

# Threat Assessment: Warning Signs & Risk Behaviors

**Alabama State Department of Education**

**SAFE Council Regional Training**

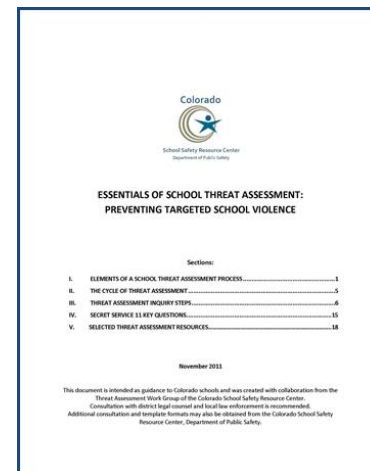
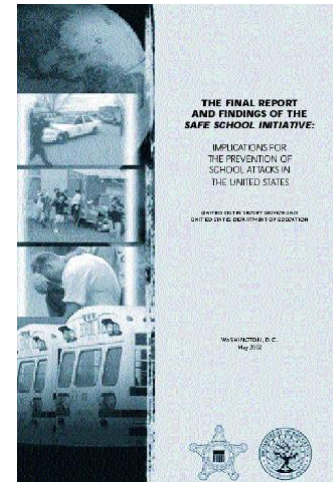
**Trained by and Adopted from the Colorado School Safety Resource Center**

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# The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative

- US Secret Service and Department of Education
- Patterned after the Secret Service's Exceptional Case Study Project (ECSP)
- US Secret Service and Dept. of Ed. (2004)
- Essentials of School Threat Assessment (CSSRC)



# Safe School Initiative Key Findings

There is no accurate profile of students who engage in targeted violence.



# Safe School Initiative Key Findings



Most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.

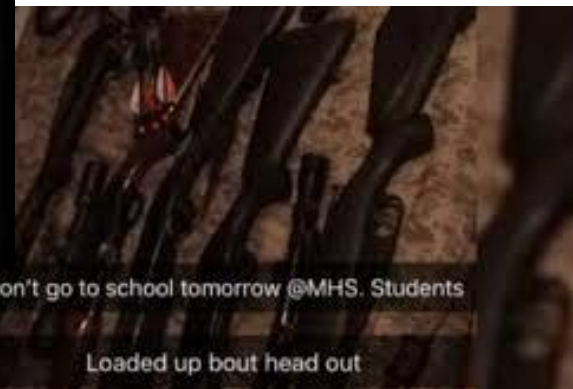
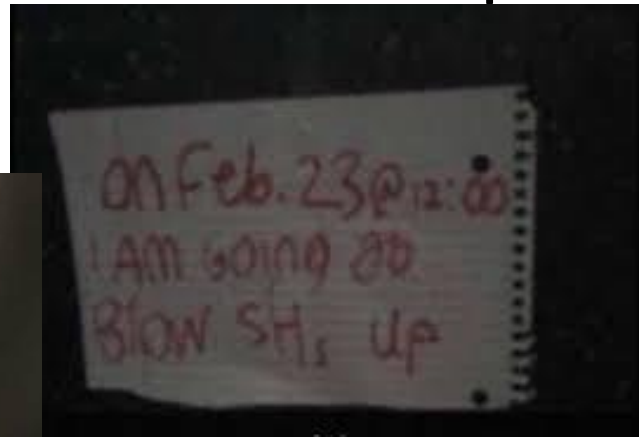
# Safe School Initiative- Key Findings



Many felt bullied, harassed, and/or persecuted by others.

# Safe School Initiative Key Findings

Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea or plan—"leakage"



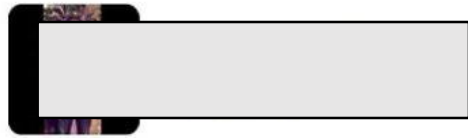
shooting up the school tomorrow  
wear a red shirt if you want to live so  
we know not to shoot you

👤 Reply 🔄 Retweet ⭐ Favorite ⋮ More

RETWEETS 101 FAVORITES 76

7:06 PM - 22 Jan 2014





Your gonna piss me off... And then some shits gonna go down and I don't think you'll like it... 🙄🙄



20/08/2014 08:31

← Reply to comment



1 hour ago

Im going to be a professional school shooter



Add a reply...



Follow

It breaks me... It actually does... I know it seems like I'm sweating it off... But I'm not. And I never will be able to... 🙄🙄🙄



RETWEETS 188 FAVORITES 123



3:43 AM - 21 Oct 2014

" I'm preparing myself for the school shooting. I can't wait. My aim has gotten much more accurate... I can't wait to walk into that class

# Safe School Initiative Key Findings



WHERE'S WALDO'S PARENTS ?

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- ▶ Most attackers had significant losses and/or personal failures;  $\frac{3}{4}$  history of suicidal thoughts, gestures, attempts
- ▶ Most attackers had access to weapons (3/4 get weapons from their own home)



# Safe School Initiative Key Findings

In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.

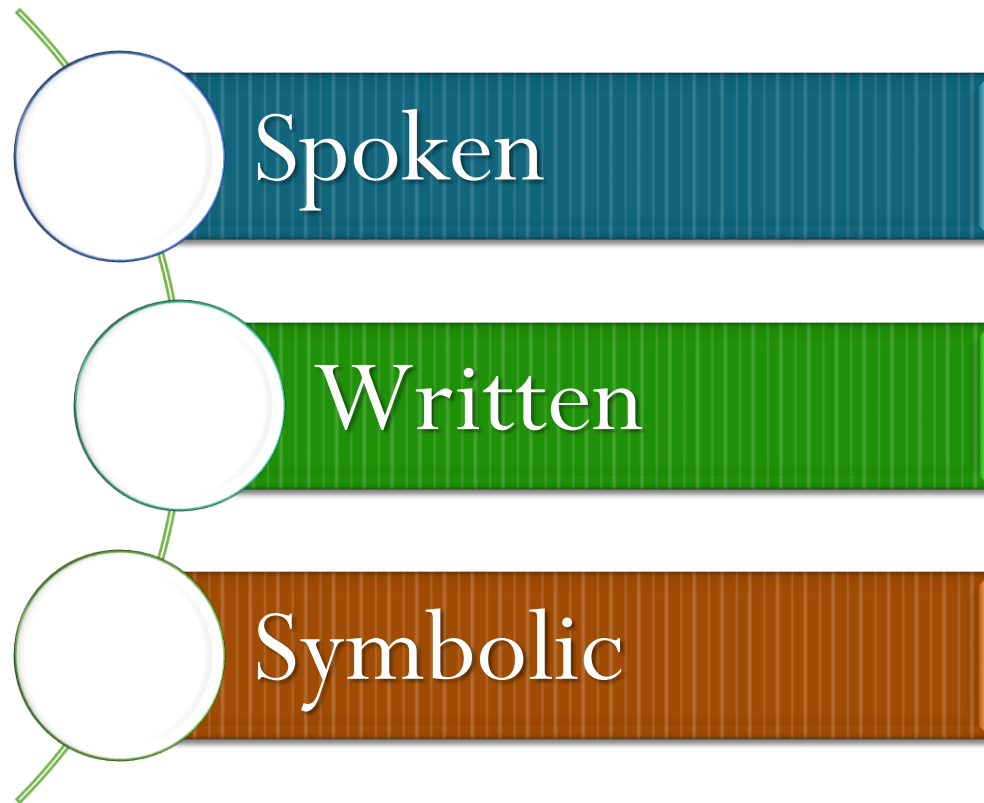


# Triggering Events for a Threat Assessment

- Student directly or indirectly threatens to harm person, group, and/or entire school
- Artistic, written, or symbolic expression with disturbing and/or violent content is presented
- Report that someone may possess a weapon on campus
- Student demonstrates imminent warning signs or a cluster of concerning early warning signs
- Student makes threat to harm or kill self (along with threats to others, or additional factors)
- Student has escalating pattern of behavior that has been resistive to intervention at school
- Other reasons?**

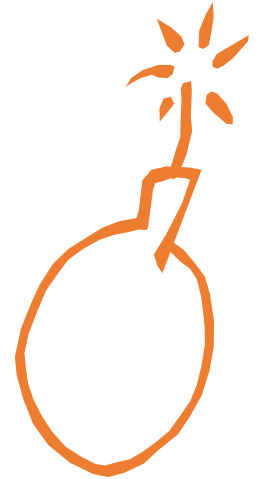
# What Is A Threat?

An expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something.



## A Direct Threat

- ▶ Identifies a specific act against a specific target and is delivered in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner:
  - "I am going to place a bomb in the school's gym."
  - "Josh is a dead man by tomorrow."



(Critical Incident Response Group & National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. (2000). The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective. Quantico, VA: US Dept. of Justice)

## An Indirect Threat

- Tends to be vague, unclear, and ambiguous. The threat suggests that a violent act **COULD** occur, not that it **WILL** occur.

**"If I wanted to, I could kill everyone  
at this school."**

(Critical Incident Response Group & National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. (2000). The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective. Quantico, VA: US Dept. of Justice)

## A Veiled Threat

- The threat hints at a possible violent act, but leaves it to the listener to interpret the message and give a meaning to the threat.

- **"I like you. So take my advice and stay away from school tomorrow."**

(Critical Incident Response Group & National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. (2000). The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective. Quantico, VA: US Dept. of Justice)



## A Conditional Threat

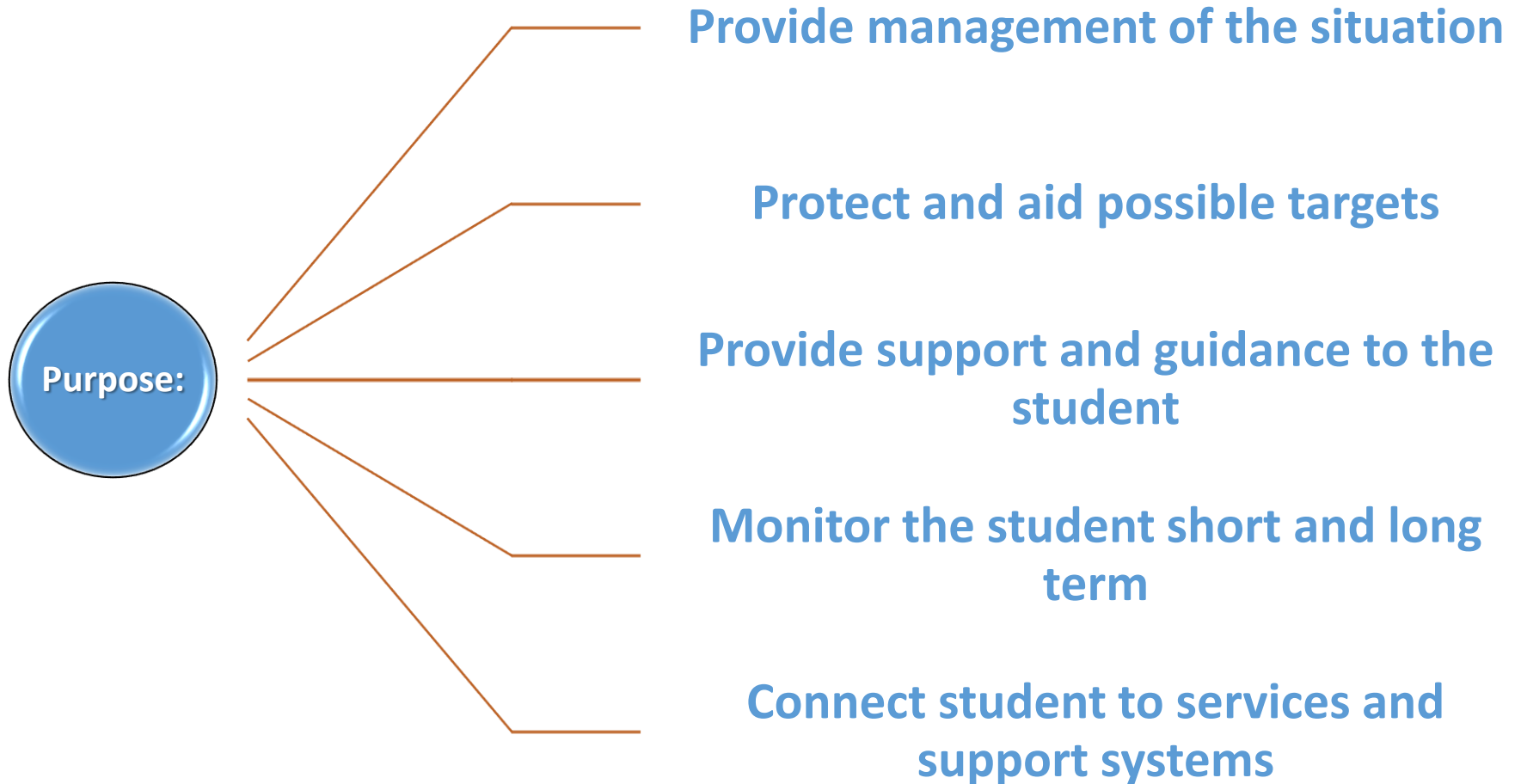
- Warns that a violent act will happen unless certain demands or terms are met. Look for the words "if" and "or". It often is designed to intimidate the target into compliance:
  - **"If you tell someone, you might not make it home today."**

(Critical Incident Response Group & National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. (2000). The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective. Quantico, VA: US Dept. of Justice)



What is your process for reporting concerns about students?

# Develop a Response, Management, and Support (RMS) Plan

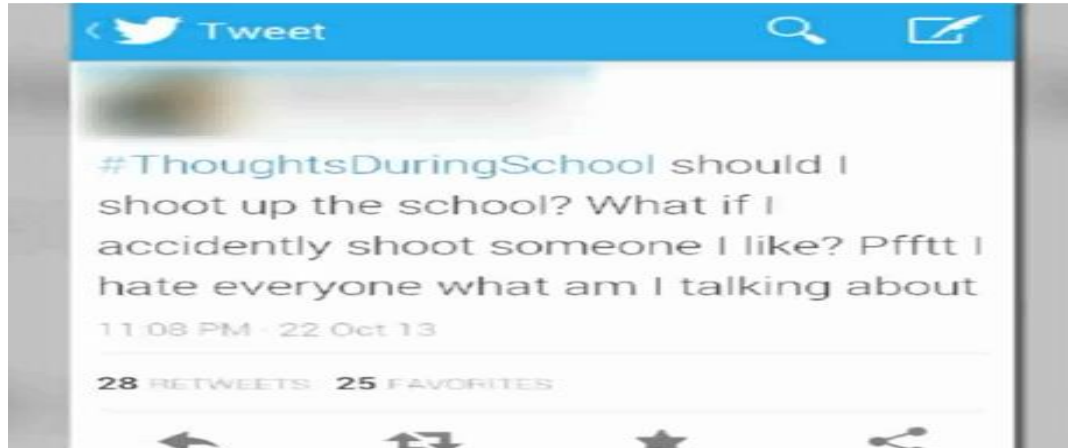


# Table Top Exercises



- [Message on Social Media](#)

- At a high school basketball game on a Friday night, a concerned parent pulls you aside to show you a posting that her son just showed her:



- You recognize the student as one that has had a few fights in the past and was recently suspended for possessing marijuana.
- You immediately contact the principal and the superintendent, who calls the local police. Officers go to the student's house and meet with the family. The student was agitated about the whole situation, but reports that he was "just joking around." He admits to being mad about being suspended, but said he "wouldn't do anything that stupid." Officers ask about weapons in the home and the parents report that there are only two shotguns locked in a gun safe. Law enforcement reports back to school officials that they do not feel this is an immediate concern, but they will keep an investigation open.



# Preventing School Violence

- Develop and maintain a positive school climate
- Provide awareness and ongoing training in early warning signs
- Outline ***clear procedures for reporting***
- Timely and appropriate response to threats
- Use a team process to gather information and evaluate threat
- Seek assistance, as needed
- Implement interventions that are equal in weight to the behavior(s) of concern
- Provide ongoing monitoring of students of concern

# SAFE Council Regional Contacts

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