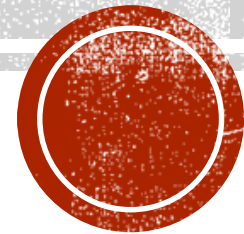


# THREAT ASSESSMENT

RCT Meeting  
April 26, 2016  
Gabe Lomas



# THE FINAL REPORT AND FINDINGS OF THE SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF SCHOOL ATTACKS IN THE UNITED STATES



- The US Secret Service and the US DOE studied 37 acts of school violence and summarized them in this 2004 report.



# PBS: PATH TO VIOLENCE MOVIE

- Path to Violence
- From the case of Roy High School in Utah, we learn:
  - Leakage will occur and that can prevent violence
  - Relationships with students will create a safer climate
  - Working in teams will reduce threats
  - “Connections with adults matter”
  - Most school violence can be prevented
- What factors protected Roy HS?
  - The brother
  - Relationships



# SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE FINDINGS AGREE:

- Others know prior to an attack
- Most do not threaten directly, most threats are indirect
- School-based attacks are usually planned, not sudden
- Attackers had seriously concerned others prior to the attack
- Attackers had serious difficulties with losses or failures. Many were suicidal.
- A profile is not clear
- Attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack
- Most had access to weapons, and trained with weapons, prior to the attack
- Many involved or tried to involve other students prior to the attack
- Despite law enforcement responses, most incidents were stopped prior to law enforcement involvement
- Most acts were brief



# S.T.E.P.

- Subject
- Target
- Environment
- Precipitating Events



# DEVELOPMENT OF THE THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM (VA)

- Established by law
- May serve one campus or more than one campus
- Must meet weekly, but may meet more frequently in the event of a threat
- Teams must include experts in:
  - Counseling
  - Teaching
  - Administration
  - Law Enforcement



# **THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS MUST:**

- Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff on recognizing threatening behavior
- Identify members of the school community to report threats
- Implement policies developed by the school board for threat assessment
- Report to the superintendent or a designee any preliminary determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, and
- Report quantitative data on its activities



# STEPS IN THREAT ASSESSMENT

- 1. Team receives a report of threat
  - Sometimes the threat is averted with counseling and/or disciplinary measures
  - We want to know: who made the threat, who witnessed, who received the threat, what adults know the student well, and what records do we have on the student?
- 2. Team gathers more information on the student of concern
  - Speak with other staff including coaches, friends, employer, parents, law enforcement, social media, online presence
- 3. Team reviews all known information using 11 questions from the SSI Report
  - 11 questions on subsequent slide
- 4. Team makes a determination
  - Does this person pose a genuine threat? What kind of response is warranted?
- 5. Team classifies the threat





# 11 QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the motives and goals? What brought him/ her to our attention?
- 2. Have there been any communications suggesting intent to attack?
- 3. Has the student shown heightened interest in school attacks, attackers, weapons, or other incidents?
- 4. Has the student engaged in attack related behavior?
- 5. Does the student have the capacity to carry out the attack?
- 6. Is the student hopeless, desperate, or in despair?
- 7. Does the student have a trusting relationship with an adult?
- 8. Does the student see violence as acceptable for problem solving?
- 9. Is the student's "story" consistent with actions?
- 10. Are other concerned about the potential for violence?
- 11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?



# TIPS FOR DISCUSSING CASES

- Focus on the facts of the case
- Focus on behaviors and not traits
- Focus on understanding the context of the behaviors
- Examine the progression over time
- Corroborate critical information



# THREAT CLASSIFICATION SCALE

- Low- Does not appear to pose a true threat
- Moderate – Does not appear to pose a threat currently, but shows behaviors that indicate a continuing intent to harm
- High- Clear threat of violence, showing behaviors and intent to harm, as well as capacity to carry out plan
- Imminent – immediate threat that requires quick response including containment of threat and protection of target



# RESPONSES BY THREAT LEVEL

- Low – Discipline, Parent notification, apology, referral to social services, internal counseling.
- Moderate – Notify intended victim and parent(s), act to protect victim, monitor and supervise both students, discipline, consult with SRO, counseling, consider assessment
- High – Notify law enforcement, protect target, supervise threatening student, mental health evaluation
- Imminent – Notify law enforcement, protect potential victims, supervise, notify parents, notify superintendent, order evaluation, develop written safety plan based on assessment outcomes



# LAWS

- FERPA only governs written records, not observations. You are allowed to speak to law enforcement about your observations
- FERPA only applies to schools, and doesn't impair police
- Guidance from the Federal DOE encourages information sharing where public safety is concerned`

