WHAT WE ARE DEALING WITH
WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO PREVENT

WARNING: This video includes images and audio some viewers may find upsetting or disturbing.

USA TODAY FINDINGS

During 2017-2018 school year, nearly 1,300 more threats made during current school year compared with prior school year.

In the 30 days following the Parkland shooting, 35% of threats for the entire school year occurred.

The US has had 57 times as many school shootings as the other major industrialized nations combined.

288 school shootings in the United States since 2009

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- France: 2
- Germany: 1
- Japan: 0
- Italy: 0
- UK: 0

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The fear of a school shooting is the number one reported issue for people between the ages of 14-29.

News reports indicated school shootings are this generation's 9/11 (connects young people unlike anything except 9/11 in last 20 years).

More than 4 million children experienced a school lockdown during the 2017-2018 school year, with more than 6,200 lockdowns overall. On a typical school day last year, at least 16 campuses were locked down (Washington Post).
17 years old
High school student
Neighbors described him as having a "nice family"
Those that knew him said he kept to himself
Described by his classmates as "quiet"

THE POWER OF A NOTE

One handwritten note changed everything
Internal school investigation begins to identify author of note
Once student identified, pulled from class & searched
- Wearing empty gun holster
- Had expended rifle casing in his backpack
- Journal with disturbing writing

Case Study Continued

- Search of house revealed:
  - A dozen journals with explicit graphic threats of torture & murder
  - Notes boosting his attack would be bigger than Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre
  - Notes how to destroy evidence & evade police
  - Videos on his phone showing him firing rifles and handguns
  - Text messages indicating he was carrying a firearm in public the day before he was brought into the school office
  - Vast assortment of full tactical gear including a Kevlar vest & ammunition.
**SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

- Roles include:
  - Collaborate with school, industry, and community leaders to address countywide educational issues
  - Organize and facilitate professional learning opportunities
  - Coordinate countywide student-safety and emergency-preparation programs
  - San Diego
    - 43 school districts
    - 780 schools
    - 142 charter schools
    - 6 community college districts
    - 500,000 students

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**Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines**

"Schools must avoid two errors: over-reacting to the numerous threats that are not serious and under-reacting to the rare threats that are deadly serious."

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.
University of Virginia

AKA: Safety Assessment and Intervention

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**TARGETED VIOLENCE: ESCALATION**
Six Principles of Threat Assessment

1. Prevention is possible.
2. Consider the context.
3. Adopt an investigative mindset.
4. Rely on facts, not profiles.
5. Gather information from multiple sources.
6. Focus on determining the potential for violence.

Threat Assessment

Administrator
- Team Leader and Lead Investigator

School Psychologist
- Mental Health Assessment

School Resource Officer / Juvenile Services Officer
- Investigate / Arrest
- Prior Contacts
- Weapons Check

School Counselor / School Social Worker
- Assessment Information and Follow-up Plan

Internet Professional
- Internet Activity

SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT DECISION TREE

Step One – Evaluate the Potential Threat

- Is there communication of intent to harm someone or behavior suggesting intent to harm?

  • If Yes, it IS a threat...

  • If No, it's NOT a threat...

  - Might be an expression of anger that merits attention.
  - Intervention, support and disciplines if necessary.
**STEP TWO: IS THE THREAT TRANSIENT OR SUBSTANTIVE?**

- Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger or frustration that can be easily resolved so that there is no intent to harm?
- Does person retract the threat or offer an explanation and/or apology that indicates no future intent to harm anyone?

  **If No, Threat is a Substantive Threat, Step Three**

  **If Yes, this is a Transient Threat...**
  Case resolved as transient; add services as needed

**STEP THREE: SUBSTANTIVE THREATS**

Substantive Threats may be SERIOUS or VERY SERIOUS

- **Serious:** Threat to assault someone
- **VERY Serious:** Use of weapon or threat to kill, rape, or inflict severe injury

For ALL Substantive Threats:
- Take precautions to protect potential victims
- Warn intended victim and parents
- Look for ways to resolve conflict
- Discipline student, when appropriate

If the threat is VERY SERIOUS....

**STEP 4: MANAGING A VERY SERIOUS SUBSTANTIVE THREAT**

- Screen student for mental health services and counseling; refer as needed
- Law enforcement investigation for evidence of planning and preparation, criminal activity
- Develop safety plan that reduces risk and addresses student needs. Plan should include review of individual Educational Plan if already receiving special education services and further assessment if possible disability
STEP FIVE: IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE SAFETY PLAN

- Document the plan
- Maintain contact with the student
- Monitor whether plan is working and revise as needed

Comprehensive Approach

Recommendations for Schools

Prevent Mitigate Respond Recover

PERT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Maria Kingkade
PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

- Licensed Mental Health Clinician is partnered with an Officer or Deputy
- PERT Mission: Provide compassionate crisis intervention and linkage to services to persons with mental illness who come into contact with law enforcement or EMS.
  - Prevent unnecessary incarceration and/or hospitalization
  - Provide least restrictive care
  - Provide system-wide coordination
  - Facilitate patrol units returning to service

SAN DIEGO COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Sheriff’s Department
- Police Departments
- School Resource Officers

DOES THE YOUTH MEET §5150 CRITERIA?

- §5150 empowers PERT/LE to detain and transport a person to an LPS facility to determine whether further mental health evaluation and treatment is necessary:
  - Danger to Self
  - Danger to Others
  - Grave Disability
- Assessment
  - PERT has CCBH (Cerner) access
  - PERT clinicians gather information from reporting party, those on the scene, etc
  - PERT Clinician’s provide an on-scene clinical assessment
DANGER TO OTHERS

- §5150 transport to LPS facility
  - §5150.05 Credible 3rd Party Info
  - §5151 – Psychiatric assessment made at LPS facility to determine if the patient requires psychiatric detention
  - §5152 – The actual admission and hold
- Tarasoff when appropriate
  - Duty to protect

CONNECTION TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

- “Provide system-wide coordination.”
  - Clinical documentation in CCBH
  - Coordination with Case Manager
  - Warm Hand Off

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Laura Vleugels, MD
Supervising Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
County of San Diego
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

- County of San Diego
- Children’s System of Care
- School Based Outpatient Treatment services
- SchoolLink
- Medi-Cal Health Plans
- Educationally-Related Mental Health Services
- Private sector
  - Private insurance
  - Employee Assistance Programs

SERVICES

- Clinical vs Forensic
- Training Opportunities
  - Focus on suicide assessment and prevention
  - Dangerousness, to self and to others
    - What questions are we asking? What information are we gathering?
    - What does means reduction look like?
    - Psychiatric Hospitalization
    - Law enforcement +/- PERT
    - What resources are available to us?

THREAT ASSESSMENT

- “Danger to Others”
- Prospective Risk Analysis
  - Has client had violent/homicidal ideation or impulses in the past 12 months?
    - Thoughts/impulses, intention, plan
  - Does the client have past violent behaviors?
    - Toward property or animals, toward people, domestic violence, antisocial, intimidation, predatory
- §1150
  - Law Enforcement
  - PERT
  - Psychiatric Hospitalization
  - Tarasoff
Andrija Lopez, Deputy District Attorney

WHAT IS A PC 422

- Penal Code statute that covers “criminal threats”
- 6 elements that law requires:
  1) person willingly threatened to unlawfully kill or cause great bodily injury to victim
  2) person made the threat orally/in writing/by electronic communication
  3) person intended their statement to be understood as a threat and intended it to be communicated to victim
  4) the threat was so clear, immediate, unconditional, specific that it communicated to victim a serious intention & immediate prospect it would be carried out
  5) the threat actually caused the victim to be in sustained fear for their own safety or the safety of their immediate family
  6) the victim's fear was reasonable under the circumstances

YEAR | CASES REVIEWED | CASES PROSECUTED
--- | --- | ---
2015 | 9 | 7
2016 | 6 | 6
2017 | 21 | 10
2018 | 70 | 41
2019 | 12 | 4
ROLE OF DA'S OFFICE WHEN A JUVENILE MAKES A SCHOOL THREAT

- Treat each threat as serious until you can work it down
- Case-by-case extensive analysis looking at:
  - Police reports, prior criminal history
  - School records—including disciplinary IEPs, etc.
  - Psychological evaluations
  - Social media contents
  - Writings/journals/drawings
  - Mental health issues
  - Access to weapons
- Prosecution where appropriate, referral for services as appropriate, referral to restorative justice program as appropriate

PROTOCOL

- Drafting began within a few days of the Parkland massacre
- Comprehensive approach that started with identifying key partners
- Emphasis on prevention and open communication
- Comprised of three sections
  - School response
  - Law enforcement response
  - Prosecution response
Critical piece to protocol

Comprised of approximately 20 people

Multi-disciplinary

Includes prosecutors and investigators from District Attorney's Office, law enforcement officers, San Diego County Office of Education, mental health professionals, probation officers.

- A factor in nearly every single threat incident reviewed over the past four years
- Clear need to redefine dialogue between mental health providers and law enforcement
- Define cooperation of the two entities better within legal parameters (recognizing Tarasoff)
- Highlight the goal of prevention and getting the services needed to address the juvenile's underlying issues.

Mental Health Emphasis

WE NEED TO LISTEN
NEVER FORGET THE “WHY”