



Threat Assessment Possible Warning Signs and Indicators

The Colorado School Safety Resource Center offers this document only as a companion to a full threat assessment training. This document in no way replaces a fully trained team and a training for other school staff in threat assessment and making referrals

Making vs. Posing a Threat

- Some students who make threat ultimately pose threats
- Many students who make threats do not pose threats
- Some students who pose threats never make threats
- Implication: **ALL threats must be taken seriously; threats are NOT a necessary condition to initiate an inquiry or preliminary evaluation.**

Possible Warning Signs

- Feelings of being picked on, teased, bullied, or humiliated at home or at school
- Social withdrawal
- Being a victim of violence
- Low school interest and poor academic performance
- Feelings of rejection
- Feelings of isolation and being alone
- Aggressive and violent behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Drug and alcohol use
- Significant losses or personal failures
- History of suicidal gestures, thoughts, attempts
- Access to weapons
- Leakage: posters, academic assignments, movies, books, internet searches—websites, blogs
- Making threats in a “joking” manner

General Indications of Violence Potential

- History of violence
- Cruelty to animals, etc.
- Poor impulse control-low frustration tolerance
- Unsuccessful personal history- poor coping skills, lack of resiliency
- Perceived injustice history
- Obsession/paranoia
- Mental Illness
- Anger management problems
- Substance abuse
- Fascination/proficiency with weapons
- Early onset personality disorders
- Preoccupation with violence-leakage
- Other situational variables

Possible Triggering Events to Initiate the Threat Assessment Process

- Direct or indirect threats to harm person, group, property and/or entire school
- Artistic, written, or symbolic expression with disturbing and/or violent content
- Report of a weapon on campus
- Imminent warning signs or a cluster of concerning early warning signs
- Threat to harm or kill self (along with threats to others, or additional factors)
- Escalating pattern of behavior that has been resistive to intervention at school
- Discipline—suspension, expulsion
- There may be other reasons not mentioned here