

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

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

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



**1**

## **Topics**

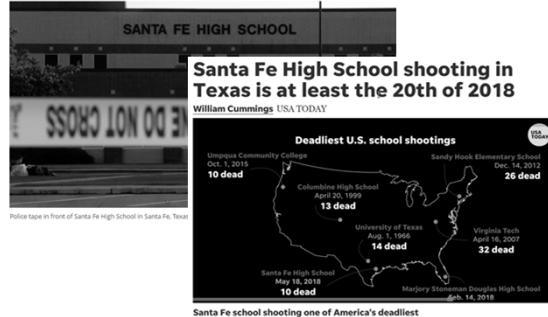
- 1. Prevention**
- 2. School Safety**
- 3. Threat Assessment**
- 4. CSTAG Model**
- 5. Training & Implementation**

**3**

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

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

By YODA C. FRANKEL, BRITTNEY MARTIN, TIM CRAIG AND CHRISTIAN DAVENPORT, THE WASHINGTON POST



**5**



**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**

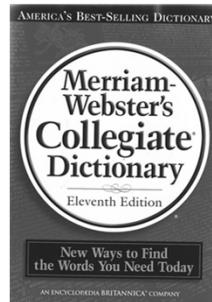
### **17 killed in mass shooting at high school in Parkland, Florida**

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



**4**

**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

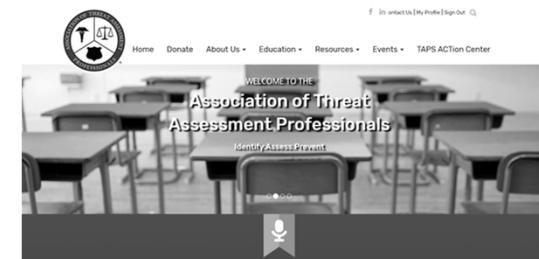
## You don't prevent forest fires by waiting until the trees are blazing.



<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/09/48836909/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

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15

### **Shootings seem unpredictable?**

**Prevention does not require prediction!**



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

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### **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**

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### **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'

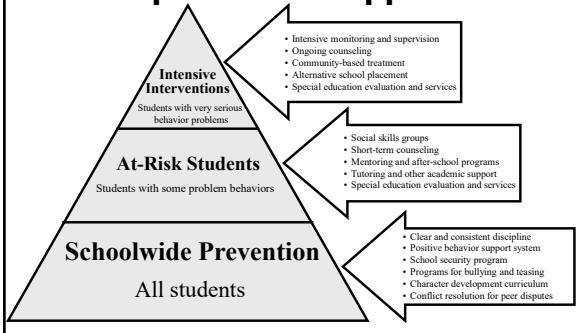


We can intervene to resolve problem situations before they deteriorate into violence.

**Intensive, tertiary, or tier 3 prevention**

19

## Threat assessment is part of a comprehensive approach.



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## Topics

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

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## 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**

Weekly / Vol. 68 / No. 3

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report  
January 25, 2019

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

Kristin M. Holland, PhD<sup>1</sup>; Jeffrey E. Hall, PhD<sup>2</sup>; Jing Wang, MD<sup>3</sup>; Elizabeth M. Gaynor, MPH<sup>1</sup>; Linda L. Johnson<sup>3</sup>; Daniel Shelley<sup>1</sup>; Thomas R. Simon, PhD<sup>2</sup>; School-Associated Violent Deaths Study Group<sup>1</sup>

**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

## 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

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
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January 21, 2011

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**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

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
**MMWR** Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report  
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**What percentage of youth homicide incidents involve a single victim?**

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

29

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
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January 21, 2011

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**What percentage of perpetrators are students?**

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

30

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
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**What was the most common motive for the perpetrator?**

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

32

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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.**

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**School Safety Fears**

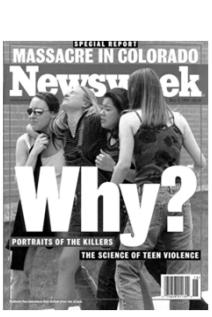


**School shootings are so traumatic that they skew perceptions of school safety and convince the public and policymakers that there are dramatic needs for security measures.**

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**Why Fear of School Violence Matters**

- 1. School Suspensions**
- 2. School Fortification**



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### 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

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### Zero Tolerance Suspensions

**Boy who held pencil like gun suspended**

School has "zero tolerance" weapons policy

Updated: Thursday, 09 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."

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### 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>

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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

11

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### 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**

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**Percent of Students Suspended (Out of School 1 or More Times)**

Race	Percent Suspended
Black	13
Amer Ind/Alaskan	7
2 or more races	5
All Student Average	5
Hawaii/Pacific	4
Hispanic any race	4
White	3
Asian	1

Source: USDOE Civil Rights Data Collection. 2015-16 AY most recent available  
7/20 <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/StateNationalEstimations>

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## 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.

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## Fear of School Violence Drives New School Security Industry

The screenshot shows a news article from Bloomberg Business. The headline reads "Newtown Rampage Spurs \$5 Billion School Security Spending". Below the headline is a photograph of a school hallway with surveillance cameras mounted on the wall. A caption at the bottom of the image states: "About 80 percent of U.S. schools report have made changes to their facilities or security policies since the Sandy Hook shooting, according to a survey of 400 districts by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, in their addition". At the bottom of the screenshot is the URL: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-11-14/schools-booster-security-spending-after-newtown-massacre>.

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## Bullet-Proof Entrances



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## Metal Detectors in Schools



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## 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>

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## 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.wzzm13.com/article/education/fruitport-designs-new-48m-high-school-with-places-to-hide-from-mass-shooters/69-6ee8154f-76a8-45bd-87c5-e3c60a3ce2f>

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**We should prevent shootings rather than simply prepare for them.**

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Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology  
2005, Vol. 73, No. 1, 140-148  
Copyright 2005 by the American Psychological Association, Inc.  
0022-006X/05/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/0022-006X.73.1.140

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

Sandra Jo Wilson and Mark W. Lipsey<sup>\*</sup>

James H. Derron  
Vanderbilt University Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Research on the effectiveness of school-based programs for preventing or reducing aggressive behavior was conducted with a meta-analysis. Changes in aggressive behavior between control and program were analyzed for developmental patterns and characteristics associated with differential effects. Control groups included no intervention, wait-list, and comparison groups. Program groups included demonstration and training 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 found in a variety of models, including social learning, cognitive-behavioral, and multisystemic. Moderate-to-high 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

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### Topics

1. Prevention
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#### 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



#### 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

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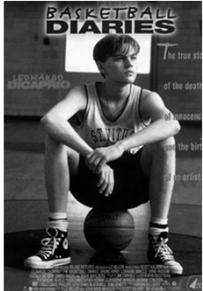
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**Deterioration under Stress of Bullying**

- 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

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**School shooting from "The Basketball Diaries"**

**Warning: Violent Content**

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**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



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# 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 strolled into the lobby of Heath High School yesterday morning, took off his coat and belt, and opened fire as a student prayer circle was gathered in the hallway outside his classroom. In less than two minutes, eight students had been wounded, three seriously.

The 14-year-old shooting suspect, who took the gun from a classmate's backpack a day earlier, was arrested and charged with the deaths of three students. Five others were wounded at the school west of Paducah.

Attendants 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.



Michael Carneal was arrested after the shooting at Heath High School.

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.

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## Teach students to distinguish snitching from seeking help

**Snitching:** informing on someone for personal gain

**Seeking help:** attempting to stop someone from being hurt



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## Shootings are averted when students report threats.



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## Threat Assessment For Schools

The School Shooter:  
A THREAT ASSESSMENT PERSPECTIVE



Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG)  
National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC)  
FBI Quantico, Virginia 22135



THREAT ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOLS:  
A GUIDE TO CREATING  
SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATES



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

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## 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.

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Threat  
Assessment

Threat  
Assessment  
in Schools

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## School-Based Threat Assessment

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

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## 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.

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EducationWeek

# These Districts Defunded Their School Police. What Happened Next?

By Sarah Schwartz, Stephen Sawchuk, Eesha Pendharkar & Ileana Najarro — June 04, 2021

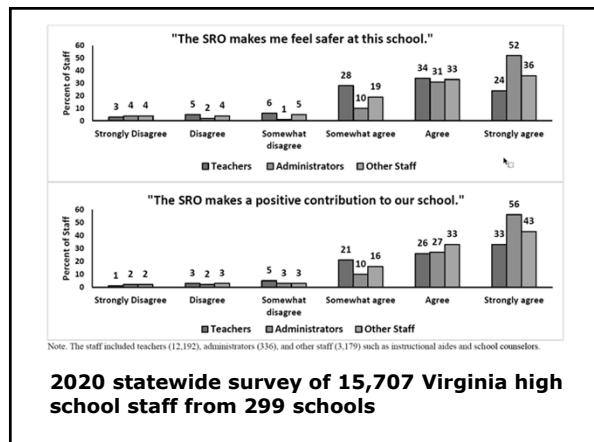
A black and white photograph of Deering High School in Portland, Maine. The building is a large, multi-story brick structure with a prominent central clock tower. It features several gables and decorative architectural details. In the foreground, there is a large evergreen tree on the left and a paved area with a small sign on the right. The sky is overcast.

Deering High School in Portland, Maine, one of two schools to have their SROs removed.

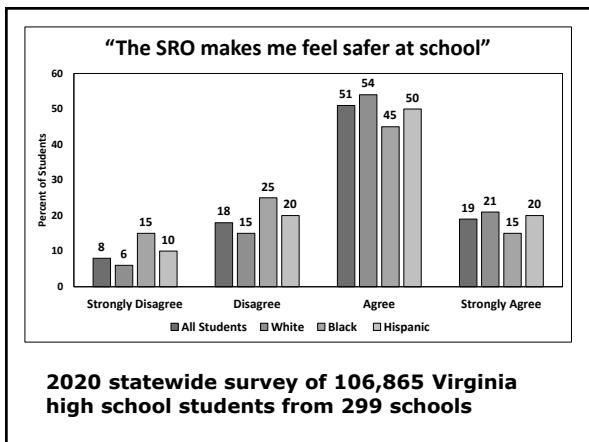
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8



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## **2020 statewide survey of 106,865 Virginia high school students from 299 schools**

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**P** NATIONAL POLICE FOUNDATION  
Advancing Policy Through Innovation and Science

5 things to consider before posting cops in schools

By John Russek  
President, National Police Foundation

**1. We must clearly define roles.** School Resource Officers have many responsibilities, including educating regarding mental health issues, and law enforcement. These functions vary by school environment and may require different skill sets. It is important to understand what each role requires and how the two of them can be balanced.

**2. We need to make sure we select the most appropriate officers to work in our schools.** Recruit the right people. The National Police Foundation has developed a guide for selecting the best officers for the schools, which the administration will likely appreciate. This guide includes a checklist for the school principal to review when selecting officers. Principals should therefore pay close attention to the hiring process and the selection of officers. Principals should also consider the following questions as they interview candidates:

- Are they willing to work with students and keep them at the forefront of their minds?
- Do they have a positive attitude?
- Do they have a desire to learn about the school community?
- Do they care more than just enforcement?

**3. We must make sure the SROs are adequately prepared for the job.** Anytime who works in schools needs to be trained in school safety, crisis intervention, and de-escalation techniques. Every SRO should receive a minimum of 40 hours of training, including training from the school resource officer training unit or another certified training unit. This training should include specialized training with specific responsibilities of the local law enforcement agency's community partnership. The training might include training in addressing bias-disrupting, anti-bullying, and other social-emotional learning topics. Training should also include training on special needs, or areas, if the SRO is based with members of the school community, everyone can be on the same page.

**4. We should define policy for a stronger partnership.** What is the policy for guiding the partnership between school districts and law enforcement? An official memorandum of understanding (MOU) can make sure both parties are clear about their roles and responsibilities. This document should also demonstrate community understanding, the role of the SROs. The policy should include statements that ensuring officers are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the school.

**5. We must engage community partners.** Anytime schools are in the responsibility of more than just the police, it is important to engage other community partners. This can include parents, teachers, school nurses, and other community partners. Engaging schools outside the school walls, the local mental health providers they also do not feel threatened by their students and their families often instead.



## A Framework for Safe and Successful Schools






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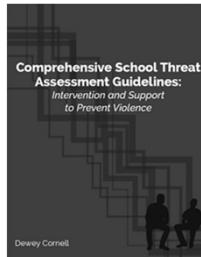
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## Topics

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### Virginia Model of School Threat Assessment



2018 Manual

- 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

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### Continuum of Threats



- Warning of impending violence
- Attempts to intimidate or frighten
- Thrill of causing a disruption
- Attention-seeking, boasting
- 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=QNTB\\_w\\_dTt4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNTB_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>

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### Accurate Threat Assessment Avoids 2 Errors ...

#### 2. Under-Reaction



### What is the purpose of school threat assessment?

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

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**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.**

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## Why do students make threats?



80

**When was the last time you threatened someone?**

81

**Think about the last time you threatened someone...**



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**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!

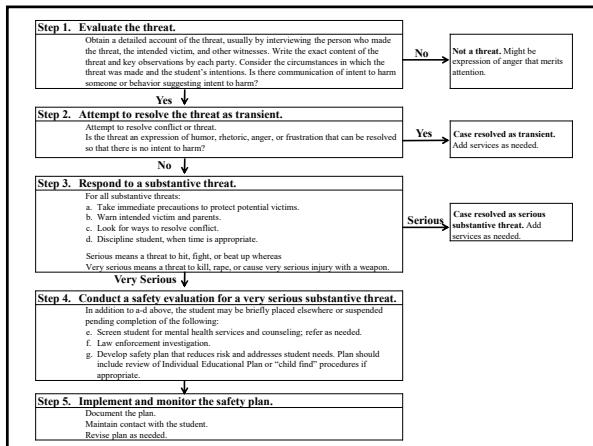


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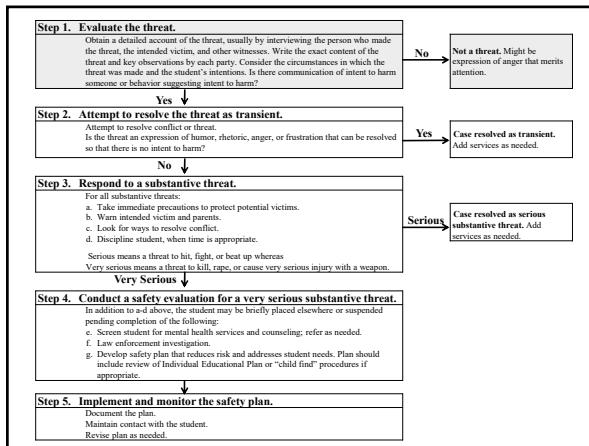
**Forms Available**  
<https://www.schoolta.com/>

A collection of several printed forms related to school threat assessment, including a "THREAT ASSESSMENT FORM", "SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM", and "THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM REPORT". The forms contain various sections for gathering information and making decisions.

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## **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.



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## 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?



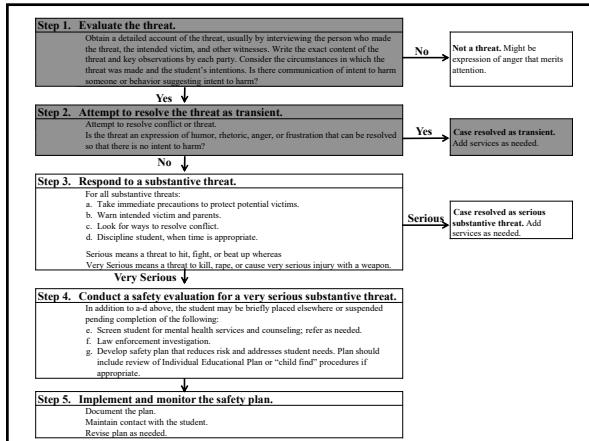
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## **Witness Questions**

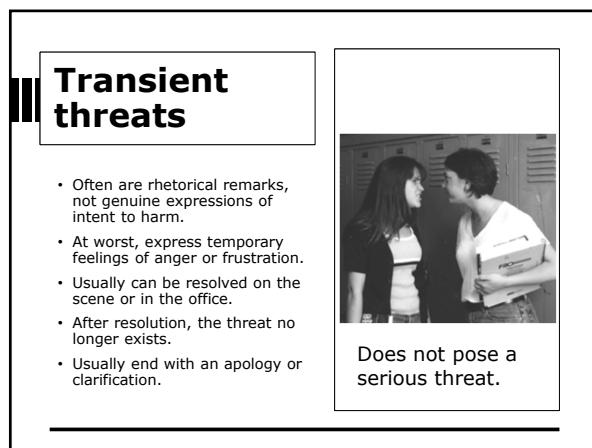
1. What happened today when you were [place of incident]? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. What exactly did [student who made threat] say and do? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. What do you think he/she meant? \_\_\_\_\_
  4. How do you feel about what he/she said? \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Why did he/she say that? \_\_\_\_\_



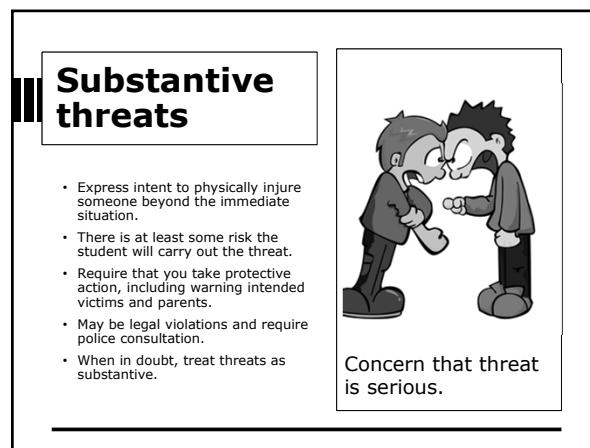
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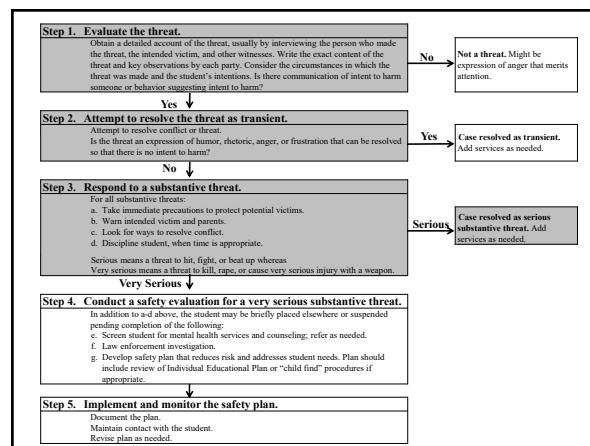
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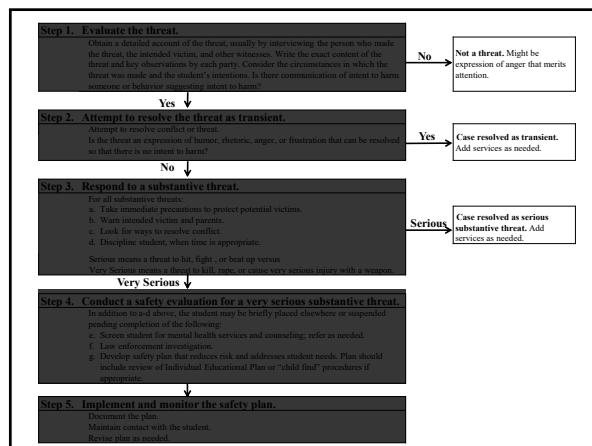
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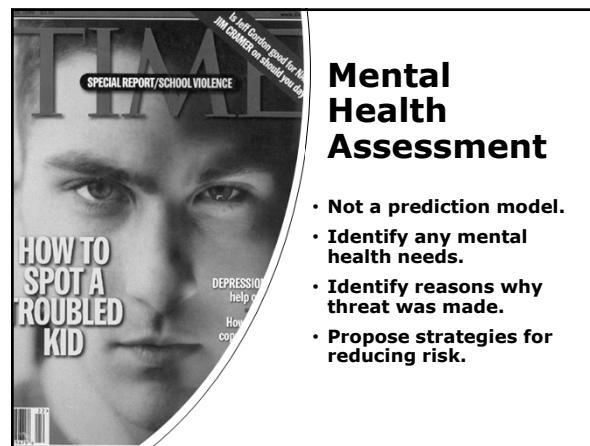
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94



95



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### Law Enforcement Investigation of Very Serious Substantive Threats

- Interview suspects and witnesses.
- Conduct searches for weapons and other evidence of planning.
- Serve as a resource for students with fears or information to share.
- Take appropriate protective action.



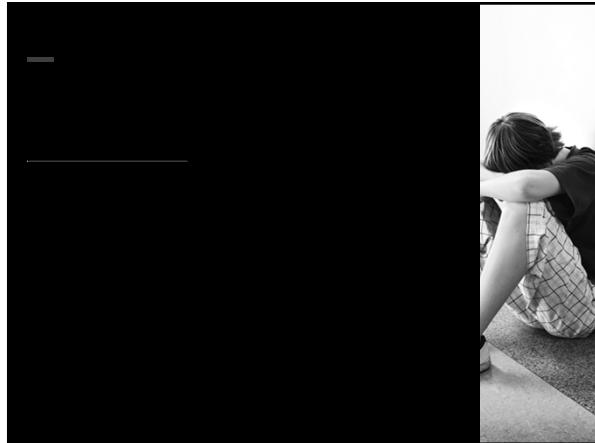
97

### Step 5. Implement and Monitor Safety Plan.

- Plan is designed to reduce risk of violence and meet student needs.
- Document the plan.
- Maintain contact with student.
- Monitor whether plan is working and revise as needed.



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### Teacher assault

Has crush on teacher, repeatedly hangs outside her classroom.

Teacher approached Larry because he was rocking in the hallway and seemed dazed and glassy-eyed. He grabbed her, pushed her to the ground and kissed her, then released her.

*Discuss how your school would handle this situation.*

100

### Further incidents

- Larry moved to another school, but for months he periodically came back and paced outside her classroom.
- Assistant Principal Mr. D repeatedly confronted Larry and had him leave school.
- On one occasion, Mr. D called police. When Larry resisted arrest, he was taken hard to the ground.

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### Threat

- For months, Larry tells everyone that the police fractured his skull, has a fissure of the brain, ears falling off and heart falling into his pelvis. Blames Mr. D for calling police.
- Larry tells people that motivational speaker Zig Ziglar has told him to shoot Mr. D to cure his injury and become successful in real estate. "I have to shoot Mr. D."
- At this point Larry has had multiple hospitalizations, but does not take his meds. He abuses alcohol and smokes marijuana.

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## Plan Response to Larry's Threat

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

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 and initial 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 type="checkbox"/>	4. Student apology	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5. Contacted target of threat, including parent if target is a minor	<b>Mr. D should not confront Larry, call 911.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Counseling (note number of meetings)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Conflict mediation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Schedule change	
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Transportation change	
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Mental health assessment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	11. Mental health services in school	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12. Mental health services outside school	
<input type="checkbox"/>	13. Assess need for special education services	
<input type="checkbox"/>	14. Review of Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students already receiving services	
<input type="checkbox"/>	15. 504 plan or modification of 504 plan	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16. Behavior Support Plan created or modified	
<input type="checkbox"/>	17. In-school time out or suspension	
<input type="checkbox"/>	18. Out-of-school suspension (number days)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	19. Referral for expulsion	
<input type="checkbox"/>	20. Other disciplinary action	
<input type="checkbox"/>	21. Change in school placement (e.g., transfer, alternative school, homebound)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	22. Services for other persons affected by threat	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23. Law enforcement contacted	<b>Police contacted if Larry is sighted at school.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	24. Legal actions (e.g., arrest, detention, charged)	<b>Protective/no-trespass order.</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25. Other actions	<b>Warn school if Larry leaves campus</b>

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### OBSERVATIONS SUGGESTING NEED FOR INTERVENTION

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not available

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## 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.

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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 and initial signature of person taking action if appropriate. Note if action was recommended but for some reason not completed (e.g., parent refusal).		
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23. Law enforcement contacted	<b>Police contacted if Larry is sighted at school.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	24. Legal actions (e.g., arrest, detention, charged)	<b>Protective/no-trespass order.</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25. Other actions	<b>Warn school if Larry leaves campus</b>

106

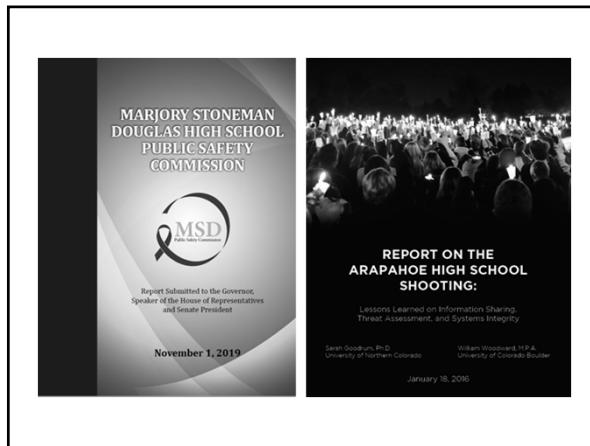
## Outcome

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.

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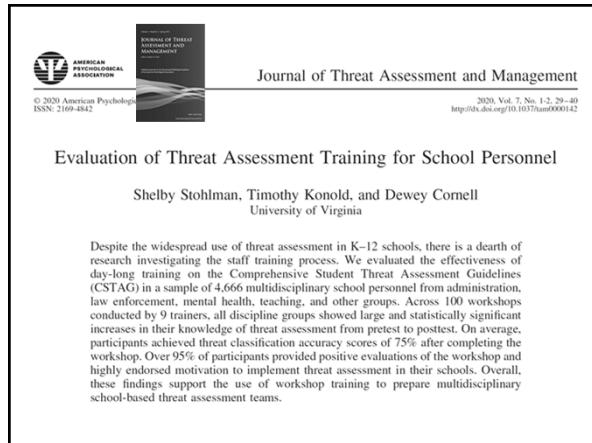
## Topics

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

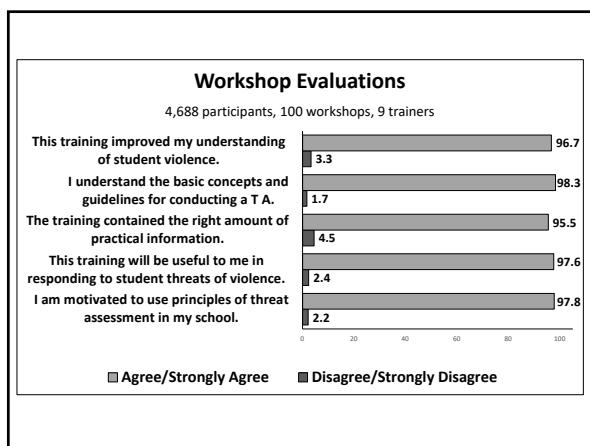
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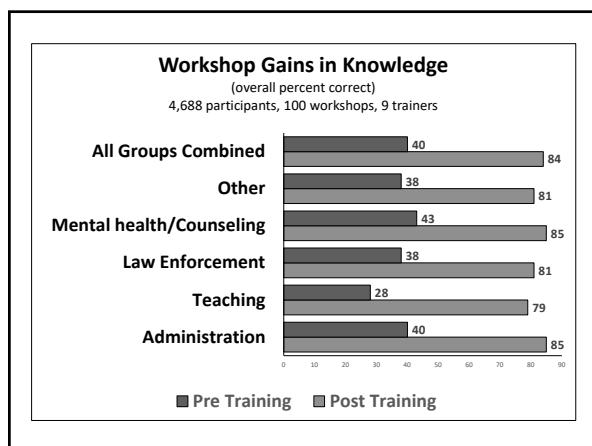
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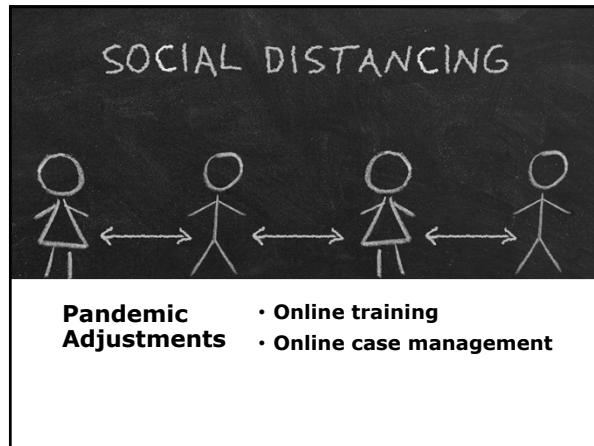
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## Blended Learning Program

**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



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## Research on Threat Assessment

1. 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.

2. Kaplan, S., & Cornell, D. (2005). Threats of violence by students in special education. *Behavioral Disorders*, 31, 107-119.

3. Kaplan, S., & Cornell, D. (2008). Student threat assessment in Memphis City Schools: A descriptive report. *Behavioral Disorders*, 34, 42-54.

4. Allen, K., Cornell, D., Lorek, E., & Sheras, P. (2008). Response of school personnel to student threat assessment training. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 19, 319-332.

5. 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.

6. Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2012). Reducing student threats in long-term suspension following adoption of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines. *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 95, 175-194.

7. Cornell, D., Allen, K., & Fan, X. (2012). A randomized controlled trial of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines in grades K-12. *School Psychology Review*, 41, 100-115.

8. 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.

9. Nekoda, C., & Cornell, D. (2016). Threat assessment and positive school climate in middle schools. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, 2, 98-113. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tam0000038>

10. Burnette, A. G., Datta, P., & Cornell, D. G. (2017). The distinction between transient and substantive student threats. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*. <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-56103-001>

11. 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/spq00000220>

12. 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.

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## Outcome Research

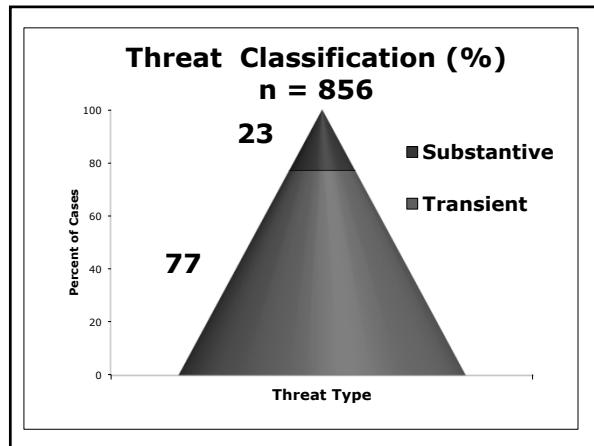
1. 99% of threats not carried out.  
2. Only 1% expelled, 1% arrested.  
3. Counseling used more often.  
4. More positive school climate.  
5. No racial disparities in discipline

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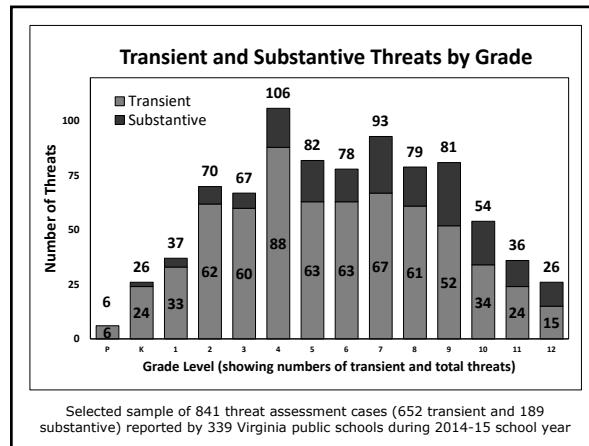
## What can you expect? Results from a routine practice study

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

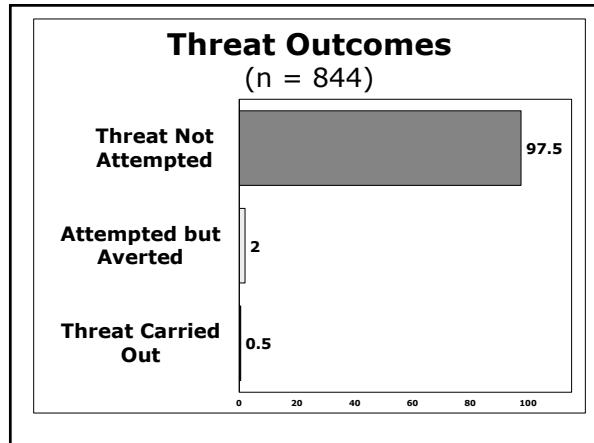
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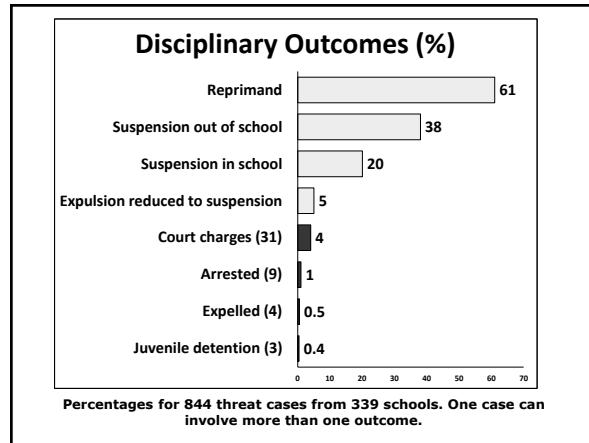
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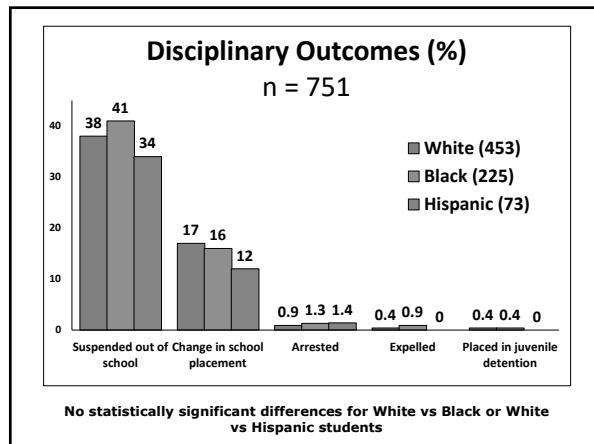
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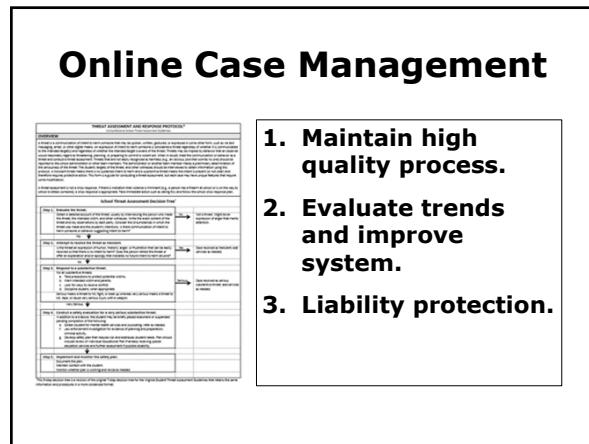
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## Online case management



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

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## 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.

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## Bright Future of School Threat Assessment

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