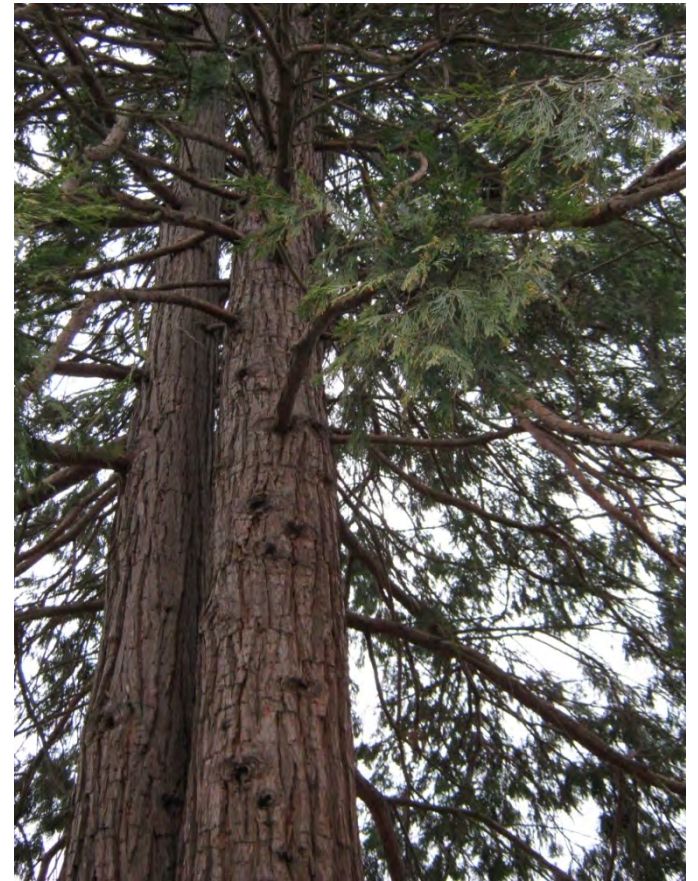


mahlum

School Safety and the Whole Child CEFPI International



Speakers

Anjali Grant

Mahlum

Seattle, Washington

William Pfohl, Psy.D.

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

Thomas Huberty, Ph.D., ABPP

Counseling and
Educational Psychology

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana



Agenda

**Introduction and
background**

**School-associated
violence**

School safety

Intervention

Psychological safety

Questions

Post-Traumatic Design: How To Construct Our Schools To Heal Past Wounds And Prevent Future Violence



Posted: 01/24/2013 9:30 am EST

By Vanessa Quirk

[\(Read the original story here\)](#)

Over a month has passed since the Sandy Hook tragedy. Its surviving students have gone back to school, albeit at another facility (decorated with old posters to make it feel familiar), and are working on putting this tragic event behind them. The nation is similarly moving on — but this time, with an eye to action.



”

While the correlation between shelters and schools may not be immediately apparent, I believe the comparison to be a rich one. Consider: in shelters, safety is a primary concern, since many abusers stalk their partners and attempt to force them home; secondly, coping and healing is an intrinsic part of the shelter's program; and, thirdly, shelters must be designed to incorporate not just parent's, but also children's, needs. ”

Background: the Building Dignity Project

WSCADV Mission

End domestic violence through advocacy and action for social change

A nonprofit coalition of 60+ domestic violence programs across the state

Focus on training, public policy change, research, leadership development, and community educational tools

WASHINGTON STATE COALITION

WSCADV

AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



The leading voice for
ending domestic violence
in Washington State.

Dr. Margaret Hobart, WSCADV





Rules

We found many of our rules unnecessarily controlling, and found they did not foster the environment of empowerment that we wanted to create in our program.

“How We Gave Up Curfew (and a lot of other rules, too),”
Karin White Tautfest,
YMCA of Pierce County

Building Dignity

Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelter



SEARCH

SITE DESIGN

COMMUNAL SPACE

KITCHEN

PRIVATE SPACE

STAFF SPACE

BACKGROUND

RESOURCES

CONTACT

Site Design

Empower

Making one's own decisions; reclaiming the autonomy and dignity eroded by abuse

Assess the neighborhood's ability to support residents' regaining independence, economic opportunities, and social connections.

When building a new shelter or assessing an existing building as a potential shelter, consider the following: will residents be able to easily access public transportation? Groceries? Health care? Educational and recreational facilities? Is the area pedestrian and/or bicycle friendly? Will the neighborhood feel safe, particularly to women walking with children? Will residents be able to access resources nearby? If not, can the site provide enough space to accommodate bringing resources in?

CASE STUDY

Rebuild: Family Resource Center of Lincoln County



"Feeling a part of a community is a wonderful way to heal - especially for kids. Being integrated into a neighborhood helps 'normalize' childhood for kids."

Lynn Kuchenbuch,
Family Resource Center, Lincoln County



Site Design

[Re]connect

Community support and [re]connection with others to break the isolation of abuse

Allow varied/multiple levels of access for public areas.

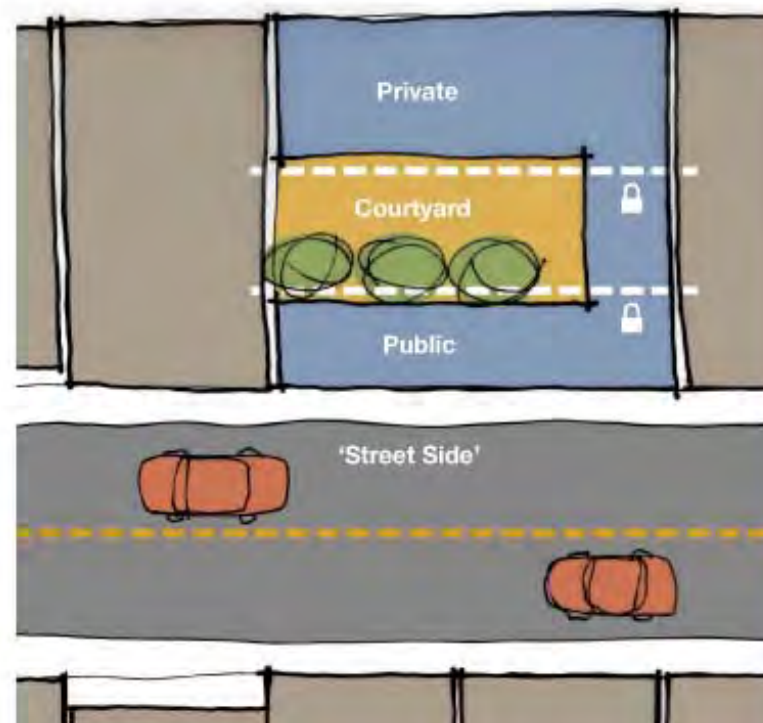
A community meeting room open to the public may be used by residents to gather with family and supportive friends, host community groups for meetings, and/or provide a location for classes or workshops. Similarly, an outdoor gathering space that can be used for public events, without compromising resident safety, can invite community members to get involved in fulfilling the shelter's mission.

LEARN MORE

For more on community access at the Dove House, see [Communal Space: \[Re\]connect](#)

CASE STUDY

[Rebuild: Eastside Domestic Violence Program](#)



"Sometimes things are safer in broad daylight."

Cheryl Bozarth,
DAWN (Former Director of Dove House)

CONSIDER THIS

Protecting individual confidentiality does not always require a secret location. While many domestic violence programs have traditionally relied on "secret" locations as a strategy to keep the shelter safe, it is more difficult to keep a location secret now than it was 30 years ago. GPS-enabled devices and the internet challenge programs' abilities to ensure secrecy. In response, some programs focus on security and individual client confidentiality while acknowledging that physical locations may be known. These programs have found that letting go of the "secret location" has opened new ways for their communities to support both the program and individual survivors.

Site Design

Secure

A sense of safety and well-being

Create a secure environment with clearly defined boundaries between the shelter and surrounding community.

Limited visibility into the interior from the public, exterior side protects residents' privacy.

Protected outdoor play spaces for children visible from communal spaces and individual units allow parents to supervise children.

Exterior lighting on timers in outdoor areas extend the opportunities for use of outdoor spaces into the evening.

LEARN MORE

For more on how clear sightlines support parenting, see [Site Design: Parent](#).

CASE STUDY

[Rebuild: Family Resource Center of Lincoln County](#)



PHOTO COURTESY OF YWCA PIERCE COUNTY

"I feel safe because there are bars on all the windows, there's cameras everywhere, the police come in two minutes... so I feel like in the building... I am safe."

Resident,
YWCA Pierce County

< STRATEGY IN ACTION

A steel artist donated time to create window coverings which are both secure and artful at the YWCA Pierce County.

Controlled access allows residents to come and go freely and safely.

Strategies include:

Keycards

Key Fobs

Perimeter and entry cameras

Controlled access can ease curfew policies. Fob access is more secure than keyed access and more flexible than staff-monitored access. Where a lost key could mean changing all the locks, a lost fob or key card may simply be deleted from the system. Focus groups indicate that survivors appreciate the use of cameras to ensure their safety and security from their abusers. Agency policies and practices need to make clear that the intention and use of security cameras is for safety not to monitor residents' behavior.

LEARN MORE

For staff related benefits, see *Staff Space: Secure*

CASE STUDIES

Remodel: YWCA Walla Walla

Rebuild: Family Resource Center of Lincoln County

Rebuild: Salvation Army Catherine Booth House



“Yes, a lot of people know where the shelter is, but there are cameras, so if a person is coming in that shouldn’t be there, they have a way to lock the doors. So I feel safe. Even if the abuser is out there, he can’t come in.”

Resident,
YWCA Pierce County

< STRATEGY IN ACTION

At the YWCA Pierce County staff monitor the entry via a camera and ask residents for a unique number code before buzzing them into the shelter.

Art can be a bridge to the community and an expression of culture.

Art can communicate welcome and affirm the value of the services provided and the population being served.



< STRATEGY IN ACTION

At the Asian Counseling and Referral Services the artwork throughout the building reflects the community's traditions; the artist worked from the idea of everyone sitting together to have a banquet; and engaged community members in creating works of art using rice bowls.

Partner with local organization to create and maintain outdoor spaces.

Inviting local organizations and volunteers to sponsor and maintain green spaces, gardens and playgrounds, etc. on shelter property is a cost-effective strategy for achieving high quality outdoor spaces. It also helps to get the community invested in the well-being of the shelter residents.

CASE STUDY

Rebuild: YWCA Pierce County



PHOTO COURTESY OF POMEGRANATE CENTER

"There are lots of people in communities who want to be a part of something good; we just need to ask them for help."

Karin White Tautfest,
YWCA Pierce County

< STRATEGY IN ACTION

Pomegranate Center is a non-profit organization in Washington State that engages volunteers in designing and building unique gathering places and public art that reflects the culture and character of the people they serve. **To learn more, see the Pomegranate Center website.**

Building Dignity

Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelter

SEARCH



SITE DESIGN

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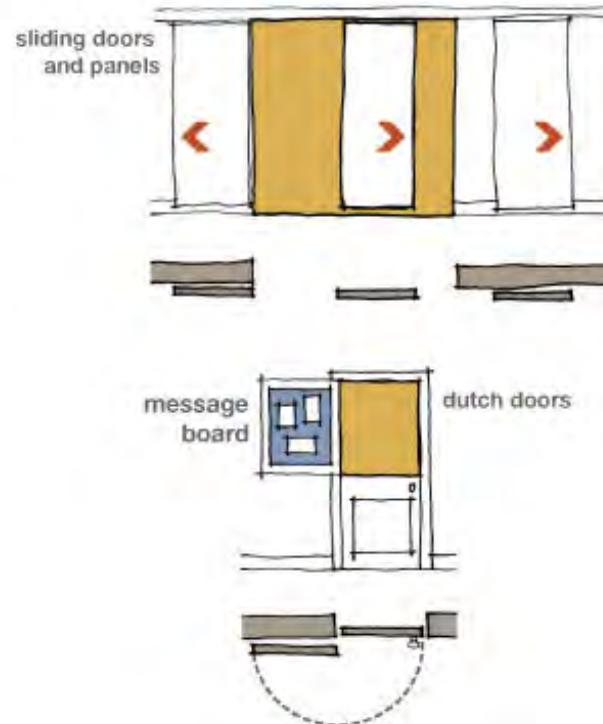
Private Space

[Re]connect

Community support and [re]connection with others to break the isolation of abuse

At entries to private spaces, dutch doors, shades and shutters allow residents to control their environment and level of social engagement.

This makes it easy for residents to signal their openness to spontaneous socializing.



“It feels good to have my own space. I lock the door, I don’t let anybody in sometimes, or I tell them to come on in. It feels good.”

**Resident,
YWCA Pierce County**

Access to nature promotes well-being.

Outdoor space offers opportunities for reflection, connection with children, privacy and healthy activity. Research has shown that nature, including the feeling of sunshine and access to views of trees, etc., can provide healing effects on those recovering from trauma. (Cooper Marcus, Claire and M. Barnes. *Healing Gardens: Therapeutic Benefits and Design Recommendations*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999.)

For more on Nature Explore Classrooms for domestic violence shelters, see here

CASE STUDY

Remodel: YWCA Walla Walla



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SACRAMENTO PRESS

Gardens can offer solace.

Healing gardens can facilitate art therapy sessions, exterior group work sessions, and the option to garden. Gardens also offer a point of connection with other community programs, such as those aimed at environmental education. At the same time the garden wall can create a protected outdoor play space for children.



95%

The percentage of shelters that state a calming outdoor area would help their clients' recovery process.

"Mary Kay Truth About Abuse" Survey, National Findings from Third Survey of Domestic Violence Shelters in the U.S., April 2011

"A young girl learning to care for a small plant is also learning to care for herself. A little boy watching a resident killdeer protect her nest begins to explore family dynamics. These lessons open the children's minds and hearts, and the healing begins."

Shauna Bigelow,
Shelter Children's Counselor,
Family Shelter Services, Downers Grove, IL

School-associated Violence



Myths

School violence is an epidemic

School violence is a police/security problem

School violence is committed by extremists

School-associated Violence

Deaths occurred in
communities of all sizes
and in 25 states

Firearms were responsible
for majority of deaths

Victims & offenders - male
& young

Motives - interpersonal
disputes

Less than 1% of
homicides and suicides in U.S.

High schools and now
universities

(source: NSSC, 1998)

School-based Safety and Crisis Issues

**Schools are a safe place
for students**

**Incidents of school
violence have dropped
since 1992 in the US;
recent increase 2007**

**Violence has changed over
time**

:: Urban

:: Rural/Suburban

:: Female – top group now

:: Cyberbullying

It can happen in your district

**Prevention is cheaper than
intervention**

Safety & Crisis Issues

**There is no single “profile”
to define who will be a
“shooter” – U.S. Secret
Service - 2002**

**Schools do not believe it
will happen to them**

**Schools need a Safe
School Plan**

**Schools need to prepare for
crisis response**

**Schools need to focus outside
the school district/local
authority for resources**

Importance of School Safety

Physical safety of students and staff

Preserving the right of other students to an education

Strong preventive action is justified

1-3% of students will be a chronic problem – easily identified by administrators or teachers or other students



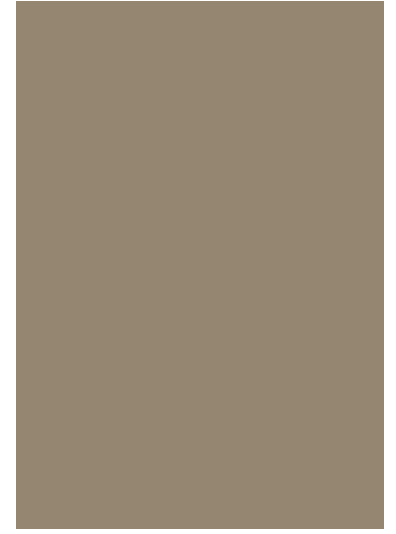
Issues to Discuss

Physical Plant

- :: Surveillance
- :: Access
- :: Evacuation/stay in place
- :: Media/cell access or denial
- :: Hardening of structure

Options

- :: Gathering places – bathroom, cafeteria; library, playground = trouble spots
- :: Monitoring – teachers/staff



Issues to Discuss

**Pleasant environment –
clean, orderly, etc.**

**Messages for and to
students**

**Safe & monitored
gathering places – “build
community”**

Prevention v. intervention

**Ability to modify teacher
and child space – paint,
walls murals, mosaics,
stained glass, etc.**

**Avoid dead-end hallways;
isolated rooms**



Issues to Discuss - Programs

Communication – inside and outside school

Community involvement

Prevention programs

Programs for At-Risk students

Family support

Rules/social media policies

Allocation of resources

Triggers – bully proofing; cyberbullying; discipline



Defining a Safe School

A “safe school” is a place where students can learn and teachers can teach in a warm and welcoming environment, free of intimidation and fear of violence

A safe school provides an educational climate that fosters a spirit of acceptance and care for every child. It is a place where behavior expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and fairly applied.

Ron Stephens, 1998

Safe & orderly school: What does the research say?





Characteristics of Safe Schools: 1

Focus on academic achievement

Involve families in meaningful ways

Develop links to the community

Emphasize positive relationships among students and staff

Discuss safety issues openly

Treat students with equal respect



Characteristics of Safe Schools: 2

Create ways for students to share their concerns

Help children feel safe expressing their feelings

Have in place a system for referring children who are suspected of being abused or neglected



Characteristics of Safe Schools: 3

Offer extended day programs for children

Promote good citizenship and character

Identify problems and assess progress toward solutions

Support students in making the transition to adult life and the workplace



Six Broad Factors Contributing to School Safety

Personal characteristics of each student and staff member

Physical environment of the school

Social environment on campus

Cultural characteristics of students and staff member

Local political atmosphere

Surrounding economic conditions



Safe School Philosophy and Our Vision

It is easier and cheaper to prevent school violence than to deal with its aftermath. It is an ongoing, broad-based process that needs regular attention and allows students, teachers, and staff to work in a safe environment where all students can achieve at high levels.

Safe schools is an integrated part of total learning, not an add-on.



Connect with Every Child

Small schools

Well-managed classrooms

**Positive (not harsh)
discipline policies**

**Overlapping and
integrated social groups**

**Impact of the Child
Development Project**

**see: Every Child Learning:
Safe and Supportive
Schools (Learning First
Alliance)**

www.learningfirst.org

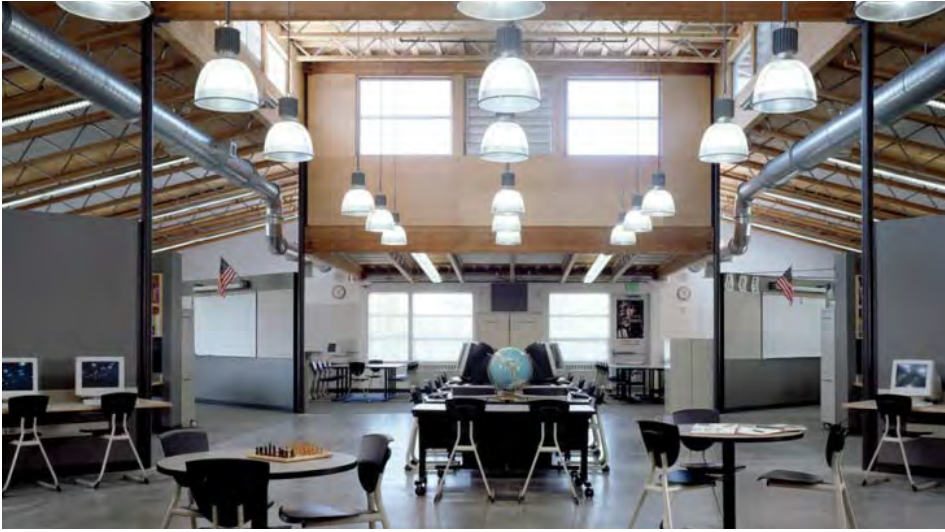


Support Family-School Collaboration

**Valuing all families;
Effective outreach (e.g.,
FAST);
Culturally competent
approaches (e.g., Lincoln
Elementary School, Salt
Lake City);**

**Support for family
participation (e.g., Keys
for Networking); and
Positive interactions with
families (e.g., Cleveland
Elementary School,
Tampa, FL)**

See: www.CASEL.org



Foundation for Safe, Responsive Schools:

Treat **all** students & families with equal respect

Ensure ways for students to share safety concerns

Ensure safe, confidential ways for students to express their needs, fears, & anxieties to caring adults

Protect against abuse & neglect

Reduce risk behaviors with extended day programs

Coordinate & tailor services to prevent "too little too late"

Regularly evaluate results



Foundation for a Safe School Environment

Strong leadership

Caring faculty

**Parent & community
involvement**

**Student participation in
design**

**Interventions based on
careful assessment &
setting measurable goals**

**Research-based
prevention & intervention**

**Access to quality team
consultation**



Foundation for a Safe School Environment

**Policies that support
responsible behavior**

**Community-developed
code of conduct**

**Negative consequences
only within positive
reinforcing environment**

**“Zero tolerance” for guns
& “zero reject” from
educational opportunity
for all**

Foundation for a Safe School Environment

Summary

School's physical environment is evaluated & monitored

Everyone is responsible for a safe school

Class size is small

Dismissal is staggered

Community police/SRO's are welcome and services are coordinated

After-school programs are available

Anti-bullying programs are in place

Early Warning Signs



Predictive Factors in Youth Violence

Child abuse

**Violence in homes
(Domestic violence)**

Ineffective parenting

**Media violence including
Internet & video games**

Gun access

**Prejudice/intolerance/
gender issues**

Poverty

Substance abuse



Protective Factors in Youth

**Positive role models –
“Caring Adult”**

**Development of self-
esteem and self-efficacy**

**Supportive relationships,
including teachers &
friends**

**A sense of hope about
the future**

Belief in oneself

Strong social skills

Good peer relationships



Protective Factors in Youth

A close, trusting bond with a nurturing adult outside the family

Empathy and support from the mother or mother figure

Attached to or involved in community and school

Ability to find refuge and sense of self-esteem in hobbies and creative pursuits, useful work, and the assigned chores

Sense that one is in control of one's life and can cope with whatever happens

What Can We Do?

We have to educate ALL children - "They send their "best" child to school each day" Secretary of Education R. Riley

Curriculum that teaches problem solving, anger management (social skills)

Children who feel connected to their family, school, and community

Positive & caring relationship with at least ONE caring adult

What Can We Do?

Break the “Conspiracy of Silence”

Start early in making a difference

Prevention is less costly than incarceration

Establish links with ALL community services & organizations that deal with our students

More help for teachers - they cannot do it all

What Can We Do?

**More support staff -
counselors, school
psychologists, etc.**

**Good crisis plan and
“practice them”**

**Remember: Kids and guns
do not match**

**Schools are safe places to be
but we can make them safer**

Effective Interventions



Prevention/Intervention

School-wide Prevention

90%

Targeted Prevention

7-10%

Intensive Services

1-3%

Universal Interventions

Rules

- :: Agreed upon, willing to enforce
- :: Posted, brief, positively stated

Routines

- :: Avoid problem contexts, times, and groupings
- :: Consistent

Physical arrangements

- :: Clear boundaries
- :: Supervision of all areas

Keys to Effective Intervention

Identify and intervene early

Be a student of the child

Start where the child is

Give 4 times as much praise as criticism

Have a plan; stick with it

Evaluate

Collaborate

Instruction, Planning, Prevention

Teaching social skills

**Prevention as prior
planning**

Comprehensive planning

Involve **all stakeholders**

**Violence is learned behavior
and can be unlearned**

**Early Intervention that
teaches positive life skills may
be the best hope of
preventing violent behavior**



Violence Prevention: School-wide

Physical plant

Organization

Discipline

Norms

Crisis response

Teacher training

Instructional delivery



Violence Prevention: Classroom

Teach and practice social skills

Connect violence prevention skills to academics

Manage class efficiently

Develop media awareness

Teach conflict resolution skills

Remind students that they can make a difference



Violence Prevention: Community

Mentoring

Parent involvement

Parenting education skills

Youth services

Building liaisons

**Creating service
opportunities**

Weapons education

Challenges to Violence Prevention

System coordination

Parent participation

School climate

**Implementation method
(avoid scare tactics)**

**Program scope - long term
and comprehensive best**

**Expectations - no easy cure -
one size does not fit all**

Online resources

National Association of School Psychologists

www.nasponline.org

US Department of Education

www.ed.gov/emergencyplan

Federal Emergency Management

www.fema.gov; or www.ready.gov

Kentucky Safe Schools

www.kysafeschools.org

American Society for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org

Center for Effective Collaboration & Practice

www.cecp.air.org

Center for Mental Health in the Schools

<http://smph.psych.ucla.edu>

Safe Students/Healthy Students Action Center

www.sshsac.org

Surgeon General

www.surgeongeneral.gov

Safe Youth www.safeyouth.org

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

www.CASEL.org

Center for the Study of Violence Prevention www.colorado.edu/cspv/
(See Blueprints)

Virginia Tech Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention

www.cpsvp.vt.edu/

Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center

www.secretservice.gov/ntac.shtml

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

www.cdc.gov

Psychological Aspects of School Safety

Safe

1. I feel safe

I think of macaroni, spaghetti, a warm bed, a nose, and a little with food. It makes me feel happy, warm, and secure. I think of the people who love me and that protect me, & that look out for my best interest.

This word reminds me of when my family is around me and when I'm at school with my friends. I don't feel safe when I am alone.

This word reminds me of when my friends be nice to me I feel safe next to them and when my Mom & bro and sis r around me I also feel safe.

Future

I think of the unexpected, the uncertain. the future; I don't like change. It makes me vulnerable.

The future worries me. When I'm trying to make decisions, I think too much about the future and it makes me indecisive.

When I think of the future I

Being a Doctor



Characteristics of Psychological Safety in Children

Children feel safe to try new things

Children feel free from current or long-term threat

Children feel supported by adults and peers

Children feel securely attached to significant others, including peers and adults

Children feel competent to handle stressors

Children have good self-esteem

Consequences of Feeling Unsafe

Increased sense of vulnerability

Increased sense of incompetence

Increased anxiety, unhappiness, and sadness

Potential for chronic stress and trauma

Increased sense of being a victim

Social problems

Learning problems

Consequences of Feeling Unsafe

**Developmentally
inappropriate behavior**

**Increased sense of
alienation,
marginalization, social
isolation**

**Virtually all school shooters
were current or former
students who felt alienated or
isolated**

Lowered self-esteem

**Increased risk for emotional
and behavioral problems**

Consequences of Feeling Unsafe

**Impairments in making
and maintaining adequate
interpersonal relationships**

**Perceptions that others do
not care about them**

**Perceptions that others
are not willing to help or
intervene on their behalf**

**Perceptions that others may
be hostile or indifferent to
them**

Consequences of Feeling Unsafe

Perceptions of unfair treatment

Rebellious and oppositional behavior that is not developmentally appropriate, i.e., is not expected for the child's developmental level or age

Retaliation for feeling victimized

Arrested social and emotional development

Academic underachievement

Causes of Feeling Psychologically Unsafe

Genetic and biological factors

Poverty

Dysfunctional families

Parent/caregiver mental health issues

Parenting practices

Exposure to violence

Learning, developmental, and emotional problems

Causes of Feeling Psychologically Unsafe

Relational aggression and bullying

Schools that do not meet child's basic social, psychological, and educational needs

Families that do not meet child's social and developmental needs

Lack of attachment to others, especially someone who is considered trustful

Chronic stress and trauma



School Factors that Promote Psychological Safety

Adequate and accessible facilities

Caring and supportive teachers

“Schools within schools”

Protection from harassment and bullying

Physically safe environments

Inclusive and responsive schools

Avoid marginalizing students

Questions

