

## Threat Assessment: Secret Service Eleven Key Questions

Colorado School Safety Resource Center 03.19.2010

### Threat Assessment Inquiry: A Summary of the Secret Service Eleven Key Questions

How should the information from a threat assessment inquiry be organized and analyzed? Information from research and interviews conducted during a threat assessment inquiry should be guided by the following 11 key questions:

1. WHAT ARE THE STUDENT'S MOTIVES AND GOALS?
2. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY COMMUNICATIONS SUGGESTING IDEAS OR INTENT TO ATTACK?
3. HAS THE SUBJECT SHOWN INAPPROPRIATE INTEREST IN SCHOOL ATTACKS OR ATTACKERS, WEAPONS, INCIDENTS OF MASS VIOLENCE?
4. HAS THE STUDENT ENGAGED IN ATTACK RELATED BEHAVIORS?
5. DOES THE STUDENT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT THE ACT?
6. IS THE STUDENT EXPERIENCING HOPELESSNESS, DESPERATION OR DESPAIR?
7. DOES THE STUDENT HAVE A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH AT LEAST ONE RESPONSIBLE ADULT?
8. DOES THE STUDENT SEE VIOLENCE AS AN ACCEPTABLE OR DESIRABLE WAY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS?
9. IS THE STUDENT'S CONVERSATION AND "STORY" CONSISTENT WITH THEIR ACTIONS?
10. ARE OTHER PEOPLE CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT'S POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE?
11. WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT AFFECT THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENCE?

Use the information gathered to help determine the seriousness of the concern and to develop the action and support plan.

#### Explanation of the Secret Service Eleven Key Questions

1. WHAT ARE THE STUDENT'S MOTIVE(S) AND GOALS?
  - a. What motivated the student to make the statements or take the actions that caused him or her to come to attention?
  - b. Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
  - c. Does the student have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?
  - d. What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result? Does the potential attacker feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternative?
2. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY COMMUNICATIONS SUGGESTING IDEAS OR INTENT TO ATTACK?
  - a. What, if anything, has the student communicated to someone else (targets, friends, other students, teachers, family, others) or written in a diary, journal, or website concerning his or her ideas and/or intentions?
3. HAS THE SUBJECT SHOWN INAPPROPRIATE INTEREST IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?
  - a. School attacks or attackers;
  - b. Weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon);
  - c. Incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murderers).
4. HAS THE STUDENT ENGAGED IN ATTACK-RELATED BEHAVIORS? THESE BEHAVIORS MIGHT INCLUDE:
  - a. Developing an attack idea or plan;
  - b. Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons;
  - c. Casing or checking out possible sites and areas for attack;
  - d. Rehearsing attacks or ambushes.

Exhibit No.: 6  
Deponent: Meredith  
Date/RPR: 6/30/15  
Hunter + Geist, Inc. Jm



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### 5. DOES THE STUDENT HAVE THE **CAPACITY** TO CARRY OUT AN ACT OF TARGETED VIOLENCE?

- a. How organized is the student's thinking and behavior?
- b. Does the student have the means, e.g., access to a weapon, to carry out an attack?

### 6. IS THE STUDENT EXPERIENCING HOPELESSNESS, DESPERATION AND/OR DESPAIR?

- a. Is there information to suggest that the student is experiencing desperation and/or despair?
- b. Has the student experienced a recent failure, loss and/or loss of status?
- c. Is the student known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event/
- d. Is the student now, or has the student ever been, suicidal or "accident-prone"?
- e. Has the student engaged in behavior that suggests that he or she has considered ending their life?

### 7. DOES THE STUDENT HAVE A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH AT LEAST ONE RESPONSIBLE ADULT?

- a. Does this student have at least one relationship with an adult where the student feels that he or she can confide in the adult and believes that the adult will listen without judging or jumping to conclusions? (Students with trusting relationships with adults may be direct away from violence and despair and toward hope.)
- b. Is the student emotionally connected to – or disconnected from – other student?
- c. Has the student previously come to someone's attention or raised concern in a way that suggested he or she need intervention or supportive services?

### 8. DOES THE STUDENT SEE VIOLENCE AS AN ACCEPTABLE – OR DESIRABLE – OR THE ONLY WAY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS?

- a. Does the setting around the student (friends, fellow students, parents, teachers, adults) explicitly or implicitly support or endorse violence as a way of resolving problems or disputes?
- b. Has the student been "dared" by others to engage in an act of violence?

### 9. IS THE STUDENT'S CONVERSATION AND "STORY" CONSISTENT WITH HIS OR HER ACTIONS?

- a. Does information from collateral interviews and from the student's own behavior confirm or dispute what the student says is going on?

### 10. ARE OTHER PEOPLE CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT'S POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE?

- a. Are those who know the student concerned that he or she might take action based on violent ideas or plans?
- b. Are those who know the student concerned about a specific target?
- c. Have those who know the student witnessed recent changes or escalations in mood and behavior?

### 11. WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT AFFECT THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN ATTACK?

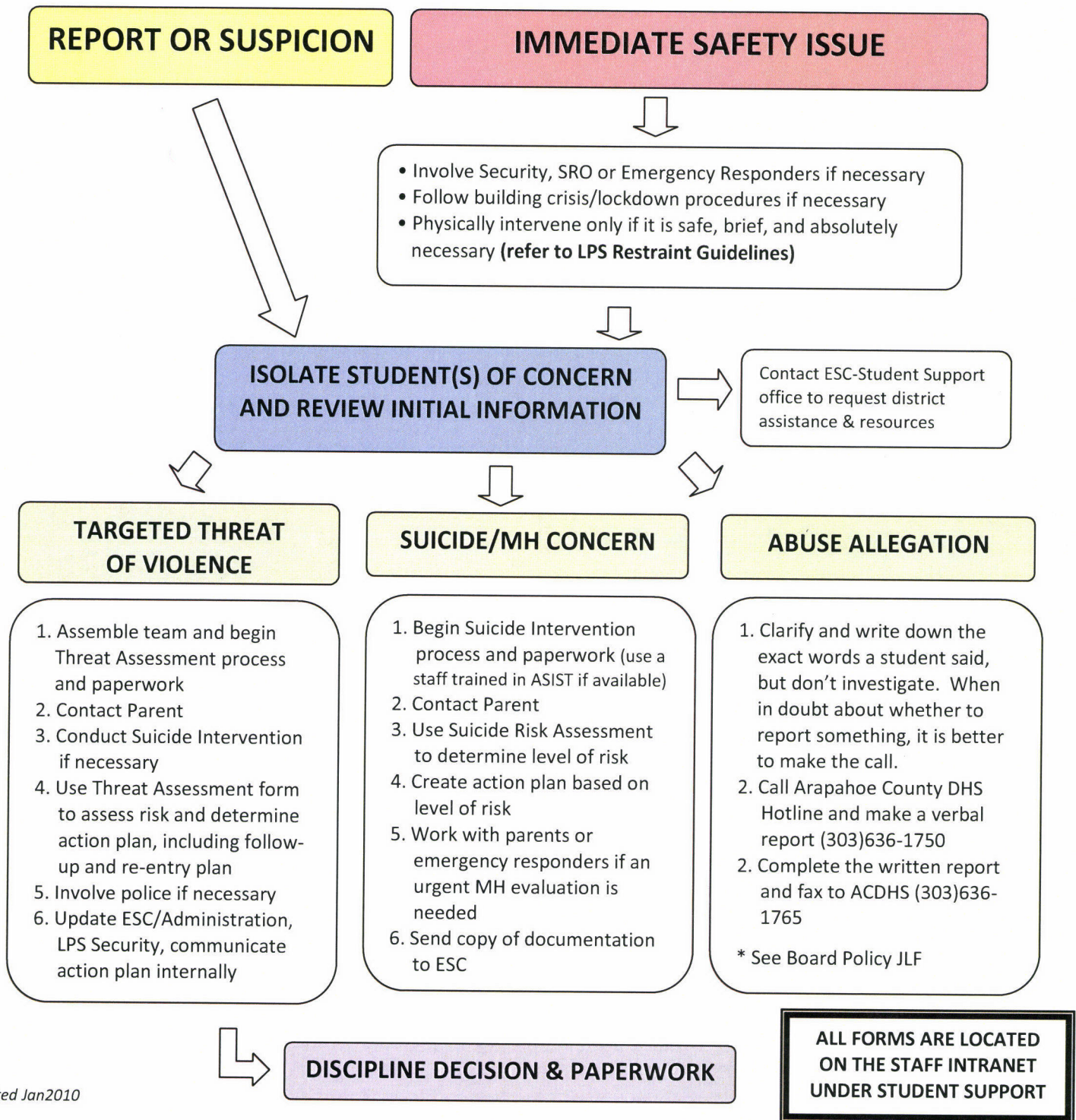
- a. What factors in the student's life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that the student will attempt to mount an attack at school?
- b. What is the response of other persons who know about the student's ideas or plan to mount an attack? (Do those who know about the student's ideas actively discourage the student from acting violently, encourage the student to attack, deny the possibility of violence, passively collude with attack, etc.?)

Adapted from: Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., Pollack, W., Borum, R., Modzeleski, W., & Reddy, M. (2002). *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools Program and U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center.





# **Littleton Public Schools** **CRISIS RESPONSE FLOWCHART**



Updated Jan2010



## **Danger Assessment Training**

### **Updates and Reminders for 2014-15**

#### **Suicide Intervention**

In consultation with our trainers and the implementation of the updated model of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), we have made changes to the suicide intervention forms. We no longer will be making judgments on the "level" of suicide risk. Staff should follow the ASIST intervention model and utilize the Suicide Intervention Report form as both guidance and documentation of the necessary steps. In addition, we have added the parent advisement to the resources page to indicate that parents have been notified of the concern and provided with resources. We are currently working to get these forms translated into Spanish.

We no longer will be using the old Risk Assessment Worksheet or the Notification of Emergency form.

#### **Threat Assessment**

We have made some changes to the Threat Assessment & Action Plan form based on feedback from administrators and mental health staff. Most of these address confusing checkboxes or terms. A section to include the summary of team decision was also added. Additional clarification was made on Step 6: Documentation & Notifications. We are currently working to get this form translated into Spanish.

In addition, two new guidance documents are now available. The Threat Assessment Intervention HELPSHEET is designed to provide quick reference to key aspects of the process and intervention options. The Threat Assessment Guidance Document provides specific clarifications about what is required versus what is optional.

Lastly, as a part of ongoing continuous improvement, we have a new District-level Danger Review Meeting each week that includes administrators from LPS Security, Student Support Services, and Social, Emotional & Behavior Services. The team reviews all LPS critical incidents from the past week, including discipline incidents, suicide interventions, threat assessments, Safe2Tell reports, physical restraints/seclusions, notifications of new charges from the District Attorney and other reports to or from law enforcement. The goal is to provide an overarching review and monitoring process and to support schools. You may have communication from this team as necessary to gather information or as follow up to specific incidents. The team will also review all HIGH level Threat Assessments and meet with parents and students if necessary.

#### **Bullying Intervention / Documentation**

No changes this year





# Early and Imminent Warning Signs for School Violence

Reminders for Teachers and Other School Staff

## Principles for Identifying the Early Warning Signs of School Violence

- Develop caring, supportive relationships with students
- Do no harm – don't enflame the situation
- Understand violence and aggression within a context
- Avoid stereotypes such as race, socioeconomic status, academic ability, appearance
- View warning signs within a developmental context
- Understand that children typically exhibit multiple signs (do not over react to one sole sign)

**Early Warning Signs:** When observing a child's behavior it is imperative that the examiner look for multiple signs and consider the appropriate context. The signs must be presented in combination and indicate a need for further analysis to determine the appropriate intervention.

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being a victim of violence
- Feelings of being picked on and persecuted
- Low school interest and poor academic performance
- Expression of violence in writings and drawings
- Uncontrolled anger
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating and bullying behaviors
- History of discipline problems
- Past history of violent and aggressive behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Drug use and alcohol use
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms
- Serious threats of violence

**Imminent Warning Signs:** Indicate a student is very close or has a very high potential of being violent. Usually these signs are apparent to both staff and parents. When these signs are evident safety is the first and foremost consideration.

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members
- Severe destruction of property
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons
- Detailed threats of lethal violence
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide

*ALWAYS REPORT WARNING SIGNS TO AN ADMINISTRATOR AND ALSO TO THE STUDENT'S COUNSELOR, PSYCHOLOGIST OR SOCIAL WORKER. This can be done via phone, email, verbally, or anonymously through Colorado's Safe2Tell line.*

*Source: Center for the Study of Violence Prevention, U.S. Secret Service*