



## **Kimberly Daubenspeck School Safety and Climate Coordinator**

Office of School Safety and Transportation/District Operations  
Spring 2021

# Strategic Plan Overview



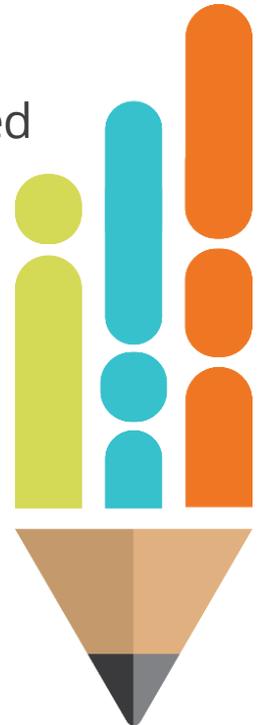
**ACADEMICS:** All Tennessee students will have access to a high-quality education... *by learning to read and reading to learn with high-quality materials.*



**STUDENT READINESS:** Tennessee schools will be equipped to serve the academic and non-academic needs of all students... *by developing robust career pathway opportunities and connecting students to real-time support.*



**EDUCATORS:** Tennessee will set a new path for the education profession... *by becoming a teacher for free.*



# Current Trends in School Climate and Safety





# BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

## ACADEMICS

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ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE

## STUDENT READINESS

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TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

## EDUCATORS

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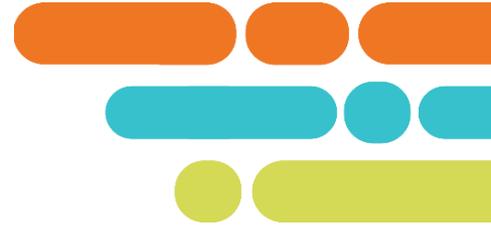
TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL

# Objectives

- Learn about the impact of the pandemic on school climate and safety.
- Understand resources for improving school climate and safety.



# Grief and Loss



- Grief can happen in response to loss of life, as well as to drastic changes to daily routines and ways of life that usually bring us comfort and a feeling of stability.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/stress-coping/grief-loss/index.html>

# Question?

- How have our students experienced grief and loss?



# Grief and Loss for Students

- Change in schedule/structure going into pandemic
  - Food insecurity
  - Academic insecurity
  - Loss of extracurricular activities
  - Loss of contact with peers and staff (relationships)
  - Sense of safety or fear of the unknown
  - Loss of a loved one due to COVID-19
  - Family loss of income (ability to meet basic needs)
- Change in schedule/structure during virtual school
  - Technology insecurity
  - Navigate virtual school alone while parents go back to work
  - Keep up with schedule changes of in-school and virtual learning
  - Loss of connection (relationships)
- Change in schedule/structure going back to in-person school
  - Learning gap and new expectations
  - Transportation after loss
  - Building relationships after loss
  - Sense of safety and fear of the unknown after loss
  - Extracurricular activities after loss
  - Going back to school after loss of a loved one
  - Going back to school after loss of family income



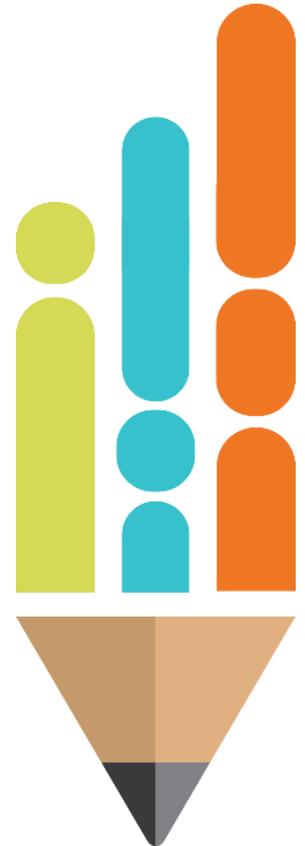
# Fostercare during the pandemic

- 8,000 children are in foster care in Tennessee
- CDC states that 1 out of 500 children has experienced COVID-19 orphanhood.



# Question?

- How have staff experience grief and loss?

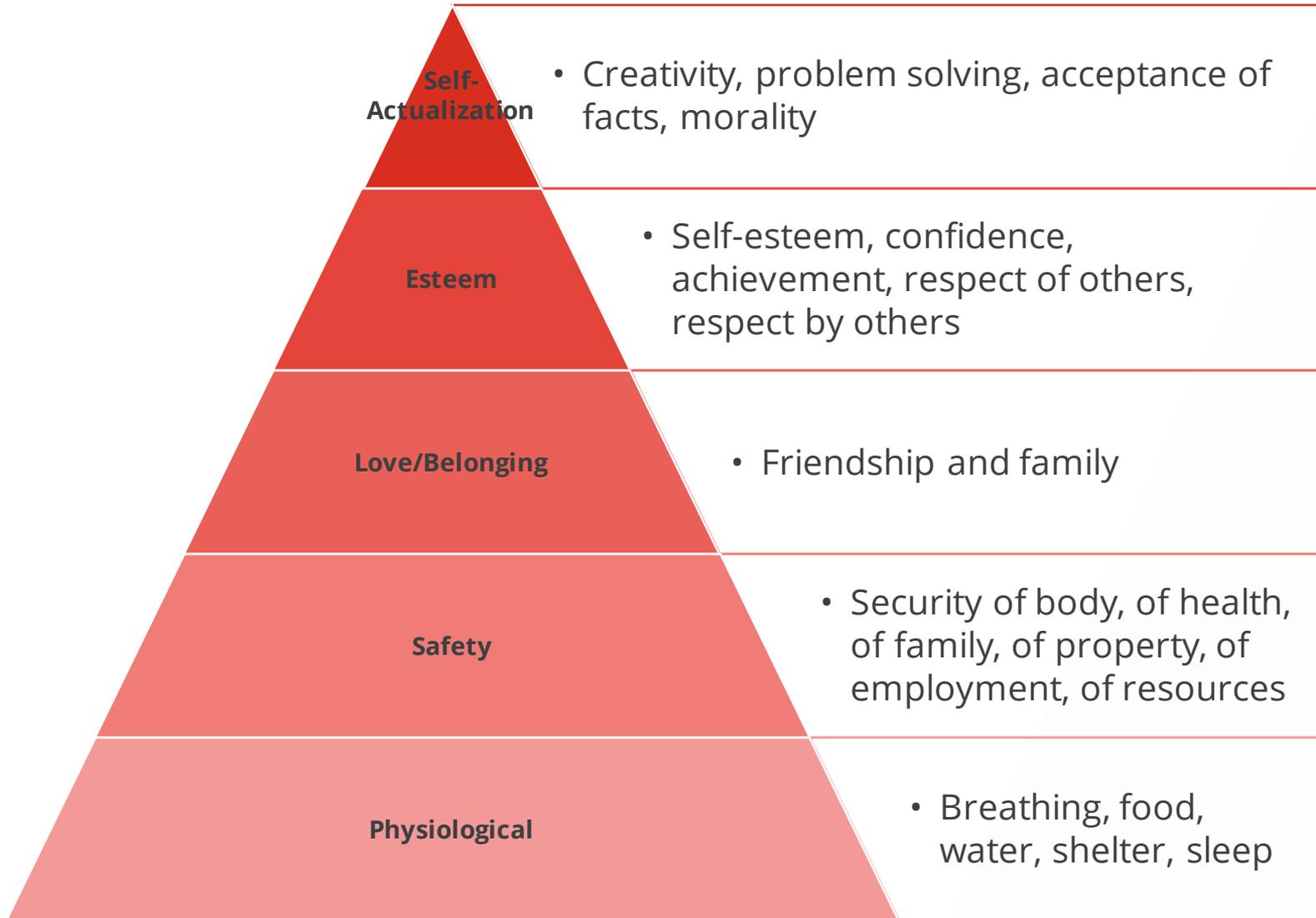




# Grief and Loss for Staff

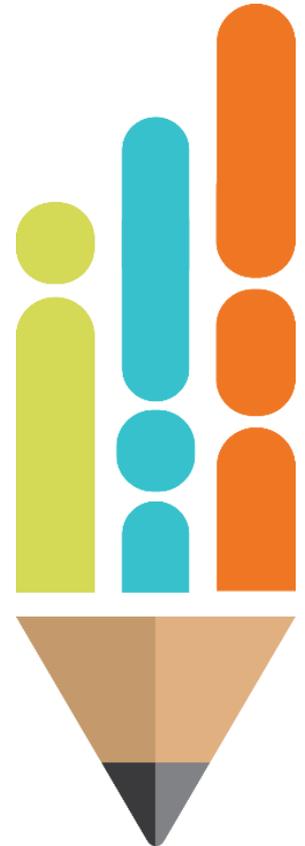
- Change in schedule/structure going into pandemic
  - Loss of contact with students and peers (relationships)
  - Sense of safety or fear of the unknown
  - Loss of a loved one due to COVID-19
  - Family loss of income (ability to meet basic needs)
  - Student learning loss concerns
  - Job changes/insecurity
- Change in schedule/structure during virtual school
  - Technology insecurity
  - Loss of connection (relationships)
  - Learning new skills to be able to teach virtually or virtually and in-person at the same time
  - New policies and procedures for virtual and hybrid scheduling
  - New policies and procedures during the pandemic
  - Health concerns
- Change in schedule/structure going back to in-person school
  - Learning gap and new expectations
  - Building relationships after loss
  - Sense of safety and fear of the unknown after loss
  - Going back to school after loss of a loved one
  - Going back to school after loss of family income

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Disrupted



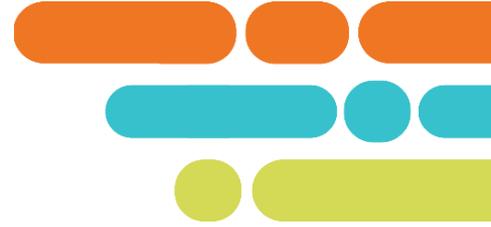
# Common Grief and Loss Reactions

- Shock, disbelief, or denial
- Anxiety
- Distress
- Anger
- Periods of sadness
- Loss of sleep and loss of appetite



# Question?

- What grief and loss reactions have you seen in students?
- What grief and loss reactions have you seen in yourself and your peers?



# Coping Skills

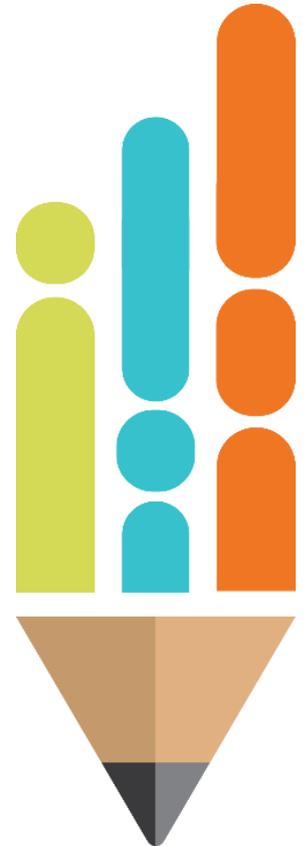
- Unhealthy Coping Strategies
  - Drug or alcohol abuse
  - Overeating
  - Procrastination
  - Sleeping too much or too little
  - Social withdrawal
  - Self-harm
  - Aggression
- Healthy Coping Strategies
  - Exercise
  - Talking about the problem
  - Healthy eating
  - Seeking professional help
  - Relaxation techniques(deep breathing)
  - Using social support
  - Problem-solving techniques

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/healthy-unhealthy-coping-strategies.pdf>

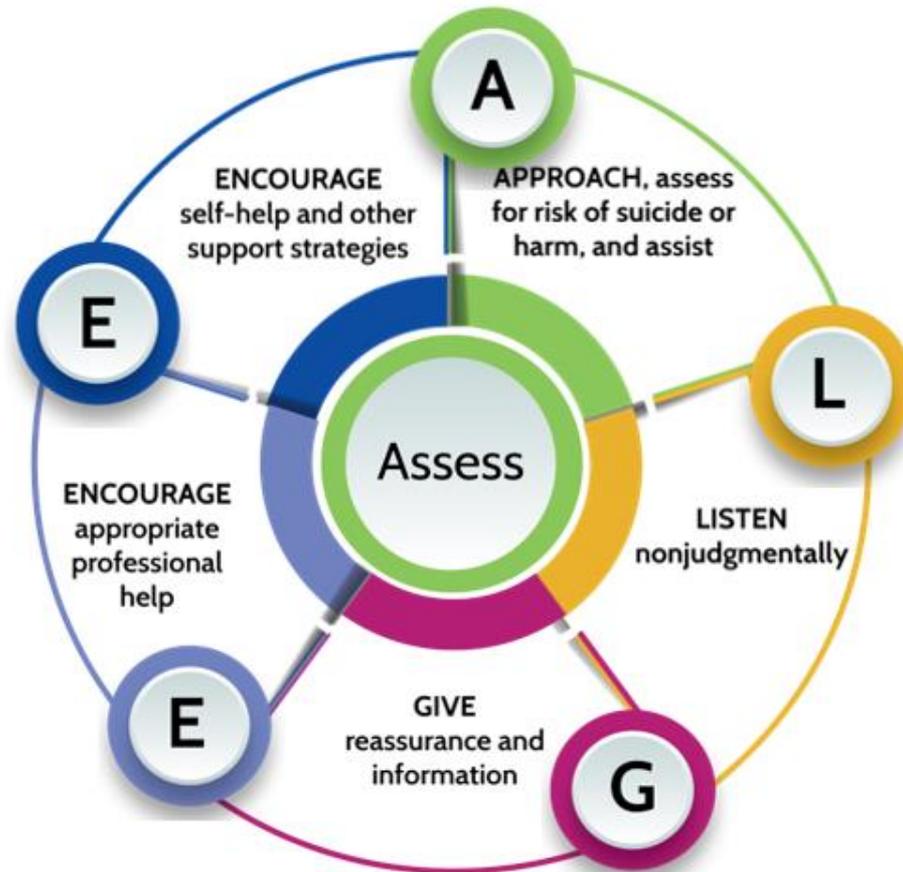


# Question?

- Do you think adult unhealthy/healthy coping strategies have been modeled for your students?



# The Mental Health First Aid Action Plan



# What are the signs and symptoms of a mental health challenge?



Let's look at signs and symptoms in these three broad categories:

- Emotions
- Thoughts
- Behaviors

# Emotions

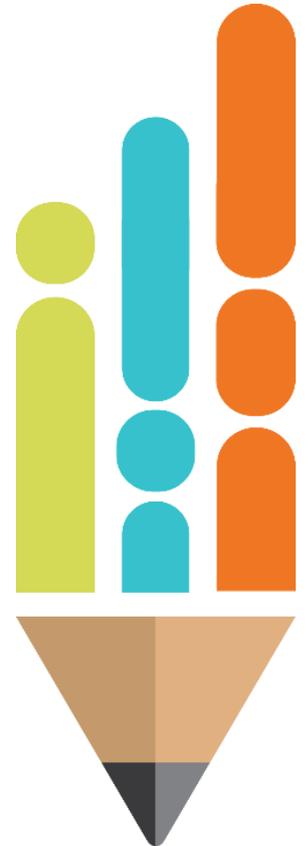
It might look like:

- Depressed mood or mood swings
- Unrealistic or excessive anxiety
- Excessive irritability
- Excessive anger
- Lack of emotion or emotional response
- Helplessness or hopelessness
- Oversensitivity to criticism



# Thoughts

- Frequent self-criticism or blame
- Pessimism
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Indecisiveness or confusion
- Racing thoughts
- Delusions or hallucinations
- Suspiciousness
- Thoughts of death or suicide

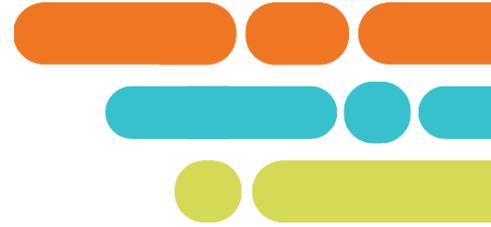




# Behaviors

- Crying spells
- Withdrawal from others
- Neglect of responsibilities
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Loss of motivation
- Slow Movement
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Changes in energy level
- Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- Showing distress

# It is all about **RELATIONSHIPS**:



- Look for changes in the young person
- Ask how they are feeling
- Express concern
- If you have noticed a change in a young person, discuss your observations with the young person such as “I have noticed a change in you lately. Is everything OK?”
- Use “I” statements that are not accusatory

# Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN)

## WHAT TO DO

- Take the risk factors and signals seriously. If you think someone is considering suicide, ASK HIM OR HER "Are you suicidal?" or "Do you want to kill yourself?" If the answer is "yes," GET HELP.
- Talk, offer help and most importantly, LISTEN.
- Teens need reassurance that someone cares. Show interest in the person and be supportive. Let the person know that help is available.
- Trust your instincts. If the situation seems serious, seek prompt help.
- Talk directly about suicide, and get specifics. The more specific the plan, the greater the risk.
- Treatment for depression and suicidal tendencies is of utmost importance. Alert key adults— family, friends, teachers, or coaches. Seek professional help. (For resources, see the back of this brochure.)

## WHAT TO AVOID

- Avoid acting shocked or judgmental, or lecturing the person on reasons to live. Allow the person to express his or her feelings and accept those feelings.
- Avoid giving advice or false reassurances, or offering easy answers.
- Avoid dismissing problems or minimizing the threat.
- Never keep a person's suicidal thoughts a secret. Remember - saving a life is more important than keeping a promise. Silence can be DEADLY!

## WHERE TO GET HELP

NATIONAL  
**SUICIDE  
PREVENTION  
LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



[www.tspn.org](http://www.tspn.org)

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255).  
The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline will automatically connect you with a certified local crisis center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Get the TSPN App:  
Available on Apple  
and  
Android



615-297-1077 • [www.tspn.org](http://www.tspn.org)

**TN** Department of  
**Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse Services**

[www.tennessee.gov/behavioral-health](http://www.tennessee.gov/behavioral-health)  
1-855-CRISIS-1 or 1-855-274-7471



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**SAVING TEEN AND  
YOUNG ADULT LIVES  
IN TENNESSEE**



**Tennessee Suicide  
Prevention Network**

"Saving Lives in Tennessee"

# Lack of Connectedness

Impacts Social and Personal Competency Skills



## Self-Awareness

- Recognize one's own feelings, interests, strengths, and limitations.

## Self-Management

- Regulate emotions and manage daily stressors.

## Social Awareness

- Take perspective of others and appreciate similarities and differences.

## Relationship Skills

- Exhibit prosocial behavior and demonstrate positive social skills in order to develop meaningful relationships.

## Responsible Decision Making

- Make ethical decisions, and strengthen the ability to develop appropriate solutions to identified problems.

# Question?

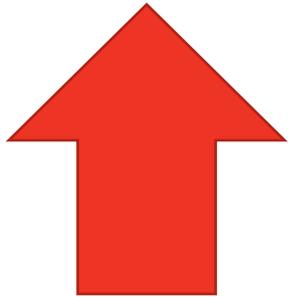
- What changes do you see in student's social and personal competency skills do you see?



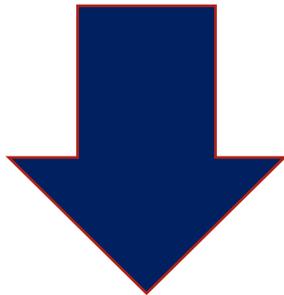
# Why are Social and Personal Competencies Important?



Increases student's capacity to learn



- Social and personal competency skills (22<sup>nd</sup> percentile)
- Positive attitudes (9<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Prosocial behaviors (9<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Academic achievement (11<sup>th</sup> percentile)



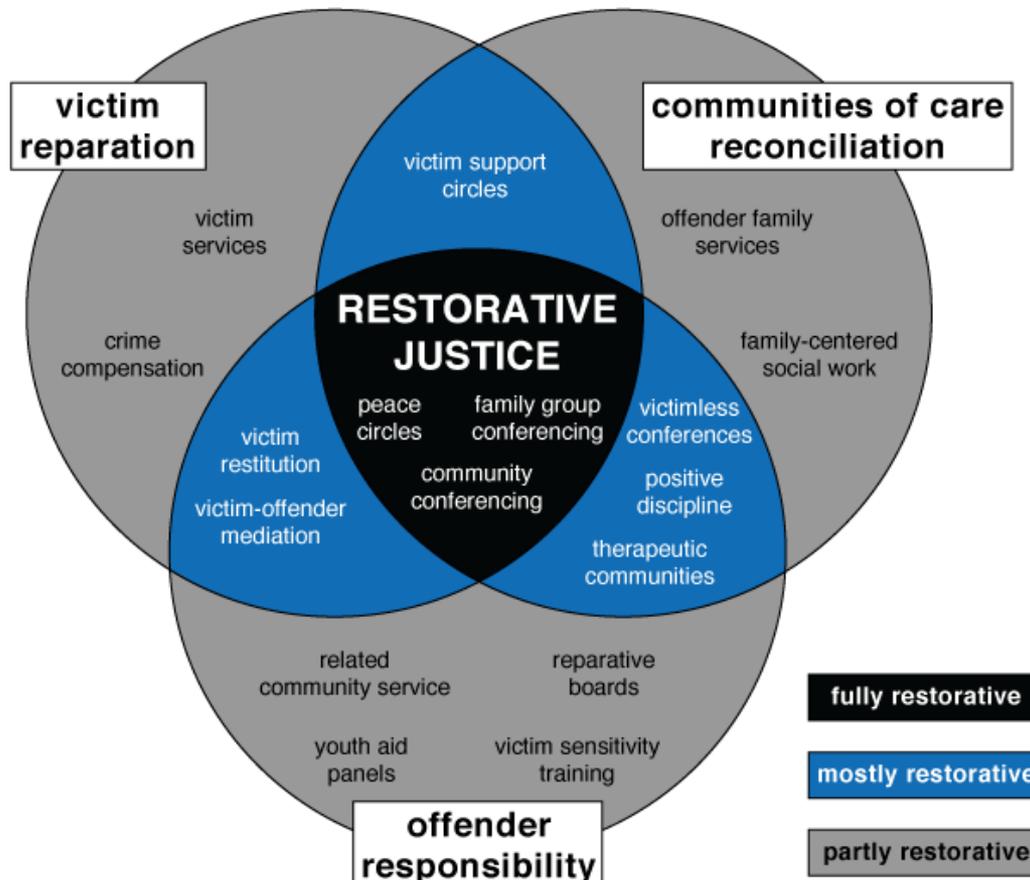
- Conduct problems (9<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Emotional distress (10<sup>th</sup> percentile)

Source: Durlak and colleagues, 2011

# Lack of Connectedness

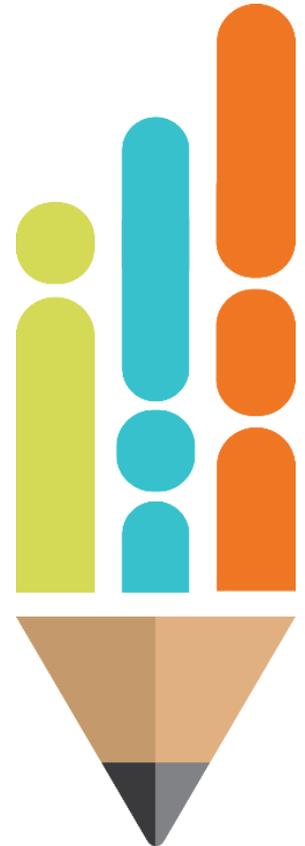
Impacts Conflict Resolution Skills

## Types and Degrees of Restorative Justice Practice



# What is Restorative Practices?

- The fundamental hypothesis of restorative practices is that human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *with* them rather than *to* the or *for* them.





# **Aim of Restorative Practices**

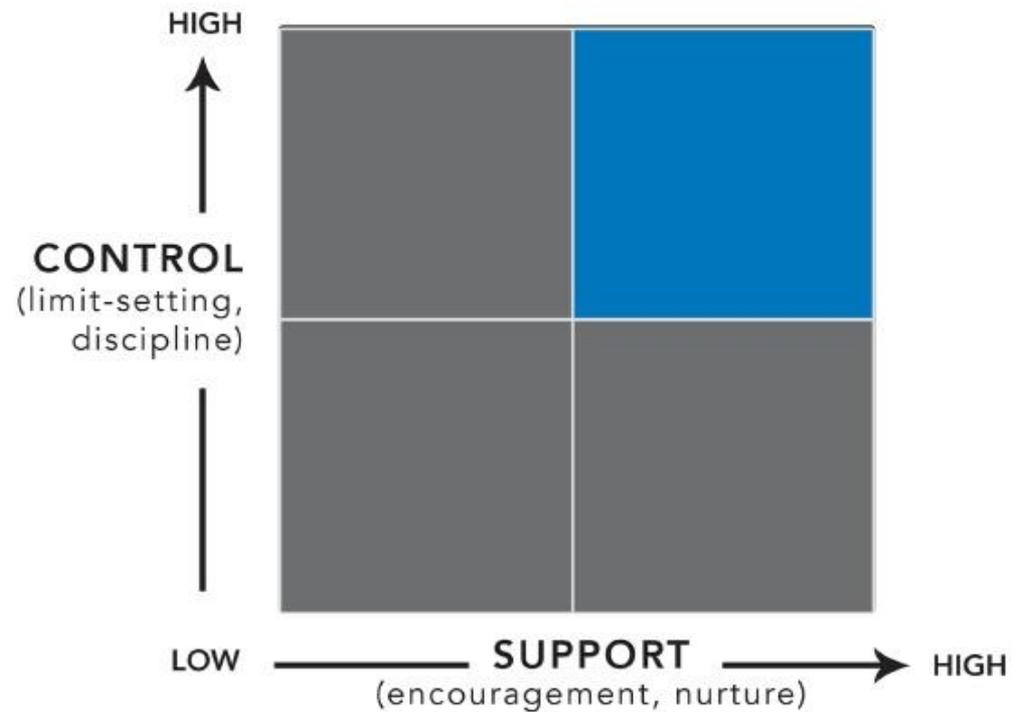
To develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and restoring relationships.

# Question?

- What do healthy relationships look like? Feel like?



# SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

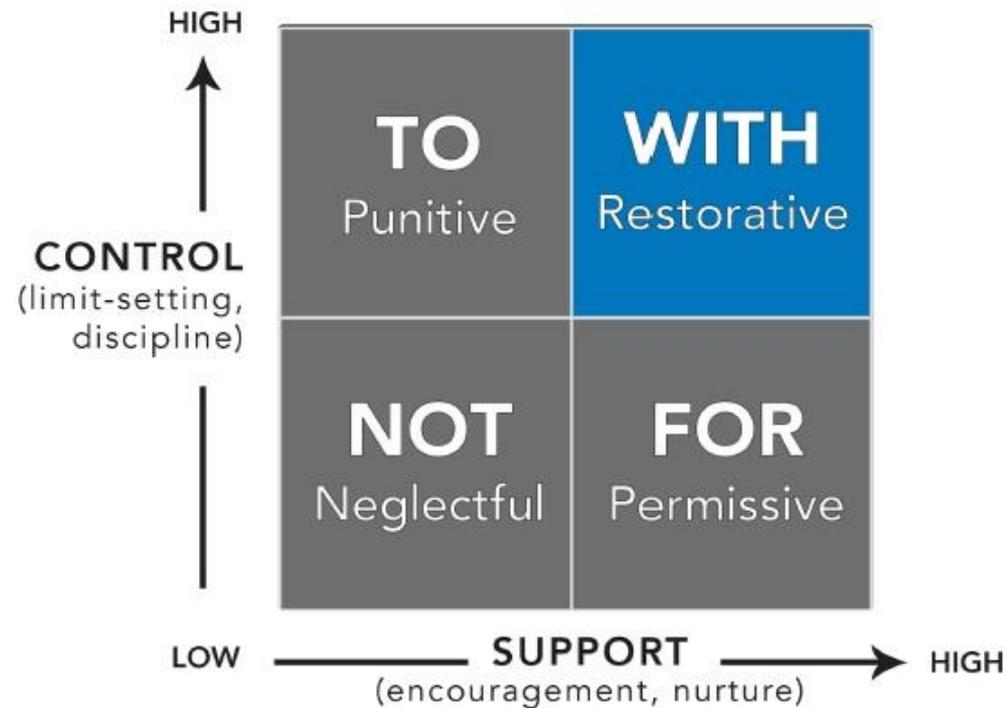


Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel from Glaser, 1969

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# SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel from Glaser, 1969

Page 50 in *Restorative Practices Handbook*

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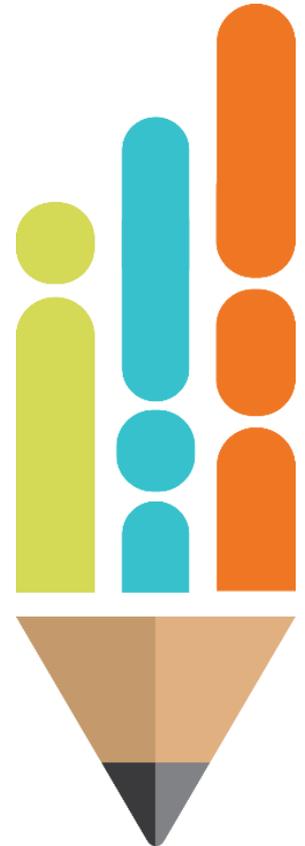
# Question?

- What is school climate?
- Why is it important?



# What is School Climate?

- The learning conditions and quality of the school environment that affect attitudes, behaviors, and performance of both students and staff.
- ‘School climate is like the air we breathe...it tends to go unnoticed until it become toxic.’-J.Feiberg





# Positive School Climate is Important

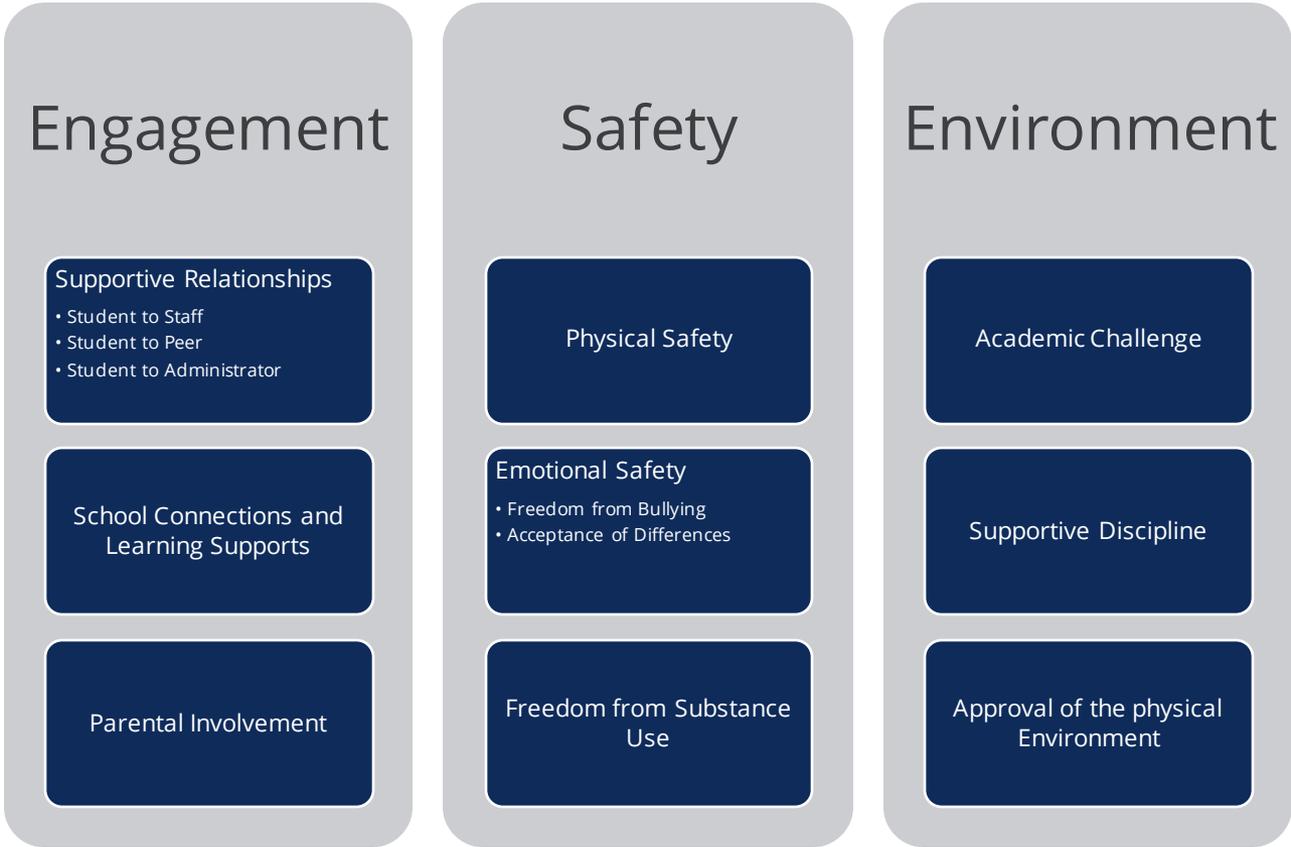
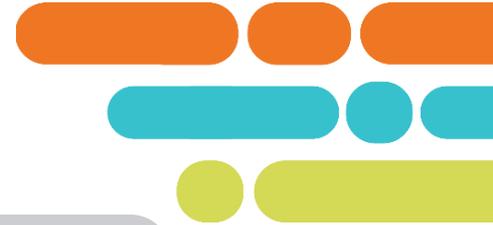
- Strengthening school climate and conditions for learning can help districts, schools and teachers meet key goals, including:
  - Boosting student achievement and closing achievement gaps
  - Increasing high school graduation rates
  - Decreasing teacher turnover and increasing teacher satisfaction
  - Turning around low-performing schools

# Negative School Climate

- Negative school climate is linked to poor attendance, as well as decreased student achievement and graduation rates.
- Negative school climate can contribute to or exacerbate violence, bullying, and even suicide.



# TN School Climate Model



# Perceptions of Safety

- Students feel *safer* in schools with high-quality *relationships* between students and teachers and teachers and families.
- Teachers also feel *safer* in schools with high-quality *relationships*.



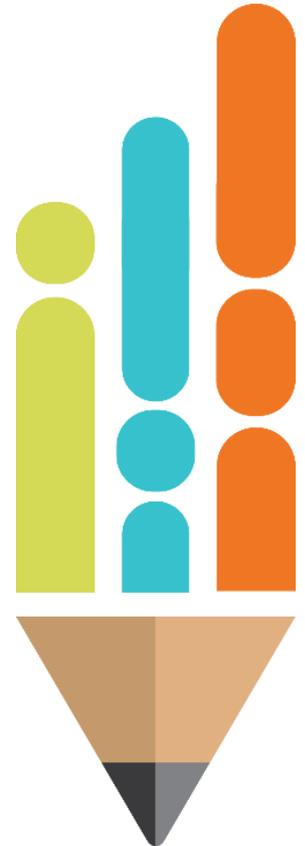


# **Increases in safety concerns**

- Coping Skills
- Lack of Connecteness/Relationships

# Addressing Safety or Fears

- Ask the question?:
  - When do you feel safe?
  - When do you not feel safe?
  - Do you know who to go to and what to do if you feel unsafe?
  - Do you feel like you have a voice?



# Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model



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## ENHANCING SCHOOL SAFETY USING A THREAT ASSESSMENT MODEL

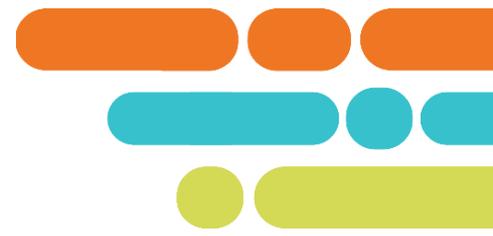
An Operational Guide for  
Preventing Targeted School Violence



*U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security*  
United States  
Secret Service

National Threat Assessment Center  
July 2016

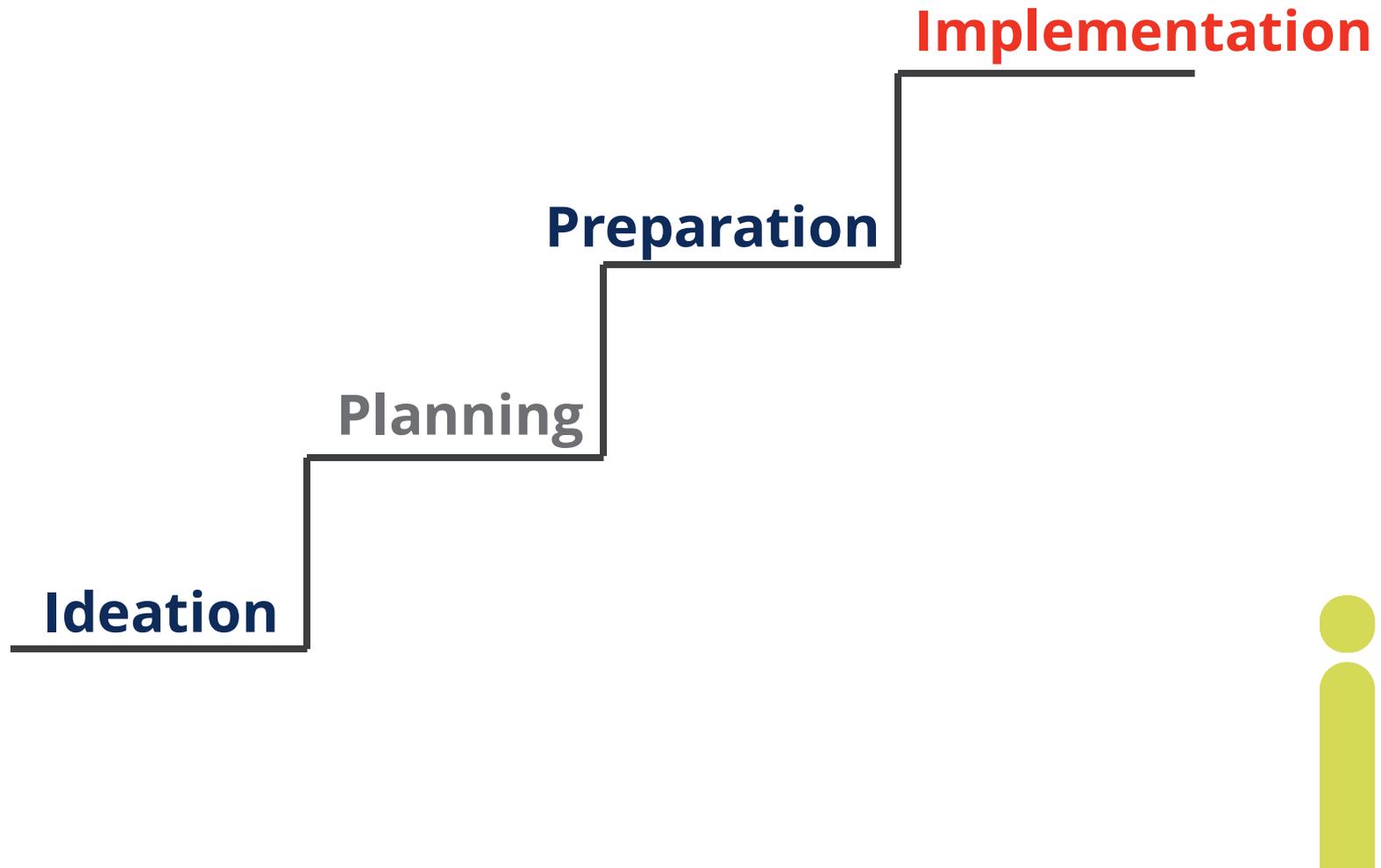
# What is Threat Assessment?



A systematic process that is designed to:

- 1 • Identify persons of concern
- 2 • Gather information/investigate
- 2 • Assess person and situation
- 4 • Manage the person/situation

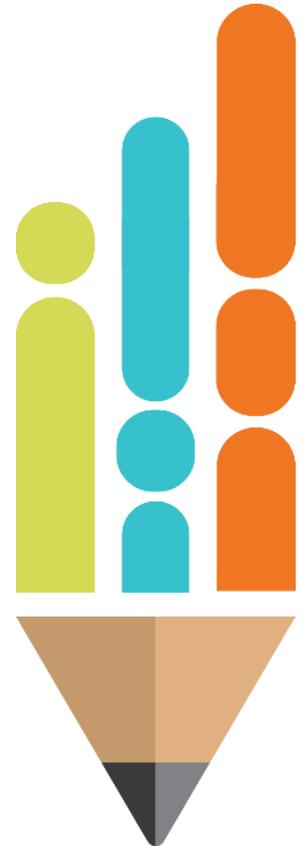
# Pathway to Violence



# Prevention is Possible

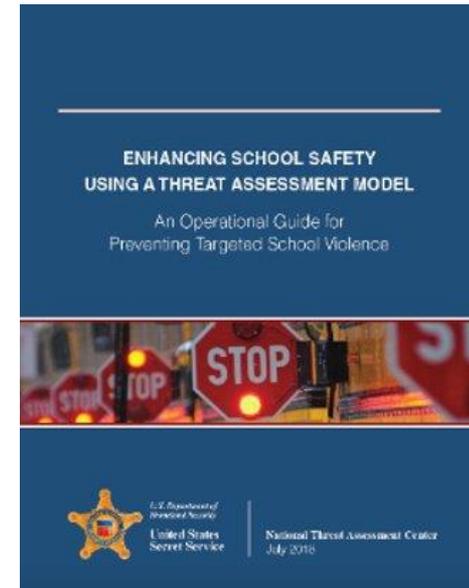
Threat assessment involves asking:

- Is this person on a pathway to violence?
  - If so, how can we guide this person off the pathway to violence?
  - How can we help them solve their problem, fix their situation, or address their condition in a non-violent way?
- Threat assessment is **most effective** when it is **non-adversarial and focused primarily on support and problem solving**.



# 8 Steps of Building a Threat Assessment Program

- Step 1: Establish a Multi-disciplinary team
- Step 2: Define prohibited and concerning behaviors
- Step 3: Create a central reporting mechanism
- Step 4: Define threshold for law enforcement intervention
- Step 5: Establish threat assessment procedures
- Step 6: Develop risk management options
- **Step 7: Create and promote safe school climates**
- Step 8: Conduct training for all stakeholders



# What is your central reporting mechanism?

## SafeTN Reporting App

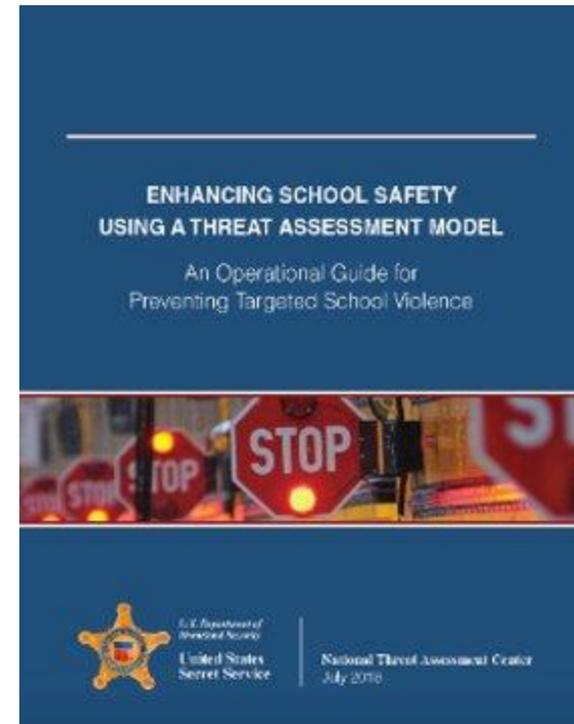
- Anonymously report suspicious activity, safety concerns, observed threats, behaviors or actions.
- The Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security will review, assess, and then send all submissions to law enforcement, mental health crisis response teams, and/or administrators for intervention based on the information received.

## Download SafeTN today!



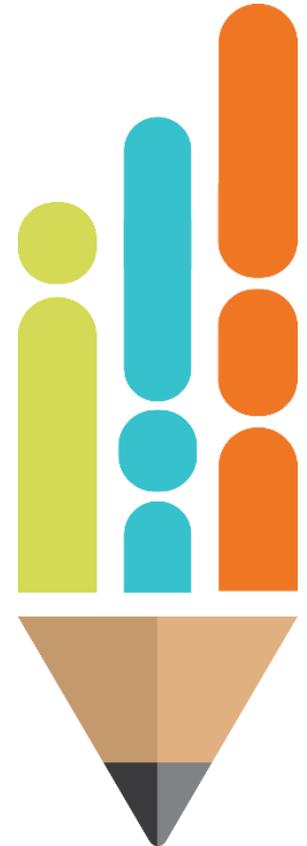
# Step 7: Create and Promote Safe School Climates

- Assess current school climate:
  - Administer surveys to students, staff, and parents
  - Share results with all stakeholders
  - Identify resources available in the community
  - Identify resources available remotely (e.g. tele-medicine)
  - Identify resources for staff and students
- Enhance current school climate:
  - Use survey findings to identify areas to address
  - Involve students in developing and implementing solutions
- Strengthen students' connectedness:
  - Feeling connected to an adult they can trust is a powerful protective factor
  - Strategies can be no-cost and easy to implement



# Best Practices for a Safe School Climate

- Break down “codes of silence”
  - Help students feel empowered to come forward and share concerns and problems with a trusted adult.
- Encourage teachers and staff to build positive, trusting relationships with students.
- Help students feel more connected with their classmates at the school.
- Students have a role to play in fostering relationships and connectedness among the student body.



# Conclusions

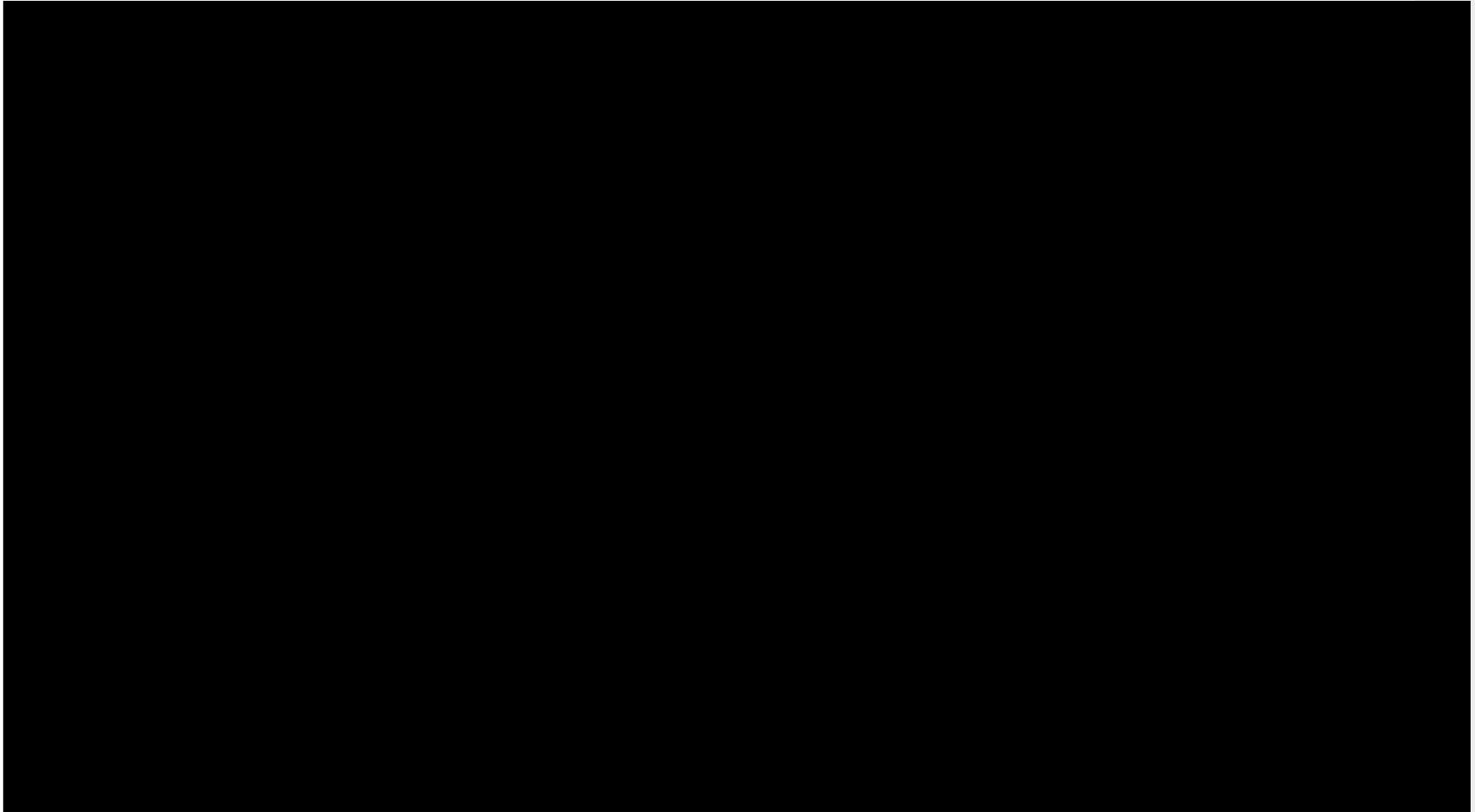


# How will we know we are safe?

- When students know what to do and who to go to if they feel unsafe
- When you see positive, engaging, supportive and collaborative interactions in all places of the school
- Discipline data indicates less office referrals, less fights and less bullying.



# Students feel comfortable to talk



# Questions?

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