

## POTENTIAL THREAT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### 1. Explore motivations for violence.

What are your motivations or reasons for the planned violence? How do you think it would solve your problems? What other ways have you tried to solve your problems?

### 2. Identify thoughts of revenge.

Have any events happened where you felt you would like to get revenge or to get back at someone? Do you hold any grievances or bad feelings about school or individuals at school?

### 3. Identify experiences with/attitudes toward weapons.

Do you have experience with guns? Do you have any experience with violent point and shoot video games?

### 4. Explore history of/attitudes toward violence.

What are your views on violence? What do your parents think about violence? What do your friends think about violence? Do you have a history of violent behavior, criminal behavior, harassing others? Have you gathered any information about weapons, murders, suicides, or school shootings (e.g., Internet writings, news accounts, music, etc.)?

### 5. Identify possible stressors.

What events are happening in your life right now that are stressful? What has happened in the past that was stressful? How have you coped with stress in the past? Have you had any major changes in your life lately (e.g., changes in living arrangements, loss of a significant relationship, death, divorce, a recent personal failure)?

### 6. Identify signs of depression, helplessness, and/or hopelessness.

Have you written any essays, poems, music, journals with themes of hopelessness, helplessness, homicide, and/or suicide? What kind of course do you feel your life is on right now: even, upward, or downward? Do you have feelings of depression now? Have you had feelings of depression in the past? For how long? How intense? Do you have feelings of being desperate?

### 7. Identify suicidal ideation.

Have you ever tried to hurt yourself? Do you have any thoughts of hurting yourself or killing yourself now? Have you ever threatened to kill yourself? Have you ever made a gesture of suicide such as trying to slash your wrists? Have you tried to kill yourself before? Do you have a plan? (Ask "how," "how soon," and "how prepared.") Have you told others of your plans to kill yourself? What have been their reactions? What factors might increase the chance that you will attempt suicide? What factors might decrease the chance that you will attempt suicide?

8. Identify homicidal ideation.

Do you have any thoughts of hurting or killing others now? Have you had any homicidal thoughts in the past? What plans do you have? Have you taken any steps or actions to injure or kill others so far? What weapon(s) have you considered? Do you have access to guns (i.e., at home, at relatives)? Have you made any efforts so far to get hold of a gun(s)? Do you know how to get hold of a gun? Have you thought about whom you would target? Do you have a time and place in mind? Have you thought about how you would get close to this target (persons or building)? How well do you know the target? Have you thought of other targets? Have you thought of how to get around security measures? Have you told others of your plans to kill others? What have been their reactions? What factors might increase the chance that you will attempt to attack the target? What factors might decrease the chance that you will attempt to attack the target?

9. Identify possible helping resources.

What do you need right now to make your life a little better? What has helped you cope with angry or depressed feelings in the past? How might the school help you? How might your family help you?

10. Identify additional psychiatric disorders.

Have you had any hallucinations where someone is commanding you to do something? Have you had any delusional ideas, feelings that others are out to get you? Have you acted on these feelings or experiences? Do you have a history of mental illness? Does anyone in your family have a history of mental illness?

Note. Adapted from Borum (2000); Fein and Vossekuil (1998), and Vossekuil et al. (2000).