**Main Points**

1. School violence is a small part of the larger problem of gun violence. Schools are safer than the public perceives.
2. The fear of school violence has stimulated harmful consequences in school discipline and security.
3. We need a multi-tiered approach to school violence prevention, including:
   - Safe and supportive school climate
   - School threat assessment

**Traumatic Effect of School Shootings**

School shootings are so traumatic that they convince everyone that we extensive schools are unsafe and require extensive security measures.

We need both recovery from trauma and a factual analysis of the best way to prevent more shootings.
Annual Gun Toll
- 33,000 deaths
- 67,000 injuries
100,000 total

275
Shootings per day

301 School Shootings In America Since 2013

For every shooting in a school, there are 1,600+ outside of schools

If schools were impregnable, it would only stop .06% of shootings
Less than 1 tenth of 1 percent

The real problem is gun violence, not school violence.

March for Our Lives
Youth from across the country emphasize the gun violence they experienced both in and out of school.
Homicides of School-Aged Youth

Average of 22 homicides per year in schools
Average of 1,480 homicides outside of schools
Homicides outside of school are 67x more likely


Why the Fear of School Violence Matters

Newtown Rampage Spurs S5 Billion School Security Spending


High Security Military Entrances

Extra security in Hillsborough schools would cost $4 million
School security measures could cost millions locally
Additional Florida School Security Could Cost $100 Million

School security wish list would cost Marion County $160M
Armed guards in every Mirnn. school would cost $138 million
NRA proposal would cost state schools about $130 million.

Extra security in Hillsborough schools would cost $4 million
School security measures are expensive and deprive schools of resources that could be allocated to preventive measures such as anti-bullying programs and counseling services.

Armed guards in every Mirnn. school would cost $138 million
NRA proposal would cost state schools about $130 million.

Every Per Pupil dollar spent for Security is a Per Pupil dollar NOT spent for Instruction.
The Expansion of Zero Tolerance

From No Guns to
- No Toy Guns
- No Nail clippers
- No Plastic utensils
- No Finger-pointing
- No Jokes
- No Drawings
- No Rubber band shooting

No accidental violations

3.3 Million Suspensions Per Year Fuel the School to Prison Pipeline

Latest available data April 2018

We should prevent shootings rather than simply prepare for them.

Prevention means “to keep something from happening”

Crisis response is not prevention.

A crisis occurs when prevention has failed.
Prevention must start before the gunman is at your door.

There are opportunities for prevention years before the shooting starts and leading up to the day it happens.

Three Tiers of Prevention in Schools

III
Intensive Interventions

II
At-Risk Students

I
Schoolwide Prevention

Prevention begins with a safe and supportive school climate for all students.

Virginia Secondary School Climate Study

- Surveys of students and teachers
- 700+ middle and high schools
- In collaboration
  - Virginia Department of Education
  - Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

What is Authoritative School Climate?

Developmental research has found that authoritative parents, who are both demanding and warm with their children, are more effective than authoritarian parents who are demanding but cold and permissive parents who are warm but not demanding.

Our research suggests that schools are most effective when teachers are demanding and warm, too.
Four types of schools?

- Authoritarian
  - Low Structure
  - High Support
- Authoritative
  - Low Structure
  - High Support
- Disengaged
  - Low Structure
  - Low Support
- Permissive
  - High Structure
  - High Support

Support - Caring and Willing to Help

- Most teachers and other adults at this school care about all students: 3.1
- Most teachers and other adults at this school want all students to do well: 2.8
- Most teachers and other adults at this school listen to what students have to say: 2.7
- Most teachers and other adults at this school treat students with respect: 2.9
- There are adults at this school I could talk with if I had a personal problem: 3.0
- If I tell a teacher that someone is bullying me, the teacher will do something about it: 3.1
- I am comfortable asking my teachers for help with my school work: 3.2
- There is at least one teacher or another adult at this school who really wants to help me: 3.3

Overall SUPPORT: 3.2

Discipline - Strict, but Fair

- The punishment for breaking school rules is the same for all students: 2.4
- Students at this school only get punished when they deserve it: 2.6
- Students are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnicity: 3.0
- Students are suspended without good reason (reverse scored): 2.6
- The adults at this school are too strict (reverse scored): 2.7
- The school rules are fair: 2.7
- When students are accused of doing something wrong, they get a chance to explain it: 2.6

Overall STRUCTURE: 2.7

Disciplinary Structure and Support established in multi-level structural factor analysis


Student Engagement

- Low Str/H Low Supp: Disengaged
- HS Str/Low Supp: Authoritative
- Los Str/Hi Supp: Permissive
- Hi Str/Hi Supp: Authoritative

Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying Across 4 Types of School Climate

- Low Str/Low Supp: Disengaged
- HS Str/Low Supp: Authoritative
- Los Str/Hi Supp: Permissive
- Hi Str/Hi Supp: Authoritative
Authoritative School Climate

- Higher student engagement
- Less teasing, bullying, and sexual harassment
- Teachers report less aggression by students
- Less fighting and weapon carrying
- Lower suspension rates
Authoritative School Climate

Findings consistent across schools varying in:
- School size
- Student poverty %
- Minority students %
- Urbanicity

School threat assessment is an alternative to zero tolerance.

The FBI, Secret Service, and Dept of Education recommended a threat assessment approach nearly 20 years ago.

What is Threat Assessment?

Threat assessment is a problem-solving approach to violence prevention that involves assessment and intervention with students who have threatened violence in some way.

Threat Assessment is a violence prevention strategy.

1. Family members, friends, or others seek help when concerned about someone in distress or who is threatening violence.
2. The threat assessment team evaluates the seriousness of the threat.
3. The team initiates assistance to address the underlying problem, conflict or need. In the most serious cases, protective action is taken.

Threat Assessment Takes a Problem-Solving Approach

The team takes action based on the seriousness of the threat.
- What protective action, if any, is needed?
- What problem stimulated the threat?
- What can be done to resolve that problem?
School Climate and Safety

May 16, 2018

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

Accurate Threat Assessment Avoids 2 Errors ...

1. Over-reaction

School Suspends Second Grader for Eating His Pop-Tart Into the Shape of a Gun

Accurate Threat Assessment Avoids 2 Errors ...

2. Under-Reaction

In a threat assessment, we try to determine why a student made a threat, and therefore how we can prevent the threat from being carried out.

Research on Threat Assessment

1. 99% of threats not carried out.
2. Only 1% expelled, 1% arrested.
3. Suspension rates decreased.
4. Racial disparities reduced or absent.
5. Counseling used more often.

Research on Threat Assessment

Virginia mandates K-12 threat assessment in 2013

Student Threats to Harm Others

Types of Threats (%)

Intended Victim (%)

Threat Outcomes (%)

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.
**Disciplinary Outcome (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reprimand</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension out of school</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension in school</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expulsion reduced to...</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detention after school</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placed in juvenile detention</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expelled</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages for 1,865 threat cases from 785 schools. One case can involve more than one outcome.

**School Placement Outcome (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to alternative school</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebound instruction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred to regular school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Points about School Threat Assessment**

1. Must be adapted for schools.
2. Avoid criminalizing students.
3. Provide help where needed.
4. Need systematic training and research to maintain effectiveness.

**Concluding Points**

1. School violence is a small part of a larger problem of gun violence.
2. Schools are much safer than the public thinks.
3. Prevention begins with a positive school climate.
4. Threat assessment can help schools respond to student threats.

[http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu](http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu)