**Early Warning Signs Demonstrated by Previous Active Shooters**

**And**

**The Relationship of the Intervention Process**

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The Indiana State Police and Dr. Richard Hogue Ed. D of Hogue & Associates Incorporated do not have a foolproof program for preventing and responding to an active shooter event.

**The Intervention Process**

Most sources suggest that no infallible profile of an active shooter exists. It is not the intent of the Indiana State Police to create a profile of active shooters that is flawless.

**However, by studying previous active shooter events, schools may be better able to identify, evaluate, and support individuals that may be developing into a potential threat.** The Indiana State Police refer to this process as the **“Intervention Process.”**

The following paragraphs set out several behavioral indicators that may assist educators and law enforcement in identifying and supporting individuals that are exhibiting “Early Warning Behavioral Indicators.” By studying previous active shooter events, several common “Early Warning Behavioral Indicators” may be identified that signal the need for an intervention.

**The Indiana State Police feel strongly that the development and implementation of the nonpunitive “Intervention Process” plays a critical role in improving the security of our schools.** The following paragraphs examine several behavioral indicators that may signal the need for an intervention.

**The Foundation of the ISP Intervention Process**

**Common Pre-Event Behavioral Keys**

The United States Secret Service, the United States Department of Education and the National Association of School Psychologists **suggest that no infallible profile of a student who will cause harm exists.**

***The Indiana State Police are very clear on the fact that no process has been developed that is 100% accurate in profiling a developing shooter. However, by studying the developmental history of previous shooters, ISP brings into focus an undeniable pattern. The utilization of this pattern may be helpful in identifying individuals that may need support and intervention.***

**The ISP Intervention Process**

**The “Intervention Process” is not a punitive procedure or practice! It involves** **identification, monitoring, evaluation, and or a support/treatment program.**

**The Intervention Team**

The Intervention Team is the foundation of the “Intervention Process. It is recommended that the “Intervention Team” be staffed by selecting a cross section of individuals from the school community.

By utilizing a broad spectrum of school community members, the scope of intelligence gathered by the team will be dramatically increased. The broad-spectrum approach to staffing the “Intervention Team” will also allow educators to create a team that has a wide range of talents and resources. Each member of the “Intervention Team” should bring a special skill set to the process as well a unique perspective on supporting those in need.

**Examples of Intervention Team Members**

1. School Counselors
2. School Nursing and Medical Professionals
3. Community Mental Health Professionals
4. Representatives from School Nursing Staff
5. School Resource Officer and or Law Enforcement Rep
6. Building Administrator
7. Classroom Teacher Representative
8. Representatives of the School Community Clergy
9. Support Staff Member

* Student Representative (As Appropriate)

It is critical for “Intervention Team” members to be trained. Members must understand that the purpose of the team is to identify and support those in need of assistance. Again, the purpose of the “Intervention Team” is not punitive in nature.

**Examples of the Team’s Training Program Focuses**

* 1. Purpose and Procedural Guidelines

1. Early Warning Behavioral Indicators
2. Expectations
3. Confidentiality Policies
4. Basic School Safety Terms
5. Belief Statements
6. Policies
7. Avenues to Utilize Resources
8. Chain-of-Command

**Purpose of the Intervention Team**

Again, one of the primary purposes of the Intervention Team is to assist in monitor members of the school community. By monitoring members of the school community, the team may be more likely to identify a broader spectrum of individuals in the district population. It is critical to identity those in need of assistance early in the developmental process. A second critical function of the team is to provide the resources to aide and assist those individuals that need support.

NOTE: An additional benefit of selecting a broad spectrum of individuals to serve on the “Intervention Team” is to broaden the scope of resources that team members bring to the process.

**Educating the School Community on the Early Warning Indicators**

“Active Shooter Events” can only be prevented if individuals are identified early and supported appropriately. Knowing the “Early Warning Behavioral Indicators” and understanding how to initiate the support process is critical to the success of the “Intervention Team.”

“**Prevention is preferable to Response.”**

***It must be underscored, that ISP always prefers prevention to response.*** With that in mind, the Department feels strongly that most school attacks can be prevented by educating the school community on the “Early Warning Behavioral Indicators.” This program must be accompanied by a system that provides pathways for reporting concerns and a meaningful intervention/ support program for those exhibiting the “Early Warning Indicators.”

**Common Pre-Event Behavioral Keys**

Shooters typically develop in plain sight. This assertion is often challenged. For supporting documentation, a quick review of several school shootings will serve to demonstrate that shooter most often develop in plain sight. The review will include the Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Stoneman Douglas, and Dennis Middle School attacks. **People almost always know there is something “off” about these individuals.**

To prevent active shooter events, members of the school community must be educated on the “Early Warning Indicators” that are exhibited by developing active shooters.

**“Common Pre-Event Behavioral Keys”**

**Tools in the Intervention Process**

The following paragraphs set out several behavioral indicators and developmental factors that may assist “Intervention Team Members” in better understanding shooter development. This information may also serve to educate “Intervention Team” members and assist in identifying individuals in need of assistance.

**Developing Shooters May Not Be Who We Think They Are**

**Behavioral Early Warning Indicators and Factors**

**(Keys to Better Understanding the School Shooter)**

1. Shooters Share their Intent with Others.

2. Shooters or Threats Typically Develop Over Time.

3. Shooters Develop in Plain Sight.

4. Failure to Fit In (Shooters Become Isolated)

5. Role of impulsive Actions

a. Adolescent Brain Development Plays a Significant Role

6. Obsessed with Desensitizing Activities

7. Extreme Fascination with Previous Active Shooter Events

8. Extreme Fascination with Weapons

9. Undiagnosed and or Untreated Emotional and or Mental Health Issues

**Author’s Note**

Perhaps the most recognized authority on school shooters, Dr. Peter Langman Ph.D., writes:

**Are school shooters mentally ill?**

**“The Term “mental illness means different things to different people, which makes it problematic to use in this context. Sidestepping the problems associated with this term, it is fair to say that school shooters are not happy, well-adjusted people. As I have written elsewhere regarding juvenile shooters:**

**These are not ordinary kids who were bullied into retaliation. These are not ordinary kids who played too many video games. These are not ordinary kids who just wanted to be famous. These are simply not ordinary kids. These are kids with serious psychological problems.” {521}**

**ISP Believes:** “**Prevention is preferable to Response.”**

Again: **It must be underscored, that ISP always prefers prevention to response**. With that in mind, the Departments feels strongly that ***most school attacks can be prevented*** by educating the school community on the early warning behaviors and by providing avenues for meaningful intervention and support.

***In “PROTECTING AMERICA’S SCHOOLS A U.S. SECRET SERVICE ANALYSIS OF TARGETED SCHOOL VIOLENCE,”*** The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center offers this guidance with respect to shooters openly demonstrating concerning behaviors:

“**All attackers exhibited concerning behaviors. Most elicited concern from others, and most communicated their intent to attack:” {523}**

**“ISP Common Pre-Event Behavioral Keys”**

1. **Shooters Share their Intent with Others!**

In the experience of the Indiana State Police, individuals do not just snap. They develop over time and display very specific characteristics. These characteristics are typically obvious to friends, parents, educators, counselors, law enforcement, etc.

Shooters share their intent with others for a variety of reasons and in a variety of ways.

1. Developing shooters, often share their plans to garner attention.
2. It is not uncommon for shooters to become obsessed with previous active shooters.
3. Shooters often see the attention that previous receive. They want the same.
4. Developing shooters often plan extensively. They produce charts, drawings and develop goals based on the potential number of intended victims.
5. Information is often shared with classmate, teachers, significant others, etc.

**The Indiana State Police believe strongly that sharing the name and likeness of school shooters is a mistake. By sharing this type of information, media outlets may unintentionally be to reinforcing the infamy desired by developing shooters. ISP does not participate in this practice.**

1. **Shooters or Threats Develop “Over Time”**

Shooters develop over time. They do not snap. It is not unusual for school shooters to develop over time and exhibit behavior that may generate concern in educators, students, parents, law enforcement, etc. While shooters may be “triggered” by an event, the catalyst typically sets into action an event that has been contemplated and planned. Again, ISP is not aware of a school shooting that resulted from an individual just “snapping.” ISP holds the belief that school shooters do not just “snap.”

1. **Shooter Develop in Plain Sight!**

The development of an active shooter event is not a covert process. These individuals typically develop in plain sight.

1. They plan meticulously and typically their actions are not done in a secretive manner.
2. They accumulate large quantities of weapons.
3. They talk freely of their fascination for previous active shooters. They may collect news articles and search the internet to garner information on previous active shooter events.

1. **Failure to “Fit In” (Isolation)**

It goes without saying that even the best of “school days” can be difficult at times for children. The need to be accepted or to “fit in” is a strong determinant in the developmental process of a “shooter.”

From early elementary school, individuals strive to belong, to be recognized and or to be a part of the “group.” If individuals are excluded from the “group”, self-esteem, self-image and or self-concept suffer dramatically. This may create a sense of alienation that can be magnified by hazing, teasing or in the extreme bullying. Often being the “odd person out” invites more intense bullying and teasing. The longer this process continues, the more ingrained the alienation and the greater the need to get even.

As individuals seek to belong, the need for recognition may become an obsession. These individuals may seek a means to garner that recognition by extreme behavior.

In addition, the desire to strike back at those they perceived to be responsible for the alienation or isolation grows. Adolescents may fantasize about getting even and attaining the recognition they so desperately desire. It is not uncommon for adolescents to fantasize about “getting even.” These fantasies may even have a violent focus.

However, typically the fantasy is just that, a fantasy and it does not become an obsession. However, in extreme situations, the threat begins to progress when the “developing shooter” begins to see a violent act as a realistic avenue to “getting even” and obtaining recognition. Thus, they see an end to the isolation they so desperately seek to escape. Shooters may develop when the fantasy of attaining recognition and bringing the isolation to an end becomes an obsession.

**Supplemental Note:**

**(The Role of Adolescent Brain Development)**

1. **The Impact of Adolescent Brain Development**

**It is often hard to understand why adolescents act so irrationally. Adolescents often make decisions impulsively with dangerous results.** **{1}** The biological explanation for this behavior rests in the physiological development of the adolescent brain. The area of the brain responsible for rational thought develops more slowly than the areas of the brain that steward emotional behavior such as aggression, anger, and fear.

Most neuroscientists suggest that the prefrontal cortex is still developing during a preadolescent and adolescent years. As a result, teens rely on an area of the brain referred to as the amygdala to make decisions solve problems and process emotions, impulses, aggression, and instinctive behavior. **{524}**

Adolescents often do not view the consequences of their actions with the same rational thought processes as an adult.

**“Adults think with the prefrontal cortex, the brain’s rational part. This is the part of the brain that responds to situations with good judgment and an awareness of long-term consequences. Teens process information with the amygdala. This is the emotional part.” {169}**

***“Basically, various areas of the brain develop at different rates. The area that stewards reasoning develops more slowly than the area of the brain that helps students see the consequences of their actions.” {177}***

**“The latest research indicates that exposure to drugs and alcohol during the pubescent years can change or delay these developments.”** {176}

The disparity, in developmental rates, does not mean that adolescents cannot make sound decisions and or tell the difference between right and wrong. It also does not mean that they should not be held accountable for their actions. An understanding of this process may assist parents, psychologists, clinicians, counselors, educators, law enforcement, etc. in managing and understanding the behavior of adolescents in their charge.

1. **“Obsessed with Desensitizing Activities”**

As indicated above, we must understand that areas of the adolescent mind are still in the developmental stages. Some experts opine that the changing physiological components of the brain contribute to many of the poor decision-making practices found in adolescents. **Again, adolescent decisions are driven more by emotion than reason.** **The consequences of their actions are frequently not a factor in their decision-making processes.**

**In the discussion of “Desensitizing Activities,” we may be well served to review Col Grossman’s work on the desensitizing impact of violent video games, movies, literature, etc. on the adolescent brain. {12}**

Col Grossman, a retired general staff officer, company commander in the 7th (Light) Infantry Division and a professor of psychology at West Point suggests that most people have a predisposition against harming another human being. He utilized his experience and expertise to demonstrate that soldiers need to be specifically conditioned and trained to kill.

***“Just as soldiers must be trained to “counter” the predisposition to harm another human being, extensive exposure to video games may condition adolescents to become desensitized thus changing their repugnant view of violent behavior.”*** {12}

Grossman and others suggest that extreme exposure to violent internet sites, video games, television programing, movie styles and literature vogues are contributing to the desensitizing of adolescents. Grossman maintains that the techniques used to train our military are emulated in the technology utilized to develop the programing for these entertainment avenues. Grossman’s assumption rests in the assertion that extensive emersion and exposure to these sources influences adolescents by desensitizing them to violent acts. {12} Some social scientists suggest that more research to support this assertion needs to be mounted.

1. **Extreme Fascination with Previous Active Shooter Events**

Often “school shooters” are motivated by previous “active shooter events.” Developing shooters often idolized the shooters at Columbine. **This phenomenon has become so common in developing shooter that it is referred to as the “Columbine Effect.”** Developing shooters see the infamy attained by the Columbine perpetrators and wish to garner the same. In the search for elevating their self-esteem they fantasize about duplicating a school attack in hope of attaining the notoriety and recognition they seek.

Columbine is the classic example of an event that school shooters have studied, emulated, and admired for more than twenty years. “The Columbine Effect” is a phrase that has been coined to describe this phenomenon.

As we study school shootings, the importance developing shooters place on being accepted, recognized, and validated becomes clear. We begin to see the extent to which these individuals will go to be acknowledged and recognized within the “active shooter social caste system.”

***Author’s Note***: It is important to remember how the adolescent brain “works.” The decision-making process operates differently than that of an adult. The section of the brain that considers the consequences of actions is not fully developed. The adolescent is impulsive. **The desire to belong, to be recognized and perhaps to get even are powerful determinants especially in early puberty.**

1. ***Extreme Fascination with Weapons***

School shooters often accumulate a large cache of weapons and ammunition. They frequently practice and become proficient in the use of these weapons. A healthy respect for weapons is not troublesome but an obsession with displaying weapons in “selfies” along with threatening verbiage is a reason for concern.

It is not uncommon for developing shooters to post pictures online. Many of the “selfies” show the developing shooter in a threatening pose. Messages outlining their intent are often incorporated into the “selfie” as they display their weapon of choice. It is important to underscore that these individuals often plan, stockpile weapons, ammunition and share their intent others prior to carrying out these horrific events. The planning phase is our best chance to prevent these attacks.

1. **Undiagnosed and or Untreated: Emotional and Mental Health Issues**

***It goes without saying that most individuals suffering with emotional and mental health issues are nonviolent. The Indiana State Police do not wish to contribute to the stigma placed on the scores of individuals dealing with a variety of emotional and mental health issues.*** On the contrary, ISP wishes to underscore the need for assistance that can and should be provided by a well-designed “Intervention Program.”

***If individuals with emotional and mental health issues are diagnosed and treated, they are statistically no more violent that anyone in the general population.*** This fact underscores the need for supporting and treating those that are suffering from emotional and mental health maladies. It is the intent of the Indiana State Police to promote the availability of effective treatment and by doing so decrease the potential for possible violence among adolescents living with emotional and or mental health issues.

Mental health experts suggest that adolescents suffering from schizophrenia are more likely to harm themselves than to harm others. In severe cases, schizophrenia may be linked with violent behavior. In some cases, undiagnosed and or untreated emotional and or mental health issues can be a major factor in the emergence of an active shooter.

The Indiana State Police feel strongly that the development and implementation of the nonpunitive “Intervention Process” plays a critical role in disrupting the development of some active shooters. The “Intervention Process” is based on identification, intervention, diagnoses, and support.

**Someone “Most” Always Knows**

In reviewing the case studies set out below it will become apparent that numerous individuals and institutions knew or should have known that these shooters needed an intervention.

In many of the school shooter incidents, fellow students knew, law enforcement knew, mental health professionals knew, educators knew, and parents knew.

***Early Warning Behavioral Indicators:***

***Demonstrated by Developing Shooters***

To demonstrate how developing shooter exhibit the Indiana State Police “Early Warning Behavioral Indicators” several “active shooter events” have been outlined in the following paragraphs.

Again, typically, shooters do not develop in a covert manner. Most clearly display and project their intent.

**Columbine 1999**

**Early Warning Behaviors**

As far back as the most infamous school shooting in United States history, school shooters have made no secret of their intent to do harm. They did not just “snap.” They developed! The following information clearly sets out the “Early Warning Indicators or Behaviors” that signal their intent to do unspeakable harm to their classmates, teachers, and others.

**The Developing Shooter: Preexisting Criminal Behavior**

**Columbine Shooter Development**

1. A complaint was filed with law enforcement (Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office). The parents of a fellow student alleged that one of the eventual shooters threatened to kill their son with explosives. The complaint cited an electronic threat generated by one of the eventual shooters. **{180}**

2. Months before the Columbine attack the shooters were arrested for breaking into a van and stealing equipment. The court placed the pair on a diversionary counseling program. The shooters apparently fooled the counselors assigned to evaluate their progress.

***The “Diversionary Counselor’s” final assessment:***

***Shooter # 1***

***``RECOMMENDATIONS: Successful Termination. (Shooter # 1) has earned the right for an early termination. He needs to strive to self-motivate himself so he can remain on a positive path. He is intelligent enough to make any dream a reality, but he needs to understand hard work is part of it.'' {502}***

***``PROGNOSIS: Good. (Shooter’s # 1) is a bright young man who has a great deal of potential. If he can tap his potential and become self-motivated, he should do well in life.'' {502}***

***Shooter # 2***

***``RECOMMENDATIONS: Successful Termination. (Shooter # 2) should seek out more education at higher levels. He impressed me as being very articulate and intelligent. These are skills that he should grow and use as frequently as possible.''{502}***

***``PROGNOSIS: Good. (Shooter #2) is a very bright young man who is likely to succeed in life. He is intelligent enough to achieve lofty goals if he stays on task and remains motivated.' {502}***

**Excerpts of the Court Report on Shooters, By the Associated Press, Friday, April 23, 1999; 10:03 a.m. EDT {510}**

Psychiatrists and psychologist studying the pair in the aftermath of shooting suggested that one of the shooters took pride in duping their diversion counselor. It has been suggested that this behavior may demonstrate early psychopathic tendencies and or behavior.

Reports suggest that the Jefferson County Sheriff warned school administrators at Columbine that one of the shooters might be making pipe bombs. **{384}**

**Update on the Columbine Shooters**

**About Dr. Peter Langman**

***“Peter Langman, Ph.D., is a sought-after expert on the psychology of school shooters and other perpetrators of mass violence. He conducts trainings on understanding the psychology of school shooters and identifying potential school shooters for professionals in mental health, education, and law enforcement. He has spoken on preventing school shootings at the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA, and been hired by Homeland Security to train professionals in school safety. He is also a researcher with the National Threat Assessment Center of the United States Secret Service. In 2018 he was invited by the Department of Homeland Security to participate in the National School Security Roundtable. Though his primary focus is school shooters, he has spoken at FBI Headquarters on white supremacist homegrown violent extremists and at the National Counterterrorism Center on American jihadis.” {513}***

***Dr. Langman’s View of the Columbine Shooters***

**To develop his view of the shooters:**

**“Langman examined 27,000 pages of records from the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, including 5,000 pages previously unseen. While others have pointed out that Harris exhibited the classic behaviors of a psychopath, Klebold was more of a mystery. His journal, released publicly in 2006, gave Langman crucial insights into his personality.” {510}**

**On the first shooter Langman offers:**

**Shooter # 1: “18, was a psychopath — rage-filled, egotistical, lacking a conscience, writes Langman.**

**On the second shooter, Langman offers:**

**Shooter # 2, 17, was psychotic, suffering from paranoia, delusions, and disorganized thinking.” {510} "The biggest eye-opener was the extent to which (Shooter # 2) really was mentally disturbed. That was not in the literature, not in the media accounts. To realize this assumption, you had to see his journal, says Langman, a clinical director of KidsPeace, a 127-year-old Pennsylvania-based charity with treatment centers from Maine to Florida.” {510} "His journal is very fascinating, a very disturbed piece of writing." {510}**

The Top 5 Ways the Psychopath Will Try to Manipulate You:

Author’s Note: Not all shooters suffer from an unhealthy mind. Individuals suffering from psychopathy are at an elevated risk.

***One of the defining features of psychopathy is the tendency to con others through lying, manipulation, and a glib form of charm. If you have been taken in by a person high in psychopathy, you can be left feeling hurt, deceived, and used.” {503}***

***Those high in psychopathy:***

1. ***“Don't see their traits as problematic. There’s evidence from the self-other correlations, especially in the boldness domain, that people high in psychopathy do not mind showing how fearless they are, even if it means they come across as dominating.” {503}***
2. ***“Don't care about the negative consequences of their actions. People high in psychopathy may be aware of their undesirable traits, but not be particularly concerned about their impact on others.” {503}***
3. ***“Try to dominate others. You will know if you are in the presence of psychopathic individuals if you sense that you are being pushed around. {503}***
4. ***“Elevate their own devious motivations. Kelley et al. concluded that high boldness plus high impression management would lead people high in psychopathy to feel that they are not subject to the same” concerns as others. They may even give higher purposes to their behavior than their behavior would merit.” {503}***
5. ***“Try to portray themselves as unusually honest. Being honest does not come naturally to people high in psychopathy, but their self-distortions can lead them to think that they are. It is easy to be swayed by this apparent high-mindedness.” {503}***

***In reviewing one of the Columbine shooters, these diagnostic standards fit well. That leads the Indiana State Police to concur with Dr. Langman’s assessment of Shooter # 1.***

Simply, mental illness played a very significant role in the development of the Columbine shooters.

***Supplemental Emotional & Mental Health Issues***

**More Early Warning Indicators of the Columbine Shooters**

***Behavior & Class Work Demonstrated the “Early Warning Indicators”***

***“They wrote death poetry for their English class. They made a video about their new guns-for a class at school. They shouted murderous slogans and posted them on America Online. They loved explosives and guns. They talked about it to anyone who might listen.”*** **{181}**

A few months before the attack, one of the shooters penned a story for a writing class assignment about an assassin in a black trench coat who shot students and bombed a city. The shooter reportedly wrote,

**"The…streetlights caused a visible reflection off of the droplets of blood…I understood his actions."** {384}

Sources suggest, the shooter’s writing teacher contacted his guidance counselor and the student’s parents. [She] communicated to the parents her concern and discussed at length the appropriateness of the disturbing story. [She] later stated that they did not seem worried and made a comment about trying to understand kids today. {385}

The shooters left a footprint on the web:

“**In the writings left behind, one of the shooters left a large, varied electronic trail.” “His web pages were dotted with images of fire and skulls, devils and weapons.”** **{181}**

One of the Columbine shooters wrote in his personal account on his America Online profile:

"**As his empire crumbles, my precious black widow shall rise as his most fitting successor." {181} "Online, he called himself "Darkness." {181}**

**Virginia Tech**

**Early Warning Behaviors**

**Demonstration of Emotional and Mental Health Issues**

In the view of the Indiana State Police, the Virginia Tech attack like many other school shooter events could have been prevented. The “Early Warning Indicators” were clearly present. This view is supported by a comprehensive report generated at the request of Virginia Governor Tim Kaine.

**The VT Shooter’s Early Warning Indicators Manifested in the Middle Grades**

In the eighth grade, the developing Virginia Tech shooter’s teachers reported concern over the **suicidal and homicidal ideations exhibited in his writing samples**. **{383}** These concerns and his unhealthy interest and or **fascination with the Columbine attack** generated a request from school officials that the family seek counseling. After the initial evaluation, the shooter was prescribed an antidepressant. He responded well and was taken of the medication a year later. ***{383}***

***Fall of 2005 at Virginia Tech***

At Virginia Tech in the Fall of 2005, one of the shooter’s language arts professors expressed concern about the **violent content in his writings**. A letter was penned to the “English Department Chair” expressing concern. He was removed from the class and to salvage his academic status, two professors established a one-on-one tutorial rotation with the expectation that the shooter would participate in counseling.

He **refused to go to counseling** which resulted in referrals to the “Division of Student Affairs,” the “Cook Counseling Center,” the “Schiffert Health Center,” the “Virginia Tech Police Department” and the “College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences” by the co-director of the creative writing program**.{383}**

**Law Enforcement Involvement**

In November of 2005, a **female student filed an initial report** with the Virginia Tech Police Department indicating that the shooter had made "annoying" contact with her by phone, on the internet and in person. The Virginia Tech Police Department referred the complaint to the university disciplinary office. **A month later a second stalking complaint was filed** with the Virginia Tech Police Department. The report alleged that the shooter was sending “disturbing instant-gram messages” to her.**{383}** The Virginia Tech Police Department (VTPD) contacted the accused and directed him to have no further contact with the female students. After the VTPD officer left, **the shooter intimated to a suitemate that he “might as well kill himself**.”

**The suitemate reached out to the Virginia Tech Police Department**. The VTPD determined that the shooter was considering suicide. The VTPD took the shooter off campus for a voluntary counseling evaluation at New River Community Services.

There **he was given a mental health screening**. The screening **determined that he was mentally ill and in need of hospitalization**. Specifically, **the screening found him to be a danger to his self and others**. **The shooter was remanded to a local psychiatric facility**.

A few hours later he was evaluated by a staff mental health professional. This evaluation found a very different conclusion. The **mental health professional on staff determined** that he **was “mentally ill” but was not a danger to his self and others**. This finding determined that outpatient counseling was the appropriate treatment. {383}.

**The Court Involvement**

As a result of the evaluation by the local mental health facility, the shooter was released, and paperwork was sent to a Special Justice. The **judge signed an order** that determined that the ***shooter was mentally ill, in need of hospitalization and an imminent threat to self and others***. {493} {494} Tragically, the **Virginia Tech shooter failed to get the mental health treatment ordered by the judge.** {494} {495}

**The Shooter Demonstrated Concerning Behavior:**

**Virginia Tech 2006**

Records indicate that the shooter continued to display his macabre interest in violence. Electronic records demonstrate that he had **been reading several violent books including**:

***“Men, Women, and Chainsaws by Carol J. Clover, this text examines the role of gender in the modern horror film, along with Lovecraft: Bloodcurdling Tales of Horror and the Macabre; and The Female of the Species: Tales of Mystery and Suspense by Joyce Carol Oates, a book in which the publisher writes: In these and other gripping and disturbing tales, women are confronted by the evil around them and surprised by the evil they find within themselves.” {496} {497}***

**Virginia Tech** **2007**

**In early 2007 the shooter began to prepare and assemble his cache of firearms.** He ordered a .22 caliber Walther P22 on the Internet; picked up the .22 caliber Walther P22 from J-N-D Pawnbrokers pawnshop in Blacksburg, Virginia; purchased a 9-millimeter Glock 19 handgun and a $10 box of 50 9-mm full metal jacket ammunition. **{498} {499} {500}**

**Critical Point of Interest**

**The Chair of the English Department sounded the alarm years before the attack!**

Professor Roy, the chair of the English Department offers in 2005:

***“A colleague had alerted her (Roy) to Cho's disturbing writings and disruptive behavior. Roy writes that Cho's classmates were afraid of him, and that he was taking cell phone pictures of them under his desk.” {501}***

***A concerned Roy, decided to tutor him privately. In the sessions she found a student wearing dark reflective sunglasses who was almost always unresponsive in the tutorial sessions. {501}***

***Roy offers, "It's actually a bit terrifying in some ways to be with someone when you realize that all you are getting are things that bounce off them," Roy said. In Roy's view, this was a very serious situation. {501}***

***Professor Roy contacted four different departments on campus, including the counseling center and university police. She was desperate for the (shooter) to get help.***

***As a result of her attempts to obtain to obtain counseling for the developing shooter she was told:***

***"That would never happen," Roy said. I was essentially told that I could not require a student to seek counseling.*** ***{501}***

***Points of Interest***

**Just a reminder:** Some sources indicated that after the shooter threatened suicide, ***he did receive mental health counseling* and support at an off-campus facility.** **These same sources indicate that after an initial evaluation he was not considered a threat and was released.**

**In addition:** News outlets have suggested that at the end of the calendar year, **the eventual shooter voluntarily reached out to the university’s mental health department**. **According to CBS news, “the records of any treatment he may have received are missing.”** **{501}**

***"You get very, very few opportunities to help someone who is mentally disturbed. Very few," Roy said. "And when you get them, you must take them." {501}***

***The report on the Virginia Tech Shooting, commissioned by Governor Kaine of the Commonwealth of Virginia, intimates:***

***After reviewing all the Early Warning Indicators, the “Virginia Tech Shooter Report” suggested that it was unfathomable that:***

***“A deranged and dangerous student could go on a killing rampage on the campus of Virginia Tech University.” {383}***

***The Virginia Tech Governor’s Commission found several glaring concerns:***

***1. “Confusion about state and federal privacy laws.”***

***2. “*Major gaps in mental health services within the state of Virginia.”**

***3. “Confusion on the part of mental health service professionals.”***

***4. “Communication issues at Virginia Tech Administration Services.”***

***5. Gaping holes in gun laws.” {383}***

***These conclusions represent only an overview of the shortcomings found in the study.***

**The Sandy Hook Elementary**

**Early Warning Signs**

**The Sandy Hook Elementary shooter’s life was replete with forewarnings,** **gesticulates and caveats.** **He was a troubled youth from his preschool days.**

In the **fifth grade he penned** the now infamous **“Book of Granny.”** This **play/story was created as a class project by the shooter**. In the “Book of Granny” the shooter created a main character named “Granny” and a supporting cast of Granny’s Son and “Dora the Berserker.” **In the narrative, Granny utilizes her cane-gun to shoot children.** The report authored by the “**Connecticut Office of the Child Advocate” suggests that the writings are filled with images of violence, mayhem, cannibalism, and murder**.{65}

In **“The Book of Granny,”** Granny and her son find a “little boy” in the street. **They decide that they should stuff the child with “Gran Spam” and place him in the fireplace.** **After kicking the boy into the fireplace, Granny shot the boy with her cane-gun. In a bizarre ending to the story, they decide to see if the child was in fact dead, by “try to eat the child’s feet to see if he resisted.”** **{65}**

How this behavior did not generate a referral and an intervention fly in the face of reason. ***Clearly, psychiatric support was needed***. **{65}**

**Several years prior** to the Sandy Hook attack (2005), **the shooter was treated at the Danbury Hospital Emergency Room for an “emotional crisis condition.”** The **Danbury records indicate that the mother described her son to the emergency health care providers as having had “borderline autism.”**

**In what seems to be an attempt to downplay her son’s behavior**, the mother intimated to health care professionals that **her son had “outgrown” the alleged autistic diagnosis.** **{65} {66}**

**The hospital crisis team recommended additional therapeutic support and a psychiatric evaluation.** The Office of Connecticut Child Advocacy (OCCA) report suggests that **the shooter’s mother declined these** **recommendations.** Records indicate that the mother made the decision that her son "would be better off at home.” She declined additional psychiatric care. **{65} {66}**

Records indicate that his behavior began to spiral out of control just prior to the Sandy Hook attack. **OCCA reports indicate that the shooter had not left his bedroom for three months prior to the attack.** His only contact with the outside world was via the internet. **{65}**

**The OCCA suggests that the Yale Child Study Center (YCSC) understood the severity of the shooter’s mental health needs. The YCSC recommended therapeutic support which included the need for extensive mental health treatment.**

During February of 2007, clinicians at **Yale University’s mental health facility, diagnosed the shooter with deep emotional issues.** Mental health professional, **proposed medication that they believed could have given him relief**.

**The thought of medication sent the shooter into a rant. As a result, his mother refused the treatment plan.** In a last-ditch effort, some reports suggest that **a** psychiatric nurse reached out to the father for help. **{75} At the time this document was penned, no information on the father’s response was available.**

**A former teacher described the shooter’s behavior as antisocial. She suggested that he had become isolated socially and seemed obsessed with “violence, battles and destruction.”** **{65}** In an interview with the Connecticut police, a **teacher suggested that the shooter’s writings were so graphic and explicit that they were beyond description**.

Prior to the shooting, health care professionals indicated that the eventual shooter suffered from Asperger Syndrome, Disordered-Thinking and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. {74} **Some reports indicate that the father thought it was possible that his son may have been missed diagnosed.**

**Dr.** **Langman, perhaps the most well know authority on the school shooter phenomenon, seems to support the father’s supposition**:

**“My speculation is that he may well have been schizophrenic and therefore not really in touch with reality -- and that is important if you are trying to understand a motive."** **{136}{137}**

**Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School**

**Early Warning Behaviors**

**Classmates**, that interacted with the man charged with killing 17 people at his former Florida high school, **reported that that the accused shooter worried them**. Other classmates suggested, “**He was frequently talking about his guns and sharing pictures of small animals he had shot.”** {249}

“**Students** who interacted with the (alleged shooter) said he talked a great deal about having fun with firearms, so much so that some **joked that if anyone were to attack the school, it would probably be him.”** {249}

It has been alleged that a **neighbor intimated** to authorities that the **accused shooter may have shot animals with his pellet gun in his neighborhood.** {142} {143}

The accused shooter attended Westglades Middle School prior to attending Cross Creek School ‘s K-12 program for students with emotional and behavioral issues.

Disciplinary reports from Westglades Middle School suggest:

“The alleged shooter had been **cited numerous times for disrupting class, unruly behavior, use of insulting or profane language, profanity toward staff, disobedience and other rules violations.”** **{150}**

Additional reports, from Westglades Middle School, provide some insight into the accused shooter’s temperament:

“**While the other students waited in the hallway** for their eighth-grade science teacher to let them into the classroom, **the accused shooter would sometimes bang and kick the door. He would yell profanities at the teacher, telling her to “Open up the f-----g door!”** **{150}**

School records indicate that the accused was transferred from Westglades Middle School to Cross Creek School. **At Cross Creek, a special program was implemented** to address the accused shooter’s **emotional and behavioral disabilities.** **{150}**

In 2013, psychiatrists recommended that the accused be placed in an **“involuntary admission”** program **at a residential treatment facility.{71}** **In 2016, the accused shooter returned to Stoneman Douglas High School from the Cross Creek program.**

**At Stoneman Douglas, the accused shooter’s poor behavior resulted in the implementation of a safety plan. The plan prohibited the accused shooter from carrying a backpack on campus. {146}**

“*At* ***Stoneman Douglas High School****, (the accused shooter’s) outbursts and penchant for weapons were well-known among students and staff.* ***Several students have confirmed that the shooter threatened school staff. {150}***

Law enforcement records indicate that officers from the sheriff’s department **were sent multiple times to the accused shooter’s home to deal with violent domestic situations. {149}** Records indicate that in September of 2016, three individuals **(two counselors and a sheriff’s deputy) were so troubled with the accused shooter’s behavior and mental state that they determined he should be committed to a mental health facility for evaluation. {151}**

It has been reported that **several warnings emerged** from multiple sources. **These “red flags” included calls to the FBI expressing concerns that the accused had the potential to become a school shooter. {151}** CNN reports that the alleged shooter may have introduced himself in the neighborhood as the “school shooter.” **{145}** CNN quoted a classmate as suggesting: **“Something wasn't right about him,"** "**He was off." He was “an evil kid who was always getting into trouble.”** {145}

It is alleged, that after a love-interest terminated a relationship with the accused, he posted pictures on **“Snapchat” in which he was cutting himself**. A first responder’s report confirmed the self-mutualization.

The responder’s report states that,

“**This is the only time he has ever cut himself.”** {151}

The report goes on to suggest that,

**“The accused shooter states that he cut himself because he was lonely, (he) states that he had broken up with his girlfriend and reports that his grades had fallen. The subject declares that he is better now and declares that he is no longer lonely, and his grades have gone back up." {151}**

**The “Early Warning Behavioral Indicators” were numerous & obvious.**

**Richmond Middle School Shooter**

News sources report, that a 14-year-old male shot his way through a glass panel at the rear entry way into Dennis Intermediate School on the morning of Dec. 13, 2019.It has been reported that the shooter exchanged gun fire with law enforcement in the stairwell. The event ended when the shooter took his own life.

**Numerous reports suggest that the shooter had developed a handwritten plan.** News sources also suggest that the plan set out a specific strategy for causing “maximum harm.” **{506}**

Law enforcement confirmed that the shooter was carrying a rifle bag with a Remington 700 bolt-action weapon inside and a .45-caliber Smith & Wesson semi-automatic pistol.The teen carried two magazines containing five rounds each for the pistol. **{506}**

**Sources suggest that the shooter carried a bag containing 12-ounce water bottles filled with gasoline and a couple of rags to potentially make Molotov cocktails**.**{506}**

***“Prosecutors said in an affidavit that Ms. York allegedly (prematurely) removed her son from a mental health facility; took him off prescription medication because he had said it made him feel weird; and failed to tell the police when he fired a handgun inside their home in October 2018, according to The Richmond Palladium-Item.”* {507}**

***It has been reported that the night before the planned massacre, the (shooter) filmed himself on a cell phone, stating his desire to murder classmates at his school over alleged instances of bullying. He is seen prying open the gun cabinet, which only took a "brief amount of time," and retrieving a .45 caliber pistol and bolt action rifle. {508}***

**Additional Resources and Preventative Measures**

**U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education Resources**

***NOTE: The process described in the following material refers to the Secret Service and Department of Education’s “Threat Assessment Process.”***

***Author’s Note: ISP refers to this process as the Intervention Process!***

***The U.S. Secret Service and US Department of Education Suggests:***

***“A threat assessment is a proactive investigative approach, pioneered by the Secret Service, intended to prevent targeted violence before it occurs.***

***Supplemental Material***

***One of the most important aspects of school safety is found the “Intervention Process.” This process is key to prevention. The Indiana State Police refer to the process of monitoring, identifying, treating, and supporting individuals that are demonstrating the “Early Warning Behavioral Indicators” as the “Intervention Process.”***

***Many governmental agencies, school safety experts, legislators, etc. refer to this process as the “Threat Assessment Process.”***

***The Threat Assessment in Schools:***

***“A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations & to Creating Safe School Climates”***

***This guide sets forth a process for identifying, assessing, and managing students who may pose a threat of targeted violence in schools. {512}***

***“This process–known as threat assessment–was first pioneered by the U.S. Secret Service as a mechanism for investigating threats against the president of the United States and other protected officials. {512}***

***“The Secret Service “threat assessment approach was developed based upon findings from an earlier Secret Service study on assassinations and attacks of public officials and public figures. {512}***

***“The Guide represents a modification of the Secret Service threat assessment process, based upon findings from the Safe School Initiative. It is intended for use by school personnel, law enforcement officials, and others with protective responsibilities in our nation’s schools.” {512}***

***“This Guide includes suggestions for developing a threat assessment team within a school or school district, steps to take when a threat or other information of concern comes to light, consideration about when to involve law enforcement personnel, issues of information sharing, and ideas for creating safe school climates.” {512}***