

Warning Signs of Violent Behavior

These signs may indicate that a person might be a danger to themselves and/or others.

VIOLENT FANTASY CONTENT

- Writings (stories, essays, compositions)
- Drawings (artwork, depicting violence)
- Reading and viewing materials (preference for books, magazines, television, movies, music, websites and chat rooms with violent themes and degrading subject matter) and role playing acts of violence and degradation.

FASCINATION WITH WEAPONS & ACCOUTREMENTS

- Especially those designed and most often used to kill people (machine guns, semi automatic pistols, snub nose revolvers, stilettos, bayonets, daggers, brass knuckles, special ammunition and explosives)

SUICIDAL IDEATION

- Depressed and expresses hopelessness and despair
- Reveals suicidal preparatory behavior

The Columbine shooter wrote about his suicidal ideation in a journal.

LONER

- Isolated and socially withdrawn, misfit, prefers own company to the company of others.

The Sandy Hook and Virginia Tech shooters were known to be loners.

BOASTING & PRACTICING OF FIGHTING & COMBAT PROFICIENCY

- Military and sharpshooter training, martial arts, use of garrotes (wire used to strangle) and knife fighting

STALKING

- Follows, harasses, surveils, attempts to contact a target victim regardless of the victim's expressed annoyance and demands to cease and desist

This was present in the Virginia Tech shooter.

HOMICIDAL IDEATION

- Expresses contempt for others
- Makes comments and/or gestures indicating violence, aggression

ANGER PROBLEMS

- Difficult controlling anger, loss of temper, impulsivity
- Making threats

NON-COMPLIANCE & DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

- Refusal to abide by written and/or verbal rules

IMITATION OF OTHER MURDERERS

- Appearance, dress, grooming, possession like those of violent shooters in past episodes (e.g. long black trench coat)



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| <p>INTEREST IN PREVIOUS SHOOTING SITUATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawn toward media, books, entertainment, conversations dealing with past murders | <p>VICTIM / MARTYR SELF-CONCEPT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantasy that someday they will represent the oppressed and wreak vengeance on the oppressors |
| <p>STRANGE & ABERRANT BEHAVIOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action and words that cause people around them to become fearful and suspicious | <p>PARANOID</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in being singled out for unfair treatment and / or abuse, feeling persecuted |
| <p>VIOLENCE & CRUELTY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A history of using violence to solve problems (fighting, hitting, etc) abusing animals or weaker individuals | <p>INAPPROPRIATE AFFECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoying cruel behavior and /or being able to view cruelty without being disturbed |
| <p>ACTING OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing disproportionate anger or humor in situations not warranting it, attacking surrogate targets <p>This was present in both the Columbine and the Virginia Tech shooters.</p> | <p>POLICE CONTACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A history of contact with police for anger and/or disorderly conduct • Past temporary restraining orders (or similar orders) • A jail/prison record for aggressive crimes |
| <p>MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY RELATED TO DANGEROUSNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A history of referral or commitment to mental health facilities for aggressive/destructive behavior | <p>UNUSUAL INTEREST IN POLICE, MILITARY, TERRORIST ACTIVITIES & MATERIALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles resembling police cars, military vehicles, surveillance equipment, handcuffs, weapons, clothing (camouflage, ski masks, etc) |
| <p>EXPRESSIONLESS FACE / ANHEDONIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inability to express and or experience joy and pleasure | <p>USE OF ALCOHOL / DRUGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol /drugs are used to reduce inhibitions so that aggressive behaviors are more readily expressed |

Source: The Virginia Tech Review, a report developed by a panel of experts who outlined the behaviors exhibited by previous shooters.

