state senator. The alleged gunman, Dylann Storm Roof, 21, sat in the church for about an hour before beginning the rampage. He was caught about 200 miles away on June 18.
July 16, 2015 Chattanooga, Tenn.	A gunman opened fire at a Navy and Marine recruiting center, killing four Marines. Three other people, including a recruiter and police officer were injured. One of the injured men later died of his wounds. The suspect, identified as Muhammad Youssef Abdulzeez, was shot and killed by police.

Oct. 1, 2015 Roseburg, Ore.	A gunman opened fire at Umpqua Community College. Nine people were killed and seven more wounded. The suspected shooter, 26- year-old Chris Harper Mercer, killed himself after exchanging gunfire with the police.
Dec. 2, 2015 San Bernardino, Calif.	Fourteen people were killed and more than 20 wounded when two people opened fire at a holiday party at the Inland Regional Center, a service facility for people with disabilities and special needs. The suspects, husband and wife Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, were killed in a shootout with police after the rampage. Officials said they believe the attack was terrorism related.
Feb. 20, 2016 Kalamazoo, Mich.	An Uber driver, Jason Brian Dalton, went on a killing rampage throughout the town of Kalamazoo, Michigan killing 6 people. He started the 6-hour deadly spree by shooting a woman outside her townhouse, leaving her in critical condition. Then Dalton killed two men in a brightly-lit Kia dealership parking lot, after which he moved into a Cracker Barrel parking lot, killing four women there. A 14-year-old girl was also left in critical condition but survived. The killer was arrested two hours after the shootings.
Feb. 25, 2016 Hesston, Kans.	A gunman opened fire at Excel Industries, a ride-on mower manufacturing plant, killing three people and wounding 14. A police officer and the assailant exchanged gunfire, and the suspect was killed. While driving to the plant, he fired several shots out of the car window, wounding three people. The gunman, who worked at Excel Industries, used an assault rifle in the shooting spree. His name was not released.
Apr. 23, 2016 Antigo, Wis.	An 18-year-old boy named Jakob Wagner opened fire at the Antigo High School prom. He shot 4 of his fellow students, none of which died from the injuries sustained. He was then chased out of the building and exchanged fire with a school police officer. Wagner was shot down in a field after trying to flee the scene. He died in the hospital a few hours later.
June 1, 2016 Los Angeles, Calif.	On the campus of UCLA, a week before finals, a gunman shot and killed an instructor, William S. Klug, before killing himself. Assistant Professor Klug, 39, was a father of two who worked in the mechanical and aerospace engineering department.
June 12, 2016 Orlando, Fla.	A mass shooting at an Orlando nightclub in the early hours of Sunday, June 12, 2016, left 50 people dead, including the gunman, and more than 50 injured. The shooter was identified as Omar Mateen, 29, who entered the nightclub armed with an assault rifle and a pistol. According to authorities, Mr. Mateen pledged his allegiance to ISIS via a 911 call from inside the nightclub. This massacre is the deadliest mass shooting on U.S. soil.
July 7, 2016 Dallas, Tex.	Five police officers were killed, and seven others wounded in a deadly ambush during a protest against recent fatal police shootings of two black men in Baton Rouge, La. and Minnesota. The shooter was military veteran Micah Xavier Johnson, 25, of Mesquite, Texas, who deliberately targeted the law enforcement officers.
Sept. 28, 2016	A homeschooled teenager, Jesse Osborne, 14, shot and killed his father, then drove to the local elementary school playground where he shot two male students and a female teacher. The teacher

Townville, S. C.	and one of the boys were treated and released from the hospital; the other boy later died. The shooter was charged with murder.
Oct. 18, 2016 San Francisco, Calif.	Four males waited in the parking lot of San Francisco's June Jordan School for Equity and City Arts and Technology High School as students were released for the day, opening fire and injuring four students including a 15-year-old female who was critically injured.
Apr. 10, 2017 San Bernadino, Calif.	A teacher at North Park Elementary School is shot and killed by her husband in her classroom. The shooter, who would go on to take his own life with his gun, also shot two students. One, eight years old, was fatally wounded, and another injured.
Oct. 1, 2017 Las Vegas, Nev.	64-year-old Stephen Paddock, a retired area man, killed 58 and injured over 800 from the window of his room in the Mandalay Bay hotel. Paddock fired more than 1,000 rounds from 24 legally acquired guns. Paddock had no connections to hate groups, and no clear motive has ever been established. This is the worst attack by a single perpetrator in U.S. history.
Nov. 5, 2017 Sutherland Springs, Tex.	Devin Kelley opened fire at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, killing 26 and injuring 20 more. He was shot by a civilian while fleeing. He crashed his escape vehicle, then committed suicide. Kelley was prohibited from gun ownership after being court-martialed in the Air Force, however the FBI was not notified, and he was still able to acquire firearms. This was the deadliest ever attack at a place of worship in the U.S.
Nov. 14, 2017 Rancho Tehama, Calif.	Near the end of a two-day rampage killing, Kevin Neal drives a truck into Rancho Tehama Elementary. Neal had killed several neighbors, his wife, and a number of strangers prior. Police suspected Neal was going to kill his neighbors' son.
Jan. 23, 2018 Marshall County, Ky.	A sophomore student at Marshall County High School went to his school and opened fire in the school lobby. He shot 16 people in the lobby at Marshall County High School and injured 4 more by other means. Two students died.
Feb. 14, 2018 Parkland, Florida	A former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who had been expelled for behavioral reasons, Nikolas Cruz, brought a semi-automatic rifle to his old school. He triggered a fire alarm and shot the fleeing students and faculty. The suspect, was arrested a distance away after he escaped in the crowd of students. He now faces charges for the murder of 17 people, and the attempted murder of 14 more.

Appendix D

Threat Assessment Resources
Erbacher & Brindle
December 2018

U.S. SECRET SERVICE RESEARCH

- The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States: www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/...
- Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates: www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/...
- Evaluating Risk for Targeted Violence in Schools: Comparing Risk Assessment, Threat Assessment, and Other Approaches: www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/...
- Making Schools Safer - US Secret Service resource overview: www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/...
- Mass Attacks in Public Spaces (2018): https://www.secretservice.gov/forms/USSS_NTAC-Mass_Attacks_in_Public_Spaces-2017.pdf

PUBLICATIONS

School Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management - Journal article by Drs. Melissa Reeves and Stephen Brock:
link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40688-017-0158-6

School Safety: Threat Assessment Considerations – INSIGHT article by Dr. Terri Erbacher:
http://www.aspponline.org/docs/2018_Spring_InSight.pdf

What Can Be Done About School Shootings? - Journal article by William Modzeleksi:
https://www.sigmatma.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/WhatCanBeDoneAboutSchoolSchootings_ER_AERA_20101.pdf

RESOURCES

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http://threatmanagement.blogspot.com/2010/12/how-to-find-good-threat-assessment.html

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Nicoletti, J. (2014, May). Threat Assessment in Schools. Workshop presented at the Colorado Safe Schools Regional Training, Durango, Colorado. https://livestream.com/CSSRC/Durango-TA

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Threat assessment in schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates. Washington, DC: US Secret Service and Department of Education. A complete copy of the guide is available online at
http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/threatassessmentguide.pdf.

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Vossekuil, B., Fein, R. A., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002). The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education. Access the report in its entirety at http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.pdf.

VIDEOS

SIGMA Threat Management Associates has compiled several free resources on school threat assessment and school violence prevention. Please feel free to share these resources with your colleagues, schools in your community, or anyone else you think could use this information. Click on the links below to access these free resources:

- Overview of School Safety and Violence Prevention - William Modzeleski (11 minute video) www.youtube.com/...
- Understanding and Preventing School Shootings in the U.S. - Dr. Marisa Randazzo (11-minute video) www.youtube.com/...
- School Threat Assessment: A Proactive Guide for Schools - PSBA Webinar with Dr. Marisa Randazzo (75-minute video) www.youtube.com/

Additional Resources and Contact Recommendations

Erbacher & Brindle (2018)

American School Health Association (ASHA) unites the many professionals who are committed to safeguarding the health of school-aged children. A report on the National Injury and Violence Prevention Task Force is available from ASHA at http://www.ashaweb.org.

Annual School Safety Reports can be found at http://www.ed.gov.

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (2006). Risk assessment guideline elements for violence: Considerations for assessing the risk of future violent behavior. Los Angeles: Authors.

Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) works to provide diverse groups with the skills to access the news media, frame health problems in a social context, and use mass media as a tool to strengthen and advance health policy at the community level. Phone: (510) 204-9700; http://www.phi.org/programs/programs-centers.htm#bms

Blueprints for Violence Prevention: This nationally recognized center provides model violence prevention programs that identify the important components involved in preventing violence. http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/about/main.htm

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Calhoun, F. & Weston, S. (June 2006). Protecting judicial officials: Implementing an effective threat management process. Bureau of Justice Assistance Bulletin, 1-8. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

CDC Adolescent and School Health Information provides data on adolescent health risk behaviors, including violence and unintentional injury, and school health policies and programs. http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash

Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (CHHCS) studies programs that provide health promotion and health care services to youth in schools, and helps school-based health centers determine how to best provide dental and mental health care to students. CHCCS also studies practices for coordinating school-based health education and primary care services with the overall health care delivery system. www.healthinschools.org

Center for the Prevention of School Violence provides resources for initiating safe school planning and keeps the public informed through its public awareness campaign. http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/cep/PreViolence/index.html

Children's Safety Network provides resources and technical assistance to maternal and child health practitioners and others working to reduce intentional and unintentional injuries among children and adolescents. www.childrensafetynetwork.org

Corcoran, M.H. & Cawood, J.S. (2003). Violence assessment and intervention: The practitioner's handbook. New York: CRC.

DeBecker, G. (1997). The gift of fear: And other survival signals that protect us from violence. New York: Dell.

Deisinger, G., Randazzo, M., O'Neill, D. & Savage, J. (2008). The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment & Management Teams. Stoneham, MA: Applied Risk Management. Available at www.armsecurity.com.

Delaware Technical & Community College (2008). Behavioral intervention and threat assessmentavailable at http://www.dtcc.edu/stanton/safety/threat_assessment_policy.pdf, retrieved August 21, 2008.

Delworth, U. (1989). Dealing With the Behavioral and Psychological Problems of Students. New Directions for Student Services, no. 45. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dunkle, J., Silverstein, Z. & Warner, S. (2008). Managing violent and other troubling students: The role of threat assessment on campus. Journal of College and University Law, 34(3), 585-636.

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools offers research-based practices designed to assist school communities identify warning signs early and develop prevention, intervention, and crisis response plans. It includes information on what characterizes a school that is safe and responsive to all children, early warning signs, getting help for troubled children, developing a prevention and response plan, responding to crisis resources, methodology, contributors, and research support. The guide is available online at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education: This comprehensive guide contains listings of research studies, program overviews, and links to agencies addressing youth violence. http://ericweb.tc.columbia.edu/pathways/youth_violence

Fein, R. & Vossekuil, B. (1998). Protective intelligence and threat assessment investigations: A guide for state and local law enforcement officials. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

Fein, R., Vossekuil, B. & Holden, G. (September, 1995). Threat assessment: An approach to prevent targeted violence. Research in Action, 1-7. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

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Flannery, R.B. (1995). Violence in the workplace. New York: Crossroad.

Gallagher, R. (2007). National Survey of Counseling Center Directors 2007. Alexandria, VA: International Association of Counseling Services, Inc.

Hamilton Fish Institute provides a listing of violence prevention programs that have been formally evaluated, as well as examples of noteworthy programs that are still being evaluated. http://www.hamfish.org/programs/vpprograms/index.php3

Hoffman, A.M., Schuh, J.H., & Fenske, R.H. (Eds.). (1998). Violence on campus: Defining the problems, Strategies for Action. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen.

International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). (1993). Handling institutional violence on campus. Hartford, CT: IACLEA.

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IACLEA (2008). Overview of the Virginia Tech tragedy and implications for campus safety: The IACLEA Blueprint for safer campuses. West Hartford, CT: IACLEA.

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Jed Foundation (2008). Student mental health and the law: A resource for institutions of higher education. New York, NY: The Jed Foundation.

Keep Schools Safe is a project of the National Association of Attorneys General and the National School Boards Association that is designed to provide up-to-date information on successful youth violence prevention programs and assist communities in developing safe school plans. http://www.keepschoolssafe.org

Lake, P. F. (June 2007). Higher education called to account: Colleges and the law after Virginia Tech. Chronicle of Higher Education, 53(43), B6.

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Leavitt, M., Spellings, M., & Gonzalez, A. (2007). Report to the President on issues raised by the Virginia Tech tragedy. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, and U.S. Department of Justice.

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Mohandie, K. (2000). School violence threat management: A practical guide for educators, law enforcement, and mental health professionals. San Diego, CA: Specialized Training Services.

Monahan, J. (1995). The clinical prediction of violent behavior. London: J. Aronson.

Monahan, J., Steadman, H.J., Silver, E., & Applebaum, P.S. (2001). Rethinking risk assessment: The MacArthur study of mental disorder and violence. New York: Oxford.

National Association of Attorneys General (2007). NAAG task force on school and campus safety: Report and recommendations. Washington, DC: National Association of Attorneys General.

National Alliance for Safe Schools: This website provides information about the latest in school

safety, anti-violence programs, and other related issues. http://www.safeschools.org
National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS) is comprised of over 45 youth-serving organizations and their "youth members." The mission of NOYS is to marshal resources that save lives, prevent injuries, and promote safe and healthy lifestyles among youth. http://www.noys.com/index.htm

National Resource Center for Safe Schools provides information on how to prevent violence and create safer learning environments in schools. http://www.safetyzone.org

National School Safety Center provides youth-serving professionals with strategies and programs to help minimize school violence and prevent school crime. http://www.nssc1.org

National Youth Action Council (NYAC) is a committee of youth who advise the National Campaign against Youth Violence (NCAYV). 1219 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036; Phone: (202) 223-1650; E-mail: info@noviolence.net;
Web: http://www.noviolence.net; http://www.shine365.com (youth-focused);
http://www.nomasviolencia.com (Spanish speaking)

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (NYVPRC) is a collaboration between the White House Council on Youth Violence, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other federal agencies that was established to be a central source of information on prevention and intervention programs, publications, research, and statistics on violence committed by and against children and teens. Phone: (866) 723-3968; http://www.safeyouth.org/home.htm

Pacific Center for Violence Prevention researches the root causes of youth violence and works to implement policies aimed at reducing these causes. Phone: (415) 285-1793; http://www.pcvp.org/pcvp/violence/facts/fulserv3.shtml

Partnerships for Preventing Violence is a satellite broadcast series produced by the Harvard University School of Public Health, Education Development Center, Inc., and Prevention Institute. This project emphasizes leadership development, forming effective coalitions, and developing comprehensive primary prevention strategies. Order forms for purchasing this series are available online at http://www.preventioninstitute.org/order.html.

Pavela, G. The Pavela Report. Available at http://collegepubs.com/the_pavela_report.

Prevention Institute is a national nonprofit organization established to advocate for prevention. The institute develops methodology and strategy to strengthen and expand primary prevention practice. Prevention Institute works with a variety of public and private organizations across a range of issues and disciplines. Areas of specialization include injury and violence prevention; fitness, nutrition, and related health issues; child and adolescent health; and city and county initiatives. 265 29th Street, Oakland, CA 94611; Phone: (510) 444-PREV; Fax: (510) 663-1280; E-mail: prevent@preventioninstitute.org; www.preventioninstitute.org

Preventing and Reducing School Violence Fact Sheet #3 – Resources and Contacts
Prevention Institute 265 29th Street Oakland, CA 94611 (510) 444-PREV(7738)
www.preventioninstitute.org

Quinsey, V.L., Harris, G.T., Rice, M.E. & Cormier, C.A. (1998). Violent offenders: Appraising and managing risk. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative
http://www.nimh.nih.gov/childhp/safeschools.cfm

School Violence Resource Center: This federally funded national program has three primary goals: 1) to research, evaluate, and disseminate information about initiatives, programs, and information related to school violence, 2) to provide pertinent school violence information and resources through a web-based resource center, and 3) to develop and deliver an educational curriculum on school violence. http://www.svrc.net.

Search Institute is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization whose mission is to advance the well-being of adolescents and children. At the heart of the institute's work is a framework of 40 developmental assets, such as positive experiences, relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities, that young people need to grow up to be healthy, caring, and responsible adults. 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415-1138; Phone: (612) 376-8955; Toll Free: (800) 888-7828; Fax: (612) 376-8956; E-mail: si@search-institute.org; http://www.search-institute.org

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United States Secret Service & United States Department of Education (May, 2008) Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: Information Students Learned May Prevent A Targeted Attack.http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/bystander_study.pdf

United States Postal Service Threat Assessment Team Task Force (1997). Threat assessment team guide.Washington, DC: U.S. Postal Service

Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007). Mass shootings at Virginia Tech, April 16, 2007: Report of the Review Panel presented to Governor Kaine, Commonwealth of Virginia. Richmond, VA: Authors.

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Youth and Violence Education/Intervention Resources of the Humanitarian Resource Institute provides information from the U.S. Departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services, and the National Mentoring Partnership. http://www.humanitarian.net/youth

Arts

Arts Education and School Improvement Resources for Local and State Leaders: This is a guide to identifying and securing U.S. Department of Education funding for arts education programs (both in-school and after-school). http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ArtsEd

Coming Up Taller describes how the arts and humanities are being used to help at-risk youth and includes profiles of over two hundred programs. www.cominguptaller.org

Living Literature/Colors United is an example of an art program that works to prevent school violence. This program incorporates education in literature, history, and the social sciences with artistic performance and related visual arts instruction. High schools with this program have seen decreases in truancy and violence, and participating students have a 100% graduation rate, with 90% going on to college. 9911 West Pico Boulevard, Suite 1495, Los Angeles, CA 90025; Phone:(310) 444-8357; www.indiewire.com/colors_straight_up/background.htm

YouthARTS Development Project Toolkit is a multi-media toolkit to help communities develop and evaluate sustainable arts programs for youth. To order, call (800) 321-4510 x. 241 or e-mail jewells@artsusa.org. Additional information about youth art initiatives can be found online at http://www.artsusa.org/education/youth.html.

Bias and Hate Crimes

Preventing Bias and Promoting Respect: Broadcast 5 in the six-part satellite broadcast series Partnerships for Preventing Violence focuses on preventing violence by improving inter-group relations. The broadcast features school and community programs that promote tolerance and respect for diversity, as well as organizational initiatives and policies that combat structural racism. Order forms for purchasing this broadcast are available online at http://www.preventioninstitute.org/order.html.

Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools defines and describes harassment and hate crimes, contains information about applicable laws, details positive steps that schools can take to prevent and respond to harassment, includes sample policies and procedures used by school districts, identifies resource materials, and provides stepby-step assistance for creating a safe and supportive school climate. The guide is published by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Association for Attorneys General, and the National School Boards Association, and is available by calling (800) 421-3481, or online at http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR.

Teaching Tolerance: is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center that produces and distributes free, high-quality anti-bias materials, and serves as a clearinghouse of information about anti-bias programs and activities being implemented in schools across the country. The Southern Poverty Law Center; 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36014; Phone: (334) 264-0286; www.tolerance.org

Community Involvement

Family Resource Coalition of America: The website includes guidelines for school districts on how to develop family and community involvement policies. http://www.frca.org

Peace by Piece: A Violence Prevention Guide for Communities: This $25 guide is based on the experiences of a myriad of exemplary programs from across the country that have all demonstrated effectiveness in reaching out to those most likely to become involved in violent behavior. Harvard School of Public Health, Violence Prevention Program; 1552 Tremont Street, Boston, MA, 02120; Phone: (617) 495-7777; Fax (617) 495-8543; E-mail: jguzman@hsph.harvard.edu; www.hsph.harvard.edu/php/VPP/cvpp.html

The School Development Program, developed by Dr. James Comer of the Yale Child Study Center at Yale University, is a systemic school reform strategy with the goal of mobilizing the entire community to support students' holistic development and to promote academic success. Student achievement in many Comer schools has risen significantly, often outpacing districtwide achievement. For more information, see School Power: Implications of an Intervention Project and Rallying the Whole Village: The Comer Process for Reforming Education by Dr. James Comer. http://www.med.yale.edu/comer/about/profiles.html#comer

Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation

Community Board Program (CBP) provides a full range of services to schools interested in establishing violence prevention programs. The program trains student mediators and promotes conciliation and mediation as effective strategies for resolving disputes without violence. CBP publishes peer mediation training manuals as well as conflict resolution curriculums for elementary and secondary schools.
www.reeusda.gov/pavnet/cp/cpcomboa.htm

Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings is available online at http://www.ncjrs.org or by calling the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse at (800) 638-8736.

Mediation Information and Resource Center provides a forum for people in conflict to meet and discuss methods of conflict resolution. http://www.mediate.com

National Center for Conflict Resolution Education provides information and resources for the development of conflict resolution programs in schools and juvenile justice systems.
http://www.nccre.org

Peace Center offers programs to help reduce the violence and conflicts in our homes and schools using a community-based and multicultural approach.
http://www.comcat.com/~peace/PeaceCenter.html

Mental Health

American Psychological Association Public Policy Office: This website contains a briefing paper on youth and violence, as well as additional information about the mental health concerns of adolescents. Phone: (202) 336-6062; Email: ppo@apa.org; http://www.apa.org/ppo

Health, Mental Health, and Safety in School: National Guidelines to Promote Student Health and Safety: This guide is currently being developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. For more information, email Lydia Bolonga, Program Manager athmhss@aap.org.

National Association for Social Workers: The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers,and to advance sound social policies. The NASW recently published *Violence in Schools Prevention is Key* and offers available resources for social workers at the following website at www.socialworkers.org. To read the above article

https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Advocates/2018-Aug-Sept-Issue/Violence-in-Schools Phone: 800-742-4089 email: membership@socialworkers.org.

Safe Place provides the community with extensive domestic violence and sexual assault intervention and prevention programs including a teen website, hotlines, emergency shelter,counseling, supportive housing, children's services, disability services, legal and hospital advocacy, and community education/training. P.O. Box 19454, Austin, TX 78760; Phone: (512) 385-5181; Fax: (512) 385-0662; E-mail: info@austin-safeplace.org

School Psychology Resources Online provides a wide range of information for parents and educators, including violence prevention curricula, safe school information from the National Association of School Psychologists, and guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics. http://www.schoolpsychology.net/p_02.html#vio

School Social Work Association of America: The School Social Work Association of America empowers school social workers and promotes the profession of school social work to enhance the social and emotional growth and academic outcomes of all students. The website offers great resources on Violence Prevention in Schools www.sswaa.org/violence-prevention-resources. Phone: 800-588-4149 email: contactus@sswaa.org.

Suicide Information and Education Center (SIEC): This website provides information about services, training programs, and school materials related to preventing and responding to suicides and other emotional trauma. http://www.siec.ca