


**ANALYZING SCHOOL ATTACKS
TO MINIMIZE VULNERABILITIES**

**COLORADO SCHOOL SAFETY RESOURCE CENTER'S
THREAT ASSESSMENT SCHOOLS TRAINING**

John Nicoletti, Ph.D., ABPP
Nicoletti-Flater Associates
303-989-1617 www.nicoletti-flater.com


Facebook: Nicoletti-Flater Associates

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**VIOLENCE IS A
COMBINATION OF
PHYSICS & PSYCHOLOGY**


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**Avenger-Related Violent
Incidents**

**IN EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS**


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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- Westminster, Colorado, January 27, 2014: A 16-year-old student at a local high school walked into the cafeteria, poured an accelerant over himself and set himself on fire in an apparent suicide attempt. The incident was witnessed by about 60 students who were in the cafeteria. Two staffers put the fire out with fire extinguishers. The boy was burned over 80% of his body and in critical condition.


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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- West Lafayette, Indiana, January 21, 2014: A 23-year-old engineering student opened fire at Purdue University, killing a teaching assistant, before turning himself over to authorities. It would appear that the victim was the only person specifically targeted.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- Roswell, New Mexico, January 14, 2014: A 12-year-old boy drew a shotgun from a band-instrument case and shot and wounded two classmates at his middle school before a teacher talked him into dropping the weapon and he was taken into custody. An 11-year-old boy was left in critical condition and a 13-year-old girl was in serious condition.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Centennial, Colorado, December 13, 2013](#): A 16-year-old student shooter entered a local high school armed with a shotgun and looking for a teacher he identified by name. The teacher immediately left the school when he learned the student was looking for him. The shooter then shot two students, killing one, before turning the gun on himself.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Sparks, Nevada, October 21, 2013](#): A student at a Nevada middle school opened fire on campus just before the starting bell, wounding two boys and killing a staff member who was trying to protect other children. Twenty to thirty students were witnesses to the tragedy that also left the lone suspected gunman dead, police said. It's unclear whether the student committed suicide, but authorities say no shots were fired by law enforcement.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Winston-Salem, North Carolina, August 30, 2013](#): An 18-year-old was been charged with shooting and wounding a fellow student at a local high school. A 15-year-old student was shot in the neck but was expected to recover. The shooter, who had brought a concealed weapon to the high school, was apprehended and arrested.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Decatur, Georgia, August 20, 2013](#): A 20-year-old man with a history of mental health issues entered a K-5 Learning Academy armed with nearly 500 rounds of ammunition and opened fire. Fortunately, no one was injured and the school bookkeeper is credited with calming the shooter down and getting him to give himself up peaceably.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Cypress, Texas, April 10, 2013](#): A 20-year-old student went on a building-to-building stabbing attack at local community college, wounding at least 14 people – many in the face and neck – before being subdued and arrested. He had apparently been planning the attack for some time and had fantasies of stabbing people to death since elementary school.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [College Park, Maryland, February 12, 2013](#): A 23-year-old student started a fire in the home where he was living, forcing the occupants outside. Once out, he shot both his roommates several times, killing one and wounding the other. He then went back inside and shot and killed himself. It was later confirmed that the shooter was schizophrenic and had a bipolar disorder.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Atlanta, Georgia, January 31, 2013](#): A 15-year-old student opened fire at an area middle school, wounding a 14-year-old boy in the neck. Multiple shots were fired but only one student was injured and he was treated and discharged from the hospital. The school has metal detectors but they were not working on this particular day. The shooter was caught and arrested.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [St. Louis, Missouri, January 15, 2013](#): A 34-year-old part-time student went into the Stevens Institute of Business & Art and shot the school's financial aid director, after having a heated discussion with him the day before. The assailant then shot himself in the side. The shooter apparently had a history of mental illness and was on 5 year's probation for attacking a cabby with a boxcutter in 2009. Both men survived their injuries.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Newtown, Connecticut, December 14, 2012](#): A 20-year-old shot his mother four times in the head, took guns from her house and then went to a local elementary school & began blasting his way through the building. In all 20 children and six adults were killed before the shooter turned the gun on himself when he heard police approaching. Apparently, the gunman was carrying an arsenal of hundreds of rounds of especially deadly ammunition — enough to kill just about every student in the school if given enough time

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Casper, Wyoming, November 30, 2012](#): The 25-year-old son of a community college instructor barged into his father's commuter science lab and shot him in the head with a high-powered bow and arrow. Though severely wounded, the victim was able to wrestle with his son, giving his students the opportunity to escape. The father died of his wound and the son took his own life by self-inflicted knife wounds.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Baltimore, Maryland, August 27, 2012](#): A 15-year-old student opened fire on the first day of classes at a local high school, getting off two shots and wounding a classmate, before being rushed by teachers. The shooter opened fire in the cafeteria, fired one shot before teachers grabbed him, and another shot went off as he was being grabbed.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Lealman, Florida, June 22, 2012](#): A 45-year-old former middle school principal who lost his job over a drug arrest went on a rampage at a halfway house for the hearing impaired, stabbing several people - killing at least two and wounding 9 more. He apparently told his mother before the carnage that he was 'going to kill all the drug dealers.' He was charged with two-counts first degree murder and two counts attempted first degree murder.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Oakland, California, April 2, 2012:](#) A 43-year-old former nursing student who had been expelled for behavior problems went back to the small Christian university he had attended, targeting the female administrator who had expelled him. When she was not there, he opened fire – killing 7 and wounding 3 others. The shooter surrendered later that day about three miles from campus. He claimed he had been upset because he had been teased about his poor English skills.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Columbus, Ohio, March 14, 2012:](#) A 37-year-old man, armed with three knives, went on a stabbing spree in the admissions office of a technical school, injuring four people – including an employee of the state attorney general. The assailant was shot by police. He, along with three victims, were in critical condition.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Jacksonville, Florida, March 6, 2012:](#) A 28-year-old man who had been terminated earlier that day, returned to the Episcopal High School and shot and killed the headmistress and then killed himself.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Chardon, Ohio, February 27, 2012:](#) A 17-year-old high school student opened fire in the school cafeteria, killing three and wounding two others. The shooter, who claimed to be the victim of bullying and warned his friends about his plans two days in advance, gave himself up to police without incident. He had posted on his Facebook:

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Aurora, Colorado, July 20, 2012:](#) A 24-year-old man who had recently withdrawn from a doctoral program at the University of Colorado, entered through an exit door at a midnight premier of *The Dark Night* at a local theater in full riot gear, discharged a gas canister, and started shooting. Twelve people died and 58 were wounded. The shooter surrendered to police without incident, alerting them to the fact that his apartment was booby-trapped.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- [Memphis, Tennessee, August 11, 2011:](#) A 17-year-old student was charged with first-degree murder in the slaying of his Christian school principal. The student told investigators that he planned to stab the principal of the Seventh-day Adventist school on the third day of classes, when he knew he'd be alone with her in a classroom. He apparently wanted to kill her because he "did not like her" and she had made him "angry."

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- Sacramento, California, February 2, 2011: A 44-year-old school janitor entered the elementary school where he had been fired earlier and shot and killed the principal. There had been an ongoing movement by parents to fire the janitor because he was allegedly nasty to students. A SWAT team later arrested him at his home and he has been charged with murder

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- Los Angeles, California, January 18, 2011: A sophomore brought a gun to school in his backpack, and it discharged when he dropped the bag during health class, wounding two teenagers at a local high school, one critically. The student who had brought the gun to school fled the classroom after the shootings but was quickly taken into custody.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- Omaha, Nebraska, January 5, 2011: A 17-year-old boy opened fire at a local high school, killing an assistant principal and wounding the principal, before fleeing the scene and fatally shooting himself in his car about a mile away. The shooter had posted a rambling message on Facebook shortly before the incident about his unhappiness with his new school and predicted his friends would hear about the "evil things" he was about to do.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- Littleton, Colorado, February 23, 2010: A 32-year-old man signed in at the reception desk @ noon at a junior high school, approximately three miles from Columbine High School, saying he was a former student. It was unclear when he left the building but at about three p.m., he opened fire in the parking lot of the school, injuring two teenagers. He was tackled by a math teacher, who said they had gone through extensive emergency drills after Columbine.

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RECENT VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

- Bailey, Colorado, September 27, 2006: A 53-year-old gunman walked into Platte Canyon High School, took six female students hostage, shot and killed one girl when SWAT team came through the door, before killing himself.

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WHAT ARE THE TIME & RESPONSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS?

- Pre-Event Threshold Actions – what you do before the person gets on your radar.
- Event Threshold – what you do when the person gets on your radar.
- Event Horizon – what you do when the person attacks you.
- Post-Event Horizon – what you do to try to recover and live with what happened.

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PRE-EVENT THRESHOLD ACTIONS

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BASIC SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN PREVENTING & DISRUPTING A VOLATILE ATTACK

- Development of Policies, Procedures, & Protocols for Threats & Violence
- Development of a Centralized Data Collection Point (VORTEX)
- Target Hardening
- Activation of Dynamic Countermeasures

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WHAT ARE THE CATEGORIES OF RISKS?

- A risk for Proactive Attack Behaviors against people or property
- A risk for Reactive Attack Behaviors against people or property
- A risk for behaviors that create Social and Psychological Disruption

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VIOLENCE INGREDIENTS

- TIME
- OPPORTUNITY
- ABILITY
- DESENSITIZATION & DEHUMANIZATION BEHAVIORS
- STIMULUS



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WHO ARE THE ATTACKERS?

- Insider – Individuals who are on your radar before they attack.
- Outsider – Individuals who are not on your radar before they attack.

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SPECIFICALLY, WHO ARE THE INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS?

- > Employees / Students
- > Ex-Employees / Ex-Students
- > Parents
- > Family Members of Employees / Ex-Family Members
- > Contractors
- > Others

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WHAT DOES NOT WORK IN CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT?

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FOCUSING ON WHO INSTEAD OF WHAT

- What is a 'who'?
 - Mental Health Diagnosis (i.e., psychotic, bipolar, etc.).
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Religious Affiliation
 - Political Affiliation
 - Other Affiliations (i.e., Greenpeace, Code Pink, PEAT)

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Individuals with Mental Illness

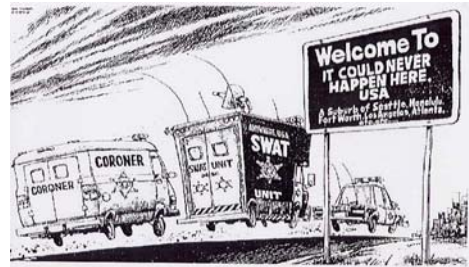
Attackers

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DENIAL



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RATIONALIZATION -- Inserting 'JUST' in the behavioral description



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BELIEVING IN AN URBAN LEGEND



"Joe was a nice person. He just snapped!"

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MORE REASONS & EXCUSES

- Afraid to do anything because they might “set the person off”
- Assuming that the potential perpetrator is getting help because he/she is in counseling
- Afraid of law suit or other legal action.

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IN DEALING WITH CURRENT STUDENTS/EMPLOYEES:

- Document all behavioral actions
- Provide them ongoing feedback
- No surprises

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**If They Broadcast It –
Believe It!**

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**Skip the “Tea Leaf”
Reading**

**If a coded behavior
occurs, go to a
countermeasure.**

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AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- Employees – Detectors
- Supervisors / Managers / Ombuds / Police – Detectors & Disruptors
- Agency Response Team – Disruptors

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UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE

Violence Acts Like a Virus

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MEDICAL VIRUS

- SARS
- AIDS
- WEST NILE
- BIRD FLU
- H1N1 FLU
- MERS


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VIOLENCE VIRUSES

- Workplace / Avenger / Targeted Violence
- Predatory
- Bullying
- Entrepreneurs
- Rioting
- Domestic


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VIOLENCE VIRUS


- Suicidal
- Cyber Violence
- Stalking
- Terrorism
- Flash Mob
- PIB – a non-violent virus
- ?

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There are two timelines in violence.


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TWO KEY TIME CONSIDERATIONS

- Event Threshold
- Event Horizon

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CONSIDERATIONS IN DEALING WITH AN INSIDER THREAT

There is plenty of time between the event threshold and the event horizon to disrupt the behavior.

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The probability of a violent incident from an insider should be low.

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CONSIDERATIONS IN DEALING WITH AN OUTSIDER THREAT

- The amount of time between the event threshold and the event horizon is significantly compressed.
- The event threshold and the event horizon may occur simultaneously.
- The individuals in the attack zone will experience decoding errors.

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EVENT THRESHOLD ACTIONS

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Avengers always have a progression.

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HOW DO YOU GO FROM POINT A TO POINT Z?



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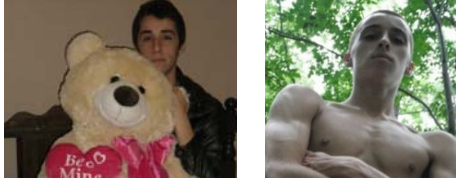
HOW DO YOU GO FROM POINT A TO POINT Z?



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HOW DO YOU GO FROM POINT A TO POINT Z?



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HOW DO YOU GO FROM POINT A TO POINT Z?



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DEVELOPMENT OF AN AVENGER

- Perceived Injustice
- Feeling Victimized
- Externalization of Responsibility
- Development of a Grudge
- Obsessed with Avenging
- Avenging Action

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Avengers always broadcast ahead of time.

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HOW DO THEY BROADCAST IT?

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HOW DO THEY BROADCAST IT?

- Insiders broadcast directly to their targets.
- Outsiders triangulate their broadcasts.

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- BEHAVIORAL CODING OPTIONS:**
- Normal Behaviors
 - Boundary Probing Behaviors
 - Attack Related Behaviors
 - Attack Behaviors
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- NORMAL BEHAVIORS**
- Must be defined according to:
 - The specific environment
 - The individual
 - The event
 - In reality, "normal behaviors" refer to behaviors that are accepted and tolerated.
 - There cannot be any universal definition of "normal behaviors."
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- BOUNDARY PROBING**
- Involves pushing rules, regulations and tolerance levels.
 - The purpose is to determine how much he/she can get away with.
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IMPORTANT ISSUE

If you allow a boundary probe to occur without a disrupter, then by default that behavior becomes normal.

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ATTACK RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **Desensitization Behaviors (threat making – direct, veiled, conditional)**
 - In Vivo
 - Virtual
- **Dehumanization Behaviors**
 - In Vivo
 - Virtual

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ANALYZING THREATS

- **According to Secret Service and other research, the majority of attackers (over 85%) will broadcast a threat prior to an attack.**
- **The majority of the threats will be veiled or conditional.**
- **The threats most likely will not have a time frame.**
- **The threats may not specify a named target.**
- **Therefore, the condition of imminence will not necessarily be present.**

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HIPPA & CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES versus DUTY TO WARN / DUTY TO PROTECT

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ATTACK RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **Skill Set Building**
- **Development of an Armament Inventory**
- **Development of an Attack Plan**

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ATTACK RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **Threatening Verbalizations**
- **Threatening Behaviors**
- **Personal Space Violations**

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ATTACK BEHAVIORS

- People
- Property


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ACTIVATION OF COUNTERMEASURES


Always Interrupt / Disrupt the Behavior

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BOUNDARY PROBING AND ATTACK RELATED BEHAVIORS INCREASE WHEN THERE ARE NO TREES (DETERRENTS)

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TREES CATEGORIES (Disrupters)

CATEGORY I
QUESTIONING

CATEGORY II
CONFRONTING

CATEGORY III
CONSEQUENCES

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INDIVIDUAL REACTIONS TO TREES


WHEN A TREE IS PLACED AFTER A PRACTICE SESSION THE INDIVIDUAL HAS A CHOICE TO EITHER

BACK OFF

OR

CLIMB OVER IT

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PREDICTING FUTURE VIOLENCE

The best predictor of future behavior is not past behavior but post-intervention behavior.

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INTERPRETING LACK OF COMPLIANCE

If the concerning behaviors continue after an intervention, then two possible hypotheses have been generated:

1. The individual is choosing to disregard rules when it suits him/her.
2. The individual does not have the capacity to control his/her actions.

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STEPS IN CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT

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TYPES OF RISK ASSESSMENT

- Direct
- Indirect

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STEP I

- Collect behavioral data
- Utilize multiple data sources
- Collect both in vivo and virtual data

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STEP II

- Date each behavioral occurrence whenever possible

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STEP III

- Code both in vivo and virtual behaviors (normal, boundary probing, attack related or attack)

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STEP IV

- Insert and date any previous countermeasures

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STEP V

- Compare post intervention coded behaviors to pre interventions coded behaviors

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STEP VI

DETERMINE IF THERE IS SUFFICIENT DATA TO INDICATE IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS:

- A risk for Proactive Attack Behaviors against people or property
- A risk for Reactive Attack Behaviors against people or property
- A risk for behaviors that create Social and Psychological Disruption

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STEP VII

ACTIVATE COUNTERMEASURE

- What is going to be done
- Who is responsible for implementation
- When will the countermeasures be activated
- How will the effectiveness of countermeasures be evaluated
- What are your contingency plans if the countermeasures are not effective

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INTEGRATING EVERYTHING

- Document and date the behavior
- Code the behavior
- Activate a response
 - Initiate a disrupter
 - Removal
 - Counseling
 - Other Options
- Re-evaluate the behavior

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REINTEGRATION ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Attack behaviors and attack-related behaviors have been eliminated
- A functional vortex is in place
- Re-entry plan has been developed to include:
 - Response protocols
 - Points of contact
 - Regular monitoring
 - Development of methods for reassuring
 - Victims
 - Targets
 - Co-workers
 - Supervisors
 - Others

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IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION

Once an individual has engaged in an attack-related behavior, he/she should always remain on the radar detector, even if the behavior appears to have stabilized.

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EVENT HORIZON CONSIDERATIONS

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Always Proactively Train for an Event Horizon

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RESPONSE STRATEGIES (Initiate At The Event Horizon)

- Activation of Delay Systems/Target Hardening
- Internal Notification
 - Hi-Tech
 - Hi-Touch
- External Notification
- Activation of Survival Strategies

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STRATEGIC RESPONSES: PERSONAL SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

WHEN VIOLENCE IS OCCURRING:

GET OUT

HIDE OUT – Saferoom/Concealment

FAKE OUT – Play Dead

TAKE OUT – Active Resistance

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POST EVENT HORIZON CONSIDERATIONS


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**THERE WILL BE AN
AFTERMATH AND YOU
MUST DEAL WITH IT.**

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**THE SIZE OF THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL
FOOTPRINT WILL EXCEED
THE SIZE OF THE
MEDICAL FOOTPRINT**

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**CRISIS RECOVERY
BEGINS IN THE
MIDDLE OF A CRISIS**

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AFTERMATH ISSUES

- Activation of Reintegration Centers
- Media Response Protocol
- Physical Clean Up
- Psychological Clean Up & Recovery
- Campus Reactivation


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THE ISSUES

TOO MUCH TOO UGLY TOO SOON
TOO MUCH TOO UGLY TOO DIFFERENT
TOO MUCH TOO UGLY TOO LONG
TOO MUCH TOO UGLY TOO SIMILAR

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE AFFECTED

- Families of the deceased.
- The injured and their families.
- Other campus students, faculty, staff, & visitors who were on site but not physically injured.
- First Responders.
- Second Responders.
- The community-shattered assumptions and comfort zones.

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM CAMPUS SHOOTINGS

- Self-deploying responders are problematic
- Responders credentialing is critical
- Trauma responders need to function in an incident common model
- Allowing first responders to self-determine their psychological needs does not work for everyone

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OUTCOME OPTIONS

- Adaptors (the resilient)
- Avoiders / Minimizers
- Deniers
- Retainers
 - Punishing Others
 - Secondary Gain

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