



The Melissa Institute
For Violence Prevention and Treatment

**PREVENTING VIOLENCE & PROMOTING SAFER
SCHOOLS: A TOOLKIT***

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The Melissa Institute's mission is to prevent violence and promote safer communities through education and application of research-based knowledge.

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PREVENTING VIOLENCE & CREATING SAFER SCHOOLS: A TOOLKIT

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment, Inc. is dedicated to the prevention of violence through education, community service, consultation, and research. Our mission is to prevent violence and promote safer communities through education and application of research-based knowledge. Following the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting and the March of Our Lives in the Spring of 2018 and knowing that the movement for safe schools would require everyone's continued involvement, we developed a **Toolkit** to support efforts to make schools safe and to reduce gun violence.

Today, as we mourn with the families and communities of the 19 children and 2 teachers who were killed at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, we are reminded of the unacceptably high levels of gun violence in our country, the alarming surge in hateful attitudes and behaviors and the disturbingly easy access to guns in our communities. This **Toolkit** is a work in progress, which we will continue to revise as we identify more effective ways to prevent violence and create safer schools. The **Toolkit** is an initiative undertaken by various members of the Institute's Scientific Board under the leadership of Dr. Donald Meichenbaum.

Since 1996, The Melissa Institute, located in Miami Florida, has worked to reduce violence and create safer homes, schools, and communities. The Institute is named in honor of a young student, Melissa, who was a victim of fatal gun violence. The Melissa Institute was founded as a vehicle to transform unimaginable grief into social actions (Please see www.melissainstitute.org). In this spirit, we offer the following **Toolkit** as a way to support efforts to make schools safe and help repair the world.

Keep in mind that most social change arises from the bottom up and highlights the critical role of individual and group efforts. Stay the course and keep your eyes on the prize!

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TOOL 1 is a discussion checklist that helps individuals search for common areas of agreement on gun safety measures.

TOOL 2 provides research-based guidelines on ways to engage in dialogue and attitude change discussions.

TOOL 3 provides a procedure by which lessons can be learned in the aftermath of a violent episode to reduce the likelihood of further such incidents.

TOOLS 4 AND 5 focus on what people can do to make schools safer, more inviting, and academically more effective. **TOOL 4** highlights the critical role of principals, while **TOOL 5** focuses on specific ways to reduce day-to-day threats to school safety and specific methods to create a more peaceful and safe school environment. Several accompanying resource websites are included.

**TOOL 1: A DISCUSSION TOOL: MEASURING PEOPLE’S VIEWS ABOUT GUNS.
WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS TOWARD REDUCING VIOLENCE AND MAKING
SCHOOLS SAFER?**

The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment is committed to nurturing a national discussion about ways to reduce violence and make schools safer. Whether you are a politician or a member of the general public, we encourage you to take a moment to fill out this Discussion Tool, and then reflect on the difference between those items with which you agree and those with which you disagree. It is our hope you will engage others in discussions of these measures and how you came to these decisions.

SEEKING COMMON GROUND DISCUSSION TOOL

FOCUS ON ACCESS TO GUNS

Please indicate **AGREE (A)**, **PARTIALLY AGREE (PA)**, or **DISAGREE (D)** next to each item

- ___ 1. Express support for Second Amendment Rights.
- ___ 2. Keep guns out of the hands of individuals who are deemed to be dangerous.
- ___ 3. Prohibit domestic abusers and felons from acquiring and possessing guns.
- ___ 4. Impose a ban on the sale of guns to individuals on the "No Fly" list.
- ___ 5. Increase the age from 18 to 21 for the purchase of all guns, given that brain development of youth is not fully complete until early adulthood.
- ___ 6. Improve the Federal Background Check System (NICS -- National Instant Check System)

for Criminal Background).

___ 7. Ensure that various agencies report to the NICS and penalize them if they fail to provide required information to the FBI.

___ 8. Reinstate regulations that prohibited individuals with a significant mental illness disability from purchasing guns.

___ 9. Ban the sale of guns on the Internet where verifiable background checks cannot be conducted.

___ 10. Ban the sale on the Internet of home-made three-dimensional guns that can be manufactured and sold.

___ 11. Support "Red Flag" laws that could temporarily remove guns from individuals who are deemed to be dangerous by law enforcement officers. Ensure that Due Process procedures are followed in this determination.

___ 12. Permit judges to remove firearms from gun owners who evidence violent behaviors and instability, as reported by law enforcement officers. Follow Due Process procedures in this determination.

___ 13. Limit the sale of guns at gun shows to licensed gun dealers who are required to conduct background checks. Conduct regular enforcement procedures at gun shows to ensure compliance with this legislation.

___ 14. Impose a three-day waiting period for the purchase of assault-type weapons.

FOCUS ON THE NATURE OF GUNS SOLD

___ 15. Ban the sale of Bump Stock devices that allow semi-automatic weapons to fire much more rapidly. (A federal ban has recently been proposed.)

___ 16. Provide longer "add on" sentences for assaults or robberies where a gun is involved.

___ 17. Outlaw the sale of armor-piercing bullets, which further endanger the police and others.

___ 18. Outlaw the sale of "high-capacity" magazines (often defined as more than 10 rounds of ammunition).

___ 19. Gun owners who are permitted to carry concealed guns in their own state, should be required to abide by the "concealed carry" restrictions in other states they enter, which may involve obtaining a permit for that state.

___ 20. The federal government should be prevented from passing the "Concealed Carry Reciprocity" Law (currently being considered), which would allow a person whose state permits

concealed carry of guns to also carry a concealed gun in any other state, regardless of that state's restrictions.

___ 21. Reintroduce the ban on the sale of all military-style assault weapons that expired in 1994.

___ 22. Allow the use of assault-type weapons, such as the AK-47, the AR-15, and similar weapons, to be used only at shooting galleries authorized by State law.

___ 23. Invite Emergency Room doctors to educate their patients and the public about the medical impact of military-style weapons on the body.

PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS TO MAKE SCHOOLS SAFE

___ 24. Maintain and enforce Gun-Free School Zones.

___ 25. Arm teachers and administrators in schools and ensure that they have been well-trained to use their weapons in a highly stressful assault situation.

___ 26. Train police on how to manage individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

___ 27. Increase and properly train School Resource Officers at all schools. Budget accordingly.

___ 28. Identify students who are at "high -risk" of becoming violent toward themselves or others because of having experienced multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (High ACE scores). Provide them with preventative mental health services and resources.

___ 29. Balance increased funding for school mental health services and police security in accordance with the individual needs of each school.

___ 30. Improve training of school mental health counselors and other health care providers to identify and work preventatively with students at high-risk for violence and/or victimization.

___ 31. Improve communication and coordination across agencies, such as schools, community centers, mental health agencies, and families, to increase the likelihood that high-risk students do NOT fall through the cracks.

___ 32. Implement an independent post school-shooting Assessment Team of experts to identify the "lessons to be learned," rather than to place blame. This strategy is modeled after the National Transportation Board that investigates the causes of various accidents.

___ 33. Have school principals conduct and publicly report on a regular basis about safety measures that his/her school has taken. (See the Melissa Institute School Principal Checklist, as included in TOOL 5).

___ 34. Improve and systematically evaluate educational practices, including anti-bullying

programs, peer warning procedures, school readiness programs, reading skills training programs, student school connectedness efforts, parent involvement programs, suspension and expulsion procedures, school drop-out prevention programs, and the like.

___ 35. Empower Federal researchers, such as the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), to treat violence as a Public Health issue and fund and publicize their scientific findings. (This option has recently been reauthorized after the 1996 federal Dickey Amendment effectively banned funding for gun-violence research for the last several decades).

___ 36. Encourage pediatricians and other health providers to counsel their patients about gun safety issues.

___ 37. Hold parents legally responsible for failing to properly safeguard guns in their possession if they are used in a violent manner.

___ 38. Support guns buy-back programs in order to take unwanted guns out of circulation.

___ 39. Require gun manufacturers to produce safer guns, including features such as high-security locks and “smart gun” technology that allow guns to be fired only by authorized users.

___ 40. Encourage politicians to refuse to accept political donations from the NRA; and to donate previous NRA donations to civilian and police victims of gun violence.

TOOL 2: WAYS TO CONDUCT A DISCUSSION THAT CONTRIBUTES TO ATTITUDE CHANGE

One objective of the March for Our Lives movement is to encourage a national dialogue on ways to make schools safe and bring about legislation designed to reduce gun violence. Such efforts should be informed by the psychological research on **ATTITUDE CHANGE**. Here are a few things to keep in mind and specific examples of how to implement these findings in follow-up efforts to bring about change. Students are encouraged to engage politicians of both parties in Town Hall meetings and organized discussion groups after they have filled out TOOL 1. Students may consider working with effective grassroots groups, such as Indivisible (www.indivisible.org) and Move On (www.MoveOn.org), to further strengthen their support and effectiveness. Remember that attacking, threatening, and disparaging their views will only lead to the hardening of their positions. TOOL 2 provides examples of how to conduct such interviews, using research-based attitude change procedures.

BEHAVIORAL PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND

1. Argumentation does NOT work in changing peoples' beliefs and attitudes. Attacking someone ONLY contributes to resistance and hardening of their positions (the "hardening of their categories").
2. There is a need to help individuals identify their GOALS for a specific position or action and consider the discrepancy between what they want to see happen and their current views.
3. The best way to achieve long-term change is to have individuals offer SELF-GENERATED REASONS to change their attitude and beliefs. There is a need to engage individuals to share their thinking processes in how they came to the decision to endorse a specific position.
4. Finally, the discussion should be respectful and empathic in an attempt to understand the individual's perspective, and it should use the ART OF QUESTIONING ("HOW" and "WHAT" questions as noted in the examples below).

A SCRIPTED EXAMPLE OF HOW TO ENGAGE POLITICIANS, LEADERS, AND MEMBERS OF THE NRA IN A DISCUSSION ON GUN CONTROL USING PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

Sir or Madam, thank you for the opportunity to discuss ways to make schools safe and ways to reduce gun violence. I don't know if you have children in schools, or nieces or nephews in school, but I'm sure you share our concerns given the rash of recent school shootings.

I've taken the liberty of listing four proposals that have been offered, and I would greatly appreciate it if you would take a moment to read them and indicate if you agree or partially agree with any of them. Would that be possible?

1. Keep guns (especially military-style assault weapons) out of the possession of individuals who are deemed to be "dangerous."
2. Increase funding for mental health services to schools.
3. Ban the sale of bump stock devices that allow semi-automatic weapons to fire much more rapidly.
4. Ban the manufacture and sale on the Internet of three-dimensional home-made guns, such as the AR-15, that anyone would be able to obtain.

I wonder if you might agree or partially agree with any one of these four proposals. If so, would you please share "HOW" you came to your decision to agree or partially agree with that proposal? "WHAT" led you to agree or partially agree with that proposal?

If it is okay with you, may I ask a few follow-up questions, so I can more fully understand your position?

POSSIBLE FOLLOWUP QUESTIONS

1. IF PROPOSAL ONE ON GUN POSSESSION IS ENDORSED, THEN THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY BE RAISED.

- How would you go about assessing "dangerousness?"
- How would you go about ensuring such dangerous individuals do NOT have access to guns, such as Internet sales and guns shows?
- If such dangerous individuals did indeed have guns in their possessions, then what steps if any, should be implemented to get such weapons out of their possession?

I assume it would be helpful if we had good research on the best ways to assess and identify who is dangerous as soon as possible. Do you agree?

2. IF PROPOSAL TWO ON MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING IS ENDORSED, THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY BE RAISED.

Sir/Madam, I appreciate your endorsement that more funding should go to mental health services in schools. May I ask a few questions about your agreement or partial agreement with this proposal?

- WHAT specific mental health services did you have in mind, and how could we determine if they would be effective?
- Do you think we could identify students who are at risk of becoming violent, and what do you think we could do?
- HOW do you think we can involve the school principals as partners in this process?
- HOW much funding should be provided to meet these mental health needs? Where do you think these funds should come from?

3. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS IF PROPOSAL THREE—BAN ON BUMP STOCK DEVICES—IS ENDORSED.

Sir/ Madam, given that a bump stock device was used in the Las Vegas concert massacre, I am glad to hear of your endorsement of this measure.

- Does your concern extend to other military-style fast rapid weapons and their availability?
- Please help me better understand, what, if anything is DIFFERENT between the sale of bump stock devices and the sale of AK-47's and AR-15's?
- If you consider bump stock devices to be unacceptably dangerous, please help me understand how these same concerns do NOT apply to other assault-type weapons?
- WHAT, if any regulations do you think should be placed on the sale of such weapons?
- Finally, are you aware that a youth's brain is NOT fully developed until early adulthood?
- WHAT, if any, implications do you think this should have on their access to such lethal weapons?

4. POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO OPTION FOUR — THE SALE OF 3-D HOME-MADE WEAPONS

With the increased capabilities of computer technology, you or your family members will be able to reproduce and make a HOME-MADE AR-15 or similar weapons in the near future.

- Do you have any concerns about the widespread access to such weaponry in our country?
- WHAT about terrorists being able to obtain such weapons on-line?
- Your endorsement of this proposal indicates that you have concerns. WHAT specific steps do you think should be taken on a preventative basis to ensure that such dangerous events do NOT occur?

I greatly appreciate your taking the time to discuss these issues and ways to make schools safe and reduce gun violence. I look forward to having a follow-up discussion and to determine what WE, together, can do to implement your efforts.

FINALLY, the students' discussions should be informed about the type of arguments the NRA and their supporters are likely to pose. See the article by David Gilson "Pro-gun myths, shot down" that appeared in the publication Mother Jones (www.motherjones.com).

TOOL 3: LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

In the recent school shooting in Uvalde, Texas 19 were killed and 17 more children and adults were injured. There have been over two dozen school shootings with injuries or deaths this year. Following such shootings, there is typically an outcry that "something must be done," such as controlling gun availability, improving FBI profiling, providing more mental health counselors, and the like.

Perhaps a different approach should be considered. In the aftermath of major accidents, the National Transportation Safety Board will send in a team of experts to evaluate the possible factors that contributed to the accident and make specific recommendations. Was it a faulty vehicle, road, or weather conditions, and /or human error? Each accident is unique and, importantly, each accident adds to the prevention knowledge base.

Terrible tragedies provide important information that is critical to prevention.

Questions to Ask:

In the aftermath of school shootings, we should establish similar procedures to investigate and evaluate knowable factors associated with such violent incidents. For instance:

1. Were the official building entryway and hallway security plans in full operation?
2. Had the building practiced "active shooter alert" lockdown and evacuation procedures this school year and created an after-action report detailing what was learned and implemented appropriate modifications?
3. What specific mental health services were provided and were there efforts to arrange for follow up treatment?
4. Were the school-based mental health staff-to-student ratios consistent with recommendations from their respective professional bodies?
5. Was there an operational peer warning system? Had students been provided instruction regarding what to watch for and with which adults to share this information?
6. Was there a fully operational bullying prevention program that focused on the needs of those students known to be most at risk for victimization?
7. Did the school have a Threat Assessment Team guided by principles outlined by the US Secret Service and the Department of Education?
8. Did the school have an organized and practiced crisis management plan that addressed mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery and was a part of a local Incident Command System?
9. What efforts, procedures, and/or policies were in place in this school and deserve to be shared widely?

Why Ask These Questions:

The use of such post-hoc analysis is not designed to blame the school, but rather to expand the knowledge base and provide the more than 100,000 principals across the nation with additional

tools to help keep their students safe. Locked doors, entryway greeters, identification badges and more are the result of knowledge acquired after school shootings dating back to the 1990's. The tragic deaths at Columbine High School broke our nation's collective hearts, but they also taught first responders across the country to change their tactics. As a result, lives elsewhere have been saved.

Any form of violence, including school shootings, reflects a transaction between school, family and community settings and the specific characteristics of the student. There is a need to adopt an ecological perspective on violent behaviors and develop and implement after-event procedures and tools that can systematically and methodically evaluate factors that contribute to such tragedies and most importantly, add to the prevention knowledge base.

We need to move beyond decrying such events and learn from them so we can reduce the likelihood of future school shootings. The Melissa Institute is committed to furthering education and application of research-based knowledge to reduce violence and together, our efforts will promote safer communities.

TOOL 4: A PRINCIPAL'S CHECKLIST TO MAKE SCHOOLS SAFER

In a recent column (March 13, 2018), the New York Times columnist David Brooks noted that "Good leaders make good schools." He observed:

When you learn about successful principals, you keep coming back to the character traits they embody and spread: energy, trustworthiness, honesty, optimism, determination. We went through a period when we believed you could change institutions without first changing the character of the people in them. But we were wrong. Social transformation follows personal transformation.

The **PRINCIPAL'S CHECKLIST** enumerates the variety of Principal initiatives that can be conducted at the school-wide level (Primary Prevention); with identified "high risk" students and their families (Secondary Prevention); and with students who have evidenced persistent behavioral problems and require more intensive wrap-around services and crisis management interventions (Tertiary Prevention). This Checklist can be viewed as a type of **PRINCIPAL REPORT CARD**. It highlights the need "to pay attention to small things."

Primary Prevention

1. Principals should be a visible presence in greeting all students and parents visiting the school.

2. Conduct a formal review of all safety policies and school emergency plans and practices. For example, establish a regular schedule for safety drills.
3. Conduct a school safety assessment and identify any safety weaknesses and strengths and correct deficiencies.
4. Provide staff training on school safety, emergency management, and bullying.
5. Ensure that there are staff members who are trained in emergency first aid and CPR, and that their identities and hourly locations are posted.
6. Connect with community law enforcement personnel, first responders to a crisis.
7. Establish a reporting system for bullying and safety concerns.
8. School exterior grounds have been assessed for security concerns by law enforcement personnel or by individuals trained in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
9. All areas of the building and grounds are supervised and there are no obvious “dead zones” where problems can occur, including bathrooms, interior stairwells, parking lots and loading docks.
10. The interior of the school buildings is well-lit, clean, and reflects pride in school identity and the accomplishments of its student body.
11. Assess not only the safety of the school and school grounds, but also assess the safety of the routes students take to school. (Ask students to draw a map of how they get to and from school and/or their perceived school bus safety.) Interview school bus drivers, janitors and lunchroom staff about safety and implement intervention strategies, as needed.
12. There are effective access control policies and procedures for keeping intruders out of the school.
13. There are effective policies and procedures for keeping weapons out of the building.
14. A rigidly enforced policy for controlling school keys is in effect, and sensitive locks are replaced every several years.

15. There are effective policies and procedures for keeping gang-related “identifiers” and behaviors out of the building and off school grounds.
16. Check to see if staff members feel safe at all times during the school day. Work to improve the emotional climate of the school.
17. The school has a well-formulated Mission Statement that is posted and shared with all parties and underlies improvement efforts. Work to change norms and expectations about aggression and violence.
18. The school has a collaboratively written Code of Conduct that has been examined for currency. It is educational more than punitive, and defines desirable, as well as undesirable behaviors and resultant consequences.
19. Administration and teachers have established an Inviting Learning Environment that encourages school bonding and ownership from all groups of students, staff, and parents. Set up a School Website, telephone hotline, Home-school Link. Be sure to have teachers contact parents when students are doing well in school. Involve students in establishing and implementing rules and activities.
20. Academic standards are high, and pride in achievement is emphasized and publicly expressed through multiple outlets.
21. Cultural, ethnic, and other minority groups are valued, and diversity is respected and honored. Bolster strengths of students and their families.
22. Parents are welcomed into the building and provided with opportunities and information to be full partners in their child’s education. Work with parents to improve parenting skills, such as monitoring, supervising, and academic support.
23. All teachers have received training in classroom behavior management, and 95% of disciplinary consequences are administered at the classroom level.
24. All students receive evidence-based classroom instruction in anger management, social problem-solving, and/or conflict resolution across multiple grade levels.
25. The school has a comprehensive school-wide anti-bullying program in place and systematically evaluates its effectiveness.

26. The school has implemented a student peer mediation training program and a student-led Restorative Justice Program.
27. The school has implemented a peer warning system that allows for confidential student communication to identified adults.
28. The school has a broadly represented Crisis Intervention Team that has been trained in crisis response and management.
29. Administration and school personnel have undertaken initiatives to foster community-based supports and partnerships. Increase the availability of youth development opportunities and civic activities.

Secondary Prevention

30. All teachers have received training on methods to tailor academic instruction to meet diverse student needs. Convey high, clear expectations, but be realistic and collaborative. Teachers should convey a “Growth” Mindset to students.
31. The school has undertaken a special initiative to improve students’ reading achievement and monitor its effectiveness. (See the Melissa Institute Reading Initiative Program www.readingteacher.net).
32. Have a commitment to systematically collect data to evaluate intervention programs designed to reduce bullying, improve academic performance, improve parental involvement, and reduce absenteeism, suspensions, expulsions, and drop outs. Share these data with staff and provide Professional Development days for staff training on a needs basis.
33. Work to bolster student “connectedness” to school and encourage teachers to be supportive, look for the good qualities in students, point it out to them, and share it with others. Celebrate student contributions, support students who made mistakes, and talk to students about their futures.
34. Check on the health of your students. (Make sure they have basic health needs met, such as vision and hearing problems, nutrition, safety issues, and stable homes).
35. Supportive services staff are provided adequate time and relief from other duties to implement interventions for identified students at risk.

36. Existing interventions for at-risk students have undergone recent program evaluations to assess their effectiveness.
37. Administrators treat office referrals as teaching opportunities to augment disciplinary procedures.
38. Out-of-school suspension is exceedingly rare and used only for clear issues of student safety and when home supervision can be assured.
39. In-school suspension is used sparingly, only for the most serious offences, and it contains an academic support component.
40. School personnel have assessed the drop-out problem and implemented evidence-based dropout prevention programs.
41. The school has implemented a mentoring program for at-risk students.
42. Ongoing needs assessment and program planning are driven by authentic data from disciplinary referrals and academic progress monitoring, and interventions are linked to the data.

Tertiary Prevention

43. Students with chronic and persistent behavior problems are routinely provided with assessment-driven behavior intervention plans.
44. Students with chronic anger management and aggression problems are provided with evidence-based skills training by support services staff.
45. All school personnel have been taught and have practiced ways to defuse and redirect students who evidence aggressive and violent behaviors.
46. There are staff members professionally trained in student restraint and safe transport, and their identities are known by everyone.
47. Effective partnerships or wraparound arrangements with families, community mental health, law enforcement and social service agencies are maintained to support the highest risk students.
48. School personnel have been trained to identify and help students who live with neglect and violence.

49. Children who enter school with high Adverse Childhood Experience Score (ACE) are identified and services are provided. (See Tool 6).

TOOL 5: PROGRAMS TO INCREASE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

While the previous tools highlighted ways to reduce the likelihood of school shootings and ways to achieve gun control, it is important to recognize that schools are still the safest place for children and youth. The actual statistics is that the likelihood of any child being murdered inside a school is upwards of 4 million to one. It has been noted that peaceful schools do not arise simply from installing bullet-proof windows, arming teachers, or expelling troublemakers.

Instead, peaceful schools come when the academic and social-emotional needs of the students within its walls are understood and substantially met.

This tool provides specific examples of how to achieve this objective and make schools safer. The tool is organized following a public health model that seeks to recognize and program for the needs of all the students (**universal programming**), some of the students who are at higher risk (**selective programming**), and a few of the students who are the most at risk (**indicated programming**). This tool is designed to reduce day-to-day threats to school safety.

Caveat: Creating safe schools is a momentous but often frustrating undertaking. Experience has shown that simply adding a new program or instituting a new policy will have little measurable effect. Even those schools that approach the problem systematically with evidence-based programs and procedures, as recommended in this tool, need to do so with humility and respect for the challenge facing them.

Twenty-three years ago, Johnson & Johnson offered the following wisdom, and it still applies today:

To change the social norms controlling street behavior requires a broad-based effort that involves families, neighbors, the mass media, employers, health care officials, schools, and government. Schools do not have the resources to guarantee health care, housing, food, parental love, and hope for the future for each child. Educators cannot eliminate the availability of guns (especially semi-automatic handguns), change the economics of the drug trade (and other types of crime), or even reduce the dangers of walking to and from school. Because there is a limit to what schools can do in reducing violence among children and adolescents outside of school, violence prevention programs should be realistic and not promise too much.

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb95/vol52/num05/Why-Violence-Prevention-Programs-Don't-Work%E2%80%94and-What-Does.aspx>

That understood, schools are advised to approach the task of creating a safe learning environment in a systematic, progressive, and data-informed manner. This tool has recommendations for well-regarded programs, but they must arise out of a carefully determined need.

The following two websites will assist in organizing the schoolwide effort:

- Recommendations from the Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment: <http://teachsafeschools.org/seven-steps.html>
- Recommendations from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/book1.pdf>

1. Creating Safe Learning Environment: *Universal Programming*

Teaching behavioral expectations on a schoolwide basis:

- <http://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners>

Teaching social and emotional competencies, including anger regulation and problem-solving, at the elementary and middle school levels:

- Understanding the value of social and emotional learning: <https://casel.org/faqs/>
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS): <https://www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/paths/paths.html>
- PATHS research review: <http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/factsheet/promoting-alternative-thinking-strategies-paths>
- Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum: <http://www.secondstep.org/research>
- Second Step Review: <https://casel.org/guideprogramssecond-step/>

2. Creating Safe Learning Environment: *Selected Programming*

Bullying is a feature of virtually every school environment. Apart from the negative impact it has on student feelings of safety, the later life outcomes for chronic victims and perpetrators is distinctly negative.

- Relationship between bullying and school violence:
<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/05/bullying-victims-carry-weapons-guns/>
<http://www.npscoalition.org/school-violence>
<http://www.LCSI.org>
- Useful bullying prevention websites:
<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
<https://www.prevnet.ca/>
<http://www.cyberbullying.us/index.php>
<http://www.bullypolice.org>
<http://www.pacer.org/bullying>
<http://www.nobullying.com>
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program:
<http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/factsheet/olweus-bullying-prevention-program>
- KiVa Bullying Prevention Program:
<http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/factsheet/kiva-antibullying-program>
- Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum, with bullying curriculum:
<http://www.cfchildren.org/programs/bullying-prevention/>
- The No Bully Program engages Solution Teams of students to generate and enact solutions to specific ongoing cases of bullying in their school:
<http://www.nobully.org>
- The Eyes on Bullying Program provides toolkits for parents, teachers, and other caregivers to help build bullying prevention skills together with children and youth involved in bullying as bullies, victims, or bystanders.
<http://www.eyesonbullying.org>
- The Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders Curriculum prepares students in grades 6-9 to think and act to prevent violence from the perspective of aggressors, victims, and bystanders.

<https://nrepp.samhsa.gov/Legacy/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=142>

For some students, the anger regulation and behavioral support programs at the universal level will be insufficient to meet their needs, and additional small group skills training will be necessary. For the needs of this population to be met, school mental health personnel must be staffed at a level that allows them time and resources to properly implement the treatment. The following counseling programs are designed for use in the school setting.

- For students K-8: The Coping Power Program
<http://www.copingpower.com/>
<http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/factsheet/coping-power>
- For high school students: Teen Anger Management Education (TAME), Think First, and Aggression Replacement Training
https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-briefs/Three%20Anger%20Mgmt%20Programs%2010-21-2013_2.pdf

Research on the impact of childhood trauma shows that everyday relationships with teachers, caregivers and pro-social friends have restorative effects. A sense of belonging, school-connectedness, an inviting school environment of respect and mastery are key to bolstering resilience.

- Understanding Trauma: <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/trauma>
- Creating Trauma-Sensitive Schools: <http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/mental-health/trauma-sensitive-schools>
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Trauma in Schools: <https://cbitsprogram.org/>

3. Creating Safe Learning Environment: *Indicated Programming*

The number of highest risk students in most schools is typically no more than 5 to 10% of the population and may frequently have diagnosed Emotional Behavior Disabilities (EBD). If not provided adequate behavioral supports, they have the potential to occupy up to 75% of the administrator's time with their chronic problem behavior.

- A procedure adopted from community healthcare entitled "Wraparound" has been shown to be an effective process.

<https://www.pbis.org/school/tertiary-level/wraparound>

- The No Bully Program engages Solution Teams of students to generate and enact solutions to specific ongoing cases of bullying in their school. <http://www.nobully.org>

In response to the school shootings earlier this century, The US Department of Education and US Secret Service collaborated on a procedure to assist school personnel to make valid threat assessments; differentiating those who make a threat from those who may genuinely pose a threat. See: https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting_Americas_Schools

- An overview of the Threat Assessment process: <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/threat-assessment-at-school/threat-assessment-for-school-administrators-and-crisis-teams>
- Recommended resource for schools: Cornell, D., & Sheras, P. (2005). Guideline for responding to student threats of violence. Longmont, CO, Sopris West.