



## NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS

301 N. Wilmington Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825  
919-807-4001

### I. School Incidents Findings:

- Most attackers had difficulty coping with loss/failure. Many considered suicide.
- Many attackers felt bullied/persecuted.
- Most attackers had access to weapons.
- Other students were often involved.
- Despite law enforcement response, most attacks stopped by other means.
- Violent incidents are rarely impulsive acts
- Prior to most incidents, others knew
- Most attackers did not directly threaten targets before the attack
- No useful “profile” of the attacker
- Most attackers engaged in behaviors that caused others to be concerned
- About 25% of the adolescent population is at high risk for psycho-social problems and poor developmental outcomes such as academic failure, alcohol and drug abuse, delinquency, and problems with the law and violence.
- 20% have a diagnosable mental health disorder at some time during adolescence, the highest rate for any age group through the life span
- A majority of school shooters displayed evidence of mental health symptoms, often undiagnosed or untreated. Criminologists note that mental illness is only part of the issue, however, and mass shooters tend to externalize their problems, blaming others and are unlikely to seek psychiatric help, even if available. Other scholars have concluded that mass murderers display a common constellation of chronic mental health symptoms, chronic anger or antisocial traits, and a tendency to blame others for problems

### II. Facts about Threats:

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**III. Characteristics of Individuals who followed through with threats:**

- “Leakage” (considered to be one of the most important clues that may precede an adolescent’s violent act)
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Poor coping skills
- Lack of resiliency
- Failed love relationship
- “Injustice Collector”
- Signs of depression
- Narcissism
- Alienation
- Dehumanizes others
- Lack of empathy
- Exaggerated sense of entitlement
- Exaggerated or pathological need for attention
- Masks low self-esteem
- Anger management problems
- Intolerance
- Inappropriate humor



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- Seeks to manipulate others
- Lack of trust
- Closed social group
- Change of behavior
- Rigid and opinionated
- Unusual interest in sensational violence
- Fascination with violent entertainment
- Negative role models
- Turbulent parent-child relationship
- Parents' acceptance of pathological behavior
- Access to weapons
- Family lack of intimacy
- Student "runs the show" in the home
- No limits or monitoring of TV and internet
- Student's attachment to school
- School tolerance for disrespectful behavior
- Inequitable discipline perceived at school
- Drugs and alcohol
- Outside interests
- The copycat effect
- Remember: no one or two traits or characteristics should be considered in isolation or given more weight than the others.
- Behavior is an expression of personality, but one bad day may not reflect a student's real personality or usual behavior pattern: That is why it is very important to **establish a baseline** (how he or she typically behaves most of the time)