



# UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE NATIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

## What is a *behavioral threat assessment* in school?

In K-12 schools, a *behavioral threat assessment* is a proactive approach to identify, assess, and provide appropriate interventions and resources for students who display a behavior that elicits concern for the safety of themselves or others.

### SECRET SERVICE RESEARCH ON SCHOOL ATTACKERS HAS FOUND:

- ▶ There is no demographic profile of a student attacker
- ▶ All experienced social stressors, and nearly all experienced traumatic events at home
- ▶ All exhibited prior concerning behavior
- ▶ Most communicated their intent to attack
- ▶ Most were victims of bullying
- ▶ Most experienced mental health symptoms
- ▶ Most elicited prior concerns about safety
- ▶ Half engaged in observable planning behaviors



### A COMPREHENSIVE BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT:

- ✓ Focuses on behaviors, not traits or profiles
- ✓ Involves multidisciplinary school staff
- ✓ Identifies threatening and other concerning behaviors, and assesses them in context
- ✓ Provides students with additional supports
- ✓ Utilizes existing school resources
- ✓ Promotes a safe school climate

- ✗ *Is not* a criminal investigation
- ✗ *Is not* a disciplinary process
- ✗ *Does not* involve zero tolerance
- ✗ *Does not* replace student support programs
- ✗ *Is not* a physical security measure

As part of its mission to prevent targeted violence, the National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) maintains a particular focus on the safety of children in schools. NTAC resources are available to assist community partners in developing behavioral threat assessment programs and to inform the decisions for when and how to initiate a threat assessment.

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