

"I think there's something wrong..."

An introduction to recognizing, documenting,
and reporting concerning behaviors in school

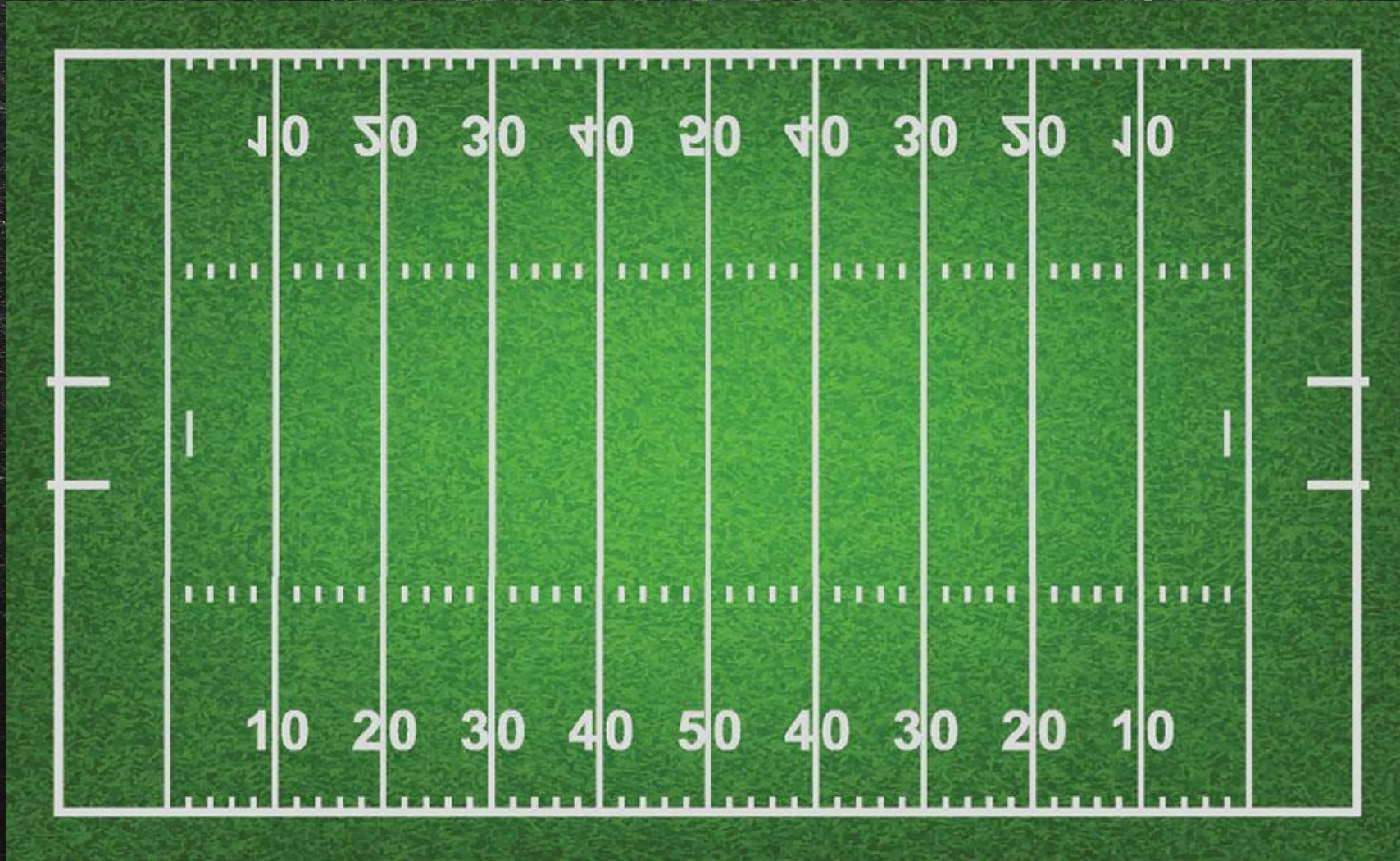
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AGENDA

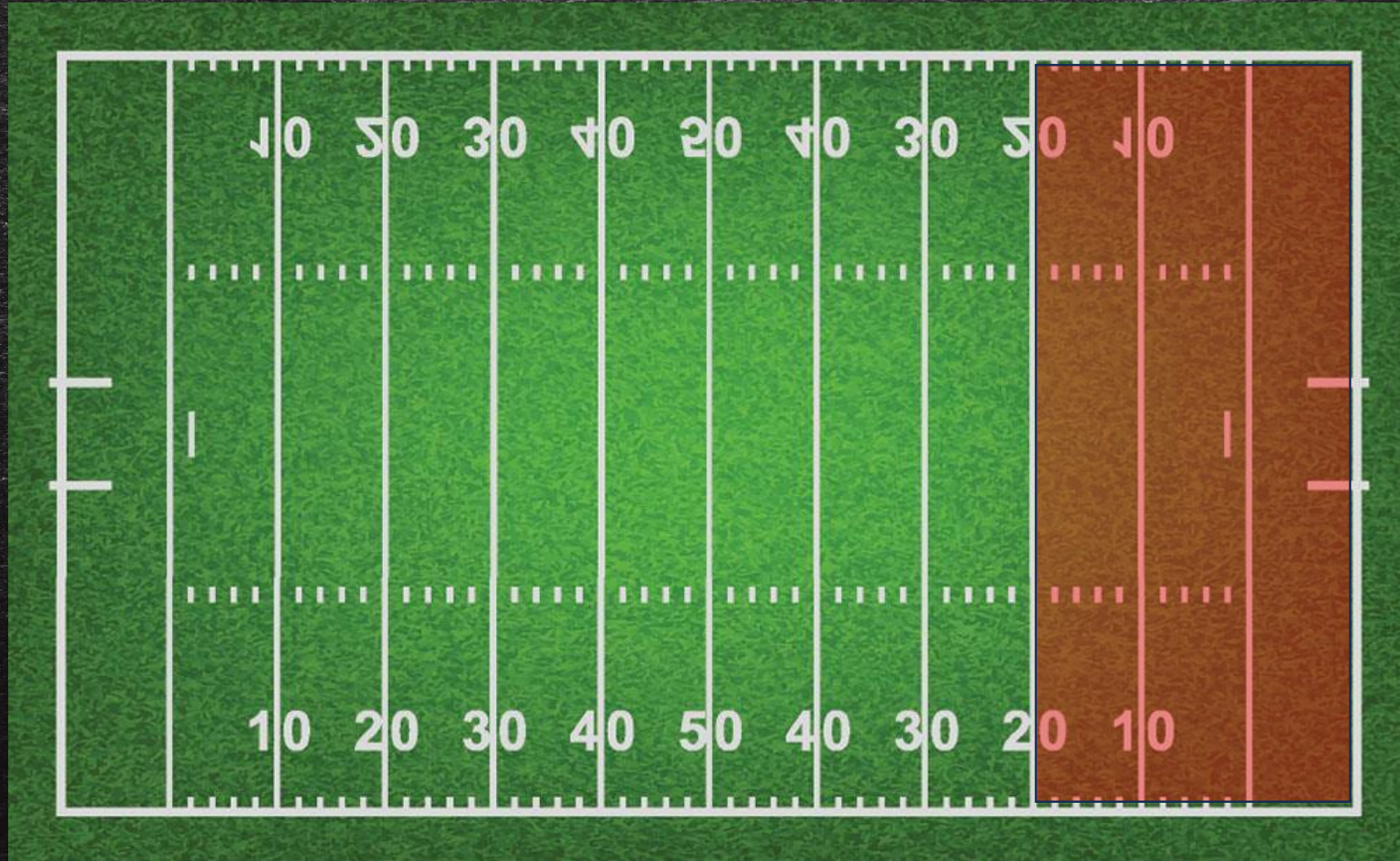
1. **Why Do We Examine Behaviors?**
2. **Understanding Baseline Behaviors and Deviations**
3. **Understanding and Countering Adverse Childhood Experiences**
4. **Recognizing Behavioral Markers of Targeted Violence**
5. **Observing, Documenting, and Reporting Concerning Behaviors**
6. **Overcoming Barriers to Reporting**
7. **Resources**

WHY DO WE EXAMINE BEHAVIORS?

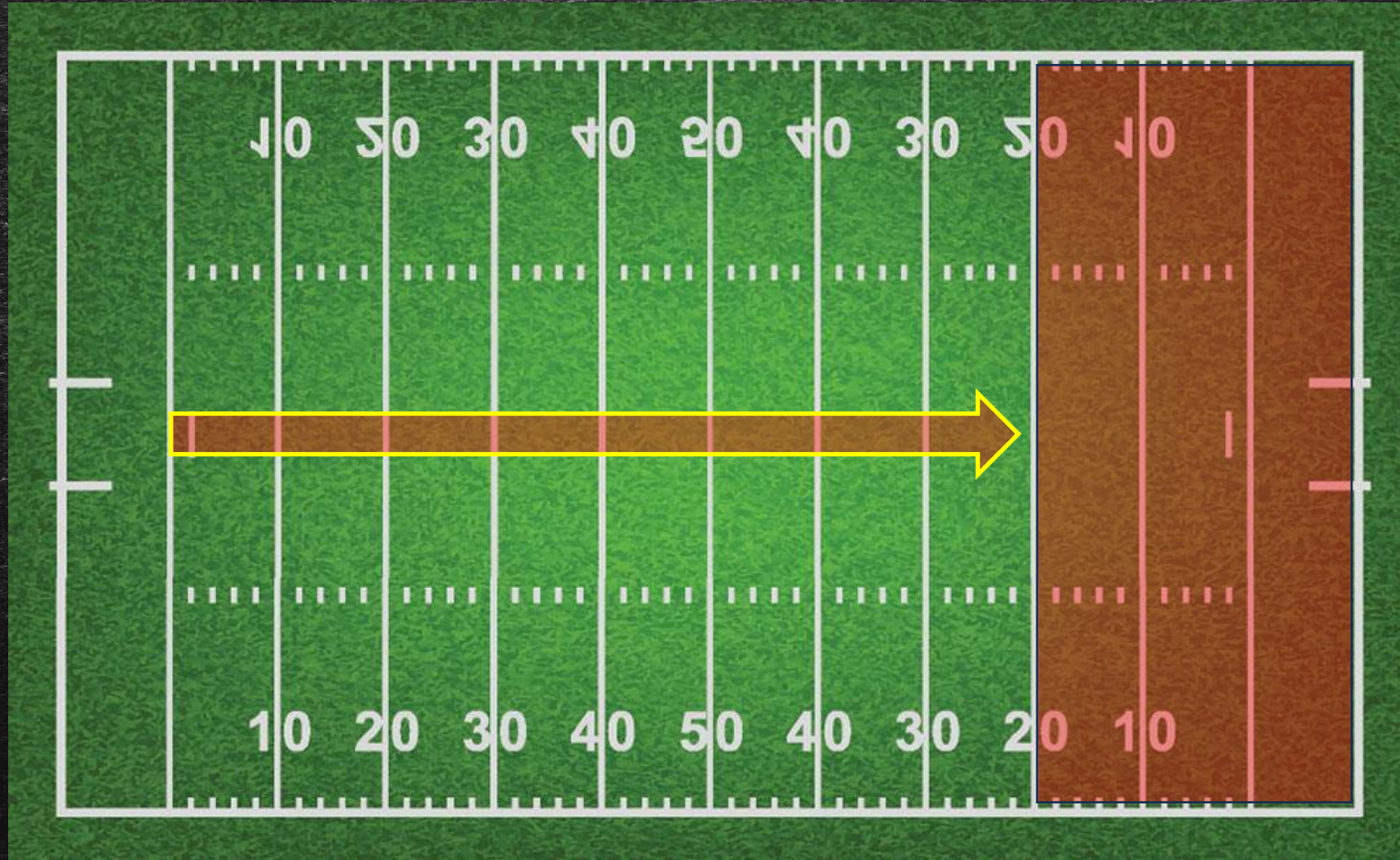


Courtesy of Dr. Joseph Holifield, PhD

WHY DO WE EXAMINE BEHAVIORS?



WHY DO WE EXAMINE BEHAVIORS?



Why Do We Examine Behaviors?

STATISTICS:

- **51%** of attackers engaged in observable planning behaviors
- **80%** of attackers elicited safety concerns from bystanders
- **86%** of attackers exhibited a constellation of lower level concerning behaviors
- **89%** of attackers exhibited *objectively concerning or prohibited* behaviors
- **100%** of attackers exhibited concerning behaviors prior to their attack
- **85%** of these behaviors were observed at least 6 months prior to their attack



MYTH vs REALITY

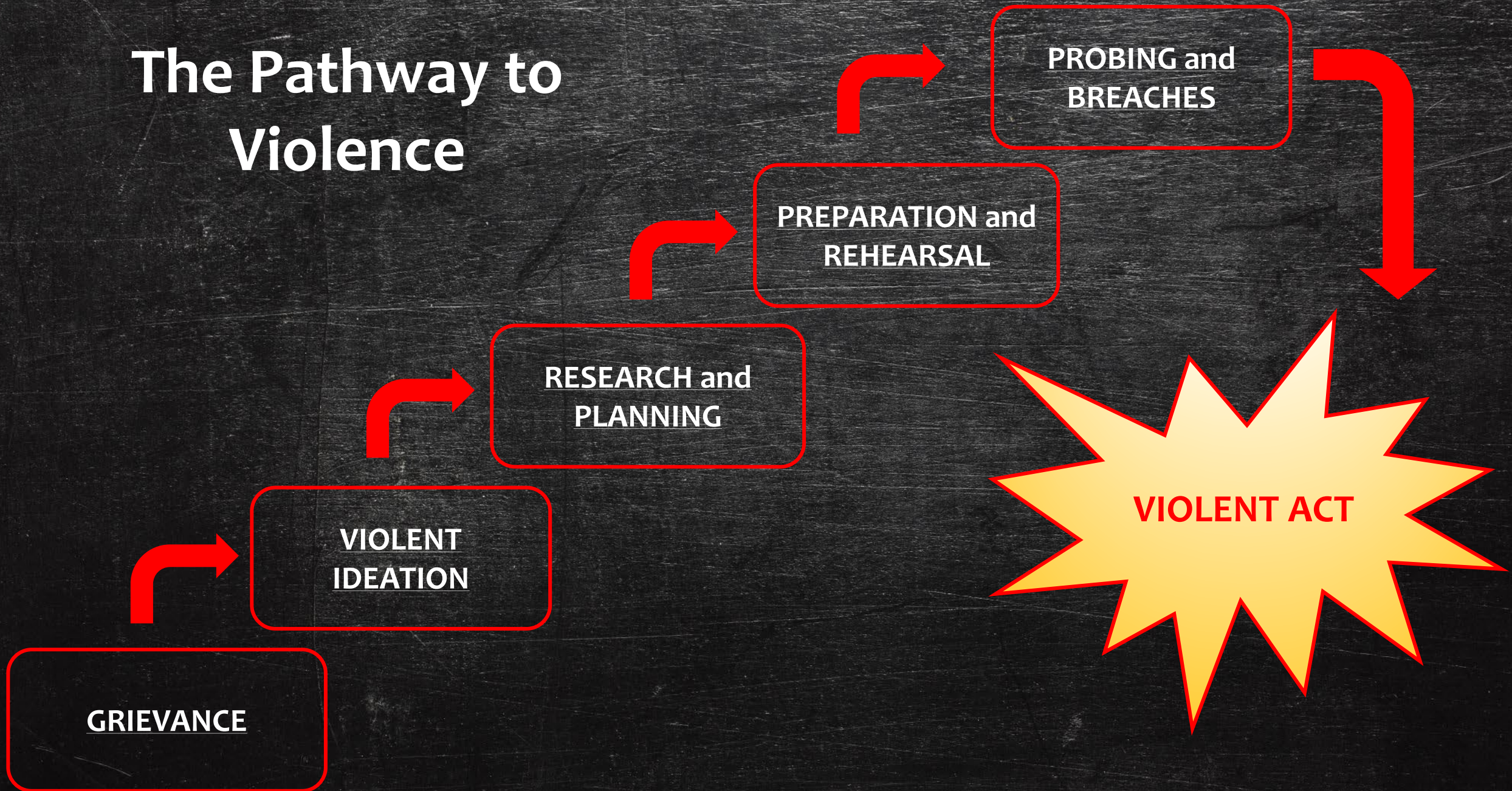
MYTH

- Targeted violence can be predicted
- People “Snap”
- There’s nothing we can do but react/respond when something bad happens
- Violence is random... it comes out of the blue

REALITY

- Targeted violence can be prevented through assessment and intervention
- Targeted violence is researched, planned, and practiced
- Every act of targeted violence has behavioral indicators that provide opportunities to intervene before an attack occurs

The Pathway to Violence



Communicating vs Posing a Threat

- Most people who communicate threats do not actually pose a threat.
 - Some people who communicate threats do pose a threat.
- Some people who actually pose a threat never directly communicate a threat.

Threats do not occur at a single point of time, or in a linear manner

Establishing Baseline Behaviors

- Current behavioral patterns
- Influence of developmental or learning disabilities, or psychiatric/mental health issues
- Influence of cultural issues that might affect behavior
- Influence of socio-societal factors (i.e. trying to fit in)
- Influence of other external factors that might affect behavior

Deviations from Baseline Behaviors

- Some behaviors that may not be socially “acceptable” might still be “normal” given the specific factors with a student.
- Pay attention to significant changes to behavioral patterns that happen
 - Following a significant traumatic or stressful event
 - Over a short period of time
 - Accompanied by any objectively concerning behaviors
 - Accompanied by any ACE in the student’s life

Influence of Adverse Childhood Experiences



“Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity.”¹

“73% of all school mass shooters had a history of childhood trauma”²

1. Center for Disease Control, cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces

2. The Violence Project (Dr Jillian Peterson and Dr. James Densley), theviolenceproject.org



GRIEVANCE



**ADVERSE
CHILDHOOD
EXPERIENCES**



ISOLATION

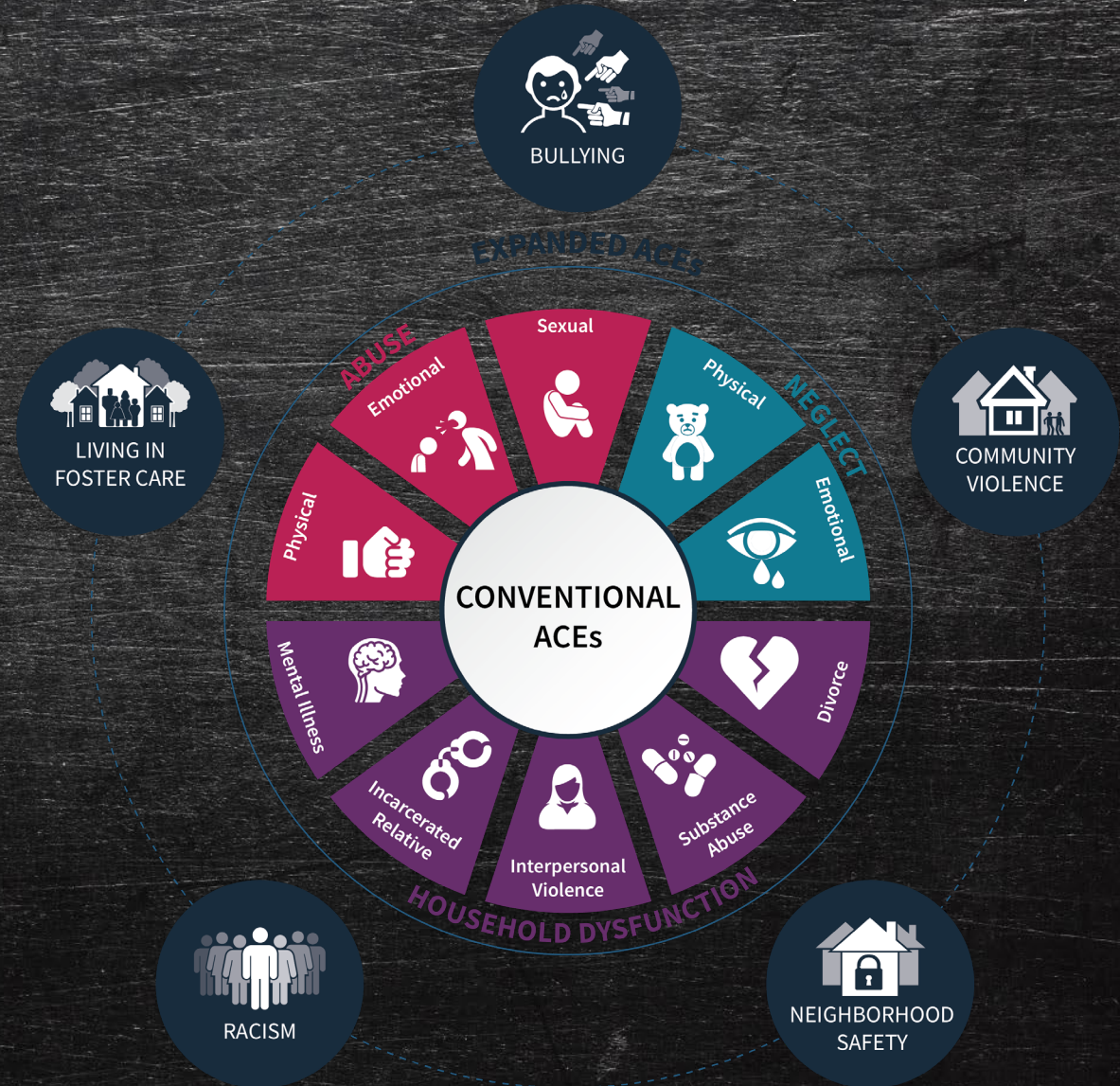


**INABILITY TO
PROCESS TRAUMA**

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs)

Youths “who have experienced at least one substantiated report of abuse or neglect are 47 percent more likely to participate in delinquent acts.”¹

“At least 1/5 of the attackers experienced trauma during their childhood...”²



1. Brown et al, Childhood Adversity and the Risk of Substance Use and Delinquency: The Role of Protective Adult Relationships (2017)

2. Alathari et al, Mass Attacks in Public Spaces, 2023

ACEs and COVID-19



COVID precipitated a significant increase in many of these ACEs, which then resulted in a more than 300 percent increase in threats

Countering Adverse Childhood Experiences

Schools can be a “safe place” for students exhibiting stressors in their home

The school environment provides multiple opportunities to engage and positively influence students experiencing ACEs

School documentation and reporting facilitates earlier intervention, earlier law enforcement and behavioral health involvement, and provides opportunities to connect students of concern to resources

Teachers and staff can engage with students’ parents/caregivers in a non-threatening manner to increase understanding of the ACEs’ effect on students

Schools can use existing law (SB906, Cleveland v Taft, Grossman v Rockaway Twp) as vehicles to engage students and parents to counter stressors that increase the risk of violence.

Countering Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Foster a culture in which everyone is able to identify a “trusted adult” in whom they would confide
- Ensure that every student has at least one positive interaction with a staff/faculty member every day
- Identify students of concern and actively seek them out to check in
- Foster a student culture in which kindness, compassion, and inclusiveness are considered “cool”
- Establish clear and easily identifiable “safe” spaces in which students can talk about their needs
- Actively educate students on risk factors such as drug abuse, bullying, trafficking
- Provide a safe and confidential method of reporting concerning behaviors
- Educate students, staff, faculty, and parents on indicators of suicidality

OBJECTIVELY CONCERNING BEHAVIORS

89% of mass attackers engaged in some sort of *objectively concerning* or *prohibited* behaviors. –USSS/NTAC, 2023

- **School Disciplinary Issues:** bringing weapons or other prohibited items to school, fights, unwanted sexual advances or aggression, bullying, novel aggression towards other students
- **Legal/Criminal Issues:** theft/robbery, arson/explosives, stalking, sexual assaults or harassment
- **Psychological Issues:** Self-harm, suicide attempts or suicidal ideations, substance abuse, disturbing/violent/graphic communications or posts, harming animals, isolation

Recognizing Behavioral Markers of Targeted Violence

- Suicidality or suicidal statements
- Significant or sudden changes in behavioral pattern
- Increased Isolation
- Writings or drawings of violent material
- Internet searches for previous mass attacks/attackers
- Threatening, violent, or homicidal/suicidal social media posts
- Threatening or violent statements towards others
- “Probing” behavior or low-level aggression/violence towards others
- Deliberately harming animals
- Identification with previous attackers
- Statements referencing violence or indirect communication of threats

The Relationship between Suicide and Homicide

“Although most attackers had not received a formal mental health evaluation or diagnosis, most attackers exhibited a history of suicide attempts or suicidal thoughts at some point prior to their attack (78 percent, $n=32$). More than half of the attackers had a documented history of feeling extremely depressed or desperate (61 percent, $n=25$).”



Rejection by Group

Failure of Intimate
Relationship

Greater
Creativity/Innovation

History of Violence

Change in
Thinking/Emotion

WARNING BEHAVIORS

Pathway*

Fixation*

Identification*

Novel Aggression

Energy Burst

Leakage*

Last Resort

Directly Communicated Threats

Mental Disorder

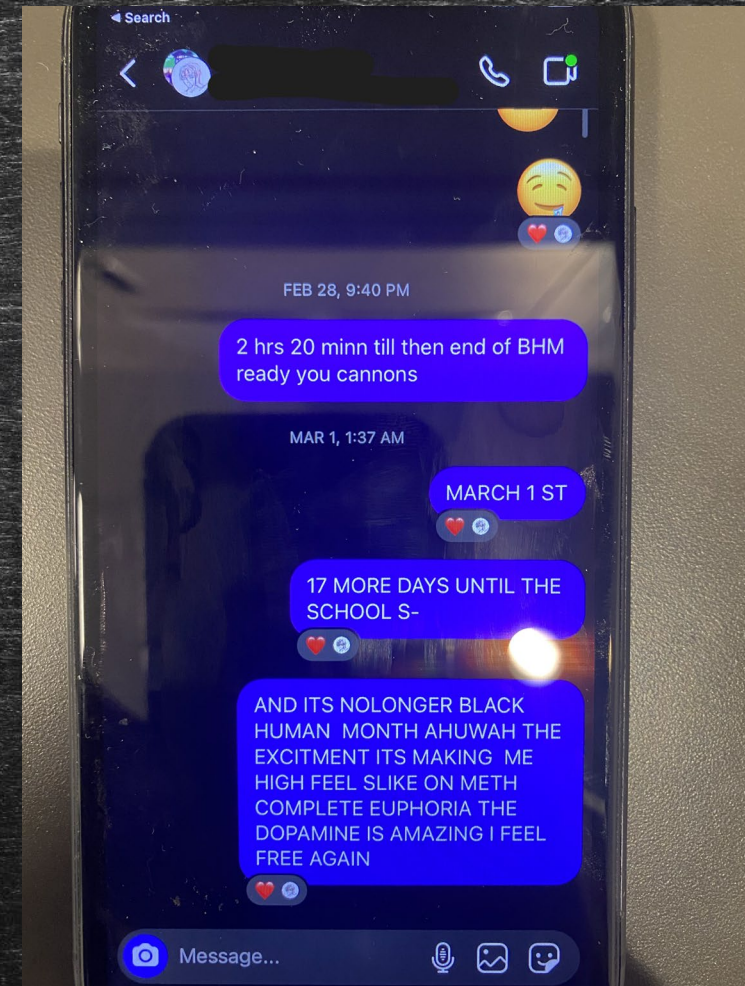
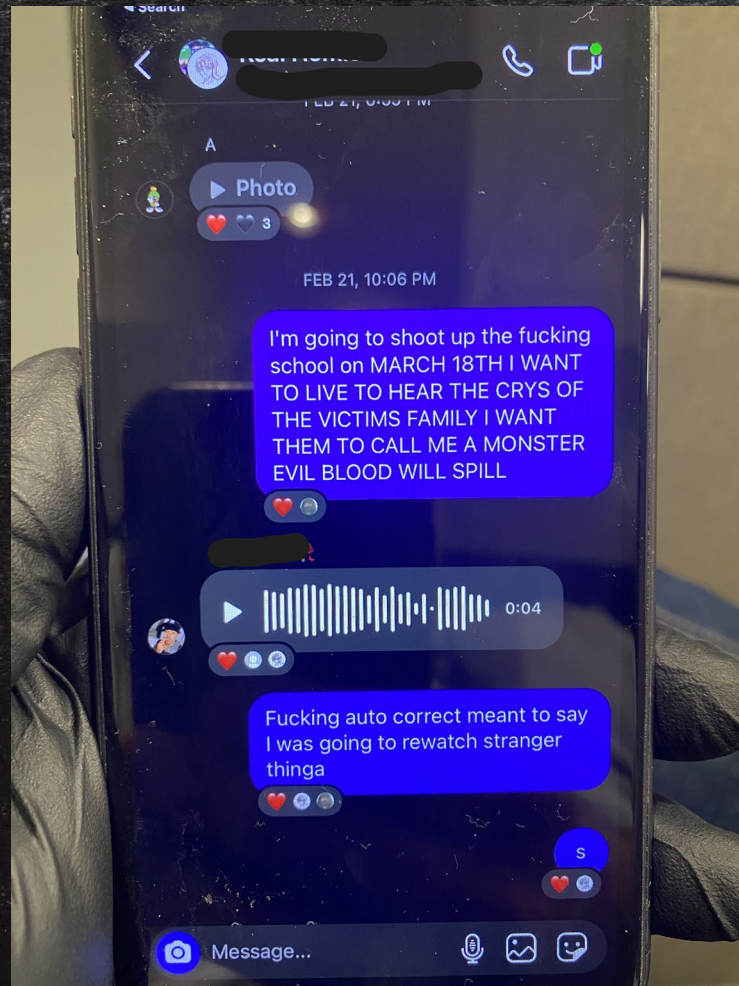
Personal Grievance/Moral
Outrage

Dependence on Virtual
Community

Framed by an Ideology

Thwarting of
Professional/Educational
Goals

LEAKAGE



IDENTIFICATION



POSTS



Alek Minassian

1 hr · 🌐



Private (Recruit) Minassian Infantry 00010, wishing to speak to Sgt 4chan please. C23249161. The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We will overthrow all the Chads and Stacys! All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!



1



Like



Comment



Share

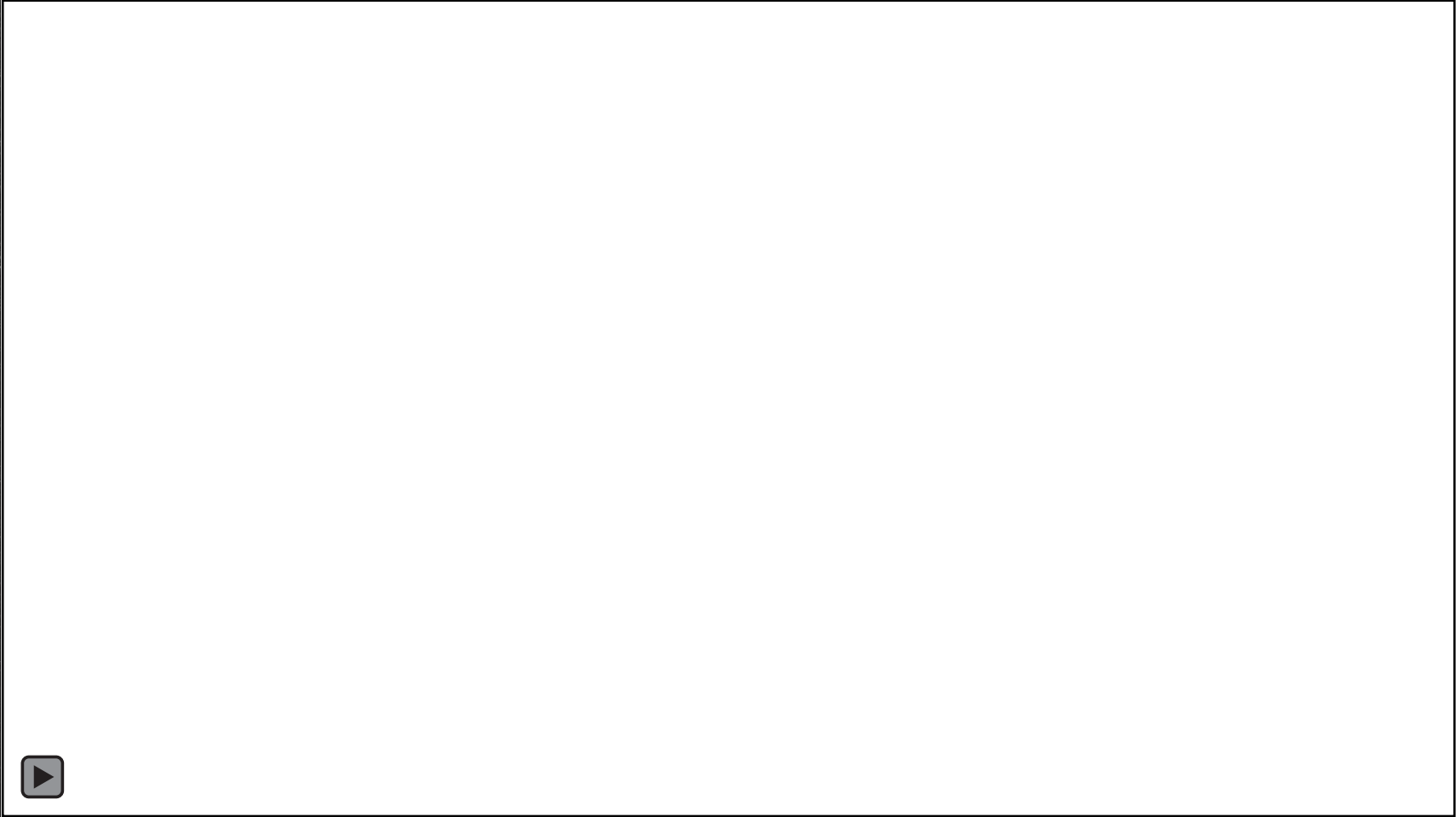
FIXATION

Internet Search History

- “Adam Lanza” – 136 total searches
- “Adam Lanza Body” – 32 searches
- “Adam Lanza IQ” – 18 searches
- “Adam Lanza Crush” – 10 searches
- “Adam Lanza Corpse” - 4 searches
- “Adam Lanza MBTI” – 1 search
- “Scarlett Lewis Sandy Hook” – 14 searches
- “Sandy Hook” – 46 searches
- “Autism” – 20 searches
- “Anorexia” – 15 searches
- “Hybristophilia” – 12 searches



PATHWAY



"So...what do I do about this?"

- **OBSERVE:**

Watch for the behavioral indicators of targeted violence.

Non-faculty may be in the best position to observe concerning behaviors in students.

- **DOCUMENT:**

Consider using a disciplinary form rather than a student record form

- **REPORT:**

Call 911 if there is immediate danger! If not, notify your school resource officer, police department, and submit a SAR to the LECC

Barriers to Reporting

- Fear of retribution
- Fear of not being taken seriously
- Fear of being labeled “overreactive” or “a snitch”
- Assumption that law enforcement is already aware
- Misunderstanding of laws regarding disclosure
- Underestimation of seriousness
- Unwillingness to accept that a violent act could happen
- Social pressure
- Thinking it’s cool
- Not knowing how or where to report

Overcoming Barriers to Reporting

GOAL: Create, foster, and promote a culture wherein:

School staff and students are aware of and able to recognize behaviors that cause concern, what these behaviors might indicate, and why they must be reported.

School staff and students know how to report concerning behaviors to a responsible adult or to law enforcement

School staff and students are confident that their reports will be taken seriously and followed up on, and that they can feel safe from harm, embarrassment, or retaliation in reporting behaviors of concern.

School staff and students understand that by reporting concerning behaviors, they are actually *helping* the student of concern receive care they may need, not tattling.

Reporting School Threats

45 CFR 164.512(j) – HIPPA EMERGENCY EXCEPTION

(j) *Standard: Uses and disclosures to avert a serious threat to health or safety -*

(1) *Permitted disclosures.* A covered entity may, consistent with applicable law and standards of ethical conduct, use or disclose protected health information, if the covered entity, in good faith, believes the use or disclosure:

(i)

(A) Is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a person or the public; and

(B) Is to a person or persons reasonably able to prevent or lessen the threat, including the target of the threat; or

(ii) Is necessary for law enforcement authorities to identify or apprehend an individual:

(A) Because of a statement by an individual admitting participation in a violent crime that the covered entity reasonably believes may have caused serious physical harm to the victim; or

(B) Where it appears from all the circumstances that the individual has escaped from a correctional institution or from lawful custody, as those terms are defined in § 164.501.

Reporting School Threats

34 CFR §§ 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36 (a) – FERPA EMERGENCY EXCEPTION

34 CFR § 99.31 - *Under what conditions is prior consent not required to disclose information?*

(a) An educational agency or institution may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record of a student without the consent required by § 99.30 if the disclosure meets one or more of the following conditions:

(10) The disclosure is in connection with a health or safety emergency, under the conditions described in § 99.36.

34 CFR § 99.36 - *What conditions apply to disclosure of information in health and safety emergencies?*

(a) An educational agency or institution may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate parties, including parents of an eligible student, in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

OBSERVE

- Have they been thinking about hurting or killing themselves or other people?
- Do they have weapons, or have access to weapons?
- Have they tried to get, or do they plan on trying to get a weapon?
- Are they angry at someone or a group of people? If so, why?
- What would make them less angry?
- Have they researched previous school shooters or school shooting events?
- Have they been the victim of bullying or physical/sexual assault?
- Is there a responsible adult in their life that they may trust and can talk to about their feelings?
- Do you feel like they might need help? Have they asked for help?

DOCUMENT

Document any incidents according to your district policy. Document as a security or safety issue, not as a student record.

NOTIFY

If you think that someone may be a danger to themselves or others, or you believe there could be an emergency life-safety situation,

CALL 911 immediately!

If you think a student, staff or faculty member, or anyone else in the school may pose a threat to safety, notify your **Principal** or their assigned designee, and get your **School Resource Officer** or **Juvenile Detective** involved right away.



SCHOOL THREATS

A Resource for Teachers and Staff

School shootings and threats to public safety are commonplace across the country. Teachers and school staff are one of law enforcement's best assets when it comes to flagging concerning behavior. Here are tips on what to look for and what to do if you have concerns a student may be a danger to themselves or others.

To report a threat, visit SD-LECC.ORG and click on 'Private Sector/Citizen School Threat SAR'

LOOK

APPEARANCE

EMULATION: Mass violence actors frequently identify with previous attackers. Look for clothing identical with or similar to that worn by previous mass attackers.

BEHAVIOR

CHANGE: Look for behavior that is sharply contrasted with someone's previous behavior, such as sudden withdrawal, or a focus on dark or homicidal material that was not previously observed.

PROBING: Watch for probing behaviors that seem to "test" the system and learn the response from the school or police.

REHEARSAL: Watch for novel aggression towards other students or staff members, or signs of harming animals. It could be an attempt to assess their own comfort with violence.

READ

INTERNET and SOCIAL MEDIA

RESEARCH: Individuals who engage in mass violence frequently research previous attacks and attackers to learn what worked and what didn't. Pay attention to browsing history that includes significant searches for previous school attacks and attackers.

DON'T EXPLAIN IT AWAY: If someone appears to be researching previous attacks or attackers, ask why they are doing that. Don't just assume that there is a harmless explanation behind their interest.

CONSUMPTION IS KEY: What we consume on the internet is often a better indicator of our true interests and aspirations than what we post on social media. Pay attention to what someone posts, but also what they research.

WRITING/SCHOOL PROJECTS

LEAKAGE: Many attackers telegraph their intentions in school writings or projects. If you see references to previous mass violence events in student projects or papers, ask the student why they are interested in that material.

If you aren't comfortable with the response, REPORT IT!

LISTEN

VERBAL STATEMENTS

STATED vs IMPLIED: Listen to what someone says, but also pay attention to what they reference or talk around. You can often learn a lot about a person's true intent by focusing on the ideas or concepts they talk about.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Some attackers publicly "announce" their attacks soon before carrying them out. Treat every threat as real until you can comfortably articulate that it is not.

SOCIAL IMAGE

THE SCHOOL SHOOTER: We avoid things that make us uncomfortable. When people avoid a specific person or refer to them as "the school shooter", it could mean that they are exhibiting behavioral indicators of violence that others find scary, creepy, or uncomfortable.

ASK: **Don't be afraid to ask questions!**

If someone exhibits concerning behaviors, ask them about it. If you aren't comfortable with the response, and you have concerns about the behavior, Document and Report it to your Principal or their Assigned Designee.





SUBMIT A SAR

Potential nexus to terrorism or criminal activity.

[LE/PUBLIC SAFETY SAR REPORTING](#)

[PRIVATE SECTOR/CITIZEN SAR REPORTING](#)

SCHOOL THREAT SAR

Keep schools safe by submitting potential threats.

[LE/PUBLIC SAFETY SCHOOL THREAT SAR](#)

[PRIVATE SECTOR/CITIZEN THREAT SAR](#)

If the matter requires immediate attention call local law enforcement or 911.

Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR)

Help keep our community safe by reporting information regarding potential threats and criminal activity.
Please use the appropriate buttons above for reporting suspicious activity.

SDLECC.COM

Resources



Lauritz Austensen

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