

USSS & DOE Guidelines for Threat Inquiry Summary Report

*Utilize interviews, review of records, observations to gather data in five key areas
(See attached 11 questions/data collection guidelines and initial/extended report)*

1. The Facts that Drew Attention to the Student, Situation and Targets

- What behaviors/communications were reported and by whom?
- What was the situation?
- Who, if anyone, witnessed the reported behavior?
- What was the context for the reported behavior: what else was going on at the time of the reported behavior?
- WHAT IS CORROBORATED? WHAT WARRANTS SCRUTINY?

2. Student Information

A. Name, description, DOB, identification #s

B. Background information

- Residences, family/home situation
- Academic performance, social networks
- History of relationships, conflicts
- History of harassing others or being harassed
- History of violence toward self or others
- History of having been a victim of violence or bullying
- Known attitudes toward violence; criminal behavior
- Mental health/substance abuse history
- Access to and use of weapons
- History of grievances and grudges

C. Current life information

- Present stability of living and home situations
- Nature and quality of current relationships and personal support
- Recent losses or loss of status (shame, humiliation, recent breakup or loss of significant relationship)
- Current grievances or grudges, perceptions of being treated unfairly
- Known difficulty coping with a stressful event
- Any “downward” progression in social, academic, behavioral, or psychological functioning
- Recent hopelessness, desperation, and/or
- Despair, including suicidal thoughts, gestures, actions or attempts
- Pending crises or changes in circumstance
- Note: trusting relationships with adults, examples of respect shown to a particular adult. *This connected adult may be a good informant, and may be helpful to stop a student appearing to be on a path to mounting a school attack.*

3. “Attack Related Behaviors”

- Ideas/plans about injuring self or attacking a school or persons at school?
- Communications suggesting student has an unusual/worrisome interest in school attacks?
- Comments implying considering an attack?
- Recent weapons-seeking behavior?
- Communications suggesting student condones or considers violence to redress a grievance is ok?
- Rehearsals of attacks or ambushes?

4. Motives

- Actual motives for school attacks:
 - Revenge for a perceived injury or grievance
 - Yearning for attention, recognition or notoriety
 - A wish to solve a problem otherwise seen as unbearable
 - A desire to die or be killed

5. Target Selection

- Most perpetrators of targeted violence identified targets to friends and peers before advancing attack
- ½ had more than one target
- Consider whether/how target shift may occur over time
- Information on targets provide clues to motives, planning and attack-related behaviors
- Motives often suggest additional targets

Note:

The student threat assessment process is described in detail in the document: Threat assessment in Schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates developed by the US Secret Service and Department of Education’s Safe School Initiative, 2000. See: <http://www.secretservice.gov>. The designation of transient, substantive is taken from the work of Dewey Cornell, University of Virginia Safe Schools initiative to describe those threats which require detailed analysis vs. those that can be determined not to pose a risk. See: <http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu> for information on training and related issues.