Using What Works to Prevent and Avert School Violence

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

University of Colorado **Boulder**

Learning Outcomes

- **Participants will…**
  - Understand what works to make schools safe;
  - Identify the key components of a comprehensive approach to school safety focusing on prevention/intervention;
  - Collaborate and reflect on ways that SVPP could enhance prevention/intervention in our schools.
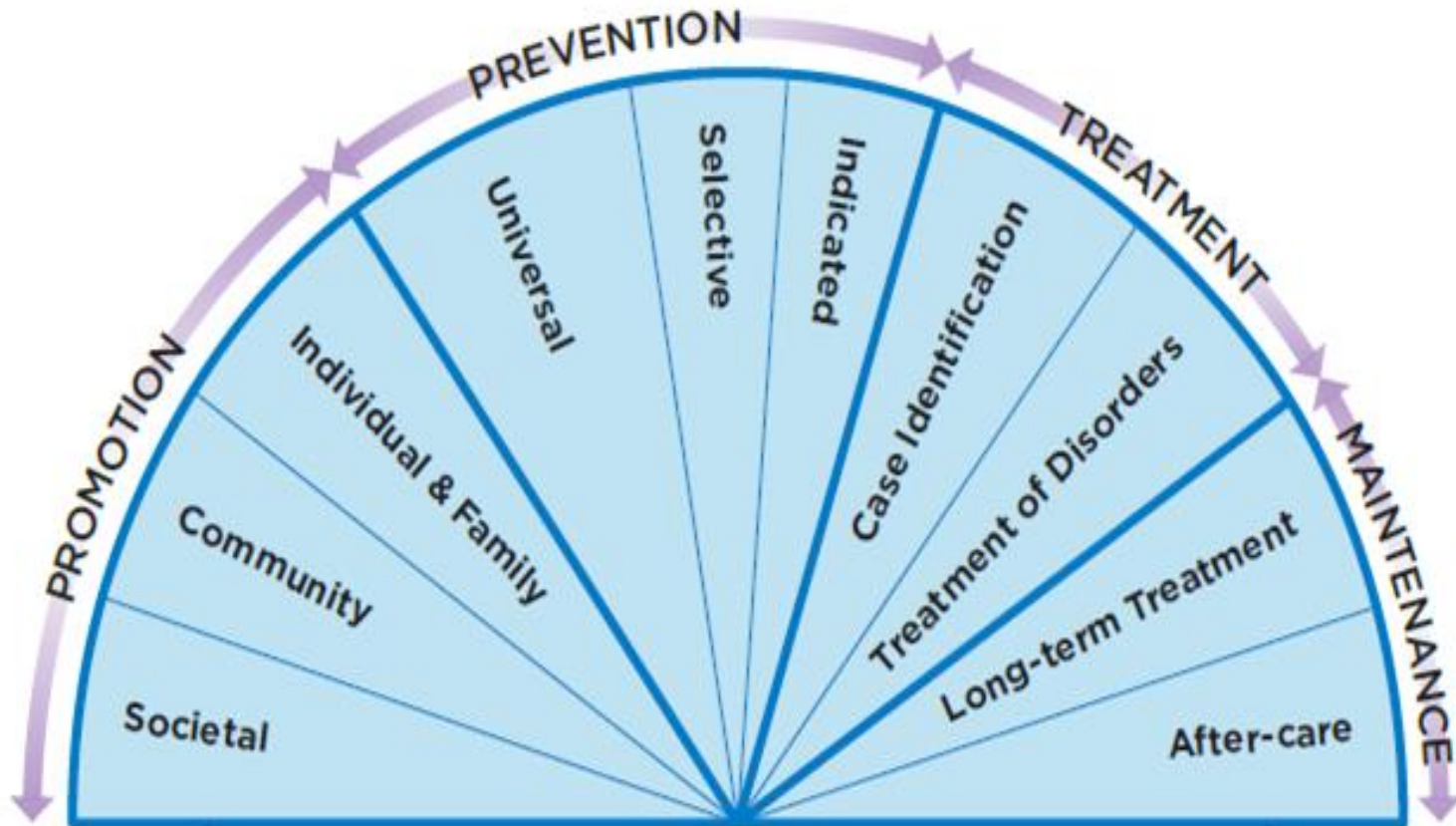
Research consistently finds that a comprehensive approach to school safety offers the *greatest potential* for:

- ***Preventing* youth violence**

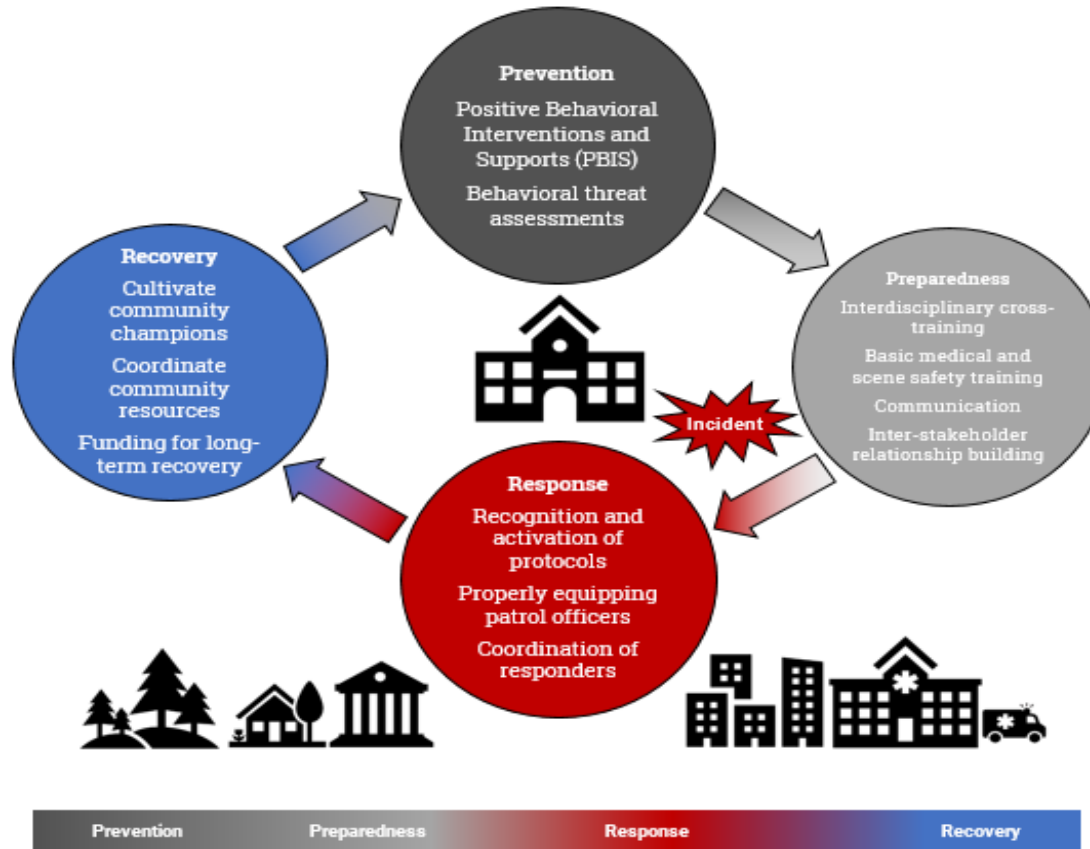- ***Promoting* mental/behavioral health**

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

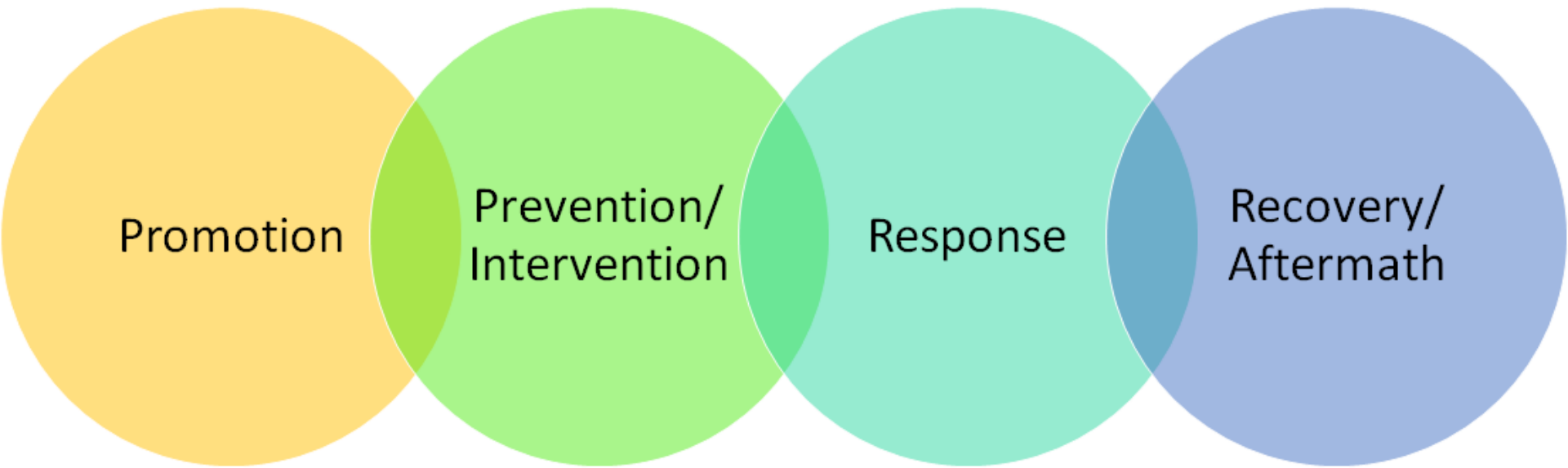Spectrum of Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Interventions

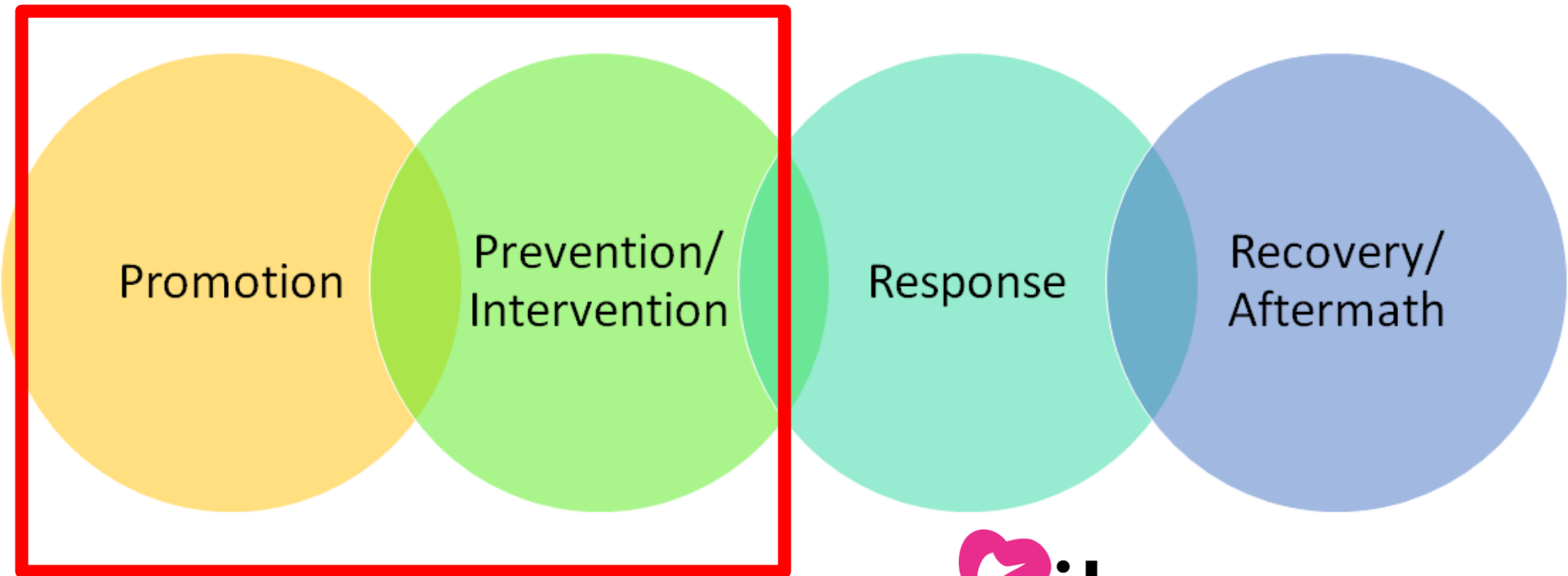# COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

School mass casualty incident emergency management continuum

Standard School Safety Spectrum (S4)

Promotion

Prevention/Intervention

Response

Recovery/Aftermath

Standardardized Violence Prevention Protocol (SVPP)
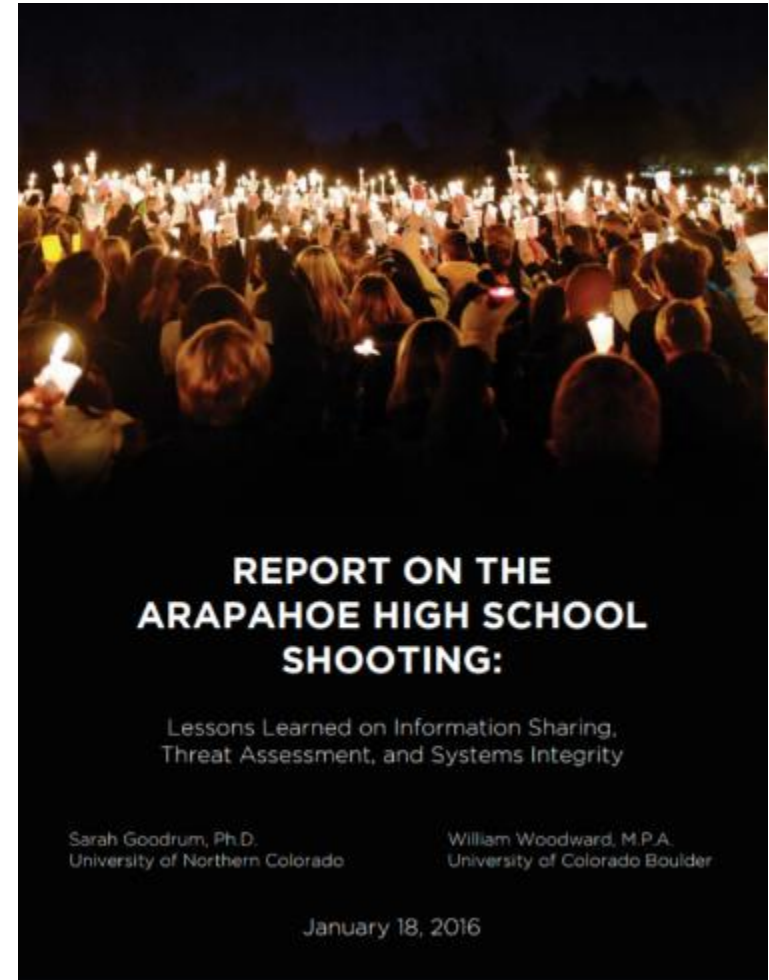
PROGRESS IN RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

- **Emergency crisis plans & rehearsals**
  - I Love U Guys' Standard Response Protocol

- **Threat assessment trainings**
  - Colorado School Safety Resource Center

- **Anonymous reporting tool development**
  - Safe2Tell

- **Policy enactment**
  - Claire Davis Act

GAPS IN OUR RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

Arapahoe Report (2016)

- Information sharing

- Threat assessment

- *Leadership, school climate and culture*

REPORT ON THE ARAPAHOE HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING:

Lessons Learned on Information Sharing, Threat Assessment, and Systems Integrity

Sarah Goodrum, Ph.D.
University of Northern Colorado

William Woodward, M.P.A.
University of Colorado Boulder

January 18, 2016

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: THE NEED

Use what works to create safe schools

1. Upstream prevention and intervention

2. Positive school climate and culture

3. Identifying and addressing warning signs

THE RESPONSE: SVPP
Foundational Areas

- Culture, Climate, & Community
- Threat Assessment
- Information Sharing
- Bystander Response & Reporting
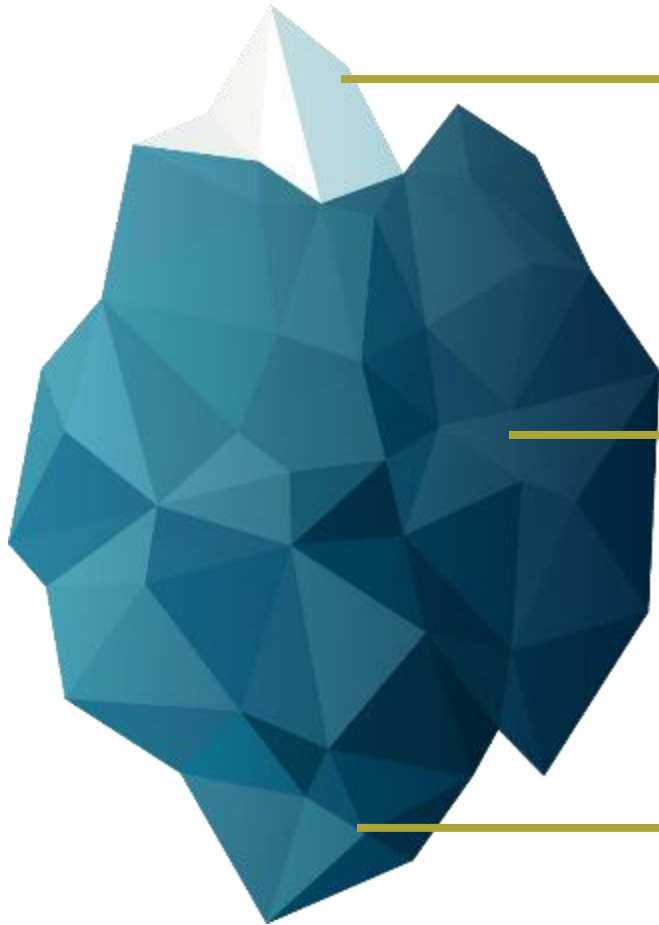- Mental/ Behavioral Health

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: WHAT WORKS

Use what works to create safe schools

1. **Upstream prevention and intervention**

2. Positive school climate and culture

3. Identifying and addressing warning signs

STARTING WITH PREVENTION

TIP:
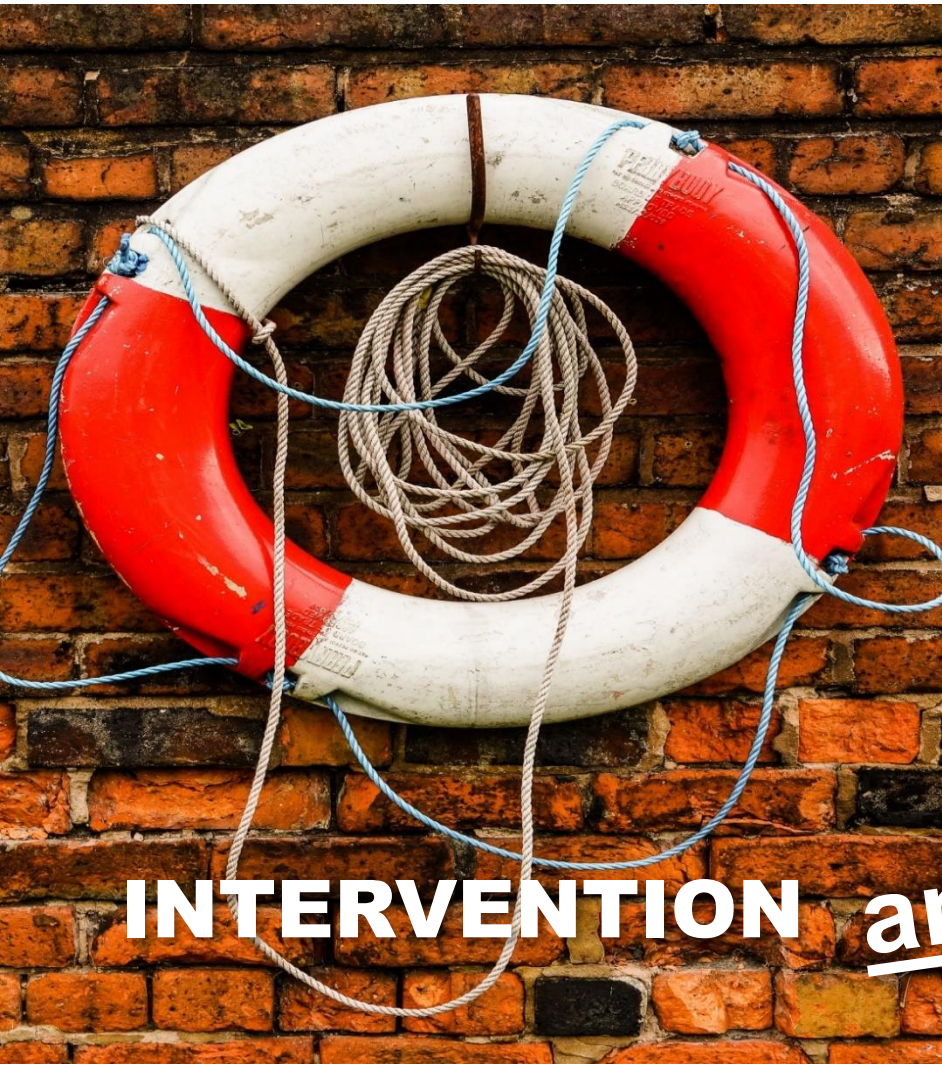Mass shootings on the rise in the U.S.

UNDERNEATH:
Bullying victimization, physical fights, depression, and suicidal ideation

ROOT CAUSES:
School climate challenges, lack of social emotional skills, and ineffective systems to address safety concerns

STARTING WITH PREVENTION

INTERVENTION _and_ PREVENTION

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COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: WHAT WORKS

Use what works to create safe schools

1. Upstream prevention and intervention

2. **Positive school climate**

3. Identifying and addressing warning signs

FOCUSING ON SCHOOL CLIMATE

The foundation of school safety rests in creating *"climates of safety, respect, and emotional support"* in schools.

(U.S. Secret Service, 2004; 2008; 2018)

FOCUSING ON SCHOOL CLIMATE

- Physically safe environment
- Emotional safe environment
- Bonding to School
- Respectful and supportive relationships
- Respect for diversity
- Fair and consistent discipline
- Systems for addressing mental health
- Systems for addressing safety concerns
- Youth involvement and engagement

What's in Your Wallet?

- Rate the Climate of your school from 1-5.
- What cultural strategies do you have in place to support your school climate?
  - Write down as many as strategies as possible in 2 minutes
- Group Share

Activity

CULTURE, CLIMATE & COMMUNITY

- Administer an annual student and staff survey to evaluate school climate and use the results to identify needs, guide prevention efforts, and monitor progress

- Include all staff on the identification and implementation of strategies to create a culture that promotes social and emotional competencies

- Ensure every student has a connection to at least one trusted adult at school

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: WHAT WORKS

Use what works to create safe schools

1. Upstream prevention and intervention

2. Positive school climate and culture

3. **Identifying and addressing warning signs**

IDENTIFYING INTERVENTIONS

Bystander Response and Reporting
- Provide *training on warning signs* for violence and how to report safety concerns (staff, students, parents)

Information Sharing
- Develop *systems/processes for sharing information* and clarify staff misconceptions about confidentiality

Threat Assessment and Management
- Ensure that there is a multidisciplinary team in place that is trained to use an *effective threat assessment tool and process*

BYSTANDER RESPONSE & REPORTING

- Train staff and students on what to tell, who to tell, and how to tell in the case of concerning behaviors
- Create a system for following up on reported concerns and share this process with the school community
- Provide and train staff and students on a preferred anonymous reporting system for your school (e.g., Safe2Tell)

INFORMATION SHARING

- Develop a standardized process for collecting and recording information about a student's mental/behavioral health concerns and train staff on the process
- Develop a communication plan to share information with relevant staff on students with mental/behavioral health concerns, as well as the supports needed for those students
- Develop MOUs or Information Sharing Agreements with local agencies (e.g., law enforcement, criminal justice system) to facilitate the sharing of information about students of concern

THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

- Use established threat assessment tools when completing a threat assessment (e.g., screening tool, full threat assessment, response management and reentry plan)

- Develop a plan for how students' threat assessment results will be documented and how relevant information will be conveyed to school staff

- Assign a staff member (i.e., information vortex) to monitor, follow-up with, and support the student after the threat assessment process

Spend a Buck...

If you had 100 pennies, where would you spend the most money in providing an intervention for your community?

- **Bystander Response and Reporting**

- **Information Sharing**

- **Threat Assessment and Management**

Activity

DISCUSSION

- How would focusing on this safety intervention support your school?

- What are some action steps you could take to help support this initiative?

Activity

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH: WHAT WORKS

Use what works to create safe schools

1. **Upstream prevention and intervention**

2. **Positive school climate and culture**

3. **Identifying and addressing warning signs**

MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Reduce *mental health stigma* and develop systems to support *identification, recommendations for resources, and follow-up* of youth in need of mental health services.

MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- Promote opportunities for staff and students to engage in discussions related to mental health to normalize these experiences and challenges
- Create a response plan for students who experience urgent mental and behavioral health problems
- Identify local community mental health centers and behavioral health resources and develop partnerships to facilitate student care

COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH:
THE CHALLENGE

We know if we **used what works**, we could
reduce violence by 30%

AND... It's not that easy.

Flooded

How should schools create a social climate that reduces the likelihood of violence? How should schools identify potential internal threats within the student body and how should this information be shared and used? How should schools work with mental health professionals and others to support students and their families when they are having trouble or involved in violence as victims or offenders? How should discipline policies be set to send a clear message that violence is not acceptable and offenders will be held accountable, without taking overly severe or exclusionary actions that channel those who commit minor disorder offenses into the juvenile or criminal justice systems?

Flooded

WE MUST SIMPLIFY!

LOCKOUT LOCKDOWN EVACUATE SHELTER

i love u guys FOUNDATION STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL

THAT IS OUR COLLECTIVE MISSION

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:
Feeling "Flooded"

- Are your schools & communities flooded? Are you flooded?

- What could we help with?
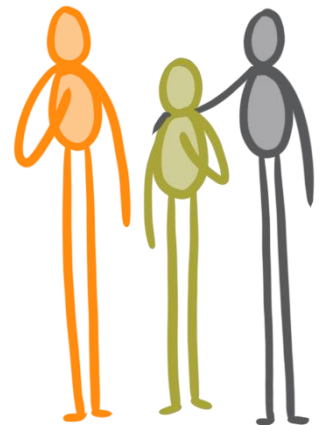
Did We Meet Our Outcomes?

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REFLECTION

- Take a couple of minutes to individually reflect on your learning today.

- Share with a partner

Activity

SCSS RESOURCES

- Readiness Assessment Tool

- School Resource Mapping

- Student and Staff School Climate Surveys

- Action Plan Questionnaire (Foundational Areas School Safety)

- School Action Planning

- Implementation Support Systems

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
CSPV.COLORADO.EDU/SAFESCHOOLS

OTHER RESOURCES

Colorado Attorney General School Safety Guide & Resources

https://coag.gov/office-sections/office-community-engagement/foster-school-safety

Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development Programs

www.blueprintsprograms.org

Identifying Youth Mental Health Challenges (free course)

www.canvas.net/browse/cu-boulder/courses/safe-resilient-schools

There is great hope.
Together, we can do this!

Image by John Fielder

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