

School Violence Prevention: Lessons from the front lines

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USA Today Cover Story on School Shooting: He Was an Average Kid!

- What do we know about school shooters and are they average kids?
- Is it appropriate to place a picture of a school shooter on the cover of a national publication?
- How big a problem is school violence?
- What do the parents of shooting victims call for?
- How do we make our schools safer?

School Violence: My thoughts

- First Congressional testimony in 1999
- Many reports on school shootings were done in late 1990's and early 2000's and many recommendations made
- Most recommendations were not implemented nor funded
- More studies needed and state school safety centers need to be created
- Students and parents can play a key role

Parents Of School Violence Victims Call For

- More religion
- Explanation of what school officials knew
- Reduced gun access to children
- Better parenting and supervision
- Improved mental health services
- Reduced violence in media
- School safety audits
- No notoriety for perpetrators

Questions

- Which one of the changes called for by parents to prevent school shootings do you think is the most important?
- In what countries do the most school shootings occur?
- Are you familiar with the Texas School Safety Center?
- Does Texas have an anonymous reporting line for students?

Foundations Started by Parents

- Safe and Sound Schools
www.safeandsoundschools.org
- Sandy Hook Promise
www.sandyhookpromise.org
- No Notoriety www.nonotoriety.com
- I Love U Guys www.iloveuguids.org
- Rachel's Challenge
www.rachelschallenge.org

Parkland, FL.

- Shooting at MSD on 2/14/18
- Seventeen were killed
- Student perpetrator had exhibited many warning signs
- Possible failure of many systems
- MSD students leading movement to make changes

Questions

- What do you think needs to be done to prevent school shootings?
- Do you support arming school staff?

Broward County School District

- Nations' 6th largest with a highly trained staff
- My recommendations at planning meeting
- Broward is accepting help from many sources
- Broward is supporting their staff and trying to limit their exposure
- Florida passed legislation addressing school violence

National Threat Assessment Center Report 3/2018

- NTAC which is part of U.S. Secret Service studied 28 mass incident attacks in 2017 where 3 or more people were harmed in public places
- 4 attacks were at school (2 at an elementary, 1 at a high school and 1 at a university)

National Threat Assessment Center Report 3/2018

- Key findings were that 82% used a firearm over 1/2 had criminal charges and 2/3 had mental health problems
- Over 1/2 had a personal grievance
- 29% died by suicide on the scene or shortly after
- 3/4 had concerning communication and/or elicited concern prior to the attack

School Shooters: Murder Suicide Is Primary

- Violence is premeditated/predatory
- “If I am to die then it is virtuous that they do too”
The perversion of virtue by T. Joiner (2014,
Oxford press)
- Murder suicide 4 types interpersonal virtue
- Mercy (people you care for will suffer badly after
your suicide and their death will bring a quick
end to an ongoing ordeal).

Perversion of Virtue: Mercy or Justice Most Common

- Justice (“soon I will be dead but it is not fair that those who deeply wronged me go unpunished”)
- Cho’s statements that rich kids are deceitful charlatans engaged in debauchery. He stated his evil plan was actually good!

Perversion of Virtue

- Glory example Eric Harris said, " people will die because of me and this day will be remembered forever"!
- Duty to spare others an obligation that would be inherited. A man kills his wife as she can not take care of herself without him.

NTAC Recommendations for Schools

- Foster climate of trust and respect
- Build relationships
- Promote communication
- Identify concerning behaviors
- Maintain a threat assessment team
- Reinforce clear policies
- Provide resources to manage concerning students

NTAC Recommendations for Schools

- Promote information sharing between schools and community stakeholders (Arapahoe H.S. Shooting Report)
- Liaison with law enforcement and require constant training with stakeholders
- What is missing from this list that is being promoted?

NTAC Recommendations for Schools: What is missing?

- NTAC recommendations nor any professional school or law enforcement associations have endorsed arming teachers
- Texas Guardian program—my thoughts 1/5 of Texas districts have provisions to allow campus carry
- Approximately 22 states have some provision to allow arming teachers

Realengo, Brazil

- Perpetrator returned to his previous middle school killing 12 and wounding many others
- He appeared to be imitating the VA Tech shooter
- He died by suicide at the school
- My consultation and key responses from the Principal Luis

Arapahoe H.S. Shooting

12/13/13 Claire Davis Killed

- Her parents agreed not to sue the school if information is provided about what the school knew about KP, the perpetrator
- Arapahoe Sheriff Report critical of the school which had undeniable evidence of KP's threat to kill the debate coach but KP was not suspended
- School psychologist and local mental health officials both assessed him at low risk

Arapahoe Continued

- County Prosecutor concluded no criminal liability for school
- Report says debate coach feared for his life and almost resigned and contained numerous examples of KP angry outbursts
- School security guard held a press conference about lax security at the school

Arapahoe HS 2016 Report

- Failure of information sharing
- Failure of threat assessment as many missed opportunities to intervene
- As many as ten students knew of perpetrator's anger and gun possession only one reported concern to counselor and none reported to Safe2Tell
- Failure of system thinking as superintendent cited the challenge of connecting isolated incidents

Arapahoe H.S. Shooting

- Colorado passed Claire Davis Safety Act in 2015 designed to make public schools more liable for student safety
- AHS and my consultation with crisis team
- Memorial issues at AHS
- FERPA does not prevent record sharing in emergency situations

Key Points for Schools

- Is the authority established to conduct a threat inquiry
- Is a multi-disciplinary team developed and trained to assess threats
- Are interagency relationships and partnerships with agencies established to respond to a threat
- Are warning signs and reporting procedures clarified and provided to staff , students, and parents

Active Shooter Incidents FBI Study 2000-2013

- 160 Incidents total (not gang or drug related) actively trying to kill in a confined and populated area
- 39 Incidents were at school
- 27 Incidents K to 12 schools (52 fatalities)
- 12 Incidents Higher Education (60 fatalities)

FBI Data Review 2005-2010

Homicides of 5 to 18 year olds

- 9847 homicides in residences
- 4455 homicides on the street
- 1209 homicides in parking lots
- 629 homicides outdoors
- 522 homicides in a restaurant or bar
- 492 homicides in a store

NASP May Communique 2015

- School year 2010-2011 there were 11 homicides at school
- Nearly 50 million children attend school
- Chances of being a homicide victim at school are about 1 in 4.5 million
- Car accident deaths for that same year were 2892 with chances of death about 1 in 20,000

Every Town USA

- 2016-17 school year there were 14 shootings at school resulting in death or injury
- www.everytown.org
- Total K-12 schools in U.S 129,189
- We do not have the data for 2017-2018 school year but media reports make us believe a school shooting is probable! It is a possibility.

Kids and Gun Deaths

- 1300 killed by a gun each year (Journal of Pediatrics June 2017)
- Among 23 richest countries the U.S. accounts for 91% of firearm deaths for children under 14 (Los Angeles Times July 2017)
- 26,000 American children died a gun death between 1970 and 1999 (Washington Post April 2018)

Kids and Guns

- Dickey Amendment passed 20 years ago forbids CDC from studying gun violence
- No Federal Child Access Prevention Laws (CAP) exist
- CAP in place for 27 states and if prosecuted it is only a misdemeanor
- More information at www.childrensdefensefund.org

School Shooters: (2015)

Why Kids Kill: (2009)

Peter Langman

- Based on his extensive study of school shooters their rampage acts best understood as a result of their personalities and life history
- Hypothesized there are three types of shooters

Types of Shooters

- Psychopathic—narcissistic without a conscience—aspiring to be godlike—paranoid, sadistic with antisocial personality traits
- Psychotic—avoidant, schizotypal and dependent personality traits—paranoid delusions, auditory hallucinations—depressed and full of rage

Columbine: Thirteen Murdered and Twenty Four Injured



Eric Harris

- “If we have figured out the art of time bombs before hand, we will set hundreds of them around houses, roads, bridges, buildings and gas stations.”
- “it’ll be like the LA riots, the oklahoma bombing, WWII, vietnam, duke and doom all mixed together. Maybe we will even start a little rebellion or revolution to f* things up as much as we can. I want to leave a lasting impression on the world.”

Eric Harris

- Accomplished liar as he knew how to say what adults wanted to hear and his Juvenile Diversion program after van break in was ended early and counselor commented on his bright future
- School projects, violent website and violent interests/ comments should have prompted extreme concern
- Rejection from Marines may have been a precipitating event

Heath High School

- Student opened fire on prayer group killing 3 and wounding 5



Michael Carneal: Perpetrator

- Example of psychotic type
- Many examples of paranoid behavior , delusions and hallucinations
- Pleaded guilty in adult court but later asked for a new trial based on his mental illness
- He cited that he saw, smelled and tasted things that were not there. His lawyers argued that it took years for medication to reduce his psychotic symptoms
- Had talked for over a year about shooting up the school, showed students a gun prior and warned students not to be at school

Third Type

- Traumatized Shooters—suffered emotional and physical abuse at home—were sexually abused—lived with ongoing stress and losses—parents had substance abuse problems--frequent moves—lost parent to separation, jail and death—trauma history resulted in suicidal thoughts
- Debate about Dylan Klebold-His mother has written a book

Family/Trauma History of Jeff Weise Red Lake Perpetrator

- Parents separated when young
- Lived with mom and her boyfriend
- Severely disciplined (locked in closet)
- Father died by suicide when Jeff was 8 (standoff with tribal police)
- Mother in car accident suffered brain injury and in nursing home
- Moved frequently

Weise History

- Bullied and harassed at school
- Black-garbed loner
- Described as “floating alone”
- Introvert at school
- Outspoken on internet
- Posted often on neo-Nazi web-site
- Created violent animated story on internet about school shootings and suicide

Weise History Continued

- Posted entries against racial mixing
- 2003-2004 told other Red Lake students he was going to shoot up school and was questioned and released by police
- 2004-2005
 - stopped attending school twice due to depression and harassment
 - Expelled for unspecified reasons
 - Suicide attempt summer-2004
 - Under psychiatrist's care
 - Prozac doubled 2/05
 - Viewed film "Elephant" frequently in days before shooting

Posting from the shooter

“Most people have never dealt with people who have faced the kind of pain that makes you physically sick at times, makes you so depressed you can’t function, makes you so sad and overwhelmed with grief that eating a bullet or sticking your head in a noose seems welcoming.”

Jeff Weise

Federal Report on Red Lake Shooting Found:

- 39 students knew of his violent plans
- 5 students communicated via internet with the perpetrator about the planned violence daily
- 8 teens were part of the Elephant Group that watched the movie repeatedly

Why don't students tell adults about violent threats?



The "Conspiracy of Silence"!

Langman Addressed the Argument that Psychiatric Medications Cause School Shootings

- Of 24 school shooters studied only 2 were on psychiatric medications at the time of the attack (E. Harris and J. Weise)
- No evidence that their medications contributed to mania, agitation or psychosis
- In the last twenty years violent crime and homicide by youth has decreased at the same time that there has been a dramatic increase in psychiatric medications

Violence Key Points

- Increase in violent incidents around the world intended to kill 2 or more people
- Warning signs in violent fantasies, mental illness, distorted sense of what is just and severe interpersonal conflicts
- Signs of trouble include aggression, interest in obtaining guns, collecting posters of school shooters and being a social loner
- Mass murderers are almost always suicidal

Suggestions to Prevent School Shootings

- Limit adolescent privacy
- Don't lie to protect your child
- Follow through with due process
- Pay attention to what the schools says and seek help
- Eliminate easy access to guns
- Take threats seriously

More Suggestions

- Recognize anyone can stop a school shooting
- Recognize rehearsal and planning of attacks
- Physical security alone is not the answer
- Implement suicide and bullying prevention programs
- Good communication and positive culture important at school
- Implement anonymous tip lines

More Suggestions

- Limit media violence exposure
- Arm teachers not with guns but with mental health support services and smaller classes
- Limit access to school buildings and implement meet and greet procedures
- Increase student participation and utilize pledges and surveys

More Suggestions

- Increase mental health services at school and in the community
- Physical security alone is not the answer
- The 4th R is relationships and it is important to know all students well and to have all students connected to their school
- The school should be place that students like and do not want to blow up!

Question....

“My child is fascinated by violent video games and plays them for hours....should I be worried?”



Safe School Initiative

- Report on the Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools
- U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center
- Departments of Education and Justice

Secret Service Report:

- Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely impulsive and are typically the end result of an understandable and discernible process.
- Prior to most incidents, the attacker told someone about his idea or plan but did not threaten the target directly.
- There is no accurate or useful profile for “the school shooter.”
- Positive connections at school are preventative

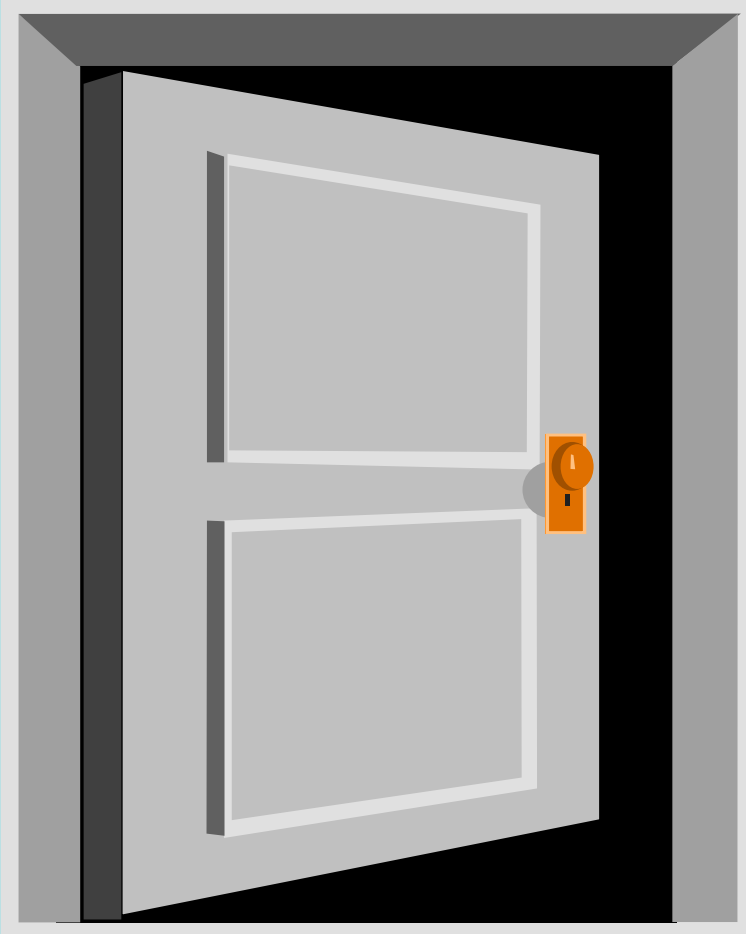
Secret Service Report:

- Most attackers had previously used guns and had access to them.
- Most shooting incidents were not resolved by law enforcement
- Majority of shooters were suicidal and the victims of bullying
- In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
- One half the attackers had more than one target

Prior Knowledge of School Violence Study

- 81% of time at least one person had prior knowledge of planned attack and 59% of time more than one person had knowledge
- Only 4% with prior knowledge tried to dissuade the attacker
- Many with prior knowledge did not believe it could happen
- School connections effected whether or not adults were told (examples)

School Safety Examples



- Create safety task force and include students
- Survey staff and students
- Teach students to deescalate fights
- Use student safety and anti-bullying pledges
- Floor plan exercise
- Sidney, NY example
- CFISD The Force

U.S.D.O.E. Policy Change

- 2013 recommended more than “lockdowns”
- Introduced phrase run, hide or fight
- Majority of school districts now have active shooter drills
- Realistic drills may scare students
- Pre and post tests needed and knowledge of crisis history

A.L.I.C.E. Program

www.alicetraining.com

- School safety program that originated in Burleson, TX designed by SRO's
- Each letter stands for a key component part of the program
- How it is presented is important
- I have concerns about C for counter attack
- Concerns about developmental level of students and some of the strategies

Recommendations: K.Trump

www.schoolsecurity.org

- Threats are manageable and critical strategies and expertise are needed by schools, police and parents
- Trusting/connected school climate needed for early warning and prevention
- Adults must understand how students use social media
- Schools need threat assessment teams and protocols and communities need an easy way for students to report threats

Crisis Drills

- How realistic should they be?
- Schools should be careful not to scare students with realistic drills with gunfire and simulation
- Some states require active shooter drills
- Lets do a pre test and a post test to see if staff and students feel safer after drills
- Drills may cause trauma history issues for students and staff to surface

Wilk v St. Vrain Schools U.S District Court CO. 2015

- A high school student B bragged to students about violent interests but denied he would really hurt anyone but his friend S might as he is planning something serious
- The threat is reported to administration and taken seriously with police notified
- Local police interview both students separately

Case Continued

- S denies ever saying anything about school violence and remarks-I do not know why my friend B threw me under the bus?
- B recants his story and says he was joking about S planning violence
- The police search the home of S and there are no working weapons only replicas
- His Facebook page had over 200 photos and a few have violent themes and he is pictured with re-enactment rifles

Case Continued

- School records indicate a few minor disciplines years ago
- He has turned in several papers about the Nazism received good grades
- S likes to draw and drawings often have violent themes and he reads fictional books about serial killers
- He is almost an Eagle Scout

Case Continued

- The police concluded their investigation and determined the threat was unfounded
- The school convened its own threat assessment team composed of the principal, teachers and the safety director
- In an interview only with the Principal, S repeated again that he did not make the threat and provided a written statement
- Does this sound like a substantial threat?

Case Continued

- The principal did not share the results of the police investigation with the team or the fact that B recanted his statement
- The counselor who knew S and talked with him on several occasions was not included in the threat assessment
- S was expelled and the school refused to consider the results of a private evaluation
- Do you think the expulsion was warranted?

Questions

- Do you think a school should ever be torn down after a school shooting? Has this ever been done?
- Schools have increasingly closed for days after a school shooting (for example MSD in Parkland closed for a week) Do you think that is a good idea?

Wilk Case Outcome

- Civil Action No. 1:15-CV-01925-RPM
- Court concluded that in this day and age that the district had reason to fear school violence and acted reasonably in expelling the student
- Comments?

Risk Factors of Violence (APA)

- Child abuse
- Ineffective parenting
- Violence in the home
- Media violence
- Poverty
- Rejection/humiliation/prejudice
- Substance abuse
- Gun access

What is Threat Assessment?

- Threat assessment is a process of evaluating the risk of violence posed by someone who has communicated an intent to harm someone.
- Threat assessment considers the context and circumstances surrounding a threat in order to uncover any evidence that indicates the threat is likely to be carried out.
- Threat assessment includes interventions designed to manage and reduce the risk of violence.

School Example

- Mrs. Jones a parent calls transportation to report that her daughter Julie received an e-mail from Ben a student which stated he is going to shoot kids on the middle school bus tomorrow. Mrs. Jones is concerned about her daughter's safety. What should you do as your first step? Who needs to get involved?

Case example continued

- The suspected perpetrator a 7th grade boy is now at school and you are about to interview him
- What information from his background and school records might be helpful?
- What approach might you take and what are the key questions you will ask?

Continued

- The suspected perpetrator readily admits that he had intended to shoot everyone on the bus as he has been the victim of repeated bullying and in fact had his thumb broken by another student named John on the bus last week
- What is your next step and how could you reduce the stressors for this student?

Parent information

- The father of the suspected perpetrator indicates that he has a number of guns at home and they are unlocked and that his son is experienced with guns---what do you recommend?
- The father also indicates that his son has not been the same since his mother died last spring and that the father has to work in the evening and his son is unsupervised

Continued

- Rumors are flying around the school about the planned violence on the bus
- John's mother has called as she has heard that her son was the primary intended victim
- What steps do you take to control rumors and what if any information do you provide to faculty, parents and students?

Who Conducts Threat Assessment?

- A **multidisciplinary team** consisting of respected members of the faculty or administration.
- Campus officer or local L.E.
- A mental health professional- psychologist, social worker, or counselor
- Teacher(s) who know student in question

U.S. Secret Service

What is Involved in a School Threat Assessment Process?

1. **Identification** of threats made by students.
2. **Evaluation** of seriousness of threat and danger it poses to others, recognizing that all threats are not the same (e.g., water guns are not dangerous).
3. **Intervention** to reduce risk of violence.
4. **Follow-up** to assess intervention results.

What is a Threat?

A threat is an expression of intent to harm someone.

- Threats may be verbal, written, artistic or gestured.
- Threats may be direct or indirect, and need not be communicated to the intended victim or victims. (“I’m going to get him.”)
- Weapon possession is presumed to be a threat unless circumstances clearly indicate otherwise. (“I forgot my knife was in my backpack.”)
- When in doubt, assume it is a threat.

Case Example: Snohomish WA

- Late April a 9th grade girl with no history of behavioral issues at school threatens to stab a friend's boyfriend
- Two students report this to the school counselor
- Her counselor is aware that the student has been receiving private counseling for depression and suicidal thoughts

Case Continued

- Student is emergency expelled and school requires psychiatric treatment and determination by outside professional of safety before she can return
- Student is hospitalized for a week and her psychiatrist states in writing that she is safe to return to school, compliant with medication and continues in therapy at a local clinic
- A transition meeting is held at school and attended by the student and her mother

Case Continued

- No significant behavioral issues are noted before school is out but cutting behavior is suspected
- Counselor calls mom who says her daughter cut legs while shaving
- Next fall meeting is held the third week of school 9/22 with student and her mother. Mom reports daughter still in therapy and doing better, depression has lifted and is using skills she is learning

Case Continued

- Teachers share academic concerns as she not working as hard and not dressing out every day for PE
- One teacher reports she has made a student feel uncomfortable with patting and another teacher reports a student said she talks about drugs-Another teacher reports that the student did a paper on a serial killer while another teacher shares a well done essay on managing stress

Case Continued

- October 25th student brings two knives to school and waits in bathroom stall listening to violent music while bathroom mostly clears out
- Two girls who she does not know are at the mirror and she jumps out stabbing both and one of them severely but thankfully the victims survive

Case Continued

- The perpetrator will spend a minimum of 13 years in jail
- Do you think the violence could have been predicted/prevented by the school?
- Is the law suit against the school warranted?
- How good are we are predicting who will actually carry out a threat of violence?

Structured Assessment of Violent Risk Youth (SAVRY)

- Risk viewed as “dynamic” subject to change not just as “static”
- Improvement noted in clinicians’ ability to distinguish violent individuals, now better than chance accuracy
- Previous assessment has been unstructured purely “clinical”

SAVRY

- Systematic risk assessment with checklist of risk factors related to violence for 12 to 18 year olds
- Systematic risk assessments perform better than unstructured ones
- Dynamic risk factors especially significant for adolescents
- SAVRY has 4 domains and 30 items all items rated low medium or high

SAVRY Domains

- Historical risk factors such as history of violence, early initiation of violence, past supervision failure, history of NSSI or suicide attempts, exposure to violence in home, childhood maltreatment, parental criminality, early caregiver disruption, and poor school achievement

SAVRY Domains

- Social/Contextual risk factors such as peer delinquency, peer rejection, stress and poor coping, poor parental management, lack of personal/social support and community disorganization

SAVRY Domains

- Individual/Clinical Risk factors such as negative attitudes, risk taking/impulsivity, substance abuse, anger problems, low empathy/remorse, ADHD, poor compliance and low interest/commitment to school

SAVRY Domains

- Protective factors such as pro-social involvement, strong social support, strong attachment bonds, positive attitude towards intervention and authority, strong commitment to school and resilient personality traits
- Available from Psychological Assessment Resources www.4parinc.com

Role of Mental Health

- Assess mental state and need for treatment similar to suicide assessment
- Parent permission not needed when threat to self or others but should notify them
- Consider info from previous evaluation but may not address current concerns
- Develop threat reduction plan and understanding of reasons behind the threat

MH Assessment Report

- Identifying information
- Referral is not for eligibility
- Findings about student's mental state, school and family history, how they present, stress and conflict
- Conclusions, summary, treatment recommendations for a safety plan

Suspected Perpetrator

- Review school discipline records
- History of depression, aggression or delinquency
- Exposure to violence
- Current stress
- Peer relations
- Coping mechanisms and level of support

Transient Threats

- No lasting intent to harm someone “heat of the moment” ...feelings dissipate
- It's clear threat is over and includes and explanation or apology
- No protective action is required but discipline may be severe (bomb threat made as a joke)
- Can be quickly and easily resolved
- What are some examples of transient threats you have seen?

Elements of Substantial Threat

- Expresses continued intent to harm
- Repeats over time and shares with others
- Threats contain specific details
- Physical evidence of planning
- Involves using a weapon
- There is a history or a grudge

Recent Consultation

- Middle school student with history of aggression at 3 previous schools
- Involved in fight at new school
- Points his binder at a teacher and acts like it is a gun and pretends to shoot her
- Tells students he's going to wear camouflage clothing on Monday and bring a gun to school and shoot people

Continued

- When questioned about these behaviors he expressed no remorse and shared his grandfather a mass murderer is his hero
- He knows the other students think he is mean and is proud of that
- He lives with Dad and expressed hatred for his mom and his sister
- Dad confirmed guns in the home and refused to lock them up
- School considering expulsion

Primary Purpose of a Student Interview

- Interview tone should be professional, neutral, and non-confrontational.
- Interview may have these effects:
 - send the message that the student's behavior has been noticed and caused concern
 - gives student chance to tell their personal story and be heard
 - provides opportunity to reassess and redirect their behavior

Parent Interview

- Question parent's knowledge of the threat
- Determine current stressors, family relationships, and childhood history
- Ask about recent behavior, mental health, school adjustment, peer relations and bullying
- Gather history of aggressive/ delinquent behavior and exposure to violence
- Ask about access to and/or interest in weapons
- Determine parent's willingness to assist in a safety plan and obtain needed releases
- Observe parent attitude toward school and Law enforcement

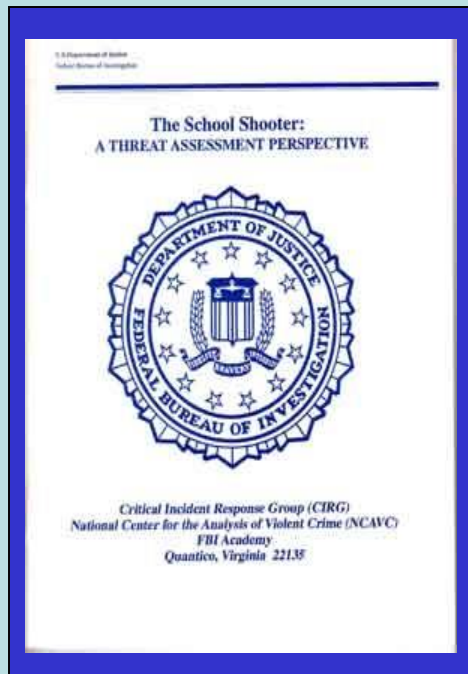
Questions

- Does your school have a threat assessment team?
- How often is school safety discussed in faculty meetings?
- Is information provided to parents about schools and is their input welcome?

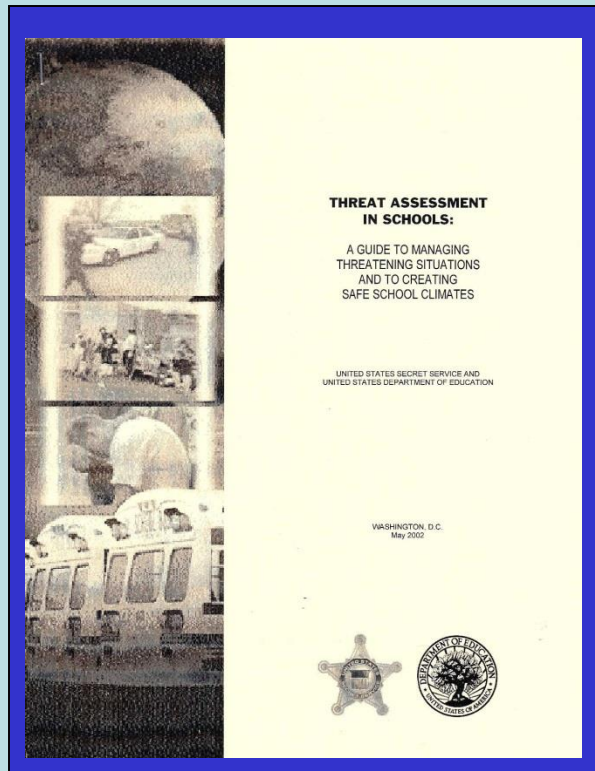
FBI Recommends Threat Assessment Approach

“Although the risk of an actual shooting incident at any one school is very low, threats of violence are potentially a problem at any school. Once a threat is made, having a fair, rational, and standardized method of evaluating and responding to threats is critically important.”

(FBI report)



US Secret Service/ US Department of Education Recommendations for Threat Assessment



- Create a planning team to develop a threat assessment process.
- Identify roles for campus personnel.
- Clarify role of law enforcement.
- Conduct threat assessments of students who make threats of violence.



Key Points About Threat Assessment

- Threat assessment stresses the examination of specific behaviors directly linked to committing a violent act
- Threat assessment aims to determine how serious the threat is and then what should be done about it.
- Threat assessment is ultimately concerned with whether the student **poses** a threat, not whether the student made a threat
- When in doubt as to whether the student's actions constitute a threat, investigate the behavior as a threat



6 Principles of Threat Assessment

1. Targeted violence is the result of an understandable process, not a random or spontaneous act.
2. Consider the interaction of person, situation, setting, & target.
3. Maintain an investigative, skeptical mindset.
4. Focus on facts and behaviors, not traits.
5. Use information from all possible sources.
6. ***Making*** a threat is not the same as ***posing*** a threat. Ask “Is this student on a path toward an attack?”



Secret Service Threat Assessment Inquiry

1. Gather facts about the student, the situation, and possibly the targets
2. Obtain information about the student
 - Background & present situation
 - Behaviors, motives, target selection
 - Campus information
 - Collateral Interviews
 - Parent/Guardian Interviews
 - Interview with Student of Concern



11 Key Questions

1. What are the student's motives or goals?
2. Any communications of intent to attack?
3. Any inappropriate interest in other attacks, weapons, or mass violence?
4. Any attack-related behaviors? Making a plan, acquiring weapons, casing sites, etc.
5. Does student have capacity to attack?



11 Key Questions (cont.)

6. Is there hopelessness or despair?
7. Any trusting relationship with an adult?
8. Is violence regarded as way to solve a problem? Any peer influences?
9. Are student's words consistent with actions?
10. Are others concerned about student?
11. What circumstances might trigger violence?

No Magic Formula or Crystal Ball

There is no formula, prescription, or checklist that will predict or prevent all violent acts. School authorities must make reasoned judgments based on the facts of each individual situation, and monitor situations over time.

“Prediction is really hard—especially if you are talking about the future”

Yogi Berra



Confidentiality has Limits

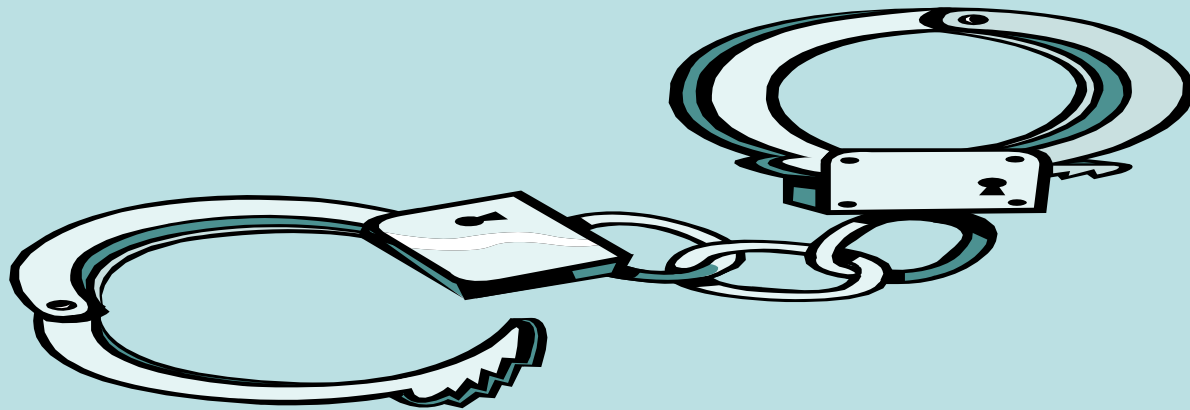
- The Family Education Records Privacy Act (FERPA) applies to educational records, not all information about a student.
- Even information covered by FERPA can be disclosed in a ***health or safety emergency*** situation:

“An educational agency or institution may disclose personally identifiable information from a school record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.”

Sec 99.36 (a)

Communication between police and school officials is essential!

Springfield, Oregon school shooting committed by a student arrested at school with guns the previous day but released from police custody.



Components and Tasks for Creating a Safe/Connected School Climate

- Assessment of the emotional climate.
- Emphasis on the importance of listening to students.
- Adoption of a strong, but caring stance against the “**code of silence**”.
- Prevention and intervention in bullying.
- Involvement of the school community in planning, creating, and sustaining a culture of safety and respect.
- Development of trusting relationships between each student and at least one staff member.
- Creation of mechanisms for developing and sustaining a safe campus

In Conclusion

School safety planning is a local decision and the best decisions are made by a team

Student and community input should be encouraged

Safety planning is an ongoing/evolving process

Craig Scott's quote, "In our schools we must reach the unreachable"!

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