

D·PREP



# Education Categories

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# Violence Risk Assessment

## ALONE

Refers to isolation and the inability to form social connections, despite the desire and attempts. This escalates to feelings of hopelessness, irritability and anger at being separated from what seems to come so easily for others. The outsider status and extreme isolation coincides with teasing and thoughts of suicide or extreme action.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty making friends</li> <li>• Lacks peer support; sadness</li> <li>• Desire for change but little progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failed attempts at connection with others</li> <li>• Some irritability/explosiveness when upset</li> <li>• Growing concern they will never fit in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme isolation; teased or bullied</li> <li>• Outsider status; no hope of fitting in</li> <li>• Considering suicide and/or revenge</li> </ul>

- Would you describe yourself as shy or outgoing?
- What are some of the qualities you look for in friends?
- How important is it to make friends?
- What do you do to make friends? Has that worked? Why or why not?
- Do you think it gets easier or harder to make friends as you get older?

### Platte Canyon High School, 2006

“Please forgive me for the terrible things you have heard or are about to hear. Suicide is sometimes an embarrassment to family members, so for this I truly apologize for any hurt I may cause all of you. To me suicide is a final release from an empty and painful life that has never had any meaning for me. I’m tired of living, and for the past 15 years I’m tired of living in pain. Constant pain.”

### Research Support

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).

Lankford A. (2013). The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage Shooters, and Other Self-Destructive Killers. (St. Martin Press, New York).

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

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## CATALYST

These negative events occur and act like the catalyst in a chemical reaction, speeding up the escalation, like the loss of a job, relationship, or finances can act to further an attack plan. Unlike free fall, catalyst events occur more suddenly.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences one of the following: HR action, breakup, loss of major/academic class, failure of Greek pledge, kicked off athletic team, financial stress, legal/criminal trouble, death of pet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple negative experiences and losses</li> <li>• Major losses; death of close friend</li> <li>• Difficulty functioning with so many stressors, losses, failed supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overwhelming sense of stress and loss from multiple events such as suspension, expulsion, loss of job, or death of parent/caregiver</li> <li>• Acceleration to greater hopelessness</li> </ul>

- How would describe a typical day at work or school?
- If you had one wish, what would change right now in your life?
- What is one thing or person that you lost in your life?
- On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the chance of things getting better (with 1=never and 10=it will be better soon)?
- What are some things that keep you from reaching your goals?

### Arizona Nursing School, 2002

“I guess what it is about is that it is a reckoning. A settling of accounts. and arrogance of authorities. The University is filled with too many people who are filled with hubris. They feel untouchable.”

### Research Support

Calhoun, F., & Weston, S. (2009). Threat assessment and management strategies: Identifying the Howlers and Hunters. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., & Holden, G. (1995). Threat assessment: An approach to targeted violence. Research in action. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

**FREE FALL**

Unlike catalyst events, which are more sudden, free fall describes a more general set of problems like failing supports, mental illness flare ups and a general sense of hopelessness. The free fall becomes more concerning as multiple, chronic problems intersect, eventually creating an inability to function and a lack of hope that things will improve.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life is not going how they want</li> <li>Depressed, sad, isolated; not suicidal</li> <li>Losing supports (family, friends, work)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feels unlucky, with many challenges</li> <li>Unable to improve; continuing to slide</li> <li>Problems intersect, hard to manage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to function or care for self</li> <li>Finances, supports, grades, work failing</li> <li>No hope, unable to stop descent</li> </ul>

- What are some things that are wearing you down in life right now?
- What kind of supports have been helpful in overcoming difficult times?
- How would you rate the chances of things getting better in the future?
- What are the three hardest things you are dealing with right now?
- Does it ever get so bad that you think about killing yourself?

**Umpqua College, 2015**

“I have always been the most hated person in the world. Ever since I arrived in this world, I have been under siege from it...my whole life has been one lonely enterprise. One loss after the other. And here I am, 26, with no friends, no job, no girlfriend, a virgin.”

**Research Support**

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).  
 National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.  
 Turner, J., & Gelles, M. (2003). Threat assessment: A risk management approach. New York: Routledge.

**HOPELESS**

This describes a sense of worry and uncertainty about the future along with difficulty focusing and pervasive feelings of sadness. As hopelessness increases, they feel trapped and eventually are unable to function and/or experience growing suicidal thoughts.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feelings of sadness and loneliness</li> <li>Unsure and worried about the future</li> <li>Difficulty focusing on daily tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often feels isolated, alone and trapped</li> <li>Difficulty seeing any way out</li> <li>Intrusive thoughts of negative future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intolerable feelings of hopelessness</li> <li>Failures in work, school, finances, dating</li> <li>Thoughts of suicide, unbearable pain</li> </ul>

- What do you think about when you see yourself five years from now?
- Do your worries about the future keep you from focusing on work, school, or friendships?
- When was the last time you felt stuck or trapped by a problem?
- Does the pain of living get so bad that you think about killing yourself?
- If you had a magic wand, what would you change in your life to make your future better?

**LA Fitness, 2009**

“No girlfriend since 1984, last Christmas with Pam was in 1983. Who knows why. I am not ugly or too weird. No sex since July 1990 either (I was 29).”

**Huntsville Alabama (Fiction Writing), 2010**

“The empty clip slid into the 9 mm easily. Beth sat on her bed, the gun and its paraphernalia, strewn about, while she worked on it... [She] sat back down with the dictionary. She mulled over words like love, loneliness, hopelessness, despair. She looked at words like suicide and murder.”

**Research Support**

Calhoun, F., & Weston, S. (2009). Threat assessment and management strategies: Identifying the Howlers and Hunters. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.  
 Lankford A. (2013). The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage Shooters, and Other Self-Destructive Killers. (St. Martin Press, New York).  
 National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

**AGGRIEVED**

Here, the person blames others for most of their problems and difficulties in life. They carry resentments and escalate to make those they see as responsible pay for their actions. These actions can be perceived or actual; most commonly they are based on some general truth.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently passes blame to others</li> <li>• Perceives others have wronged them</li> <li>• Unable take a balanced perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discusses actual/perceived injustices</li> <li>• Carries resentments/slights</li> <li>• Blames others for their behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driven by injustices and grievances</li> <li>• Shares desire to “make things right”</li> <li>• Rehearses, plots to make others pay</li> </ul>

- When something goes wrong are you able to see what it went wrong?
- Can you share a few times where other people’s poor planning or choices impacted your life?
- Will there come a time where you get justice for people treating you unfairly? Will things ever be put right?
- Can you trace back the source of the problems in your life to one place?
- Is there a certain person or group who is most responsible for the way your life turned out?

**Freedom High, 2010**

"My Testament: Some people (the government sponsored media) will say I was evil, a monster (V)... no... I was just born poor in a country where the Wealthy manipulate, use, abuse, and economically enslave 95% of the population. Rich Republicans, Rich Democrats... same-same... rich... they take turns fleecing us... our few dollars... pyramiding the wealth for themselves. The 95%... the us, in US of A, are the neo slaves of the Global South. Our Masters, the Wealthy, do, as they like to us..."

**Research Support**

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).

Calhoun, F., & Weston, S. (2009). Threat assessment and management strategies: Identifying the Howlers and Hunters. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Folger, R. & Baron, R. A. (1996). Violence and hostility at work: A model of reactions to perceived injustice. In G. R. VandenBos & E. Q. Bulatao (Eds.), Violence on the Job: Identifying Risks and Developing Solutions (pp. 51 – 85 ). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

O’Toole M.E. (2002). The school shooter: A threat assessment perspective. Quantico, VA: FBI

O’Toole, M.E., & Bowman, A. (2011). Dangerous instincts: How gut feelings betray. (New York: Hudson Street Press).

**VENGEANCE**

Seen in parallel with aggrieved, injustice and grievance collecting, this is the action and desire to punish those they feel have caused their pain or are unfairly enjoying life in a way the attacker resents. Talking and venting eventually includes fantasies of acting out their plan and considering the time, place, and location of their attack.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers setting things right, justice</li> <li>• Holds onto real/perceived wrongs</li> <li>• Overwhelmed; struggles with life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intense thoughts about bringing justice</li> <li>• Talks/posts about righting wrongs</li> <li>• Difficulty focusing; intense anger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fantasizes/plans about justice</li> <li>• Focus on revenge, regardless of cost</li> <li>• Considers time and place</li> </ul>

- Do you think people ever get the justice they deserve?
- Tell me about a time where someone hurt you badly and what happened to them as a result.
- Is it reassuring or calming for you to think about punishing those who have treated you badly?
- Have you ever been so upset that you posted something intense online?
- What are some things you would change in society if you had the chance?

**Thurston High School, 1998**

"I don’t understand any fucking person on this earth. Some of you are so weak, mainly, that a four-year-old could push you down. I am strong, but my head just doesn’t work right. I know I should be happy with what I have, but I hate living... I am evil. I want to kill and give pain without a cost. And there is no such thing. We kill him—we killed him a long time ago. Anyone that believes in God is a fucking sheep."

**Virginia Tech, 2007**

"Only if you could be the victim of your reprehensible and wicked crimes, you Christian Nazis, you would have brute-restrained your animal urges to fuck me. You could be at home right now eating your fucking caviar and your fucking cognac, had you not ravenously raped my soul."

**Research Support**

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).

Calhoun, F., & Weston, S. (2009). Threat assessment and management strategies: Identifying the Howlers and Hunters. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Knoll J. (2010). The “pseudocommando” mass murderer: Part I, the psychology of revenge and obliteration. J Am Acad Psychiatry Law. 38, 87–94.

Langman, P. (2009). Rampage school shooters: A typology. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 14, 79–86.

**INCEL**

This term stands for “involuntary celibate” and represents a range of thinking and behaviors from social awkwardness and difficulty forming connections with women to hardline misogyny and active threats to punish them for rejecting the person’s attempts at dating.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frustrated, no social/dating success</li> <li>• Unsure socially, easily embarrassed</li> <li>• Bullied/teased when trying to connect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blames society/women for difficulties</li> <li>• Increasingly hopeless for future</li> <li>• Poor self-concept; thinks no one cares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving up, isolation, hopeless, angry</li> <li>• Anger toward women, misogynistic</li> <li>• Extreme disconnection; us vs. them</li> </ul>

- How important is it to find someone to date and be with sexually?
- What are some of the roadblocks to dating and connecting with others?
- Do you think you have something valuable you can share in a relationship?
- How does society need to change to create an improved playing field?
- What would you tell a friend is the best way is to approach someone they want to date?

**École Polytechnique, 1989**

“Would you note that if I commit suicide today 89–12–06 it is not for economic reasons (for I have waited until I exhausted all my financial means, even refusing jobs) but for political reasons. Because I have decided to send the feminists, who have always ruined my life, to their Maker.”

**Akihabara, 2008**

“I don’t have a single friend and I won’t in the future. I’ll be ignored because I’m ugly... If I had a girlfriend, I wouldn’t have just left my job or be addicted to my cellphone. A man with hope could never understand this.”

**Isla Vista, 2014**

“I wanted to punish them all. I imagined how sweet it would be to slaughter all of those evil, slutty bitches who rejected me, along with the fraternity jocks they throw themselves at. I wanted to punish them all. I imagined how sweet it would be to slaughter all of those evil, slutty bitches who rejected me, along with the fraternity jocks they throw themselves at.”

**Research Support**

Ging, D. (2019). Alphas, betas, and incels: Theorizing the masculinities of the manosphere. *Men and Masculinities*, 22(4), 638-657.

Scaptura, M. & Boyle, K. (2019). Masculinity Threat, Incel Traits, and Violent Fantasies Among Heterosexual Men in the United States. *Feminist Criminology*.

Van Brunt, B., Solomon, J. & Lewis, W. (2020). *An Educator’s Guide to Assessing Threats in Student Writing: Social Media, Email, and other Narrative*. NY: Routledge.

Van Brunt, B. & Taylor, C. (2021). *Understanding and Treating Incels: Case Studies, Guidance, and Treatment of Violence Risk in the Involuntary Celibate Community*. NY: Taylor and Francis.

**COSTUMING**

As an attacker prepares, they often find clothing, tactical gear, and accessories they will need during the attack. This may start with an affiliation to a group like the Proud boys or Atomwaffen and eventually involves purchasing ballistic plates, knee and elbow pads, harnesses, and/or ammunition containers. In some attacks, they have taken on the appearance of figures such as the Dark Knight, Joker, and characters from *The Matrix*.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affiliates with group symbols or clothes</li> <li>• May begin to purchase or obtain items such as patches, military shirts/pants, footwear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquires some tactical gear and clothing</li> <li>• Persona like “Dark Knight” or “Punisher”</li> <li>• Posts online, collects items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amasses tactical gear, holsters</li> <li>• Purchases related to mission plan</li> <li>• Countermeasures to blend with security</li> </ul>

- Who is your favorite superhero or supervillain character?
- What was your favorite Halloween costume to dress up as a kid?
- Have you played paintball or airsoft? What kind of clothes do you wear?
- Do you have a video game avatar? What does it look like?
- If you had \$1000 to spend on clothing/accessories, what would you get?

**Dawson College, 2006**

“Head to toe, all black. Boots as black as tar. Cloak lashing to and fro with the wind... the disgusting human creatures scream in panic and run in all directions, taking with them the lies and deceptions. The Death Knight gazes at the humans with an empty stare, as they knock each other down in a mad dash to safety. He wishes to slaughter them as they flee.”



**Research Support**

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). *Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior*. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).

Knoll, J. (2010). The “pseudocommando” mass murderer: Part I, the psychology of revenge and obliteration. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 38, 87–94.

Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldemann, A., & James, D. (2011). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behavioral Science Law*, 30, 256–279.

Van Brunt, B & Lewis, W.C. (2014). Costuming, Misogyny, and Objectification as Risk Factors in Targeted Violence. *Violence and Gender* 4, (3), 81-101.

**SADIST**

Here, there is pleasure taken in inflicting harm on people and/or animals. At the early stages, this may manifest as a lack of empathy or non-physical negative attacks on others. In later stages, there is a growing need to harm others physically along with making plans and narrowing on target.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thoughts of causing pain to others</li> <li>Fantasize about having power to hurt</li> <li>Occasionally distracted by fantasies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in hurting others, causing pain</li> <li>Fantasizes; buys pain instruments</li> <li>Current/history of harming animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fixation and focus in pursuit of victim</li> <li>Lack of conscience, sense of right or wrong</li> <li>Driving, obsessive plans to inflict pain</li> </ul>

- How did you feel the first time you hurt someone physically?
- Do you think some people deserve to be hurt?
- Do you think there are two different groups of people? The awake and the sleepwalkers? The hunters and the hunted?
- Do you have intense thoughts of wanting to hurt another person that are difficult to resist?
- Have you ever experienced pain or guilt after hurting someone?

**Grover Cleveland Elementary School, 1979**

“I just did it for the fun of it. I don’t like Mondays. This livens up the day. I have to go now. I shot a pig [policeman] I think and I want to shoot more. I’m having too much fun [to surrender]... I had no reason for it, and it was just a lot of fun... It was just like shooting ducks in a pond... [The children] looked like a herd of cows standing around; it was really easy pickings.”

**Columbine, 1999**

“I want to tear a throat out with my own teeth like a pop can. I want to gut someone with my hand, to tear a head off and rip out the heart and lungs from the neck, to stab someone in the gut, shove it up to their heart, and yank the fucking blade out of their rib cage!... the lovely sounds of bones cracking and flesh ripping, ahhh... so much to do and so little chances.”

**Sacramento, 2001**

“I shot that fucking bitch because I’m tired of people fucking with me in life. Been fucked over by my mother for 14 years because she raped me. I was turned around and fucked over by my uncle because he raped my brother and got away with it. Turn around and I have lived through all these fucking problems. Took two years of counseling. Did no fucking thing. Turned around and trusted a female and stuff by the name of Nina Susu went out with her for seven months. We do not have sexual relationship. All we did was fool around. I never slept with the woman once.”

**Research Support**

Baumeister, R. F., & Campbell, W. K. (1999). The intrinsic appeal of evil: Sadism, sensational thrills, and threatened egotism. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3, 210–221. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303\\_4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0303_4)

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MacCulloch, M., Snowden, P., Wood, P., & Mills, H. (1983). Sadistic fantasy, sadistic behavior and offending. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 143: 20–29.

Teranishi-Martinez C. (2014). Engendered expressions of aggression: The role of gender, proprietary behaviors, and jealousy in intimate partner violence. *Violence Gend.* 2, 112–118.

**RESEARCH**

This involves the general interest in and reading or viewing materials about past attacks. As this progresses, research becomes more specifically narrowed to weapons, tactical gear, scouting the location and penetration testing (looking at vulnerabilities in security, patrols, and cameras).

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curious about past shooters</li> <li>Interest in tactics, weapons, schematics</li> <li>Collects, organizes materials for study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fascination with mass shootings</li> <li>Discusses interest with others</li> <li>Detailed knowledge of past attacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies past research to current fantasy/plan</li> <li>Obsessed with attacks; praises attackers</li> <li>Studies how to increase kill count</li> </ul>

- What interests you in studying past mass shootings and attacks?
- Have you ever felt a connection with past attackers and/or a similarity with them on how they see the world?
- What do you think motivates people to commit such acts of violence?
- In your opinion, what keeps people from killing more in these attacks?
- Why do you think these kinds of attacks are on the rise in recent history?

**Norway, 2011**

“I just bought Modern Warfare 2, the game. It is probably the best military simulator out there and it’s one of the hottest games this year. I played MW1 as well but I didn’t really like it as I’m generally more the fantasy RPG kind of person—Dragon Age Origins etc. and not so much into first person shooters. I see MW2 more as a part of my training-simulation than anything else. I’ve still learned to love it though and especially the multiplayer part is amazing. You can more or less completely simulate actual operations.”

**Research Support**

Drysdale D, Modzeleski W, Simons A. (2010). *Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education*. (United States Secret Service, United States Department of Education and Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, DC).

Meloy JR, Hoffmann J, Roshdi K, et al. (2014). Warning behaviors and their configurations across various domains of targeted violence. In *The International Handbook of Threat Assessment*. JR Meloy, JHoffmann, eds. (OxfordUniversity Press,NewYork,NY), pp. 39–53.

Pollack, W., Modzeleski, W., & Rooney, G. (2008). Prior knowledge of potential school-based violence: Information students learn may prevent a targeted attack. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education.

**CHECKLIST**

A checklist becomes the physical manifestation of fantasy rehearsal and brainstorming what would be needed to punish or harm a person, place or system. Checklists become increasingly informed by research and specificity around timing and location of an attack and the materials needed. There may also be a shutting down of bank accounts, phones or social media accounts or other recurring memberships or involvement with the anticipation of an upcoming event.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers inheritance after they die</li> <li>• Begins listing things to give away</li> <li>• Fantasizes about final arrangements,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking of suicide note/video</li> <li>• Outlining what to organize</li> <li>• Planning/fantasizing about departure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing suicide note, manifesto, video</li> <li>• Closes banking, billing, social media</li> <li>• Warns others the end is coming</li> </ul>

- What do you think people will remember about you when you die?
- What are your top three possessions and who do you see getting these?
- Have you closed bank accounts, credit cards, recurrent charges, or shut down social media accounts in recent weeks?
- When you think about leaving the earth, what would your last words be?
- Have you taken steps to end your life?

**Isla Vista, 2014**

“After I have killed all of the sorority girls at the Alpha Phi House, I will quickly get into the SUV before the police arrive, assuming they would arrive within 3 minutes.”

**Freedom High, 2009**

“For those of you retards who don’t know who I am, I’m the Freedom High School shooter in Tampa, Florida. Well, I will be in a couple months. I thought I would run over my game plan with ya’ll. The cafeteria at Freedom. My plan is to set a bomb here at point A, here at point B, point C and point D. Then I got to get to the side entrance of the school by 7:24. The bombs blow at 7:26. I’m going to come in and advance on the courtyard where there’ll probably be at least sixty people. (I’ll) come through the door then shoot everybody at the front desk. Mr. Costanzo’s office is right here, I’ve got to kill him. Mrs. Carmody is here I’ve got to kill her. Mr. Pears is here, I’ve got to make sure he doesn’t die, because I like him. There’s nothing I can do about it, there’s nothing anybody can do about it other than wait for it to unleash. If you don’t like it just find a way to find people like me and just line us up and shoot us.”

**Research Support**

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).

**OBJECTIFICATION**

There is a depersonalization regarding how others are seen with an increasing tendency to see them as “less than” or unworthy of basic consideration. This manifests in name calling and the use of racist, misogynistic or bigoted language. As objectification escalates, there are increased work, school, and home conflicts, with threats and negative actions. They eventually see their target as undeserving of any consideration and simply as an object in the way of their goal.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views others as not important</li> <li>• Self-focused with poor empathy</li> <li>• Difficulty maintaining friendships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick to assign blame to others</li> <li>• Views others with disgust/unworthy</li> <li>• Increased conflict and arguments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick to anger/blame others</li> <li>• Constant racist, misogynistic, bigoted</li> <li>• Tramples others to reach goals</li> </ul>

- Do you have difficulty seeing how other people think about things?
- Do you often have the right way of doing things and must show others?
- Is it frustrating to talk with others who can’t see things from your viewpoint?
- Have you gotten in trouble for using language that wasn’t seen as politically correct or “woke”?
- If you have a goal to accomplish, should other people just get out of your way?

**Finland, 2007**

“I have had enough. I don’t want to be part of this fucked up society. Like some other wise people have said in the past, human race is not worth fighting for or saving. only worth killing. I am ready to die for a cause I know is right, just and true. even if I would lose or the battle would be only remembered as evil. I will rather fight and die than live a long and unhappy life”

**Sandy Hook, 2012**

“I incessantly have nothing other than scorn for humanity. I have been desperate to feel anything positive for someone for my entire life.”

**Research Support**

ASIS International and the Society for Human Resource Management (2011). Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention: American National Standard. Retrieved from [www.asisonline.org/guidelines/published.html](http://www.asisonline.org/guidelines/published.html)

Calhoun, F. & Weston, S. (2003). Contemporary Threat Management: A Practical Guide for Identifying, Assessing, and Managing Individuals of Violent Intent. San Diego, CA: Specialized Training Services.

Grossman, D. (1996). On killing: The psychological cost of learning to kill in war and society. Lebanon, IN: Little, Brown, and Company Back Bay Books.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

Van Brunt B. (2015). Harm to Others: The Assessment and Treatment of Dangerousness. (American Counseling Association, Alexander, VA.)

**CONSUMED**

This reflects a set way of thinking and escalating toward action. There is a difficulty accepting alternative explanations for events, they engage in harmful debate with others and increasingly look for ways to widen their impact and solidify their viewpoint. This escalates to include a quality of obsession and a spiraling negative impact to other aspects of their work, school, social relationships and family. They seek opportunity to troll and create demonstrations to push this view on others. They not only have a hardened point of view, but this becomes a defining characteristic of their entire person. When limits are set by workplace, school or the police, they move quickly past these, feeling justified in their actions because of their locked perspective.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on singular topic only</li> <li>• Lack of balance at work/school</li> <li>• Intrusive thoughts, perseveration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts grades, work, and relationships</li> <li>• Increasing isolation; ranting</li> <li>• Inability to be re-directed or focused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obsessions leads to escalating behaviors</li> <li>• Work/school/relationship termination</li> <li>• Increasing negative consequences</li> </ul>

- Do you get so focused on a topic you can't think about anything else?
- Have you ever been so focused on an issue it has caused problems at work, school or with friends?
- When you are focused on a passionate issue, is it impossible to think about anything else?
- Do you often get into arguments with other people about something you are unwilling to budge on?
- What is an idea that you can not imagine yourself changing your mind on?

**Pearl High School, 1997**

"I am not insane! I am angry. This world has shit on me for the final time. I am not spoiled or lazy, for murder is not weak and slow-witted, murder is gutsy and daring. I killed because people like me are mistreated every day. I did this to show society 'push us and we will push back!' I suffered all my life. No one ever truly loved me. No one ever truly cared about me."

**Thurston High School, 1998**

"Every time I talk to her, I have a small amount of hope. But then she will tear it right down. It feels like my heart is breaking. But is that possible. I am so consumed with hate all of the time. Could I ever love anyone? I have feelings, but do I have a heart that's not black and full of animosity... I gave her all I have, and she just threw it away. Why? Why did God just want me to be in complete misery?"

**Research Support**

Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldemann, A., & James, D. (2011). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behavioral Science Law*, 30, 256–279.

**IRRATIONAL**

Thinking becomes increasingly impaired due to paranoia, odd or obsessive thoughts, delusions and/or a general separation from reality. This may include language about aliens, government organizations surveilling them, incongruent or poorly organized speech and the experience of hallucinations (voices, visions, smells, etc.) that may command and/or demand they take violent action.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odd, intrusive thoughts or experiences</li> <li>• Concern or worry over loss of self</li> <li>• Noticed by peers, classmates, family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent odd, intrusive thoughts</li> <li>• Panic or worry about these; lack of control</li> <li>• Impacts work, class, friends, family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily odd, intrusive or punishing thoughts</li> <li>• Inability to focus or care for self</li> <li>• Hallucinations command; no conscience</li> </ul>

- Have you experienced intrusive thoughts or seen/heard things that weren't real?
- Do you feel so lost in your own mind that you worry about finding your way out?
- Have your thoughts become so disorganized it's gotten you in trouble at work, school or with friends?
- Do you have feelings of panic and worry so intense you are unsure what to do next?
- Have you experienced thoughts that are insulting or persecuting to you?

**Umpqua College, 2015**

"I had no friends, no girlfriend, was all alone. I had no job, no life, no successes. What was it that was supposed to happen, what great event was it that was supposed to make me realize how much there was going for me. But for people like me there is another world, a darker world that welcomes us. For people like us this all that's left. My success in Hell is assured. They will give me the power that I seek. They have always been there, speaking to me on the sidelines, controlling me. It's only fit that I join them after death. They've told me what to do, showed me the way."

**Research Support**

Lankford A. (2013). *The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage Shooters, and Other Self-Destructive Killers*. (St. Martin Press, New York).

Van Brunt, B., & Pescara-Kovach, P. (2019). Debunking the myths: Mental illness and mass shootings. *Journal of Violence and Gender*, 1(1), p. 1-11.



**ENCOURAGERS**

These are often third parties they meet on the internet, chatrooms, social media or in-person meetings, such as local white supremacist, KKK or other violent hate groups. The encouragement progresses from the pursuit of ideas and philosophies to support acquiring weapons, developing an attack plan and punishing those who they see as responsible for societal problems.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks support online for viewpoints</li> <li>• Finds other likeminded individuals</li> <li>• Seeks superficial agreement not debate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rejects opposing opinions</li> <li>• Pushed to more extreme viewpoints</li> <li>• Fantasizes about action; feels grandiose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Others support and encourage violence</li> <li>• Planning and rehearsing extreme action</li> <li>• Desire to go out in a blaze of glory</li> </ul>

- Have you had times where you have questioned your beliefs, but were supported by online friends?
- Do you lean into other people to help support your beliefs and ideas?
- Have you ever thought that violence is the only way some people listen?
- Do you rule out any opinions that don't line up with your beliefs?
- Do you have friends or people you talk with who advocate violence to support their beliefs?

**Bethel High School, 2009**

The attacker shot and killed a student and his principal in August of 2009. Reports say over twenty people knew of his plan to shoot up the school, and two helped him. One student taught him how to use a shotgun, another told the shooter of the infamy that would come. Reports say another student even brought a camera to school on the day.

**Toronto, 2018**

“The Incel rebellion has already begun! All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!”

**Research Support**

Langman, P. (2014). Transcript of the Columbine “Basement Tapes.” [https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/columbine\\_basement\\_tapes\\_1.0.pdf](https://schoolshooters.info/sites/default/files/columbine_basement_tapes_1.0.pdf).  
 Lankford A. (2010). Human Killing Machines: Systematic Indoctrination in Iran, Nazi Germany, Al Qaeda, and Abu Ghraib. (Lexington Press, Boston, MA).  
 McCauleyC, Mosklenko S. (2008). Mechanisms of political radicalization: Pathways toward terrorism. *Terror Political Violence*. 20, 415–433.  
 Van Brunt, B., Murphy, A., & Zedginidze, A. (2017). An exploration of the risk, Protective, and Mobilization Factors Related to Violent Extremism in College Populations, 4(3), p. 81-101.

**TEASED**

At the early stages, teasing and bullying becomes an occasional experience that has an impact on self-worth and social connections with others. As teasing increases, their world becomes increasingly unsafe and negative, leading to feelings of hopelessness, despair, being trapped and eventually feelings of suicide or a desire to send a message to the oppressors through violence action.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling picked on and teased by others</li> <li>• Teasing impacts self-worth</li> <li>• General feelings of sadness and fear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent teasing/bullying impacts life</li> <li>• Feels fear, low self-worth, hopeless</li> <li>• Avoids others; acts out negatively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily, intense teasing and bullying</li> <li>• Impacts work, school, family, friends</li> <li>• Suicidal/need to take extreme action</li> </ul>

- Do people tease you for your beliefs, appearance, or other reasons?
- Has teasing or bullying kept you from completing work or making friends?
- Have you been teased to the point where you considered suicide?
- Do you change your plans each day to avoid those who tease or bully you?
- Do you ever fantasize about hurting people because of teasing or bullying?

**Columbine, 1999**

“I hate you people for leaving me out of so many fun things.”

**Rio de Janeiro, 2011**

“The struggle for which many brothers died in the past, and for which I will die, is not solely because of what is known as bullying. Our fight is against cruel people, cowards, who take advantage of the kindness, the weakness of people unable to defend themselves.”

**East Carter High School, 1993**

“I had a message I wanted to get across... of unmasking people, disrobing the images everyone puts on, of making people real. I still think I had the right idea. But that was the wrong way of doing it. I was very foolish.”

**Research Support**

Langman, P. (2009). Rampage school shooters: A typology. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 14, 79–86.  
 National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) (2019). Protecting America’s schools: A United States secret service analysis of targeted school violence. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

**DEFIANT**

At first, defiance may be a general tendency to take an alternative path when compared with how others approach those in authority. This escalates into more frequent incidents with teachers, student discipline, human resources, and society in general. Incidents then involve more substantive threats, violent actions and conditional ultimatums.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pushes against authority and structure</li> <li>• Unconventional beliefs; argumentative</li> <li>• Loner, non-conformist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasingly argumentative</li> <li>• Harmful debate; disdain for authority</li> <li>• Discipline, conflict, suspension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raging; conflicts with authority</li> <li>• Menacing behavior, threats of violence</li> <li>• Disciplined for challenging authority</li> </ul>

- Have others described you as a loner? Is that accurate?
- Do you frequently have trouble taking direction from people in power?
- Are there times where your strong opinions have affected your work, school, family, or friendships?
- Have you ever become physically violent when upset or arguing with boss, teacher, or police?
- Do you agree that when people in authority misuse their power, they should get what is coming to them?

**Dawson College, 2006**

“His name is Trench. You will come to know him as the Angel of Death. He is male. He is 25 years of age. He lives in Quebec. He finds that it is an O.K [sic] place to live. He is not a people person. He has met a handful of people in his life who are decent. But he finds the vast majority to be worthless, no good, conniving, betraying, lying, deceptive, motherfuckers. Work sucks. School sucks. Life sucks. What else can I say. Metal and Goth kick ass. Life is like a video game, you gotta die sometime.”

**Research Support**

ASIS International and the Society for Human Resource Management (2011). Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention: American National Standard. Retrieved from [www.asisonline.org/guidelines/published.htm](http://www.asisonline.org/guidelines/published.htm)

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals. (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline for Elements for Violence (RAGE-V). Considerations for assessing the risk of future violent behavior. Sacramento, CA: Author.

Calhoun, F. & Weston, S. (2009). Threat Assessment and Management Strategies: Identifying the Howlers and Hunters. (CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.)

O’Toole, M.E. (2014). The Dangerous Injustice Collector. *Violence and Gender*, 1(3), 97-99.

Van Brunt, B. (2012). Ending campus violence: New approaches to prevention. New York, New York. Routledge.

**IMPULSIVE**

In moving from an idea to an action, this individual progresses quickly, without weighing the impact of their actions. They increasingly ignore those in positions of authority or limits that have been set. In the more extreme escalation, they act despite a risk to their life.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent unplanned, emotional actions</li> <li>• Poor planning, reactive in situations</li> <li>• Unwillingness to change approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalations lead to trouble focusing</li> <li>• Conflict over lack of forethought</li> <li>• Impulsive actions worsen work/school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline actions from school/work</li> <li>• Impulsive dangerous/criminal behaviors</li> <li>• Menacing and threatening behaviors</li> </ul>

- Have others described you as a person who “flies off the handle” or gets upset easily?
- Have you acted quickly in the passion of the moment & later regretted it?
- Has your tendency to act quickly gotten you in trouble?
- Have you ever been disciplined at work or school for impulsive actions?
- Do you have trouble making plans or thinking carefully about next steps for an important decision?

**Isla Vista, 2014**

“When they left the store I followed them to their car and splashed my coffee all over them... I was livid with rage, and I wanted to pour my drink all over his head... That night, I threw a wild tantrum, screaming and crying for hours on end. I had the whole apartment to myself, so there was no one there to hear me. I raged at the entire world, thrashing at my bed with my wooden practice sword and slashing at the air with my pocket knife.”

**Research Support**

Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldemann, A., & James, D. (2011). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behav Sci Law*. 30, 256–279.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2019). Protecting America’s Schools: A United States Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence. United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

Randazzo, M. & Plummer, E. (2009). Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project. (Printed by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA).

Turner J, Gelles M. (2003). Threat Assessment: A Risk Management Approach. (Routledge, New York, NY).

Van Brunt, B. (2012). Ending campus violence: New approaches to prevention. New York, New York. Routledge.

## WEAPONS INTEREST

Here they explore different types of firearms, knives, explosive devices and corresponding tactical equipment such as harnesses, night-vision goggles, expanded magazines, optics and bullet-proof vests. As their interest progresses, they become increasingly obsessed with the topic and talk about this freely with others despite negative consequences to their friendships, work or academics. They may belong to several internet discussion groups, in-person organizations and subscribe to magazines or other books or literature. As this interest escalates, there becomes an increasing focus on narrowing weapons and tactical material knowledge for a specific plan such as a shooting at a public event, school or workplace.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curiosity about weapons, guns, tactics</li> <li>• Talks about weapons and shootings</li> <li>• Plays first person shooter games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connects online around interest in guns</li> <li>• Focuses on weapons used for shootings</li> <li>• Thinks about weapons; saves to buy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weapons obsession/acquisition</li> <li>• Plays tactical simulations for practice</li> <li>• Mission-oriented rationale emerging</li> </ul>

- What are some of the reasons you are interested in guns or weapons?
- Have you ever had a chance to shoot a gun? Would you like to?
- What is your favorite pistol/handgun and rifle/long gun? Why?
- Do you have friends in person or online that you talk with about weapons?
- What are some of the reasons you might want to own gun?

**El Paso, 2019**

“Main gun: AK47 (WASR 10) – I realized pretty quickly that this isn’t a great choice since it’s the civilian version of the ak47. It’s not designed to shoot rounds quickly, so it overheats massively after about 100 shots fired in quick succession. I’ll have to use a heat-resistant glove to get around this.”

**Research Support**

Knoll J. (2010). The “pseudocommando” mass murderer: Part I, the psychology of revenge and obliteration. *J Am Acad Psychiatry Law*. 38, 87–94.  
 Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldemann, A., & James, D. (2011). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behavioral Science Law*, 30, 256–279.  
 National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

## WEAPONS ACQUISITION

Moving beyond simple interest, they begin to purchase weapons or gain experience shooting at a range. The weapons are increasingly chosen for a specific purpose and the knowledge about the weapons becomes more directly tied to a specific attack plan. Secondary and tertiary weapons, ammunition and gear are obtained.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching weapons for scenarios</li> <li>• Test fires various weapons</li> <li>• Interest in magazines, accessories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchases collections of weapons</li> <li>• Feels powerful with guns</li> <li>• Acquires optics, tactical gear, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose driven acquisition and practice</li> <li>• Weapons part of mission plan</li> <li>• Stockpiles ammunition/magazines</li> </ul>

- If you were given \$1000, what kind of gun would you buy?
- Have you purchased a firearm? What kind? Why did you want to one?
- Do you have friends who you talk to about weapon purchases?
- Have you saved up to purchase a weapons or gun?
- Have you purchased other items like high-capacity magazines, extra ammunition, or optics for weapons?

**El Paso, 2019**

“Main gun: AK47 (WASR 10) – I realized pretty quickly that this isn’t a great choice since it’s the civilian version of the ak47. It’s not designed to shoot rounds quickly, so it overheats massively after about 100 shots fired in quick succession. I’ll have to use a heat-resistant glove to get around this. 8m3 bullet: This bullet, unlike pretty much any other 7.62 39 bullet, actually fragments like a pistol hollow point when shot out of an ak47 at the cost of penetration. Penetration is still reasonable, but not nearly as high as a normal ak47 bullet. The ak47 is definitely a bad choice without this bullet design, and may still be with it.”

**Isla Vista, 2014**

“After I picked up the handgun, I brought it back to my room and felt a new sense of power. I was now armed. *Who’s the alpha male now, bitches?* I thought to myself, regarding all of the girls who’ve looked down on me in the past. First, I needed to buy a third handgun, just in case one of them jams. I needed two working handguns at the same time, as that was how I planned to commit suicide; with two simultaneous shots to the head.”

**Research Support**

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).  
 Knoll J. (2010). The “pseudocommando” mass murderer: Part I, the psychology of revenge and obliteration. *J Am Acad Psychiatry Law*. 38, 87–94.  
 Meloy, J., Hoffmann, J., Guldemann, A., & James, D. (2011). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behavioral Science Law*, 30, 256–279.

# Threat Assessment

## DIRECT

A direct threat is one made verbally or in a written format like a letter or on social media. They may start as vague references or memes and escalate to mentions of a specific place, time and what they will do. As they escalate, the threat is made with a sense of urgency and repeated in multiple formats.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made a vague threat verbally or online</li> <li>No specific target, time, or location</li> <li>Threat unlikely to be carried out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Made specific threat verbally or online</li> <li>Threat to person, place, or system</li> <li>Vague location, method, or time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific time, place, method and target</li> <li>Threat is repeated to multiple people</li> <li>Countdown or sense of immediacy</li> </ul>

- Have you threatened to hurt someone, or set fire to or destroy a building?
- What would it take for you to make a threat against a person’s life?
- Have you made a threat that wasn’t take seriously enough?
- Have you ever been so angry you thought about hurting another person?
- Do you post things online that could be taken as a threat against a person?

### Columbine, 1999

“You all better fucking hide in your houses because I’m comin [sic] for EVERYONE soon, and I WILL be armed to the fuckin [sic] teeth and I WILL shoot to kill and I WILL fuckin [sic] KILL EVERYTHING!”

### Virginia Tech, 2007

“I wanted to punish them all. I imagined how sweet it would be to slaughter all of those evil, slutty bitches who rejected me, along with the fraternity jocks they throw themselves at. I wanted to punish them all. I imagined how sweet it would be to slaughter all of those evil, slutty bitches who rejected me, along with the fraternity jocks they throw themselves at.”

### Research Support

Scalora, M., Simons, A., & Vansly, S. (2010, February). Campus safety: Assessing and managing threats. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 79(2), 1-10.

Turner J. & Gelles M. (2003). *Threat assessment: A risk management approach*. New York: Routledge.

United States Postal Service. (2007). *Threat Assessment Team Guide*, from [http://www.nalc.org/depart/cau/pdf/manuals/Pub%20108%20\(2007-Mar\).pdf](http://www.nalc.org/depart/cau/pdf/manuals/Pub%20108%20(2007-Mar).pdf)

Van Brunt, B. (2012). *Ending campus violence: New approaches to prevention*. New York: Routledge.

## LETHALITY

The dangerousness of the attack plan is determined by the level of access to deadly weapons and materials. At the early stage, access to deadly weapons may require obtaining them from friends or other locations. As lethality escalates, weapons are acquired along with ammunition and secondary materials needed for an attack like high-capacity magazines, security schedules or counter surveillance measures.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject has limited access to weapons</li> <li>Could obtain weapon from friend/family</li> <li>Nature of threat makes it unlikely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can obtain guns from home/peers/store</li> <li>Ability/knowledge to carry out threat</li> <li>Nature of the threat makes is likely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has multiple firearms/weapons</li> <li>Knowledge of tactics and logistics</li> <li>Practiced with their weapons</li> </ul>

- If you think of hurting people, what methods have you thought about?
- Have you researched different weapons or ways to hurt other people?
- Do you have access to guns in your house? A friend’s house?
- Do you play tactical first-person shooter games like *Fortnight*, *Call of Duty*, *Battlefield* or *Counter Strike*?
- Do you think you could carry out a school attack that would result in more people being killed than other attacks?

### El Paso, 2019

“This gun is probably better, but I wanted to explore different options. The ar15 is probably the best gun for military applications but this isn’t a military application. This will be a test of which is more lethal, either it’s fragmentation or tumbling.”

### Research Support

Langman, P. (2009). Rampage School Shooters: A typology. *Aggression Violent Behaviour*, 14, 79–86.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). *Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence*. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

Van Brunt B. (2015). *Harm to Others: The Assessment and Treatment of Dangerousness*. (American Counseling Association, Alexandria, VA.)

Vossekuil, B., Fein, R., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002). *The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.

**TIME**

This refers to when the attack will take place. In early stages, the time may be given in months or years with the feeling of “if things don’t change at some point, this will happen.” As timing escalates, the attacker thinks in terms of weeks rather than months and the attack becomes increasingly likely if the target does not change their behavior. At the final stages, the attack is imminent, planned in the next hours or days and timing may be communicated with a verbal or online threat.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vague time given, month/season</li> <li>• Violence possible without target change</li> <li>• No pressing or imminent attack</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Week time frame w/escalating threats</li> <li>• Likely w/o target changing behavior</li> <li>• Increased feeling of grievance/payback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time narrowed to days/hours, imminent</li> <li>• High lethality; location chosen</li> <li>• Timing communicated online/verbally</li> </ul>

- If you were to punish people for the way they treated you, when do you think you would do this?
- If you were forced to act, would it be in the next few months, next week, later this week or as soon as you can?
- Have you posted a frustration about someone that included a time and/or place where you would call them out?
- Have you said something like “if you keep treating me this way, something is going to happen to you in the future that you won’t like”?
- If things go on the way they have been, what would it take for you to finally act?

**LA Fitness, 2009**

“I took off today, Monday, and tomorrow to practice my routine and make sure it is well polished. I need to work out every detail, there is only one shot. Also, I need to be completely immersed into something before I can be successful. I haven’t had a drink since Friday at about 2:30. Total effort needed. Tomorrow is the big day.”

**Stoneham Douglas, 2018**

“Alright, so here’s the plan. I’m going to go take an Uber in the afternoon before 2:40. From there I will go to the school campus, walk up the stairs, load my bag, and get my AR and shoot people down at the main courtyard. Await and people will die.”

**Research Support**

Meloy, R., Hoffmann, J., Roshdi, K. et al. (2014). Warning behaviors and their configurations across various domains of targeted violence. The international handbook of threat assessment Meloy, J.R. and Hoffmann, J. eds., 39–53. New York: Oxford University Press.  
 Turner J, Gelles M. (2003). Threat Assessment: A Risk Management Approach. (Routledge, New York, NY.)  
 Van Brunt, B. (2012). Ending campus violence: New approaches to prevention. New York: Routledge.

**LEAKAGE**

This refers to sharing attack details, intentionally or unintentionally, with a third party. At first, these are vague hints at frustration, growing unhappiness and unfairness with no mention of a specific time, place, or target of an attack. Leakage increases as they vent frustrations verbally/online and demand justice. Threats then become specific and lethal with a time and location mentioned.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vague/limited mention of frustrations</li> <li>• Hints at growing sadness/injustice</li> <li>• No specific time/place, target or method</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares frustrations/injustices</li> <li>• Venting at person, place, or system</li> <li>• Trolling; demands change/justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific threat verbally or online</li> <li>• Threat likely, actionable, and lethal</li> <li>• Location, time, target mentioned</li> </ul>

- Have you shared details about how you might hurt people with others?
- Do you post threatening messages on Facebook, YouTube or TikTok?
- Have you written a story or social media post that has gotten you into trouble with police or conduct/discipline?
- Do you vent about ways there will be justice for those who harmed you?
- Have you ever been so angry you said something that others took as a threat to kill someone?

**Arapahoe, 2013**

"I intend on going as follows: I walk through the asshole in the north side of the trophy hall, waltz in shooting everyone in my way to the [redacted] (shouldn’t be too many, it’s not far, I go to the [redacted], to kill [redacted]. From there, there are classrooms in the [redacted] where I will do something I have wanted to do for a while-mass murder and be in a place of power where I and I alone are judge, jury and executioner."

**Research Support**

Cornell, D. (2010). Threat Assessment in College Settings. Change (pp. 8–15). Retrieved from www.changemag.org  
 Meloy, J., & O’Toole, M. (2011). The concept of leakage in threat assessment. Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 29(4), 513–527.  
 National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security  
 United States Postal Service. (2007). Threat Assessment Team Guide, from [http://www.nalc.org/depart/cau/pdf/manuals/Pub%20108%20\(2007-Mar\).pdf](http://www.nalc.org/depart/cau/pdf/manuals/Pub%20108%20(2007-Mar).pdf)  
 Vossekuil, B., Fein, R., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002). The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.

**LOCATION**

This signifies the place where an attack will occur. This may be vague and general at first, perhaps even at a place where the attacker does not have access. With escalation, the location becomes increasingly specific, and the threatener has conducted research and planning on access. They may conduct walkthroughs of the location and look at overcoming any obstacles.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vague location; threat poorly defined</li> <li>• General location mentioned</li> <li>• Attack location unclear/impractical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location mentioned online/verbally</li> <li>• Location accessible to the threatener</li> <li>• Tactical location to increase deaths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location researched and planned</li> <li>• Threats are clear/consistent and lethal</li> <li>• Location walk-through, dry run</li> </ul>

- If you wanted to pay someone back for hurting you, where would do it?
- Have you ever thought about or fantasized about where to hurt someone?
- Have you threatened a location to send a message you were serious?
- Have you walked through and looked over a location for how you would attack it or to hurt someone there?
- Do you have a “plan b” location if the person you threatened doesn’t show up where you expected them?

**Stoneham Douglas, 2018**

“Hello, my name is name’s ---- and I’m going to be the next school shooter of 2018. My goal is at least 20 people with an AR15 and a couple tracer rounds that I think I can do it and get done. Location is Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida.”

**Research Support**

Turner J. & Gelles M. (2003). Threat assessment: A risk management approach. New York: Routledge.  
 Van Brunt, B. (2015). Harm to others: The assessment and treatment of dangerousness. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.  
 Vossekuil, B., Fein, R., Reddy, M., Borum, R. & Modzeleski, W. (2002). The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States. Retrieved from [http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_final_report.pdf)

**ORGANIZATION**

This denotes threats that move from vague and undefined to narrow and specific. Poorly organized threats are more reactive and often involve many targets and people. Escalations in organization define the attack to a singular target and are consistent and repeated.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats/harassment to multiple people</li> <li>• Threats lack logic/clarity; transient</li> <li>• Mental illness likely cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats made to gain a reaction</li> <li>• Multiple threats over organization</li> <li>• Theme in threats (e.g., authority)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threat consistent, logical, and plausible</li> <li>• Repeated and narrowed to one person</li> <li>• Planning narrowed on singular target</li> </ul>

- Do you tend to get upset at a lot of people or just a few people?
- When you post online about your frustration, is it usually vague or about someone in particular?
- Have you expressed the same frustration to the same person repeatedly?
- When you’ve been really upset, have you said something about wishing everyone was gone/dead?
- Are you someone who is quick to act or say what is on your mind?

**Arizona Nursing College, 2002**

“While the college does maintain a small minority student body it is primarily white women from upper middle-class backgrounds between the ages of 20 and 25. The college promotes and desires diversity but they only want their approved diversity and no other. In many ways male nursing students are ‘tokens’.”

**Research Support**

Langman, P. (2009). Why Kids Kill: Ten lessons learned from school shootings and foiled attacks. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.  
 National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security  
 Turner J. & Gelles M. (2003). Threat assessment: A risk management approach. New York: Routledge.

**TONE**

Whether written or verbal, the tone is intimidating, angry, frustrating, often with elements of anger, sadness, and pain. As the tone escalates, they attacker uses negative adverbs and adjectives to blame, harasses and intimate the target. Increased objectification of the target occurs, removing any sense of agency or humanity. In extreme stages of tone, rage and a desire for punishment are explicit and unrelenting.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anger and frustration subtle but present</li> <li>• Online or verbal intimidation made</li> <li>• Sadness, injustice, pain, frustration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses emotional adverbs/adjectives</li> <li>• Threats, intimidation, and harassment</li> <li>• Blame assigned; desire for punishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly objectifies and demeans</li> <li>• Anger, rage, and desire for justice</li> <li>• Unrelenting, “moth to the flame”</li> </ul>

- When angry, do you shout and yell or keep quiet and bide your time?
- Have people described your social media as threatening or intimidating?
- Do you typically use harsh language and descriptions about a person when you are angry at them?
- How does writing angry things on social media or verbally telling someone off make you feel?
- Do people know where they stand with you based on what you say?

**St. Pius X High School, 1975**

“I don’t want to die before I have had the pleasure of fucking some girl.”

**Dawson College, 2006**

“Head to toe, all black. Boots as black as tar. Cloak lashing to and fro with the wind... the disgusting human creatures scream in panic and run in all directions, taking with them the lies and deceptions. The Death Knight gazes at the humans with an empty stare, as they knock each other down in a mad dash to safety. He wishes to slaughter them as they flee.”

**Research Support**

Smith, S. (2007). From violent words to violent deeds? Assessing risk from threatening communications. Dissertation Abstract International, 68, 1945B.  
 Van Brunt, B. (2015). Violence risk assessment of the written word (VRAW<sup>2</sup>). Journal of Behavioral Intervention Teams (JBIT), 3, p. 12-25.  
 Van Brunt, B. (2016). Assessing threat in written communications, social media, and creative writing. The Journal of Violence and Gender, 3(2), 78–88.

**RHETORIC**

Refers to the threatener’s contextual history of writing fiction, satire, or opinion pieces that may look concerning at first but are less so, as this is a common way they process and vent. While they may write vague threats and use jarring language, the overall piece is used to express pain and/or is satirical in nature. As the rhetoric concern escalates, the tone and details convey a disregard for the target and they are written to inflict pain and insult, rather than making a larger narrative point. At the extreme, the fiction/satire is seen a poor disguise and the real desire is clearly to weaken the target’s image and destroy the target.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing is fiction; threats are vague</li> <li>• Content is jarring, but likely satirical</li> <li>• Writing used to express pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tone and details escalate and threaten</li> <li>• Disregard for subject; objectifying</li> <li>• Desire to inflict pain/insult; cruel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satire/rhetoric covers substantive threat</li> <li>• Used to destroy target’s image</li> <li>• Weakening target supports</li> </ul>

- Are some of stories, poetry, music lyrics or prose seen as threatening?
- Do you write satire and political opinion pieces to upset others and engage them in debate?
- Have you ever written something where you described a person in a one-dimensional and unfair way?
- Have you written something to embarrass or weaken an enemy’s public persona?
- Do you think writing or creative fantasy is foreshadowing something that will happen?

**Huntsville Alabama (Fiction Writing), 2010**

The attacker wrote a fiction story prior to the attack called *Easter in Boston*, in which he describes a protagonist (Beth) in this way: “The empty clip slid into the 9mm easily. Beth sat on her bed, the gun and its paraphernalia, strewn about, while she worked on it. [She] sat back down with the dictionary. She mulled over words like love, loneliness, hopelessness, despair. She looked at words like suicide and murder.”

**Chardon High School (Facebook “Story” Excerpt), 2012**

“Now! Feel death, not just mocking you. Not just stalking you but inside of you. Wriggle and writhe. Feel smaller beneath my might. Seizure in the Pestilence that is my scythe. Die, all of you.”

**Research Support**

Palarea, R. (2011). ‘ Assessing Communicated Threats: An Operational Approach .’ Paper presented at the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals , Anaheim, Ca.  
 Smith S. (2007). From violent words to violent deeds? Assessing risk from threatening communications. Diss Abst Int. 68, 1945B.  
 Van Brunt B, ed. (2015b). Violence Risk Assessment of the Written Word (VRAW<sup>2</sup>). J Campus Behav Interven. 3, 12–25.

## PLANNING

Involves writing down or thinking about what they may do to correct an injustice or seek revenge. Planning intensifies as the threatener focuses on details, gathering intel and acquiring the items they need for an attack. As planning escalates, they clarify and improve tactics to increase damage and overcome potential obstacles. Secondary sites, counter surveillance measures and contingency plans are developed.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shares research on target</li> <li>• Pre-motivated and detailed threats</li> <li>• Lacking immediacy or ties to real life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing threat impact; fantasy of attack</li> <li>• Gaining target intel by questioning</li> <li>• Acquiring attack materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning to cause high damage</li> <li>• Neutralizing obstacles to attack plan</li> <li>• Develops contingency plans</li> </ul>

- Have you posted online any plans or thoughts about research for a potential attack?
- Does thinking about your attack plan help you relax even if you aren't really going to carry it out?
- What kind of things would someone need to know to attack a school?
- Has your planning included overcoming obstacles to a successful attack, like locked doors or security cameras?
- Do you think the time of day matters if someone was to attack a school?

### Arapahoe, 2013

"Thursday, December 12, 2013, I went to Cabela's and I bought a sling, ammo belts, and of course ammo. It included 5 sabot slugs! I think I'll need more. Luckily, I'll take off tomorrow."

### Isla Vista, 2014

"I must plan this very efficiently. Nothing can go wrong. It needs to be perfect. This is now my sole purpose on this world. My plans will come to fruition, and I mustn't let anyone stop me."

### Research Support

Meloy J, Hoffmann J, Guldemann A, James D. (2011). The role of warning behaviors in threat assessment: An exploration and suggested typology. *Behav Sci Law*. 30, 256–279.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). *Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence*. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

Van Brunt, B. (2012). *Ending campus violence: New approaches to prevention*. New York: Routledge.

## PENETRATION

Here the attacker begins to study the vulnerabilities of their target or targets to determine how to increase the lethality and success of their plan. As this escalates, they study security measures and develop ways to overcome them. They select a time for the attack and often create a manifesto or legacy token memorializing their study.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casual study of similar locations/plans</li> <li>• Studies past attacks for weaknesses</li> <li>• Researches ways to counter security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching target and security</li> <li>• Testing security, schedules, obstacles</li> <li>• Planning to negate defenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates attack timeline/resource list</li> <li>• Creates manifesto, legacy token</li> <li>• Selects time and goals for attack plan</li> </ul>

- Have you ever studied a person or place to figure out vulnerabilities?
- Do you keep a journal outlining your plans in case you are ever pushed so far you would respond?
- Does your school have security cameras/patrols? A panic button system?
- Do you study security measures and ways to overcome them?
- Does studying a person or location for weaknesses provide an emotional release or calm?

### El Paso, 2019

"Remember: it is not cowardly to pick low hanging fruit. AKA Don't attack heavily guarded areas to fulfill your super soldier COD fantasy. Attack low security targets. Even though you might out gun a security guard or police man, they likely beat you in armor, training and numbers. Do not throw away your life on an unnecessarily dangerous target. If a target seems to hot, live to fight another day."

### Research Support

Meloy, R., Hoffmann, J., Roshdi, K. et al. (2014). Warning behaviors and their configurations across various domains of targeted violence. *The international handbook of threat assessment* Meloy, J.R. and Hoffmann, J. eds., 39–53. New York: Oxford University Press.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). (2018). *Enhancing school safety using a threat assessment model: An operational guide for preventing targeted school violence*. Washington, DC: United States Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security

Van Brunt, B., Murphy, A., & Zedginidze, A. (2017). An exploration of the risk, Protective, and Mobilization Factors Related to Violent Extremism in College Populations, 4(3), p. 81-101.



**APPROACH**

This term describes the movement toward a target, beginning with fantasizing about harming them and obtaining small items needed for an attack (extended magazines, research material, chains/locks). As they progress, they overcome their hesitancy and talk with others about their plan. Risk taking behavior increases as they continue to escalate without considering their well-being. In the late stages of approach, they conduct test-runs, engage in physical violence/threats and solidify details for their full attack.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fantasizes about attack punishing target</li> <li>• Acquires small items related to attack</li> <li>• Identifies test run needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies ways to overcome hesitancy</li> <li>• Talks openly about plan details</li> <li>• Pushes buttons and increases risk-taking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages in test run of attack plan</li> <li>• Physical violence to build up to attack</li> <li>• Solidifies details of attack plan</li> </ul>

- Have you taken a “test run” to a place that you have wanted to punish?
- Are there things you would do to keep yourself focused during an attack, like have a playlist or take steroids?
- Have you recently yelled at or threatened someone who made you angry?
- Have you talked in person/online about what you might do to hurt others?
- Do you take chances that put your life at risk because you don’t think you will be around in the future?

**LA Fitness, 2009**

“Was at the gym to lift. Very crowded. Tomorrow should be good. There is a woman there that gives me a certain look every time I am there. I decided to walk over and make a comment about the crowds but she left when I finished the exercise. Better that I do not get sidetracked from tomorrow’s plan anyways.”

**Research Support**

Calhoun F, Weston S. (2009). Threat Assessment and Management Strategies: Identifying the Howlers and Hunters. (CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL).  
 Knoll J. (2010). The “pseudocommando” mass murderer: Part I, the psychology of revenge and obliteration. J Am Acad Psychiatry Law. 38, 87–94.  
 Meloy, R., Hoffmann, J., Roshdi, K., Glaz-Ocik, J., & Guldemann, A. (2014). Warning behaviors and their configurations across various domains of targeted violence. In J.R. Meloy & J.Hoffmann (Eds.), The international handbook of threat assessment (pp. 39–53). New York: Oxford University Press.

**BLAZE**

The “blaze of glory” describes a desire on the part of an attacker to end their life in a public, extreme manner that will, in their mind, justify the pain they have experienced or in the service of some perceived larger cause. There is increasing talk or posting on social media about their growing frustrations or dedication to a cause. As this reaches extremes, they are overwhelmed and trapped by pain or express a fanatical dedication to a cause. There is a detailed plan and commitment to a final action to send a message to others.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing frustration over their life</li> <li>• Passing thoughts of suicide/martyrdom</li> <li>• Fear things won’t change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring/fantasizing about a way out</li> <li>• Acquiring materials to support plan</li> <li>• Increasing belief this is the only way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time, location, and target crystalized</li> <li>• Intense pain, hopelessness, trapped</li> <li>• Belief in a final action sending a message</li> </ul>

- How satisfied are you with your life’s direction?
- Do you feel as if you can change the direction you are going in your life?
- Have you ever thought about an escape plan from your life?
- Do you ever feel so trapped and overwhelmed that there isn’t a way out?
- Have you thought about sending a final message to all of the people who have wronged you?

**Rose-Mar College of Beauty, 1966**

“I wanted to get known, just wanted to get myself a name.”

**St. Pius X High School, 1975**

“Death is the true bliss.”

**Puyallup, WA, 2006**

“To finally go out in a blaze of hatred and fury”

**Umpqua Community College, 2015**

“For all those who never took me seriously this is for you. For all those who haven’t made their stand I do this. I am the martyr for all those like me.”

**Research Support**

Bhui KS, Hicks MH, Lashley M, Jones E. (2012). A public health approach to understanding and preventing violent radicalization. BMC Med. 10, 16.  
 Christmann K. (2012). Preventing religious radicalization and violent extremism: A systematic review of the research evidence. Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. Retrieved from <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=9897>  
 Lankford, A. (2016). Fame-seeking rampage shooters: Initial findings and empirical predictions. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 27, 122-129.  
 Van Brunt, B., Murphy, A., & Zedginidze, A. (2017). An exploration of the risk, Protective, and Mobilization Factors Related to Violent Extremism in College Populations, 4(3), p. 81-101.

# Suicide Assessment

## STATEMENT

Thoughts are shared with others vaguely at first related to disappearing and not wanting to live anymore. Threats become more frequent and clearer, shared with multiple people. Desire to die becomes increasingly powerful with an increase in feeling trapped, hopeless, and lost, with access to lethal means.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thoughts of not wanting to be around</li> <li>Shares desire to disappear</li> <li>Others worry something will happen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has expressed a desire to die</li> <li>Supports offer little hope/change</li> <li>Suicidal statements heard by many</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suicidal statements frequently shared</li> <li>Overwhelming trapped feelings</li> <li>Access to lethal means; detailed plan</li> </ul>

- What will happen if people don't change the way they treat you?
- Have you ever posted anything on social media that you regretted and took down?
- Was there a time that someone took what you said as a threat?
- What was the maddest you have ever been?
- Even if you didn't really mean it, have you ever said or posted something that was taken as a threat?

**LA Fitness, 2009**

"Everything [sic] stays the same regardless of the effort [sic] I put in. If I had control over my life then I would be happier. But for about the past 30 years, I have not."

**Jokela School, 2007**

"I have had enough. I don't want to be part of this fucked up society. Like some other wise people have said in the past, [the] human race is not worth fighting for or saving only worth killing. I am ready to die for a cause I know is right, just and true... even if I would lose or the battle would be only remembered as evil I will rather fight and die than live a long and unhappy life."

**Austin, 2010**

"I saw it written once that the definition of insanity is repeating the same process over and over and expecting the outcome to suddenly be different. I am finally ready to stop this insanity. Well, Mr. Big Brother IRS man, let's try something different; take my pound of flesh and sleep well."

**Research Support**

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP). (2006). Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence (RAGE-V): Considerations for Assessing the Risk of Future Violent Behavior. (ATAP, Sacramento, CA).

Horgan J. (2008). From profiles to pathways and roots to routes: Perspectives from psychology on radicalization into terrorism. *Ann Am Acad Poli Soc Sci.* 618, 80–94.

Joiner, T. (2005). *Why people die by suicide.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Klonsky, D. & May, A. (2015). The three-step theory (3ST): A new theory of suicide rooted in the "ideation-to-action framework. *International Journal of Cognitive Therapy*, 8, 114–129.

## TREATMENT

Treatment looks at the level of mental health care they are accessing, from no current care or previous inpatient stays to weekly counseling and/or medication to intensive individual and/or group therapy and/or an inpatient admission or screening within the past year. If they are not in care, they may want to be but cannot because of barriers such as finances or transportation. In some cases, they may be prescribed medication but only sporadically take them.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous care, but no current</li> <li>No previous inpatient care</li> <li>Considering therapy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current weekly therapy/meds</li> <li>Needs care; barriers to access</li> <li>Inpatient stay &gt;1 year ago</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sporadically takes medication</li> <li>Intensive individual/group therapy</li> <li>Inpatient stay/screen &lt; 1 year</li> </ul>

- What do you think about counseling?
- If you stopped counseling, what factored into that choice?
- Have you ever considered taking a medication for depression, anxiety, or another mental health problem? Risk Factor for Suicide
- Has anyone ever suggested you needed to be in the hospital?
- If you've been prescribed medication, do you take it?

**Research Support**

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. (2019). Treatment. Retrieved from <https://afsp.org/about-suicide/preventing-suicide/>.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/factors/index.html>

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). (2017). Suicide prevention. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center & Rodgers, P. (2011). Understanding risk and protective factors for suicide: A primer for preventing suicide. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

## SELF-INJURY

At the early stage, self-injury occurs infrequently (a few times a year) motivated by boredom or frustration rather than a desire to die. As self-injury escalates, it occurs more frequently (weekly), worries friends, teachers and parents and is motivated by a self-hatred and/or depression. With continued escalation, self-injury occurs more frequently (daily), is motivated by a desire to disappear or not exist and/or they have been treated at an inpatient hospital for the behavior.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivated by frustration or boredom</li> <li>Cut/burned/hurt a few times a year</li> <li>Non-lethal self-harm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly cutting, burning, or harming self</li> <li>Motivated by self-hatred, sadness</li> <li>Friends, family, teachers worried</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily cutting, burning, or harming self</li> <li>Wants to die/disappear; hopelessness</li> <li>Previous inpatient/hospital screening</li> </ul>

- If you have cut or burned yourself, how often do you do that?
  - Do you think everyone who cuts themselves is trying to kill themselves?
  - What are some of the reasons that keep you from self-harm?
  - If you do hurt yourself, what do you use to do it?
  - What are some things that make the desire to self-harm worse?
- Risk Factor for Suicide

### Research Support

Barber, C. & Miller, M. (2014). Reducing a suicidal person’s access to lethal means of suicide: A research agenda. *Am J Prev Med*, 47(3S2): S264.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/factors/index.html>

Grandclerc, S., De Labrouhe, D., Spodenkiewicz, M., Lachal, J., & Moro, M. R. (2016). Relations between Nonsuicidal Self-Injury and Suicidal Behavior in Adolescence: A Systematic Review. *PloS one*, 11(4), e0153760. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0153760>

Klonsky, D.E., Victor, S.E. & Saffer, B.Y. (2014). Nonsuicidal self-injury: What we know, and what we need to know. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 59(11), 565–568. doi: 1177/070674371405901101.

## SELF-CONCEPT

They experience a negative view of self and may talk about this with others. They are unhappy with their looks, lack of friends, poverty, or other issues. As self-concept escalates, they reject any positive comments, experience teasing and/or isolation and become frozen when asked about central issues contributing to negative self-esteem. In extreme cases, they feel utterly worthless, feel like an outsider, and may engage in dangerous or impulsive outbursts or suicide attempts.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views self in negatively, feels like outsider</li> <li>Unhappy w/looks, lack of friends</li> <li>Talks about sadness, posts online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unreceptive to positive comments</li> <li>Teased, lacks friends, isolated and alone</li> <li>Avoids talk of looks, weight; poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extremely low view of self, worthless</li> <li>Dangerous/impulsive outbursts</li> <li>Outsider status; considers suicide</li> </ul>

- What are some things you don’t like about yourself?
- Is it difficult for you to hear positive things about yourself?
- If you had a magic wand, what would you change about yourself?
- Do you see yourself as different from everyone else?
- Have you felt so bad about yourself you missed school or work?

### Columbine, 1999

“I have practically no self-esteem, especially concerning girls and looks and such.”

### Columbine, 1999

“If people would give me more compliments all of this [the attack] might still be avoidable.... You know what, maybe I just need to get laid. Maybe that'll just change some s--- around.”

### Umpqua Community College, 2015

“I have always been the most hated person in the world... My whole life has been one lonely enterprise. One loss after another.”

### Research Support

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**EAT**

They experience a loss of appetite due to sadness or an increase in eating as emotional coping. As eating problems increase, they begin to lose or gain weight, increasing health concerns and others express concern about their behaviors. Problems continue with increased isolation, negative thoughts about self and a need for medical intervention.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of appetite related to sadness</li> <li>Eats more to combat sadness</li> <li>Eating related to emotions, unstable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low appetite, not eating, weight loss</li> <li>Uncontrolled eating to manage sadness</li> <li>Others concerned about eating habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical concerns around lack of food</li> <li>Eating too much; increased isolation</li> <li>Intense negative view of self, future</li> </ul>

- How much time do you spend thinking about eating each day?
- Do you have a difficult time reducing your eating?
- Have you gone days without eating or reduced your calories below 1000/day? Risk Factor for Suicide
- Have people expressed worry about your eating too much or too little?
- Have you ever had to talk to a doctor or hospital about your eating?

**Research Support**

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/factors/index.html>  
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**SLEEP**

Sleep may be difficult to maintain due to early waking, difficulty falling asleep or sleeping to escape or avoid others. They feel tired, overwhelmed, and exhausted and have difficulty focusing on school, work, or friends. As sleep trouble increases, they can think of little else. They may experience intense nightmares or wakefulness and others express concern. At extreme levels, they are unable to function at work, school or with friends. Sleep is either completely illusive or they sleep most of the day and remain exhausted.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tired, overwhelmed, and exhausted</li> <li>Unable to focus on tasks, school, work</li> <li>Unable to fall asleep or early rising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>nightmares, wakefulness, insomnia</li> <li>Sleep/inability to sleep all-consuming</li> <li>Others concerned w/sleep habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannot function at work/school/friends</li> <li>Constant sleeping, remains exhausted</li> <li>Unable to sleep, jitteriness</li> </ul>

- Do you find yourself sleeping eight hours or more and still feeling tired?
- Have you tried many things to fix your sleep pattern to no success? Risk Factor for Suicide
- Do you have difficulty failing asleep and staying asleep at night?
- Do you regularly use sleep to escape thinking about your life?
- Have you slept too much or too little and it impacted your work or school?

**Research Support**

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**SUBSTANCES**

They use alcohol or THC first to counter unwanted emotions or pain. This causes minor disruptions at work, with friends or at school. As use increases, there is an emotional dulling of their experience and/or rise in impulsive actions and suicidal thoughts. In the extreme, substance use begins to incur conduct, HR, or criminal problems and/or dangerous life-threatening actions. When they try to cut back, they are unsuccessful, and they become increasingly isolated.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasional substance use (alcohol, pot)</li> <li>Minor disruption w/school, work</li> <li>Use to off-set emotional pain, sadness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent substance use (alcohol, pot)</li> <li>Impulsive actions, increased suicide risk</li> <li>Increased use for emotional dulling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncontrolled use; legal charges</li> <li>Dangerous, life-threatening actions</li> <li>Failure at cutting back, failing support</li> </ul>

- Have you tried to cut back your alcohol or drug use without success?
- When you drink, do you always have the same emotional state (e.g., happy, sad, frustrated, angry)?
- Has your use impacted your work or school attendance?
- Have you gotten into legal trouble or conduct/discipline issues at school?
- Have others expressed concern about your use?

**Tucson, 2011**

December 2008: Loughner is rejected by the U.S. Army. The military was apparently turned off by Loughner’s drug use, which he admitted to in his application.

**Norway, 2011**

“There are tens of various combinations out there with multiple brands and types of steroids. Just find an option that suits you. The important thing, after all, is to biologically enhance your physique in order to ensure that you have the optimal chances to succeed in the operation.”

**Research Support**

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**ATTEMPTS**

At the earliest stages, they experience thoughts of suicide without acting. They may hint to others about considering an attempt and/or have engaged in non-lethal attempts (e.g., taking 3-4 Advil, jumping from a small height, 3-4 feet). As attempts increase, they have increased access to lethal means and have engaged in detailed fantasy and planning. Others express grave concern. At extreme escalation, there have been multiple attempts, some of which had the potential for death. Without intervention, it is very likely they will continue with suicide attempts.

Moderate	High	Extreme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thought about suicide without acting</li> <li>Hinted at considering an attempt</li> <li>Minor, non-lethal attempts or gestures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed planning, almost carried out</li> <li>Access to means needed for attempt</li> <li>Others very concerned about risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple previous attempts</li> <li>Attempts had the potential for death</li> <li>High likelihood of continued attempts</li> </ul>

- If you were to kill yourself, do you know how you would do it?
  - What has kept you from killing yourself so far?
  - Have you talked to other people about thoughts of wanting to die?
  - If you have attempted suicide before, can you describe what happened?
  - Have you ever been in the psychiatric hospital after a suicide attempt?
- Risk Factor for Suicide

**Research Support**

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/factors/index.html>  
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