

**Before the Gunman Arrives:
 School Threat Assessment**

**National School Safety Conference
 New Orleans
 July 28, 2021**

**Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.
 dcornell@schoolta.com**



1



Dewey G. Cornell, Ph. D.

- Holds the Virgil Ward Chair as Professor of Education in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Virginia.
- Director of the UVA Youth Violence Project

Dr. Cornell became interested in the prevention of youth violence based on his experiences as a forensic clinical psychologist evaluating and treating violent offenders in the 1980s. He led the development of threat assessment guidelines for schools in 2001. Dr. Cornell discloses that he has a financial interest in the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG.)

2

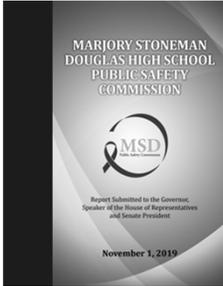
Topics

1. Prevention
2. School Safety
3. Threat Assessment
4. CSTAG Model
5. Training & Implementation

3

17 killed in mass shooting at high school in Parkland, Florida

Nikolas Cruz, 19, a former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, is charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder.

4

Santa Fe High School had a shooting plan, armed officers and practice. Ten people still died.

The southeast Texas school that was the site of Friday's mass shooting had won a statewide award for its safety plan and recently had to activate it during a false alarm about an active shooter. Its plan to arm teachers hadn't been implemented yet.

BY TODD C. FRANKEL, BERTINEY MARTIN, TIM CRAIG AND CHRISTIAN DAVENPORT, THE WASHINGTON POST

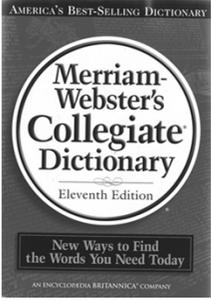


Location	Date	Deaths
University of Texas	Apr. 9, 1996	14
Virginia Tech	April 16, 2007	32
Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School	Apr. 14, 2018	17
Santa Fe High School	May 18, 2018	10
Columbine High School	April 20, 1999	13
Umpqua Community College	Oct. 1, 2015	10
Sandy Hook Elementary School	Dec. 14, 2012	26

Santa Fe school shooting one of America's deadliest

5

**Prevention means
 "to keep something from happening"**



6

Crisis response is not prevention.



A crisis occurs when prevention has failed.

7

You don't prevent forest fires by waiting until the trees are blazing.



8

You don't prevent forest fires by waiting until the trees are blazing.



<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/09/748836909/careful-with-those-birthday-candles-smokey-beloved-bear-turns-75>

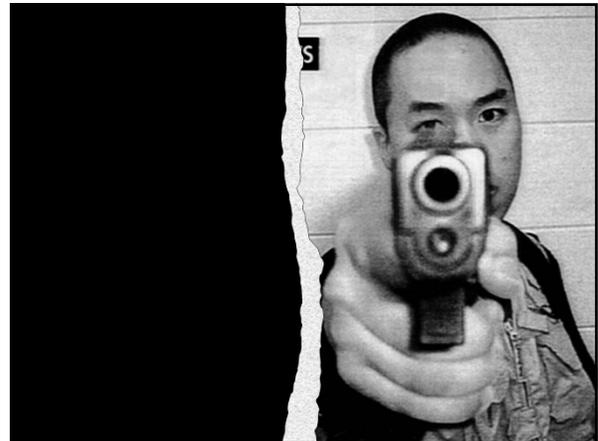
9

The nationwide movement to place threat assessment teams in schools is a critical shift toward prevention.



10

**Warning:
Photo of gunman**



11

12



13



14



15

**Shootings seem unpredictable?
Prevention does not require
prediction!**



**House Education and Labor Committee
Hearing on Campus Safety
May 15, 2007**

16

**Prevention does not
require prediction.**



We cannot predict who will have an accident, but safety regulations make safer roads, cars, and drivers.

Universal, primary, or tier 1 prevention

17

**Prevention can reduce
risk factors.**



We cannot predict who will get cancer, but we can identify risk and protective factors that reduce cancer rates dramatically.

Selected, secondary, or tier 2 prevention

18

Prevention can prevent deterioration.

Student accused of threat 'at bottom of an emotional abyss'



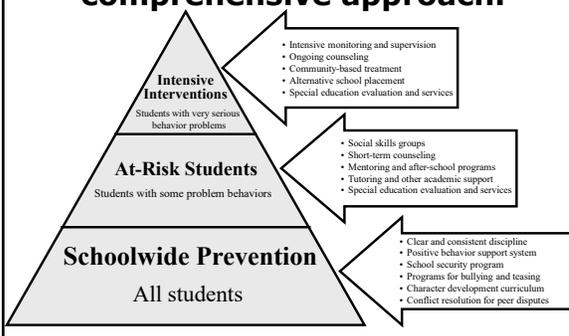
© 2014 Associated Press. All rights reserved. Photo by AP/Wide World

We can intervene to resolve problem situations before they deteriorate into violence.

Intensive, tertiary, or tier 3 prevention

19

Threat assessment is part of a comprehensive approach.



- Intensive Interventions**
 - Intensive monitoring and supervision
 - Ongoing counseling
 - Community-based treatment
 - Alternative school placement
 - Special education evaluation and services
- At-Risk Students**
 - Social skills groups
 - Short-term counseling
 - Mentoring and after-school programs
 - Tutoring and other academic support
 - Special education evaluation and services
- Schoolwide Prevention**
 - Clear and consistent discipline
 - Positive behavior support system
 - School security program
 - Programs for bullying and teasing
 - Character development curriculum
 - Conflict resolution for peer disputes

20

Topics

1. Prevention
2. School Safety
3. Threat Assessment
4. CSTAG Model
5. Training & Implementation

21

Stereotype of the school shooting perpetrator



- White males
- Victims of bullying
- Depressed/suicidal
- Seeking infamy
- Preoccupied with violence

22

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MMWR

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
 Weekly / Vol. 68 / No. 3
 January 25, 2019

Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides — United States, 1994–2018

Kristin M. Holland, PhD¹; Jeffrey E. Hall, PhD²; Jing Wang, MD³; Elizabeth M. Gayle, MPH⁴; Linda L. Johnson⁵; Daniel Shelby¹; Thomas R. Simon, PhD¹; School-Associated Violent Deaths Study Group¹

431 incidents with a youth homicide at school over 25 years

23

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

MMWR

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
 January 25, 2019

Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides — United States, 1994–2018

Kristin M. Holland, PhD¹; Jeffrey E. Hall, PhD²; Jing Wang, MD³; Elizabeth M. Gayle, MPH⁴; Linda L. Johnson⁵; Daniel Shelby¹; Thomas R. Simon, PhD¹; School-Associated Violent Deaths Study Group¹

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of youth homicides occur at school?

A) 50%
B) 10%
C) 2%

Youth means school-age, 5-18
School includes travel to and from school.

24

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides —
United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of youth homicides occur at school?

- A) 50%
- B) 10%
- ✓ C) 2%

Youth means school-age, 5-18
School includes travel to and from school.

25

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides —
United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of victims were killed on-campus?

- A) 98%
- B) 78%
- C) 58%

Off-campus includes travel to and from school
or attending off-campus school event.

26

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides —
United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of victims were killed on-campus?

- A) 98%
- B) 78%
- ✓ C) 58%

Off-campus includes travel to and from school
or attending off-campus school event.

27

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides —
United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of youth homicide incidents involve a single victim?

- A) 91%
- B) 51%
- C) 11%

28

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides —
United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of youth homicide incidents involve a single victim?

- ✓ A) 91%
- B) 51%
- C) 11%

29

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides —
United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of perpetrators are students?

- A) 93%
- B) 73%
- C) 53%

30

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides — United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What percentage of perpetrators are students?

- A) 93%
- B) 73%
- ✓ C) 53%

31

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides — United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What was the most common motive for the perpetrator?

- A) Dating conflict
- B) Brawl/street fight
- C) Gang activity

32

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides — United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

What was the most common motive for the perpetrator?

- A) Dating conflict
- B) Brawl/street fight
- ✓ C) Gang activity

33

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
January 25, 2011
Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides — United States, 1994–2010

431 Youth Homicide Incidents at School

There is no single profile of a school homicide.

Cases differ widely in circumstances, demographics, and motive.

34

School Safety Fears

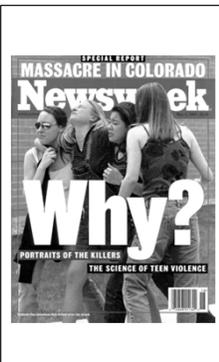
School shootings are so traumatic that they skew perceptions of school safety and convince the public and policymakers that there are dramatic needs for security measures.



35

Why Fear of School Violence Matters

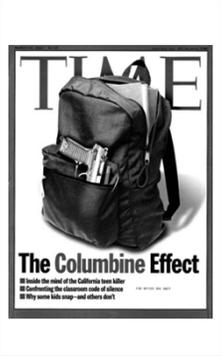
1. School Suspensions
2. School Fortification



36

The Expansion of Zero Tolerance

- From No Guns to
- No Toy Guns
- No Nail clippers
- No Plastic utensils
- No Finger-pointing
- No Jokes
- No Drawings
- No Rubber band shooting
- No Accidental violations



TIME
The Columbine Effect
 Inside the mind of the Columbine teen killer
 Confronting the classroom code of silence
 Why more kids bring—and others fear

37

Zero Tolerance Suspensions



Boy who held pencil like gun suspended
 School has "zero tolerance" weapons policy
 Updated: Thursday, 06 May 2013, 3:54 PM EDT
 Published: Monday, 06 May 2013, 5:33 PM EDT
 Anne McNamara
 SUFFOLK, Va. (WAVY) - A Suffolk school suspended a second grader for pointing a pencil at another student and making gun noises.
 Seven-year-old Christopher Marshall says he was playing with another student in class Friday, when the teacher at Driver Elementary asked them to stop pointing pencils at each other.
 "When I asked him about it, he said, 'Well I was being a Marine and the other guy was being a bad guy,'" said Paul Marshall, the boy's father. "It's as simple as that."

38

Zero Tolerance Suspensions



9-year-old with toy gun



12-year-old doodler

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/desk-doodling-toy-gun-incidents-clear-educators-lack-common-sense-article-1.194105>

39

August 9, 2006
Zero Tolerance Policies Are Not as Effective as Thought in Reducing Violence and Promoting Learning in School, Says APA Task Force
Research finds that mandatory discipline can actually increase bad behavior and drop out rates in middle and secondary students



40

Suspension Practices

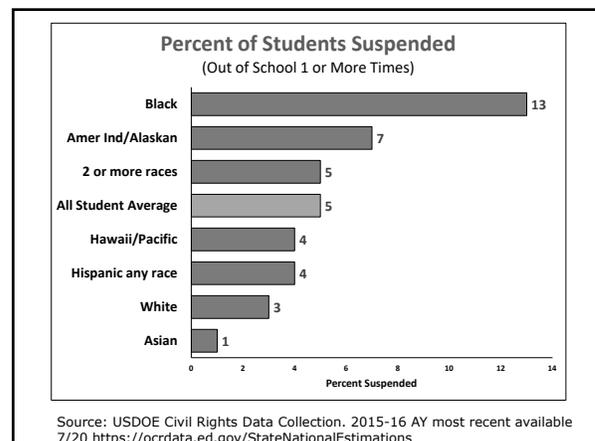
Suspension is a practice that has more negative than positive effects on students:

- Fall behind in their classes
- Feel alienated and rejected
- Continue to misbehave and be suspended
- Drop out of school
- Juvenile court involvement

The school-to-prison pipeline



41



42

Threat assessment is an alternative to zero tolerance

- Zero tolerance uses punitive discipline for all students regardless of the circumstances or the seriousness of their behavior.
- Threat assessment considers the context and content of the behavior. The student's intentions matter.

43

Fear of School Violence Drives New School Security Industry

Newtown Rampage Spurs \$5 Billion School Security Spending



<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-11-14/schools-boosting-security-spending-after-newtown-massacre>

44

Bullet-Proof Entrances



45

Metal Detectors in Schools



46

Safe Rooms



Students practice entering a bulletproof storm shelter designed by Shelter-in-Place.
SHELTER-IN-PLACE

<https://www.newsweek.com/oklahoma-schools-storm-shelters-shooting-824328>

47



Fruitport designs new \$48M high school with places to hide from mass shooters

Fruitport's \$48M high school includes curved hallways and half walls to protect students, teachers, and staff.

<https://www.wzwm13.com/article/news/education/fruitport-designs-new-48m-high-school-with-places-to-hide-from-mass-shooters/69-6e8154f-76a6-45bd-87c5-e3c60a0dce2f>

48

We should prevent shootings rather than simply prepare for them.

49

Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology
2008, Vol. 76, No. 4, 688–698
Copyright 2008 by the American Psychological Association, 0893-3200/08/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0013114

The Effects of School-Based Intervention Programs on Aggressive Behavior: A Meta-Analysis

Sandra Jo Wilson and Mark W. Lipsey
Vanderbilt University

James H. Derran
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Research on the effectiveness of school-based programs for preventing or reducing aggressive behavior was synthesized with a meta-analysis. Changes in aggressive behavior between pretest and posttest were analyzed for developmental patterns and characteristics associated with differential effects. Control groups showed little change in aggressive behavior, but there were significant reductions among intervention groups. Most studies were conducted on demonstration programs; the few studies of routine practice programs showed much smaller effects. Among demonstration programs, positive outcomes were associated with a variety of study, subject, and intervention characteristics. Most notably, higher risk youth showed greater reductions in aggressive behavior, poorly implemented programs produced smaller effects, and different types of programs were generally similar in their effectiveness, other things equal.

Reviewed 221 studies of diverse school-based violence prevention programs
Average effect size = .25 for demonstration programs, which would reduce fighting **50%** in a typical school

50

Numerous Effective Programs

- Bullying prevention
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Conflict resolution
- Family therapy
- Life Skills Training (LST)
- Motivational Interviewing (MI)
- Multisystemic Therapy (MST)
- Parenting skills training
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Problem-solving/social competence
- Substance abuse resistance

51

Topics

1. Prevention
2. School Safety
3. Threat Assessment
4. CSTAG Model
5. Training & Implementation

52



Middle School Bullying

- Gossip column in school newspaper says he and his best friend John have “feelings for one another”
- Called “gay boy”
- Shoved, spit upon
- Pants pulled down

53



High School Bullying

- Teasing continues in high school, food taken at lunch, lab work ruined in class
- Band teacher permits further harassment as traditional “initiation”
- Gym teacher makes him play basketball with the girls

54



Deterioration under Stress of Bullying

- He becomes depressed and suicidal, cuts himself
- Joins an outcast group known as “the freaks”
- These boys plot revenge and discuss “shooting up the school”
- Becomes paranoid, hears voices taunting him and urging him to take revenge

55



School shooting from
“The Basketball Diaries”
 Warning: Violent Content

56



West Paducah, Ky.
 DEC. 1, 1997

Three girls were killed when **MICHAEL CARNEAL, 14**, opened fire on a prayer meeting that had assembled in school just before the start of classes. He had warned a classmate that “something big” would happen. When a friend pushed him to a wall to stop the rampage, Carneal said, “Kill me, please. I can’t believe I did that.” He faces trial as an adult

■ A .22-cal. Ruger pistol was used



57

Three students killed, 5 wounded in shooting



McCracken police: Boy, 14, opened fire on prayer circle

By JAMES MALONE
 The Courier-Journal

HEATH, Ky. — A freshman struffed into the lobby of Heath High School yesterday morning, sliding a pistol from his backpack and opening fire as a student prayer circle was dissolving, police and witnesses said. In less than two minutes, eight students had been shot — three fatally.

Attendees moved one of the students hurt in yesterday's shooting at Heath High School to an ambulance. A 14-year-old freshman was arrested and charged in the deaths of three students. Five others were wounded at the school west of Paducah.

58

Carneal pleads guilty in shootings



An officer led Michael Carneal, left, to a police car waiting outside the McCracken County Courthouse after Carneal pleaded guilty but mentally ill in the murder of three students in a shooting at Heath High School.

59

Teach students to distinguish snitching from seeking help

Snitching: informing on someone for personal gain
Seeking help: attempting to stop someone from being hurt



60

Shootings are averted when students report threats.

61

Threat Assessment For Schools

- 2000 FBI report recommending school threat assessment
- 2002 Secret Service and US Dept of Education study and guide on school threat assessment

62

Threat Assessment is a violence prevention strategy.

- 1. Identification:** friends, family members, or others seek help when concerned about someone in distress/threatening violence.
- 2. Evaluation:** Threat assessment team evaluates the seriousness of the threat.
- 3. Intervention:** The team initiates assistance to address the underlying problem, conflict or need. In the most serious cases, protective action is taken.

63



64

School-Based Threat Assessment

1. Compared to adults, students
 - frequently make threats;
 - often engage in fights;
2. Over-reactions to student misbehavior have serious negative consequences.
3. Schools have a duty to educate all students.

65

Team roles

Principal or Assistant Principal	Usually leads team.
School Resource Officer	Advises team, responds to illegal actions and emergencies.
Mental Health Staff (School counselors, psychologists, social workers)	Team member to conduct mental health assessments. Team member to take lead role in follow-up interventions.
Optional team members Teachers, aides, other staff	Report threats, provide input to team.

School districts may further specify team roles and include other staff to meet local needs.

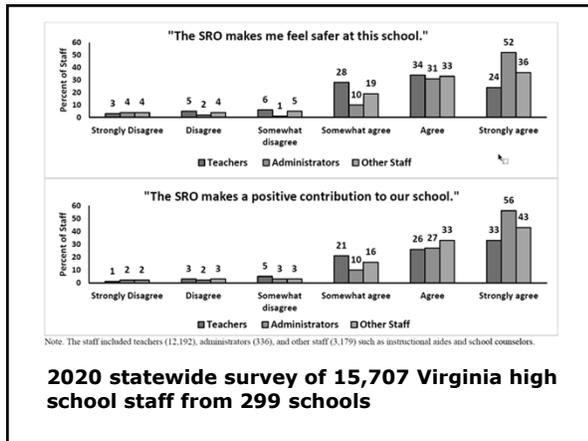
66



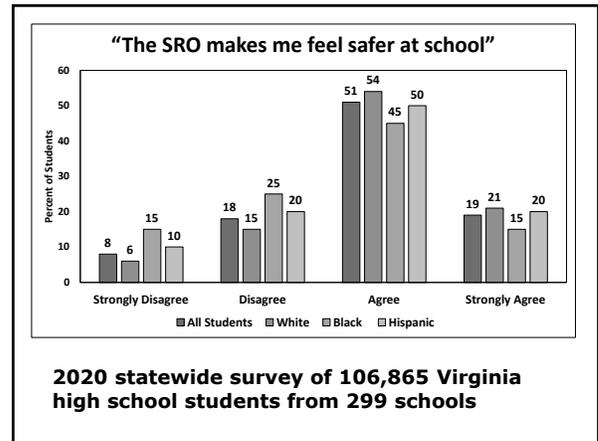
67



68



69



70

1. We must clearly define roles. School Resource Officers perform many functions, including education, enforcement, discipline, and law enforcement duties. These functions vary by jurisdiction and community needs. Be sure the SROs do not play a role in enforcing school discipline. An SRO's role is to enforce the law, not school rules. Community-based discipline is more effective than the role of SROs in enforcing school discipline.
2. We need to make sure that we select the most appropriate officers to work in our schools. SROs should work for the most qualified agencies, including law enforcement, the police, or the sheriff's office. The police are best suited to enforce the law, while the sheriff's office is best suited to enforce school discipline. SROs should be selected based on their ability to work in a school setting and their ability to build relationships with students and staff.
3. We must make sure the SROs are adequately prepared to do their job. Officers who work in schools should receive specialized training in education, discipline, and law enforcement. This training should be provided by the law enforcement agency that employs the SRO. Training should include the role of the SRO in the school, the importance of building relationships with students and staff, and the importance of working in collaboration with other professionals.
4. We should define policy for a stronger partnership. School policy that guides the partnership between school districts and law enforcement is critical to the success of SROs. This policy should include the role of the SRO in the school, the importance of building relationships with students and staff, and the importance of working in collaboration with other professionals.
5. We need ongoing community partnership. Working in collaboration with other professionals, including law enforcement, is critical to the success of SROs. This partnership should be ongoing and should include regular communication and collaboration between school districts and law enforcement.

71

1. Define the SRO role and exclude enforcement of school discipline.
2. Provide specialized SRO training.
3. Work in collaboration with other professionals.

72

Topics

1. Prevention
2. School Safety
3. Threat Assessment
4. CSTAG Model
5. Training & Implementation

73

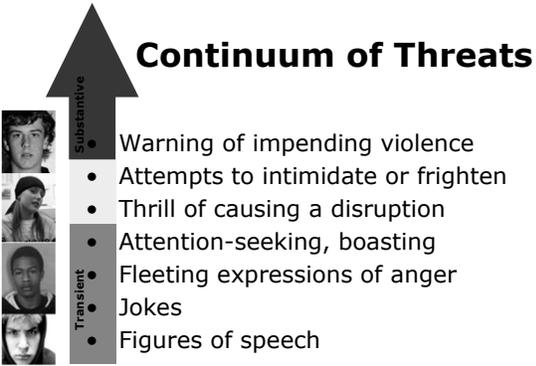
Virginia Model of School Threat Assessment



- Developed 2001 at University of Virginia
- School-based teams gather information
- Follow decision-tree to determine whether threat is transient or substantive
- Take protective action if substantive
- Attempt to resolve the problem underlying the threat

74

Continuum of Threats



Substantive

- Warning of impending violence
- Attempts to intimidate or frighten
- Thrill of causing a disruption
- Attention-seeking, boasting

Transient

- Fleeting expressions of anger
- Jokes
- Figures of speech

75

Accurate Threat Assessment Avoids 2 Errors ...

1. Over-reaction

School Suspends Second Grader for Eating His Pop-Tart Into the Shape of a Gun



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONTB_w_dTt4 - News report on WAVY TV 10 March 4, 2013.
<https://gawker.com/5988299/school-suspends-second-grader-for-eating-his-pop-tart-into-the-shape-of-a-gun>

76

Accurate Threat Assessment Avoids 2 Errors ...

2. Under-Reaction



77

What is the purpose of school threat assessment?

1. Prevent violence
2. Help troubled students
3. Avoid over-reactions to student misbehavior

78



Key Point

In a threat assessment, we try to determine **why** a student made a threat, and therefore how we can **prevent** the threat from being carried out.

79

Why do students make threats?



80

When was the last time you threatened someone?

81

Think about the last time you threatened someone...



82

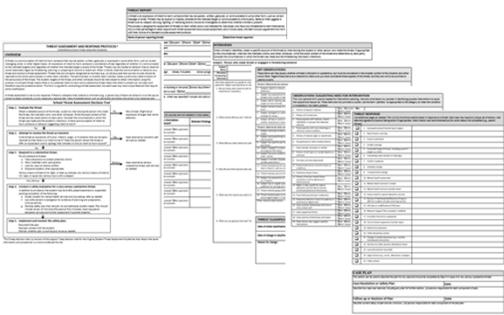
A threat is an effort to solve a problem.

- A student making a threat is waving a red flag indicating a problem they cannot solve.
- Threat assessment teams are problem solvers!

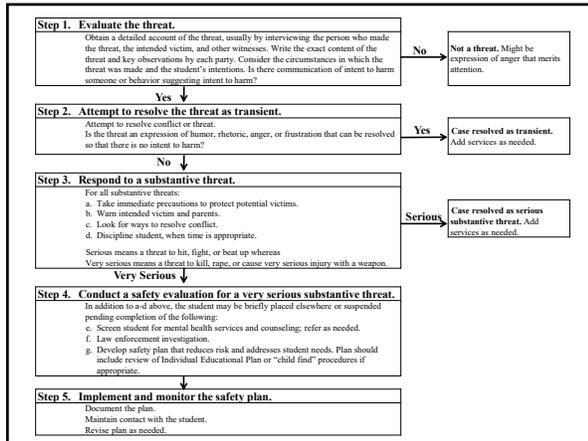


83

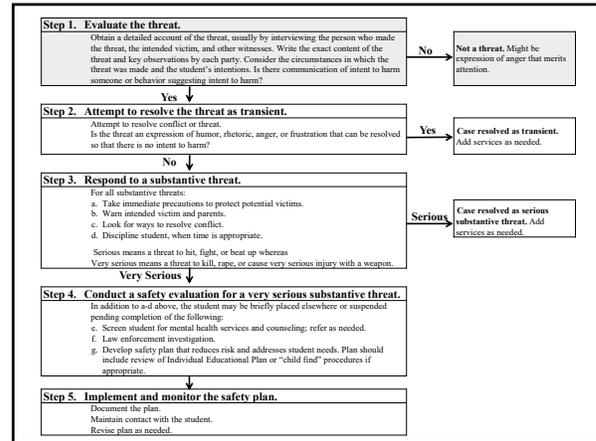
Forms Available
<https://www.schoolta.com/>



84



85



86

Step 1. Evaluate the threat.

- Obtain an account of the threat and the context from the student and witnesses.
- Write down the exact threat.
- Obtain student's explanation of the threat's meaning and his/her intentions.
- Obtain witness perceptions of the threat's meaning.

Document your evaluation.

87

Typical Questions

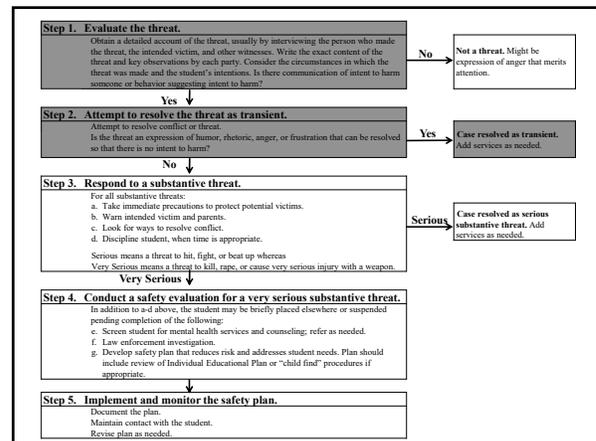
1. Do you know why I wanted to talk to you?
2. What happened today when you were [place of incident]?
3. What exactly did you say and do?
4. What did you mean when you said/did that?
5. How do you think [person threatened] feels about what you said?
6. What was the reason you said that?
7. What you going to do now?

88

Witness Questions

1. What happened today when you were [place of incident]?
2. What exactly did [student who made threat] say and do?
3. What do you think he/she meant?
4. How do you feel about what he/she said?
5. Why did he/she say that?

89



90

Transient threats

- Often are rhetorical remarks, not genuine expressions of intent to harm.
- At worst, express temporary feelings of anger or frustration.
- Usually can be resolved on the scene or in the office.
- After resolution, the threat no longer exists.
- Usually end with an apology or clarification.



Does not pose a serious threat.

91

Substantive threats

- Express intent to physically injure someone beyond the immediate situation.
- There is at least some risk the student will carry out the threat.
- Require that you take protective action, including warning intended victims and parents.
- May be legal violations and require police consultation.
- When in doubt, treat threats as substantive.



Concern that threat is serious.

92



Andrew

Two students reported to a teacher that a student in the cafeteria said that he is going to become a serial killer. The students are worried that he plans an attack on the school. You pull the student out of class and interview him in your office.

93

Step 1. Evaluate the threat.
 Obtain a detailed account of the threat, usually by interviewing the person who made the threat, the intended victim, and other witnesses. Write the exact content of the threat and key observations by each party. Consider the circumstances in which the threat was made and the student's intentions. Is there communication of intent to harm someone or behavior suggesting intent to harm?

No → Not a threat. Might be expression of anger that merits attention.

Yes ↓

Step 2. Attempt to resolve the threat as transient.
 Attempt to resolve conflict or threat. Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be resolved so that there is no intent to harm?

Yes → Case resolved as transient. Add services as needed.

No ↓

Step 3. Respond to a substantive threat.
 For all substantive threats:
 a. Take immediate precautions to protect potential victims.
 b. Warn intended victim and parents.
 c. Look for ways to resolve conflict.
 d. Discipline student, when time is appropriate.
 Serious means a threat to hit, fight, or beat up whereas Very serious means a threat to kill, rape, or cause very serious injury with a weapon.

Serious → Case resolved as serious substantive threat. Add services as needed.

Very Serious ↓

Step 4. Conduct a safety evaluation for a very serious substantive threat.
 In addition to a-d above, the student may be briefly placed elsewhere or suspended pending completion of the following:
 e. Screen student for mental health services and counseling; refer as needed.
 f. Law enforcement investigation.
 g. Develop safety plan that reduces risk and addresses student needs. Plan should include review of Individual Educational Plan or "child find" procedures if appropriate.

Step 5. Implement and monitor the safety plan.
 Document the plan.
 Maintain contact with the student.
 Revise plan as needed.

No

Yes

Serious

94

Step 1. Evaluate the threat.
 Obtain a detailed account of the threat, usually by interviewing the person who made the threat, the intended victim, and other witnesses. Write the exact content of the threat and key observations by each party. Consider the circumstances in which the threat was made and the student's intentions. Is there communication of intent to harm someone or behavior suggesting intent to harm?

No → Not a threat. Might be expression of anger that merits attention.

Yes ↓

Step 2. Attempt to resolve the threat as transient.
 Attempt to resolve conflict or threat. Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be resolved so that there is no intent to harm?

Yes → Case resolved as transient. Add services as needed.

No ↓

Step 3. Respond to a substantive threat.
 For all substantive threats:
 a. Take immediate precautions to protect potential victims.
 b. Warn intended victim and parents.
 c. Look for ways to resolve conflict.
 d. Discipline student, when time is appropriate.
 Serious means a threat to hit, fight, or beat up whereas Very serious means a threat to kill, rape, or cause very serious injury with a weapon.

Serious → Case resolved as serious substantive threat. Add services as needed.

Very Serious ↓

Step 4. Conduct a safety evaluation for a very serious substantive threat.
 In addition to a-d above, the student may be briefly placed elsewhere or suspended pending completion of the following:
 e. Screen student for mental health services and counseling; refer as needed.
 f. Law enforcement investigation.
 g. Develop safety plan that reduces risk and addresses student needs. Plan should include review of Individual Educational Plan or "child find" procedures if appropriate.

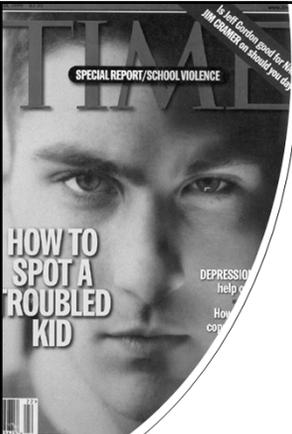
Step 5. Implement and monitor the safety plan.
 Document the plan.
 Maintain contact with the student.
 Revise plan as needed.

No

Yes

Serious

95



Mental Health Assessment

- Not a prediction model.
- Identify any mental health needs.
- Identify reasons why threat was made.
- Propose strategies for reducing risk.

96

Plan Response to Larry's Threat

OBSERVATIONS SUGGESTING NEED FOR INTERVENTION		THREAT RESPONSE	
1. History of physical violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	1. Increased contact/monitoring of subject	
2. History of criminal acts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	2. Reprimand or warning	
3. Preoccupation with violence, violent individuals, or groups that advocate violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	3. Parent conference	
4. Preoccupation with mass shootings or infamous violent incidents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	4. Student apology	
5. History of intense anger or resentment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	5. Contacted target of threat, including parents if target is a minor	Mr. D should not confront Larry, call 911.
6. Has grievance or feels treated unfairly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	6. Considered time/number of meetings	
7. Feels abused, harassed, or bullied.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	7. Conflict mediation	
8. History of self-injury or suicide ideation or attempts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	8. Schedule change	
9. Has been seriously depressed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	9. Transportation change	
10. Experienced serious stressful events or conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	10. Mental health assessment	
11. Substance abuse history.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	11. Mental health services in school	
12. History of serious mental illness (symptoms such as delusions or hallucinations).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	12. Mental health services outside school	Seek hospitalization.
13. Might or does qualify for special education services due to serious emotional/behavioral disturbance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	13. Access need for special education services	
14. Prescribed psychotropic medication.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	14. Review of Individualized Education Program (IEP) for student already receiving services	
15. Substantial decline in level of academic or psychosocial adjustment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	15. IEP plan or modification of IEP plan	
16. Lacks positive relationships with one or more school staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	16. Behavior Support Plan created or modified	
17. Lacks supportive family.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	17. In-school time out or suspension	
18. Lacks positive relationships with peers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	18. Out-of-school suspension (number days)	
19. Other factors that suggest need for intervention.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	19. Referral for expulsion	
		20. Other disciplinary action	
		21. Change of school placement (e.g., transfer, homebased instruction)	
		22. Services for other persons affected by threat	
		23. Law enforcement consulted	Police contacted if Larry is sighted at school.
		24. Legal actions (e.g., arrest, detentions, charges)	Protective/no-trespass order.
		25. Other actions	Warn school if Larry leaves campus

103

OBSERVATIONS SUGGESTING NEED FOR INTERVENTION

This is an optional form used as needed for intervention planning. Here are some factors to consider in identifying possible interventions to assist the subject and reduce risk. These items are not summed or scored. Use the term "partially" as appropriate to the category to mean the condition is moderate or not clearly present.

1. History of physical violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
2. History of criminal acts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
3. Preoccupation with violence, violent individuals, or groups that advocate violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
4. Preoccupation with mass shootings or infamous violent incidents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
5. History of intense anger or resentment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
6. Has grievance or feels treated unfairly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
7. Feels abused, harassed, or bullied.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
8. History of self-injury or suicide ideation or attempts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
9. Has been seriously depressed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
10. Experienced serious stressful events or conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
11. Substance abuse history.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
12. History of serious mental illness (symptoms such as delusions or hallucinations).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
13. Might or does qualify for special education services due to serious emotional/behavioral disturbance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
14. Prescribed psychotropic medication.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
15. Substantial decline in level of academic or psychosocial adjustment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
16. Lacks positive relationships with one or more school staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
17. Lacks supportive family.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
18. Lacks positive relationships with peers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
19. Other factors that suggest need for intervention.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available

104

OBSERVATIONS SUGGESTING NEED FOR INTERVENTION

This is an optional form used as needed for intervention planning. Here are some factors to consider in identifying possible interventions to assist the subject and reduce risk. These items are not summed or scored. Use the term "partially" as appropriate to the category to mean the condition is moderate or not clearly present.

1. History of physical violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
2. History of criminal acts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
3. Preoccupation with violence, violent individuals, or groups that advocate violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
4. Preoccupation with mass shootings or infamous violent incidents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
5. History of intense anger or resentment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
6. Has grievance or feels treated unfairly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
7. Feels abused, harassed, or bullied.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
8. History of self-injury or suicide ideation or attempts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
9. Has been seriously depressed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
10. Experienced serious stressful events or conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
11. Substance abuse history.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
12. History of serious mental illness (symptoms such as delusions or hallucinations).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
13. Might or does qualify for special education services due to serious emotional/behavioral disturbance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
14. Prescribed psychotropic medication.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
15. Substantial decline in level of academic or psychosocial adjustment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
16. Lacks positive relationships with one or more school staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
17. Lacks supportive family.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
18. Lacks positive relationships with peers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available
19. Other factors that suggest need for intervention.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available

Stress of mental illness, school removal

Drinking and illegal drug use in combination with MI.

Mother says she cannot help him, has other problems.

Explicit threat to kill based on delusional thinking.

105

Safety plan

- Law enforcement investigation of threat, possible firearm.
- Increased security, staff on alert.
- Monitor Larry at other school.
- Seek hospitalization and ongoing treatment.
- Meetings with Larry and mother to assess any change in his delusional thinking.

106

THREAT RESPONSE

Use additional pages as needed. This is a list of common actions taken in response to a threat. Each case may require a unique set of actions. Add date and signature of person taking action if appropriate. Note if action was recommended but for some reason not completed (e.g., parent refusal).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1. Increased contact/monitoring of subject	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Reprimand or warning	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Parent conference	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. Student apology	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5. Contacted target of threat, including parents if target is a minor	Mr. D should not confront Larry, call 911.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6. Considered time/number of meetings	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7. Conflict mediation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8. Schedule change	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9. Transportation change	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10. Mental health assessment	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11. Mental health services in school	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12. Mental health services outside school	Seek hospitalization.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 13. Access need for special education services	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 14. Review of Individualized Education Program (IEP) for student already receiving services	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 15. IEP plan or modification of IEP plan	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16. Behavior Support Plan created or modified	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 17. In-school time out or suspension	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18. Out-of-school suspension (number days)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19. Referral for expulsion	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20. Other disciplinary action	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21. Change of school placement (e.g., transfer, homebased instruction)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 22. Services for other persons affected by threat	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 23. Law enforcement consulted	Police contacted if Larry is sighted at school.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 24. Legal actions (e.g., arrest, detentions, charges)	Protective/no-trespass order.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25. Other actions	Warn school if Larry leaves campus

107

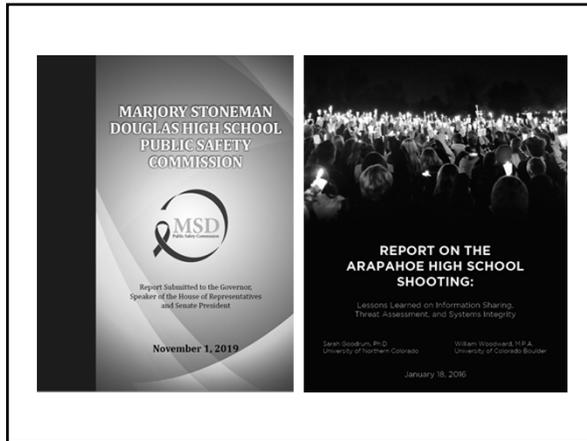
Outcome

This case example is based on an actual case evaluated by Dr. Cornell with some details changed.

In the actual case, there was no threat assessment and the threats were ignored. Months later, Larry came to school and shot Mr. D.

Larry was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

108



109

Topics

1. Prevention
2. School Safety
3. Threat Assessment
4. CSTAG Model
5. Training & Implementation

110



111

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
 © 2020 American Psychological Association
 ISSN: 2169-4842

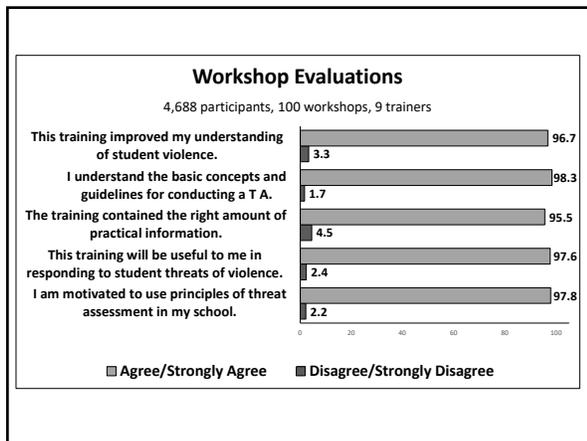
Journal of Threat Assessment and Management
 2020, Vol. 5, No. 1-2, 29-48
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ta0000142>

Evaluation of Threat Assessment Training for School Personnel

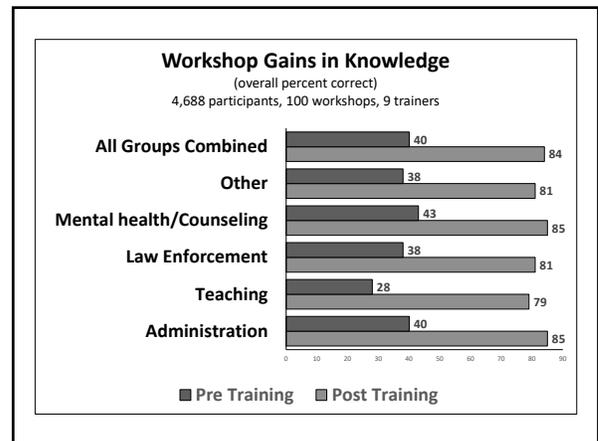
Shelby Stohlman, Timothy Konold, and Dewey Cornell
 University of Virginia

Despite the widespread use of threat assessment in K-12 schools, there is a dearth of research investigating the staff training process. We evaluated the effectiveness of day-long training on the Comprehensive Student Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) in a sample of 4,666 multidisciplinary school personnel from administration, law enforcement, mental health, teaching, and other groups. Across 100 workshops conducted by 9 trainers, all discipline groups showed large and statistically significant increases in their knowledge of threat assessment from pretest to posttest. On average, participants achieved threat classification accuracy scores of 75% after completing the workshop. Over 95% of participants provided positive evaluations of the workshop and highly endorsed motivation to implement threat assessment in their schools. Overall, these findings support the use of workshop training to prepare multidisciplinary school-based threat assessment teams.

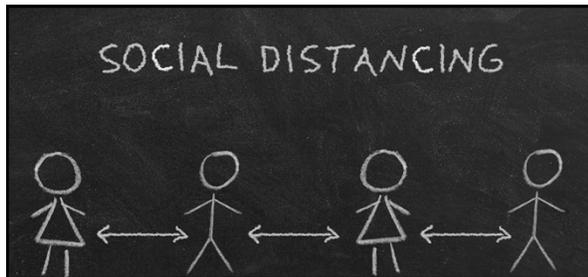
112



113



114



SOCIAL DISTANCING

Pandemic Adjustments

- Online training
- Online case management

115

Blended Learning Program

Level 1 - Online, asynchronous individual training in threat assessment basics. 4-6 hours

Level 2 - Teams apply what they learned with case exercises. 4 hours

116



117

Research on Threat Assessment

- Cornell, D., Sheras, P., Kaplan, S., McConville, D., Douglass, J., Elkon, A., McKnight, L., Branson, C., & Cole, J. (2004). Guidelines for student threat assessment: Field-test findings. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 527-546.
- Kaplan, S., & Cornell, D. (2005). Threats of violence by students in special education. *Behavioral Disorders*, 31, 107-119.
- Strong, K., & Cornell, D. (2008). Student threat assessment in Memphis City Schools: A descriptive report. *Behavioral Disorders*, 34, 42-54.
- Allen, K., Cornell, D., Lurek, E., & Sheras, P. (2008). Response of school personnel to student threat assessment training. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 19, 319-332.
- Cornell, D., Sheras, P., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2009). A retrospective study of school safety conditions in high schools using the Virginia Threat Assessment Guidelines versus alternative approaches. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24, 119-129.
- Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2011). Reductions in long-term suspensions following adoption of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines. *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 95, 175-194.
- Cornell, D., Allen, K., & Fan, X. (2012). A randomized controlled study of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines in grades K-12. *School Psychology Review*, 41, 100-115.
- Cornell, D. & Lovegrove, P. (2015). Student threat assessment as a method for reducing student suspensions. In D. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research for Policymakers*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Nekvasil, E., Cornell, D. (2015). Student threat assessment associated with positive school climate in middle schools. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 2, 98-113; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tam0000038>
- Burnette, A. G., Dana, P. & Cornell, D. G. (2017). The distinction between transient and substantive student threats. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*. <http://psynet.apa.org/record/2017-56103-001>
- Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Burnette, A.G., Jia, Y., Huang, F., Konold, T., Datta, P., Malone, M., Meyer, P. (2017). Student threat assessment as a standard school safety practice: Results from a statewide implementation study. *School Psychology Quarterly*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/spq000220>
- Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Huang, F., Shukla, K., & Konold, T. (2018). Racial/ethnic parity in disciplinary consequences using student threat assessment. *School Psychology Review* 47, 183-195.

118

Outcome Research

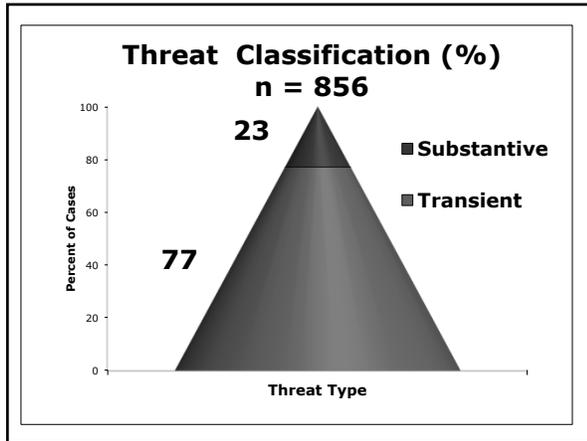
1. 99% of threats not carried out.
2. Only 1% expelled, 1% arrested.
3. Counseling used more often.
4. More positive school climate.
5. No racial disparities in discipline

119

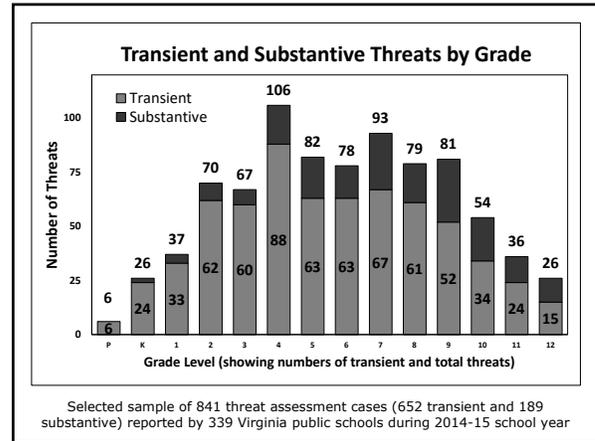
What can you expect? Results from a routine practice study

- Everyday practice results from 339 Virginia schools
- 884 threat cases
- Threat demographics
- Racial/ethnic differences

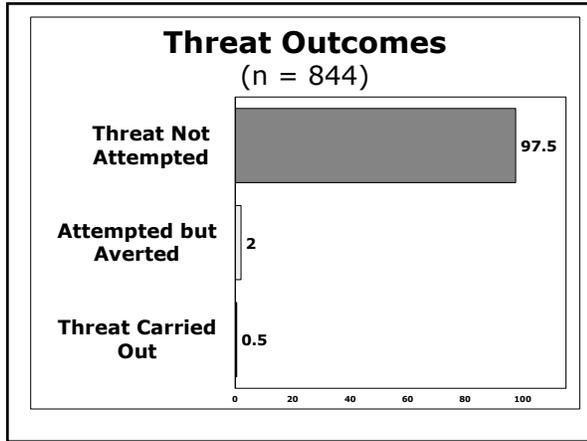
120



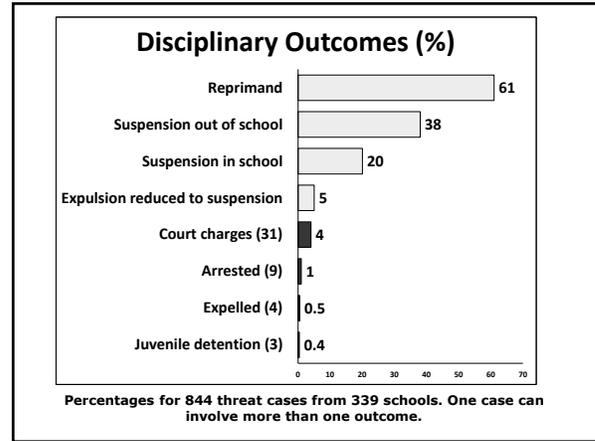
121



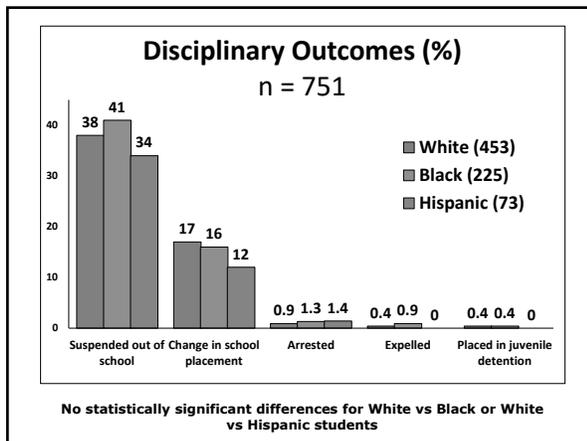
122



123



124



125

Online Case Management



1. Maintain high quality process.
2. Evaluate trends and improve system.
3. Liability protection.

126

Online case management



1. Efficient records
2. Greater consistency
3. Better fidelity
4. Trend analysis
5. Liability protection

127

University of Virginia Research Team



This work was supported in part by Grant #NIJ 2014-CK-BX-0004 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. Disclosure: Dewey Cornell is the primary developer of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines and author of the manual, Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines.

128

Bright Future of School Threat Assessment



129