Welcome ... Dr. Dewey Cornell

- Forensic clinical psychologist and Professor of Education in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia
- Director of the UVA Youth Violence Project and a faculty associate of the Institute of Law, Psychiatry, and Public Policy
- Studied youth violence for 30+ years with more than 200 publications including Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence and School Violence: Fears versus Facts

WHAT you will learn today

- Overview of Sandy Hook Promise – Who, What, How and Impact
- Overview of Safety Assessment & Intervention ... a program Dr. Cornell created and is partnering with SHP to deliver to school districts nationally

WHO is SHP?

Sandy Hook Promise is a nonprofit organization led by several family members who lost loved ones at the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on December 14, 2012.

WHAT do they do

SHP helps prevent violence and victimization BEFORE it happens by teaching youth and adults how to recognize individuals at-risk of hurting themselves or others and intervene to get them help.

HOW do they do it

- EDUCATE and empower, at no cost, schools and youth organizations in our Know the Signs prevention programs
- DELIVERY of training to fit district needs
  - Direct Training through National & Local Trainers
  - Digital Download of Youth Program Curriculum
  - Say Something Interactive Learning Video (Oct 2017)
SHP Impact ...

• Intervened on multiple school shooting, suicide, and gun threats across the US
• Stopped/reduced cutting, bullying, and other acts of violence and victimization
• Helped hundreds of youth get mental health assistance
• ~2,000,000 youth and adults trained in our programs

Today’s discussion ...

SAI trains a multi-disciplinary team how to assess and respond to threats and threatening behavior.
SAI is an evidence-based program based on the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines.

“Every act of gun violence is preventable if you recognize the signs”

We can identify troubled youth and help them before their problems escalate into violence.

Case Study – West Paducah, KY

We must have a school climate where students trust the adults in their school and are willing to seek help. School authorities must convey their concern for their students.
Bullying in middle and high school:

- School newspaper
- Rest room monitoring
- Hallway teasing
- Classroom mischief
- Cafeteria food taken
- Marching band initiation
- Gym class humiliation

Bullying led to:

- Change in peer group
  - Freaks vs preps
  - Shoot up the school
- Mental deterioration
  - Depression
  - Threatening voices
  - Man under the house
  - “You gotta do this”

Contributing Factors

- Bullying
- Mental Illness
- Peer Influences
- Access to guns
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

1. Identification of threats made by students.
2. Evaluation of seriousness of threat and danger it poses to others, recognizing that all threats are not the same (e.g., toy guns are not dangerous).
3. Intervention to reduce risk of violence.
4. Follow-up to assess intervention results.

School-Based Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal or Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Leads team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Resource Officer</td>
<td>Advises, responds to illegal actions and emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Staff (School counselors, psychologists, social workers)</td>
<td>Conducts mental health assessments. Lead role in follow-up interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional: Teachers, aides, other</td>
<td>Report threats, provide input to team. No additional workload</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School divisions may further specify team roles and include other staff to meet local needs.
Accurate Threat Assessment Avoids 2 Errors ...

1. Over-reaction

![Image of a school suspension]

- Warning of impending violence
- Attempts to intimidate or frighten
- Thrill of causing a disruption
- Attention-seeking, boasting
- Fleeting expressions of anger
- Jokes
- Figures of speech

2. Under-Response

Continuum of Threats

- Warning of impending violence
- Attempts to intimidate or frighten
- Thrill of causing a disruption
- Attention-seeking, boasting
- Fleeting expressions of anger
- Jokes
- Figures of speech

Decision Tree

- Threat Reported to Principal
  - Step 1. Evaluate Threat
  - Step 2. Decide if threat is clearly transient or substantive
    - Threat is transient
      - Step 3. Respond to threat
    - Threat is substantive
      - Step 3. Serious or Very Serious
        - Threat is serious
          - Step 5. Respond to serious substantive threat.
        - Threat is very serious
          - Step 6. Conduct Safety Evaluation
            - Step 7. Follow up on action plan

Transient Threats

- Threat Reported to Principal
  - Step 1. Evaluate Threat
  - Step 2. Decide if threat is clearly transient or substantive
    - Threat is transient
      - Step 3. Respond to threat
    - Threat is substantive
      - Step 3. Serious or Very Serious
        - Threat is serious
          - Step 5. Respond to serious substantive threat.
        - Threat is very serious
          - Step 6. Conduct Safety Evaluation
            - Step 7. Follow up on action plan

Very Serious Substantive Threats

- Threat Reported to Principal
  - Step 1. Evaluate Threat
  - Step 2. Decide if threat is clearly transient or substantive
    - Threat is transient
      - Step 3. Respond to threat
    - Threat is substantive
      - Step 3. Serious or Very Serious
        - Threat is serious
          - Step 5. Respond to serious substantive threat.
        - Threat is very serious
          - Step 6. Conduct Safety Evaluation
            - Step 7. Follow up on action plan
Immediate responses to a Very Serious Substantive Threat

- Take precautions to protect potential victims
- Consult with law enforcement promptly
- Notify intended victim and victim’s parents
- Notify student’s parents
- Begin Mental Health Assessment
- Determine safety during suspension

Law Enforcement Investigation of Very Serious Substantive Threats

- Interview suspects and witnesses
- Conduct searches for weapons and other evidence of planning
- Serve as a resource for students with fears or information to share
- Take appropriate protective action

Mental Health Assessment

- Not a prediction model
- Identify mental health needs
- Identify why threat was made
- Set strategies for reducing risk

Follow up with Safety Plan

- Determine action plan to reduce risk of violence
- Identify appropriate interventions for student
- Schedule follow-up contact with student to assess current risk and update plan
- Document plan in Safety Evaluation Report

The Era of Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-Based Policing

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.  
dcornell@virginia.edu
**Threat Assessment Outcomes**

1. Threats are not carried out
2. Reduced suspension rates
3. Increased use of counseling
4. Improved school climate
   - Less bullying
   - More student willingness to seek help

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**Governor’s School & Campus Safety Task Force**

- 40 members
- Led by Secretaries of Public Safety, Education, and Health and Human Resources


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**2013 NREPP Listing**

![NREPP Listing](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=263)

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**Student Threats to Harm Others**

![Student Threats to Harm Others](http://example.com/student_threats.png)

Selected sample of 1,865 threat assessment cases reported by 785 Virginia public schools during the 2014-15 school year
Types of Threats (%)

- Unspecified: 8%
- Kill: 23%
- Use weapon: 21%
- Hit, beat: 18%
- Stab, cut: 13%
- Bomb: 1%
- Arson: 1%
- Sexual: 1%

Intended Victim (%)

- Student: 68%
- Teacher: 15%
- Whole school/group: 13%
- Staff/administrator: 7%
- Other: 4%

Threat Outcomes (%)

- Threat Not Attempted: 97.7%
- Attempted and Averted: 2.6%
- Threat Carried Out: 0.7%

School Placement Outcome (%)

- No Change: 84%
- Transferred to alternative school: 8%
- Homebound instruction: 5%
- Transferred to regular school: 1%
- Other: 2%

Disciplinary Outcome (%)

- Reprimand: 53%
- Suspension out of school: 44%
- Suspension in school: 16%
- Expulsion reduced to...: 5%
- Detention after school: 3%
- Placed in juvenile detention: 3%
- Arrested: 1%
- Expelled: 1%

Disciplinary Outcomes

- White
- Black
- Hispanic

No statistically significant differences for White vs Black or White vs Hispanic students.
School Safety Online Educational Program

- Students (15 min)
- Parents (25 min)
- Teachers/staff (25 min)
- Team members (25, 20, 30 min)

Programs include anonymous survey questions to measure learning. Answers will be used for research purposes. For more information, contact Dr. Jennifer Maeng at jlc7d@virginia.edu

SHP Training at NO COST ...

- Safety Assessment & Intervention – 1 day training program by Dr. Cornell and associates
- See Sandy Hook Promise here at the conference, email programs@sandyhookpromise.org or go to sandyhookpromise.org