At Risk Students: Rampage School Shooters

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General School Shooting
vs.
Rampage School Shooting
General School Shooting vs. Rampage School Shooting

**General School Shooting**

A general school shooting is an incident in which gun violence occurs at an educational institution. These types of incidents include attacks from individuals that are related (current students, or previous students) and unrelated (neighbour near the school, or a parent) to the school. These types of incidents also include adult related attacks and general gun violence on school property.

![Charles Carl Roberts](image1.png)
Charles Carl Roberts (Attacked an Amish schoolhouse in PA, USA)

![Barbara Spencer](image2.png)
Barbara Spencer (Shot students at an elementary school across the street from her home)

**Rampage Shooting**

A rampage shooting is an incident in which students (currently attending) or former students (suspended or expelled) attack the school in which they are attending. These shootings normally occur in plain view of others. Rampage shootings involve multiple victims, at least some of whom were shot at random or as a symbol (i.e. Principal) of the school.

Rampage shootings do not include shootings of specific individuals due to conflict (i.e. targeted gun violence that is related to gangs, drug deals, or boyfriend/girlfriend issues).

![Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold](image3.png)
Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold attacked their school, Columbine High School.
History of School Shootings

School Shootings

There have been 143 school shootings that have occurred throughout the world, between 1902 and the present day. The first school shooting occurred in Altona, Manitoba in a one room schoolhouse.

The following are examples of school shootings that have occurred in Canada, Finland, and the US.

- **April 1999 Taber, Alberta:** A 14-year-old gunman entered W. R. Myers Junior High and opened fire, fatally shooting one 17-year-old student and critically injuring another.

- **October 2006 Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania:** Charles Carl Roberts, 32, killed 5 Amish girls and wounded 5 others in a one room schoolhouse. He then committed suicide.

- **November 2007 Jokela, Tuusula, Finland:** Pekka-Eric Auvinen, entered the school armed with a semi-automatic pistol. He killed eight people and wounded one person before shooting himself in the head.

Rampage Shootings

Rampage shootings became a part of the American cultural landscape in the 1990’s. Large scale attacks, like rampage shootings, are not recent phenomenon.

The following are examples of rampage shootings that have occurred in the US. Only enough information has been compiled on the following shootings in order to classify them as rampage shootings.

- **February 1997 Bethel, Alaska:** Evan Ramsey shot a student and the principal, and wounded 2 other students. He attempted suicide and now remains in prison.

- **December 1997 West Paducah, Kentucky:** Michael Carneal kills three students and wounds 5 others.

- **March 1998 Jonesboro, Arkansas:** Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson, 11 and 13, set off the fire alarm and kill four students and a teacher as they leave the school. Both are now free men.
• **April 1998 Edinboro, Pennsylvania**: Andrew Wurst shoots dead a teacher and wounds two students. He remains in prison.

• **May 1998 Springfield, Oregon**: Kip Kinkel, 15, was suspended from school for having a gun. Later that day he killed his parents. The next day he went to school and killed 2 students and wounded 25. Kip had planned to kill himself however he was tackled by students before he had the chance. Kip remains in prison.

• **April 1999 Littleton, Colorado**: Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold rampage through their school killing 12 students and a teacher, as well as wounding 24 others, before committing suicide.

• **March 2005 Red Lake, Minnesota**: Jeffrey Weise, 16, guns down five students, a teacher and a security guard before killing himself. He also killed his grandfather and his grandfather’s girlfriend before going to school that day.

• **April 2007 Blacksburg, Virginia**: Seung Hui Cho, 23, killed 2 students in a dorm. Following this, Seung went to a classroom building where he killed 30 people, including students and professors, and wounded 17 others. He then committed suicide.
Typology of Rampage Shooters

There are three types of classifications for rampage shooters. These classifications are psychopathic, psychotic, and traumatized.

NOTE: Psychotic and traumatized shooters. Just because some of the rampage shooters have been classified as having mental illness or are abused, does not mean that all people that have mental illnesses or are abused are violent or threatening. These characteristics only influenced the shooters choice to carry out a rampage attack even more than someone who does not deal with a mental illness or is abused.

**Psychopathic**

Psychopathic shooters have been known to have some if not all of the following characteristics.

- Lack of empathy, guilt or remorse
  - Felt nothing for their victims.
- Grandiose sense of superiority
  - Extremely narcissistic.
  - Shooters feel they are more superior than others.
- Skill in impression management
  - These shooters were usually charming, cute or charismatic.
  - Narcissism allowed them to present themselves as extremely confident.
  - Knew how to be manipulating towards people in that they had the ability to be appealing to whomever they were engaging with.
- Sadistic delight in inflicting pain on humans and/or animals
  - Andrew Golden killed cats by burning them alive and leaving them in containers to starve.
  - Eric wrote in his diary about mutilating someone with his hands and teeth.
- Engage in a variety of illegal behaviour
  - Andrew Golden vandalized property and stole.
- Intact families with no evidence of abuse or neglect
- No known psychotic symptoms
  - No evidence of mental illness.
Psychotic

Psychotic shooters usually have stable home lives with no known record of abuse. A Psychotic classification involves mental illnesses. These mental illnesses are Schizophrenic Spectrum Disorders (SSD). SSD can be broken down into Schizotypal Personality Disorder and Schizophrenia.

Schizotypal Personality Disorder

The following are the characteristics that are associated with Schizotypal Personality Disorder (SPD). SPD is a less serve form of Schizophrenia.

- Social anxiety
  - Not able to function effectively in social situations.
- Mild paranoia
  - Less severe than Schizophrenia.
- Inability to form close relationships
  - These individuals can have relationships, however, none of them are really close, like best friends would be. Also, it is impossible for these individuals to have close loving relationships. Dylan Klebold writes about not being loved by a girl throughout his diary.
- Affective flattening
  - Little or no emotional expression.
- Odd thinking, speech, behaviour, and appearance
  - Within Dylan Klebold’s writing he would use odd words, misused language by utilizing actual words in improper ways, and used odd sentence structure. For example “I wasn’t very talkable at work today” or “Me is God”.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a more a more severe form of SPD. It is characterized by the following symptoms:

- Paranoia
  - Michael Carneal had extreme paranoia. He believed that a man with a chainsaw lived underneath his house and was trying to cut his legs off. Also, when Michael would take a shower he would be sure to cover the vents in the bathroom as he believed snakes were trying to slither into the bathroom.
- Hallucinations
  - Within Kip Kinkel’s writings he states that he hears three different voices in his head.
• Delusions
  • Seung Hui Cho had an imaginative girlfriend named Jelly that would come and visit him in his dorm room.
• Affective flattening
  • Little or no emotional expression.
• Poverty of speech
  • A significant decrease in the amount of speech that an individual utters.

[Image of Kip Kinkel]

Traumatized

The following are characteristics that are associated with an individual who has been traumatized.

• Suffered physical and/or sexual abuse
  • A parent, relative, or friend has committed some sort of sexual or physical abuse against the individual.
  • Mitchell Johnson was raped multiple times by an older boy when he was 8 years old.
  • Jeffrey Weise’s mother used to hit him with “anything she could get her hands on”.
• Parents have substance abuse problems
  • Evan Ramey’s mother had a drinking problem.
• Parents have a criminal history
  • Evan Ramey’s father, Don Ramsey, was jailed for 10 years after bringing firearms to a newspaper building, shooting the building and then holding
a newspaper editor hostage for not printing his letter addressed to the government.

- Jeffrey Weise’s mother was jailed for driving while intoxicated, and assault.

- Little stability when it comes to the home life
  - Jeffrey Weise and Mitchell Johnson were shuffled between family members, to live.

- Depression and anger
  - Both stemmed from the lives they had been forced to live, dealing with death, suicide, alcohol abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse.
Causes and Misconceptions

Rampage attacks are too complex to be attributed to any one single cause. There can be many reasons why rampage shooters commit their attacks. The following reason listed are to be perceived as the causes and some of the misconceptions that are held with these causes being the single reason for why rampage shooters commit their attacks.

- Availability of guns
  - Misconception – Easy access caused shootings. If easy access was the reason for these rampage attacks, shouldn’t attacks be happening at an increased volume wherever access to guns is unlimited?
  - Rampage shooters acts cannot be blamed on the gun culture because the acts themselves are contrary to the prevalent social norm of law-abiding use of firearms.

- Psychiatric medications vs. street drugs
  - Misconception – Reports immediately after shootings state that shooters were on psychiatric drugs like Luvox, Prozac, etc. to combat depression.
  - About 80% of the shooters studied did not have psychiatric medications in their system at the time of the rampage.
    - It is possible the shooters had taken them previously (months or years prior).
  - About 20% of shooters were on psychiatric medications.
  - Research has not been conducted on whether street drugs like alcohol and marijuana could have been a cause, however, all of the shooters used alcohol or marijuana at some point.

- Alienation
  - Misconception – Shooters are loners and outcasts of the school community.
  - Only one shooter, Seung Hui Cho, was considered to be a loner. He did not interact with other students, nor did he speak to anyone. Other students attempted to befriend him, however his odd behaviours and silence eventually stopped them from trying.
  - Shooters felt lonely and alone. These students had friends and peers they shared interests with. Most were involved in school sports.
    - Kip Kinkel played football.
    - Mitchell Johnson played football, baseball, and basketball.
    - Eric Harris played soccer, and worked on the Rebel News (Columbine High School Newscast).
    - Andrew Golden and Michael Carneal played in their school band.
    - Dylan Klebold worked on the Rebel News and participated in Theatre as the Soundboard operator.

- Violence in media
• This is not a direct cause, however seeing acts of violence in movies, video games, and reading about violence can desensitize the audience. Many people throughout the world watch violent movies, TV shows, etc. and they do not end up killing innocent people. These media outlets help to build the fantasy of carrying out their attacks within the shooters minds.
  • Violent video games – Doom, Call of Duty, Gears of War.
  • Movies – Natural Born Killers
  • Novels – Rage by Stephen King

• Social rejection
  • This is not a direct cause however a build-up of rejections over time can enhance the amount of stress that is put on an individual. This could have possibly pushed them further along the downward spiralling path they were already on, but it did not directly cause the attacks.

• Depression
  • Misconception – Depression causes rampage shootings. Many people in the world are depressed, and they do not commit murder.

• Bullying
  • Misconception – Bullying is the reason why rampage shooters kill their peers.
  • Almost all children/youth that go to school (K – 12) are bullied to some degree. If every student were to retaliate to bullying with a shooting spree, there would be a lot more attacks occurring throughout the school year. Possibly a couple every day.
  • After interviewing students and staff at the schools where these rampage attacks occurred, it was discovered that most of the time the shooters were the ones bullying others.
  • The shooters felt like victims of bullying because they would bring ridicule from others on themselves by dressing odd or acting strangely.
  • Blaming bullying as the cause is hard to accept as shooters rarely shot the people who “harassed” them.
Impact of Media

American television, music videos, movies, and video games are some of the most violent forms of media in the world. Media is often one of the major areas of concern when a school shooting takes place. Researchers look towards violence in the media as a common influence that most shooters had in common. There are three ways in which media contributes to school shootings:

Media Legitimizes Violence

According to learning theory, exposure to media violence influences children’s violent or aggressive behaviour by demonstration (modeling), reward (reinforcement), and practice (rehearsal). Looking towards violent media in the forms of television, music videos, video games, and commercials, children are constantly bombarded. Media has demonstrated that violence is acceptable and it models violent acts for children. One has to look no further than World Wrestling Entertainment to see how children model wrestling moves, and mimic their favourite wrestlers because they think that it is acceptable. They witness the praise that wrestlers receive from their fans, and are reinforced with the idea that violence is acceptable. After children see numerous models of violence, and witness the rewards, the pattern is repeated over and over again. Programs are broadcast on a weekly basis and the violent act are rehearsed and repeated.

Studies have drawn a link between television violence and aggressive behaviours in children (Hoffman, 1996). This negative effect is particularly evident in children from single-parent households and from low socioeconomic groups. Parents may often be at work and children from this group are often left unsupervised.

Violence as Entertainment Has Desensitized Society

The average child is exposed through television to twelve thousand murders, rapes, and assaults per year (Hoffman, 1996). In addition to the violent scenarios in television programming, children are inundated with commercials that encourage the purchase of toys and weapons. Toy programs show weapons an average of nine times per hour.

Video games have probably had the largest influence when it comes desensitizing today’s youth. An explosion in the video game market has pushed sales above $7 billion. Data suggests that video game playing is not such a harmless activity. Over half of the most popular video games have violent content. Data extrapolated from the general media violence research suggest that violent interactive video games may cause aggressive behaviors. Junior high boys spend over four hours per week playing video games, and girls play about half that amount. Violence in video games includes
everything from punching, kicking, and decapitating opponents, to bombing terrorists and cutting out their hearts. Of the most popular video games, violence plays a role in over eighty-five percent of them.

**Obsession with Violent Media**

The third impact that media has in school shootings is that it offers scripts for horrific violent acts. Children may become obsessed and lose touch between fantasy and reality. Movies have given some of the school shooters scripts to which they can follow. Movies are often more violent than television. Eventually movies shown in theatres make their way into the home via rented movies, televisions, or pay-per-view channels. Ratings of movies are affected more by sexual content than by the frequency and intensity of the violence portrayed. As a society we have recently developed a passive attitude towards violence in the media, allowing it to make its way into the mainstream. The movie Natural Born Killers was used by Eric Harris, as a script to kill. He emulated the main character’s violent rampage, seeing it as acceptable, and somewhat heroic. Thus, we need to be more diligent in what we allow our children to watch, as we can see that media has plays a large role in school violence.

Video Game – Doom

Rage by Stephen King
Modification

Modification involves the teacher and the classroom.

Increased Structure

At risk students do not always struggle with the classroom curriculum and do not always need to be put on an adapted school plan. Some ways that teachers may be able to help these students is to provide more structure to their classroom learning. These students need to feel that they can accomplish what is asked of them because if they feel that they cannot do the work, they are not engaged, and may feel more depressed or upset. For example, when assigning a writing piece to students, outlining the topics they can write about may help to keep their focus on a specific topic rather than allowing them to think about new and possibly inappropriate ideas.

Encourage Group Activities

Another way that teachers may be able to modify classroom activities for these students is to encourage them to work on tasks with other students around them. Using group activities and providing specific responsibilities for each individual in the group engages each student in the overall task at hand.

Based on research for at risk students, one way to include students who may need more interaction is to use the method of mixed ability grouping. This involves students working in groups with other students who are at different levels of learning. This may not work for all students because not all students may be loners who need more interaction. Research studies on mixed ability grouping describe consistency with characteristics of cooperative learning.

- Mixed ability grouping:
  - Clearly defines task
  - Encourages interaction within groups
  - Differentiates the group tasks.

Most of the interventions seem to encourage students to use the group as a means to accomplish tasks more effectively and meet the needs of students.
General Accommodations

Risk Assessment Team

Implementing a risk assessment team in a school can effectively keep track of students that may be of concern. This team would involve a group of teachers, administrators, and other staff members attending meetings on a regular basis to confidentially discuss complaints and concerns that have been expressed about particular students. Using such a team allows schools to get an idea of what might be happening with a student and consider multiple perspectives prior to deciding the best way to proceed. In order for this to work, all staff members of the school have to be on board and report any concerns that they may have.

Schools can also involve parents in this process by offering the option for them to report any concerns that they may have. To facilitate parent involvement, a pre-determined weekly or monthly drop-in time could be set, or welcome them to express concerns privately to any risk assessment team member who then would report the concern back to the team.

Building Relationships

In general, caring and stable relationships are very important for most at risk students. Students will not confer trust to an adult based on his/her role, such as a classroom teacher, counsellor, psychologist, or social worker. The student may require proof that the helping adult is trustworthy by follow through on promises made. This tends to make students feel comfortable and increases the chances that they open up.

Students in middle years often have unrealistic goals that are usually based on what they have learned from mass culture and the media. After building these stable relationships, the student can be more easily helped to set realistic and reachable goals, such as day-to-day goals. The most motivating goals are those within our reach if we exercise some risk. This will help boost the student’s confidence and engage them making them want to achieve more.

Engaging School and Community Settings

- Give the student a sense of belonging
  - Feelings of being engaged in a school or community setting happens when students have opportunities to receive positive recognition and to make positive contributions, spend time in environments where team work is encouraged, and learn new skills that they find valuable. All of these positive experiences contribute to a student’s sense of belonging.
In and out of school programs

- In school programs allow students to build relationships and work with the students that they are in class with on a daily basis. This gives them the opportunity to develop friendships.
- Out of school programs can help students learn rules for success that can be applied in school from a different perspective. Caring mentors, outside the formal school setting, often have a better understanding of the students’ lives outside of school and can help deal with personal issues during their time at school day. Out of school activities also keeps students busy and focused instead of having too much time on their hands.

Advertisements

Placing advertisements around the school could also be beneficial; for example, information about anonymous helplines can be posted throughout the school. Students need to be aware of these services and know that it is ok to use them.
Specific Accommodations

Psychopathic

Psychopathic students are the most challenging because these types of students can convince you otherwise. They have the ability to act as if nothing is wrong and they are ok.

Psychotic

- Schizotypal
  
  - A therapist can help a person with schizotypal disorder learn how his/her thoughts and perceptions are distorted and how best to respond to them.
  
  - These types of people need support. They may have difficulty accomplishing tasks independently. For example routine activities may be awkward and provoke anxiety.
  
  - They may need structure. To help with this, schools can adapt an easier program for them and possibly have an educational assistant work with the student. Having options so that the student does not have the same routine to follow on a regular basis could be beneficial.
  
  - Another possible alternative may be to help students get into volunteering at a pet shelter if they enjoy animals. They can make positive connections and build relationships with them. This would be less pressure on the student and would increase their comfort level.

- Schizophrenia
  
  Can these students be helped in school?
  
  - Under research Schizophrenia is much more severe than schizotypal. Students with schizophrenia are usually not put in schools because they cannot successfully develop in a school setting.

Traumatized

How does being in a classroom have an effect on a traumatized student?

- There may be some failure to understand instruction
- Over reacting on comments from the teacher or peers
- Other forms of miscommunication
Be a Role Model/Show Support

Teachers and other school staff members can help by welcoming the student whenever they are seen, showing their understanding, and provide extra support when needed. A significant number of students cannot re-engage in the learning process or return to normal functioning without adult help or support. Schools could provide counselling on a regular basis to help student stay in or return to school and succeed academically because it is possible. School staff should always model calm and optimistic behaviour. Maintaining neutral emotions and reactions with students is important, staying in the middle, no highs or lows, to help them achieve balance.

Schools are a place where it is possible for traumatized students to receive strong relationships with caring adults, and learn in a supportive, predictable, and safe environment. Good experiences can enhance the brains development as traumatic experiences can.

“If we don’t look for or acknowledge trauma in the lives of children and adolescents, we end up chasing behaviours and limiting the possibilities for change”
(Suarez, Flores and Zamarelli, 2007)
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An IEP is a plan designed by the: classroom teachers, student, resources teacher, parents, school administrative, and school counsellor. All of these adults and the student may play a role in the design and success of the IEP or only a few individuals can have an impact on the IEP. The amount of people involved depends on the circumstance for the IEP and the mental and psychical condition of the student.

IEP’s are designed to set goals or provide support for the student. Whether the goal is academic or personal, an IEP is an action plan to reach whatever goal is set.

IEP’s are beneficial because they provide otherwise unoffered support from adults and acknowledge the students’ needs in attempt to make school and home life more manageable. This support from adults will ease in preventing occurrences like school shootings because student’s physical and mental needs are being met.

When Should an IEP be Implemented

IEP’s should be implemented for students for a variety of reasons:

- Medically diagnosed with a mental illness.
- Drastic behaviour changes in school and/or at home.
- Abuse from adult figures at home.
- Depression.
- School becomes aware of previous violent acts towards family members, friends, or animals.
- Drastic fall in academic achievements.
Individualized Education Plans for the Typologies

Psychopathic

This IEP should be a collaboration effect between the different adults involved in the student’s life at home, and the adults available at the school. Student, parents, classroom teacher, resource teacher, school counsellor, and school psychologies should be involved in a student’s IEP who is a psychopath.

The reason for including all of these adults is because the IEP would want to make the students home and school life less difficult.

This IEP would include the monitoring of the students behaviour in the classroom and in the home environment. The reason the behaviour is monitored, is so any change can be noted and reported to the medical professionals involved in the students’ IEP. Behaviour will also be monitored to determine if any specific instances or circumstances trigger the change in the student’s behaviour.

Psychotic

The individuals involved in this IEP are a little bit different from the individuals included in the Psychopathic IEP. This IEP includes: the student, mental health professional, resource teacher, school counsellor, classroom teacher and the parent(s) of the child.

The reason this IEP includes a mental health professional and the other two IEP’s do not, is because these types of students have diagnosable mental illnesses.

This IEP would include recommending to the parents that the student needs to be tested by medical professional to determine if a mental health issues exists. If the student has diagnosed with a mental issues, the school counsellor may be required to administering prescribed medication to the student during school hours if needed.

The IEP would require the classroom teacher and parents to monitor and make note of a change in the student behaviour before and after the medication is started. As well, monitoring to make sure that the medication is having the correct effect on the student.

The student, classroom teacher, resource teacher, and parent can work together to accommodate the students interest and find him or her an activity or program to be involved in. The main importance getting the student involved in an activity is that it must be something that the student is very interested in to have an effect on the student. For example, if the student really enjoys hockey, baseball, basketball,
volleyball, or soccer, the adults involved can get the student signed up for the school or community team, or if the sport is out of season, getting the student enrolled in a Leisure guide program that includes that sport.

If students are not interested in physical activity or team sports, the student may be interested in a: guitar, band, sewing, cooking, yoga, art, or a karate class. These types of programs are available through the leisure guide and would require the resource teacher and parent doing the work to get the student involved in these types of activities.

If the student is not interested in joining an activity, and more interested in becoming stronger member of the school, the student can get involved by helping with the lunch program, being a reading buddy to a younger student, or helping out to set up school activities (holiday concerts, teas, craft shows, dances, ect). This type of involvement would put the student in less socially anxiety situations.

Another important part of this IEP would be to decrease the amount of classroom presentations this student has to do. The teacher will have to offer two options to the entire classroom. The two options would be to either do a presentation or hand in a paper instead of doing the presentation. By making the option available to the entire class, the teacher is not singling out the one student if that student is the only one not doing a presentation. By lessoning the amount of class presentations that the student has to do, this will decrease the anxiety that the student feels in the classroom.

The final part of this IEP is for the student to have weekly meetings with the resource teacher to reflect on how the week has been. The resource teacher and student would talk about things such as: things the student is struggling with academically, any social or emotional issues that the student is dealing with, the negative parts of the student’s week, and positive parts of the student’s week.

Traumatized

The individuals involved in this IEP are different from the Psychopathic and Psychotic IEPs because Child and Family Services is involved and the parents are not involved. Aside from Child and Family Services, the student, classroom teacher, school counsellor, and resource teacher are involved.

Just one adult, the resource teacher would talk to the student in a one on one conversation to determine the details and to what extent issues are occurring at home. The reason only the resource teacher would talk to the student is because this way the environment will be more relaxed and the student will not feel intimidate by a group of adults questioning the student.
Once the resource teacher determined the details of what is going on at home, the resource teacher will notify Child and Family Services. This way the problem at home can be corrected or the student can be moved to a safer environment.

To make the classroom a less intimidating and more comfortable environment, the teacher can be flexible with due dates on assignments and projects. This way the student is not feeling pressure from home and from school. The teacher should be understanding towards the student because the home environment may not be the environment which allows for homework to be done. As well, the teacher and resource teacher can be available during school hours to talk if the student needs to talk about an issue.

The student’s interests should be determined by an adult involved in the IEP. This way an adult can get the student involved in a school based program that is of interest to the student and will not cost the student additional money. This type of friendship building with peers and teammates will help bring positive feelings back into the student’s life.

In the classroom, the teacher can create lessons that promote group work and inclusion of all students. This type of classroom environment will allow the student to build friendships and feel welcome in the classroom.

If the student is not interested in a school sport or activity, the resource teacher can help the student plan for their future and find resources that will help to make the student successful at reaching their goals. Whether the activity is short or long term, education oriented, or career based, the resource teacher can provide the student with as much support as possible.

For example, if the student wants to find a job so they can start earning their own money to save for school or move out of their present house, the resource teacher can help the student prepare a resume, suggest possible places to apply, or give the student a ride to go applying.

The resource teacher can help the student plan for post-secondary education in several ways. The resource teacher can help the student search for scholarships to apply for in order to help with the financial burden of attending post-secondary education. The resource teacher can help the student pick classes for high school, so the student will graduate grade twelve with the correct classes to apply for the program that interest them.

The resource teacher can also help the student get the career they desire by helping the student do research into the career and determine what the demands of the career are, what type of schooling is required, annual salary, and what the job market for that job is.
The resource teacher can assist the student with achieving any goal they want. The goal may be large or small. If the resource teacher helps or guides the student in the right direction the student will accomplish their goal and feel good about themselves.
Prevention

Preventions of the Past

Violent acts in schools are not entirely new phenomena. School shootings have occurred as early as 1902. Since then, many schools have implemented prevention techniques that were put in place to reduce violent acts in schools. There are four main prevention methods that schools and the government put in place in order to reduce school violence; however after examination, it can be noted that these acts do not in fact prevent school shootings.

- **Gun Free Schools Act**
  - The Gun Free Schools Act was passed in 1994 as part of the Improving America’s Schools Act. This act called for states to enact laws requiring that a student who brings a firearm to school or possesses a firearm at school be expelled for a period of not less than one year. This act was passed when the rate of violent behaviour in schools was near its peak of 13 incidents per 1,000 students, totalling 322,400 incidents of serious violent crimes.

- **Zero Tolerance**
  - This term describes a range of policies that seek to impose severe sanctions in schools, typically suspension and expulsion, for minor offenses in hopes of preventing more serious ones. These initiatives are based on the theory of deterrence, however after nearly a decade of widespread adoption (nearly 75% of schools in the US report having such policies), there was no empirical evidence to suggest that this created any significant decreases of violence.

- **Persistently Dangerous Schools**
  - Students in the United States are provided with the Unsafe School Option. This allows states to establish policies permitting a student to choose to attend a safe school within the district if he or she attends a persistently dangerous school or becomes a victim of a violent crime while in school or on school grounds. This policy has presented challenges because it has been left up to the state to define the term “persistently dangerous.” Many schools do not want the label because it implies that their environment is not safe for children. They will often not report incidents and marginalize violent acts, in order to pass under the radar.
  - In 2004, only 52 schools in the United States were labelled as dangerous, with schools in Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, and Baltimore having no schools that met the criteria.
Target Hardening and Security Measures

- There are many measures that schools have employed in order to prevent school shootings and violent attacks. The two types include basic measures and sophisticated measures, both of which have had minimal contributions in eliminating school rampage shootings.

- Some form of basic measures is implemented by most schools in North America. Basic measures include searching lockers, placing school staff in hallways, locking entrances and exit doors during the school day, and requiring visitors to sign in. Most schools that have had a rampage shooting had one or more of these measures in place; however the shooting was still allowed to happen.

- Sophisticated measures have also been used by many schools in order to prevent violence. This includes both security cameras and metal detectors. Analog cameras that were once fixed to one site have been replaced with digital cameras that can pan across an area and be monitored by several observers. Research states that cameras will help to reduce unruly public behaviour; however they note that it will not prevent major violent acts such as school shootings. Schools like Columbine and Virginia Tech had security cameras in place, which did not deter school shooters.
Preventing School Shootings: Moving Forward

In his book, *Inside the Mind of School Shooters*, Dr. Peter Langham has come up with a list of ten things that can be done in order to help prevent school shootings. If done separately, these prevention techniques will not have a drastic effect on reducing school shootings. However if all ten techniques are followed and kept at the forefront by parents, teachers, and school officials, then school shootings can be significantly reduced.

**Lesson #1 - The Limits of Privacy**

The first lesson in helping prevent school shootings is knowing the limits of privacy. Parents of school shooters get a lot of blame. They are blamed for raising hateful children and not seeing the warning signs. This blame is misguided as none of the parents encouraged their children to commit murder or helped them plan their attacks. Parents need to know their child. This is often easier said than done; however it comes down to communication and the relationship between children and their parents. Parents need to maintain an open line of communication and respond appropriately when problems arise. As children mature and reach adolescence, they become experts at living private lives, often isolating themselves in their rooms. Parents can still afford children their independence, while keeping a watchful eye for any potential signs of violence. Parents of the Columbine killers knew that the boys had created pipe bombs, and had a fascination with weapons. They should have taken this as a warning sign, and Dr. Langman suggests that routine room inspections should have been conducted.

**Lesson #2 - Do Not Lie to Protect Your Child**

There were many incidents that have involved parents lying to professionals about their children’s behaviours. This often took place preceding the violent attacks and there are two examples surrounding Kip Kinkel’s family that illustrate this. The first was Kip Kinkel’s father lying to police. Mr. Kinkel’s apparent motivation was to minimize the scandal, so he lied to police stating that there were no other guns in the home. Even though Kip had been found with a loaded gun in his locker, his father focussed on Kip’s grades and getting him through the school year. This failure to tell the police about Kip’s other weapons cost the lives of Mr. And Mrs. Kinkel and two students.

The second incident involved Mrs. Kinkel lying to psychologists when they asked if there had ever been a history of family illness. Mrs. Kinkel knew that family illness was rampant on both sides of the family, and she blatantly lied to the family psychologist. Perhaps if the doctor had known of the extreme nature of the family’s psychological history, he may have proceeded differently with treatments and urged his parents to more carefully monitor his behaviour.
Lesson #3 - Follow Through with Due Process No Matter Who Is Involved

Another twist in the story of Kip Kinkel is that his parents were school teachers. The fact that the school knew Kip’s family influenced the course of events. Policies and procedures were not followed, and Kip was treated differently from how students were supposed to be treated when they brought a loaded gun to school. The assistant principal at Kip’s school commented, “The rules we set up were ignored when the moment of truth arrive. They were not followed because, quite simply, he was a Kinkel. Instead of considering the fact of the gun, they considered the family of the boy who was caught with it.” School administrators, teachers, and the police need to follow through with an unbiased approach. They need to consider the facts and the implications and not necessarily the family or the individuals involved.

Lesson #4 - Pay Attention to School Concerns

It often makes parents uneasy when they hear negative things about their children. However there are reasons why teachers and administrators reach out to parents. If someone from the school calls with a concern that a child’s behaviour may pose a threat, parents should take this seriously. It may be a false alarm, but it could also turn out to be a matter of life and death, so parents need to pay attention.

Several weeks before Columbine, Dylan Klebold wrote a story about a man who brutally murdered a group of students. His English teacher was so upset by the story that she talked to Dylan and his family, but it fell on deaf ears, as they accepted Dylan’s explanation that it was, “just a story.” The lesson is that parents should give the school the benefit of the doubt. Teachers read hundreds of papers and if they sense that one is alarming, there might be a very good reason for concern.

Teachers should also pay attention to their own reactions and trust their instincts. They deal with hundreds of students on a daily basis and if one paper strikes them as disturbing or threatening, there may be a very good reason. They should not hesitate to involve parents, administrators, and any other individuals. In turn, parents must realize that the school is acting out of the best interest of the child, and should treat concerns seriously.

Lesson #5 - Eliminate Easy Access to Guns

Easy access to guns plays a major role in school shootings. Most shooters get weapons from their own homes, from their friends, and from their neighbours. Dr. Langman argues that it is not enough for guns to secured somewhere in the house. Children often know where the weapons are hidden, and can find keys and ways to open gun cabinets. If children using every tool at their disposal, including hammers, screwdrivers, and crowbars, can get at the guns, then they are not secure. The weapons
need to be out of reach of the children in the home. This means that they should be kept at a gun club or some other place that is unknown and out of the reach of adolescents. This would eliminate the easy access to weapons and would prove to be a huge stumbling block for a school shooter. If they cannot get their hands on an arsenal of weapons, then it will be hard for them to carry through their violent rampage.

**Lesson #6 - Assume Threats are Serious until Proven Otherwise**

Both students and teachers need to be trained to know what to look for, and to know what to do when they observe a potential threat. Individuals should be presented with the tools that will allow them to do a proper Threat Assessment. This does not focus on the student who made the threat, but on the students who pose the threat. Students can pose threats through their behaviour even if they do not directly threaten anyone.

Borum et al (2010) have come up with a list of seven steps that one can employ in order to assess if a threat is serious and take the appropriate action. The following is the 7 Step Method that can be done to properly assess a threat within a school.

**Figures:** Decision tree for Virginia threat assessment guidelines. Adapted from Cornell and Throsby (2006), with permission from Sagri West Educational Service.
Lesson #7 - Anyone Can Stop a School Shooting

Numerous individuals in the past have prevented school shootings because they knew enough to report what they heard to parents, school personnel, and the authorities. Anyone who is alert to warning signs can be a hero by coming forward and saving people’s lives. This has occurred numerous times in the past, with public citizens taking note of suspicious behaviours, and then alerting the appropriate authorities.

One example occurred in 2001 at De Anza College in California. A student planned to commit mass murder at the college with guns and bombs. A day before the act was supposed to be carried out; he took photographs of himself with his arsenal of weapons. A clerk in the shop where the photographs were developed was worried and notified her father, who was a police officer. This lead to a raid of the student’s home, where they found guns, bombs, and a tape recording apologizing for what he was about to do.

In July 2007, just three months after the attack at Virginia Tech, a gun dealer stopped a possible attack. A customer seemed overeager about his shipment of semiautomatic weapons and appeared urgent and desperate in his behaviour. The dealer reported his concern to the police, which prompted them to search the individual’s vehicle. In his car, they found a written document threatening to carry out an attack similar to Virginia Tech.

As these examples show, school shootings can be prevented by anyone who notices a possible threat and takes prompt action. School shootings are almost never planned in secrecy. Shooters often tell friends, take pictures, and write scripts that can serve as warning signs that they are about to commit a crime. We just need to be diligent in reporting these signs to the proper authorities.

Lesson #8 - Recognize the Possible Rehearsal of Attacks

A common behaviour among school shooters is the imaginary rehearsal of what they are going to do. This can take many different forms. Shooters will construct drawings, animations, videos, and short stories, documenting what they are planning to do.

Examples of rehearsals included a short video production by the Columbine killers. They created a video called, “Hitmen for Hire,” which portrayed a harassed student who hired Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold to kill the people picking on him. Dylan also wrote a short story about a man who kills a group of students. Other school shooters wrote stories about mutilation, torture, bombing, and suicide.

Dr. Langman notes that in hindsight, it is easy to see some of these works as obvious warning signs. However, schoolwork involving war, crime, or horror is
commonplace in our culture. The thing that differentiates creative art from possible warning signs of an eminent attack is the student’s identification with the perpetrator of violence. A student writing about the murder of other students who are named in the story needs to be investigated.

**Lesson #9 - Punishment Is Not Prevention**

Over the last few years, many schools have adopted a zero-tolerance approach to violence. This means that any acts of violence including bringing weapons to school, and threatening students are punished with suspension and expulsion. This is not a meaningful response to school violence.

Punishment in the form of suspension or expulsion for a threat of violence is not effective in preventing violence. In fact, this type of punishment can have several undesirable effects. It can increase students’ rage and the desire for revenge. It can also make them more isolated from their peers and they feel rejected and experience a loss of status (Langman, 2010). For those students who feel alienated from their classmates and are already emotionally withdrawn, punishment in the form of suspension or expulsion can make things worse.

Additionally, suspension or expulsion can result in decreased supervision and students will lack structure in their lives. This is the last thing that a struggling child needs. They need programs, therapy, and other methods of treatment in place. They need the attention from those who care about them, and rejection in the form of suspension or expulsion will not help these students.

**Lesson #10 - The Limits of Physical Security**

Basic measures (ID badges, locker searches, and staff in hallways) and sophisticated measures (security cameras, metal detectors) have already been discussed as methods used to prevent school acts of violence. While they may prevent school fights, and minor violent incidents, Dr. Langman claims that they do not prevent school shootings.

When students commit school shootings, they typically do so at their own schools. Identification might help to stop strangers from entering a school, but in the case of most school shootings, it is current students who are familiar with the layout of the school and have easy access.

Sophisticated measures such as surveillance cameras also have its limits to prevent school shootings. Cameras usually have a deterrent effect on those who try and commit acts secretly. However, in school shootings, this is not the case. School shooters are not concerned with hiding their identity and commit public acts with no attempt at
secrecy. Cameras were present at Columbine, and at Red Lake, Minnesota, but they were not a deterrent.

Thus we can see that physical security has its limits. The best defence is an early detection. Shooters need to be stopped before they get to the school with weapons. Lessons 1-9 will help with this, and being cognisant of the fact that schools have their limits with physical security will serve as the best defence for school shooters.
Emergency Measures

Lockdown Procedure

Within the school system, preparing for a school lockdown is as common as preparing for a fire drill. Students need to be prepared in case an individual performs an attack on their school. The following are two examples of lockdown procedures. The first lockdown procedure is acquired from Lundar School’s Student Handbook. Lundar is located in Manitoba, Canada.

- Lundar School (Early, Middle, and High School)
  - “Initiate lock down” repeated 3 times over the intercom.
  - The individual responsible for making the discovery of the situation that requires an emergency lockdown will immediately contact the office and the RCMP and provide as much information as possible.
  - No fire alarms.
  - If a fire alarm does sound, do not evacuate the building unless:
    - There is firsthand knowledge that there is a fire in the building, or
    - It has been advised by the RCMP or principal to evacuate the building.
  - Classroom doors are to be locked, windows closed, and lights turned off.
  - Everyone is to remain quiet and not enter the hallways.
  - Everyone must crouch down in areas that are out of sight from doors and windows.

The following procedure is obtained from the University of Winnipeg’s website. It provides the steps to take during a partial and full lockdown.

- University of Winnipeg
  - Partial Lockdown
    - The securing of all exterior doors of all facilities of the University of Winnipeg
    - Can also be used to secure a particular area of the University where an incident has occurred that could affect the safety of the students, faculty, and staff
  - Full Lockdown
    - The securing of all exterior doors and the locking or barricading of classrooms, offices, and conference rooms
    - Students, faculty, and staff must remain in these rooms until advised that it is safe to leave
  - Personal Actions
    - Stay clear of exterior doors and windows
    - During a full lockdown, barricade your room
• Remain quiet and turn off cell phones
• Do not enter the hallways unless advised to do so by the 911 Operator, Emergency Services personnel, or Security Services

• Armed Intruder
  • GET OUT
    • Know where you are and the location of all evacuation routes
    • Upon seeing or being advised of an armed intruder, if safe to do so EVACUATE the area immediately taking as many people with you as possible
    • If you encounter responding police keep your hands elevated with open palms visible
  • CALL OUT
    • Call 911 and advise Security Services
    • Provide as much detail of the intruder as possible
  • HIDE OUT
    • If you cannot safely exit the area, seek shelter in an office/room where the doors can be locked or barricaded securely
    • Turn off the lights and remain out of sight of the doors and windows
    • Call 911 and follow their instructions
    • If you cannot speak, leave the line open so the 911 Operator can hear what is going on in the room

If you cannot get out or hide out, playing dead could save your life!
Student Assignments

The following assignments were handed in to teachers to be assessed. The teachers were disturbed by what they read, however the writings were never brought to light until after the attacks had occurred. Had the students that wrote the assignments been confronted, history may have been written differently. Assignments are portrayed in original format. If there are mistakes, they are from the writers.

- Kip Kinkel, Grade 9, Essay for English

**Love Sucks (essay written about love at first sight)**

No, I don't believe in love at first sight because love is an evil plot to make people buy alcohol and firearms. When you love someone something it is always taken away from you. I also would like to add that I hate each and every one of you. Because everything I touch turns to shit. I think if you think you fall in love with someone at first sight it might just be lust. Love at first sight is only in movies. Where the people in the movies are better than you. That is why you go to a pawn shop and buy an AK-15 because you are going to execute every last mother fucking one of you. If I had a heart it would be gray.

It is easier to hate than love. Because there is much more hate and misery in the world than there is love and peace. Some people say that you should love everyone. But that is impossible. Look at our history it is full of death, depression, rape, wars and diseases. I also do not believe in love at first sight. But I do believe in hate at first sight. Therefore love is a much harder feeling to experience.

I really wouldn't know how to answer this question because my cold black heart has never and never will experience true love. I can tell you one about love. It does more harm than good. I plan to live in a big black hole. My firearms and [illegible] will be the only things to fight my isolation. I would also like to point out Love is a horrible thing. It makes things kill and hate.

- Eric Harris, Grad 12, Assignment for English

10/13/98

What's 35% of 100

1) 35

2) Germany France Spain Italy

3) Kansas Wyoming Nebraska Arizona
I think that this is absolutely ridiculous people who can’t answer questions like that should be shot. The schools are to caught up on trying to educate students on worthless subjects that they forget about the basics. Now usually for most schools that isn’t the case, but if it is for even 1 school thats a big problem. I think students today are astonishingly stupid. It never ceases to amaze me how stupid and ignorant people can be. Seems like some try to be dumb. Its pity natural selection doesn’t apply to humans, otherwise I strongly believe the race as a whole would be better off. I am ashamed to be a part of the same species as some of these people. And to think that this is what millions of soldiers died for and risked everything they had for, back in WWII and korea and Vietnam, and now there are students who don’t even know who was involved in the first world war or dont even know when the first atomic bomb was dropped. it is truely pityful.

- Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, Grade 12, Video Assignment

Hitmen for Hire  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wUh7PYzPqY&feature=related

Synopsis: The video portrays Harris and Klebold as powerful hit men at the school they attend. A student is crying for help as he is being bullied and beaten up all the time. He hires Harris and Klebold as hit men to kill the student that is bothering him. The end scene of the video shows Harris and Klebold luring the student out behind the school and shooting him repeatedly until he dies.
References


University of Winnipeg Lockdown Procedure Source: http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/emergency-guide-lockdown-procedures
