



**SAFE SCHOOLS: Preventing School Violence**  
*NYS Mandatory Training*

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## Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

- Identify the goal of the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) legislation.
- Discuss the importance of data collection related to school safety;
- Discuss how the components of the SAVE legislation interface in the prevention of violence in the schools.
- Describe how educational, legal/regulatory and environmental domains promote school safety within the SAVE legislation.
- Discuss risk and protective factors related to school violence.

## Introduction

School safety has long been an issue, but in recent years, with high profile school violence episodes both nationally and internationally, as well as the growing realization that ongoing bullying is highly destructive, the focus on safety has increased. Local school districts, the New York State government, the federal government, community and professional groups have all made safety in the school a priority.

Passed by the New York State legislature in 2000, the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) legislation requires that persons seeking educational certification in New York State must participate in a two-hour violence prevention training. This training is to provide information regarding the components of the law and an overview of violence prevention.

## Overview of the Concept of Violence

### Conceptualizing Violence Prevention

Violence is a very broad concept; it permeates most aspects of our society. At least in part because it is so widespread and pervasive, it feels like an overwhelming subject to tackle. It is ubiquitous in our culture. Violence occurs in the home, in schools, at the workplace; it occurs in private and it occurs in public. It can be ongoing and personal; it can be random. Violence has become a form of entertainment for some in our culture, for example in the entertainment industry. Violence can be viewed on a continuum from death and overt physical aggression to less obvious methods that can include emotional abuse such as teasing or belittling, to more subtle forms of shunning, exclusion, etc. Violence in our schools reflects the violence that occurs throughout our society.

Violence is an ongoing reality for many in our society, including children, who are among the most vulnerable in the population. Violence occurs on the interpersonal level with all forms of domestic violence such as child abuse and maltreatment, intimate partner violence, and elder abuse. Violence is acute and fatal, such as the death of a child after a beating from a parent. Violence can be chronic and ongoing.

Violence comes in many forms; it can be physical, emotional or sexual. Violence includes the teasing, bullying and emotional abuse that some people, adults and children, heap on each other in peer groups, regardless of age. Violence is present in gang relationships, among gang members, between gangs and members of the general public. Violence occurs in the

educational setting—from the first grader who brings a gun to school, to the tragedy at Virginia Tech where over two dozen people were shot by a student.

Violence occurs in our popular culture through a variety of means such as throughout the entertainment industry, with song lyrics, listened to by countless children, adolescents and adults, that aggrandize violence; video games where violence is glorified; gratuitous violence created by special effects in films; and the barely-concealed sexually exploitive photos in fashion magazines, often with sexually violent overtones. Violence is insidious in our society; it permeates our society.

The CDC (2015) states “school violence is youth violence that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school or school-sponsored events, or during a school-sponsored event. A young person can be a victim, a perpetrator, or a witness of school violence. School violence may also involve or impact adults.

Youth violence includes various behaviors. Some violent acts—such as bullying and teasing—can cause more emotional harm than some overt physical harm. Other forms of violence, such as gang violence and assault (with or without weapons), can lead to serious injury or even death.

Youth violence is a serious problem that can have lasting harmful effects on victims and their family, friends, and communities. The goal for youth violence prevention is simple—to stop youth violence from happening in the first place. But the solutions are as complex as the problem (CDC, 2016a)

Since the violence that occurs in the schools is a component of the larger issue of violence in our culture, prevention efforts must go beyond the schools. The prevention of violence must reach all aspects of our society. Prevention of violence includes laws (such as those against murder, child abuse, sexual harassment, etc.), skills training to improve interpersonal interaction (mediation, conflict resolution, etc.), social rules (manners, civility, norms for behavior). Some specific programs that are evidence based are reported by the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/prevention.html>.

## **Statistics Related to School Violence**

In the United States, an estimated 50 million students are enrolled in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. Another 15 million students attend colleges and universities across the country. While U.S. schools remain relatively safe, any amount of violence is unacceptable. Children, parents, teachers, and administrators and the public expect schools to be safe havens of learning. Acts of violence disrupt the learning process and have a negative effect on students, the school itself, and the broader community (CDC, 2016).

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2015):

- In 2014, among students ages 12–18, there were about 850,100 nonfatal victimizations at school, which included 363,700 theft victimizations and 486,400 violent victimizations (simple assault and serious violent victimizations).
- In 2014, students ages 12–18 experienced 33 nonfatal victimizations per 1,000 students at school and 24 per 1,000 students away from school.
- Between 1992 and 2014, the total victimization rate at school declined 82 percent, from 181 victimizations per 1,000 students in 1992 to 33 victimizations per 1,000 students in 2014. The total victimization rate away from school declined 86 percent, from 173 victimizations per 1,000 students in 1992 to 24 victimizations per 1,000 students in 2014.

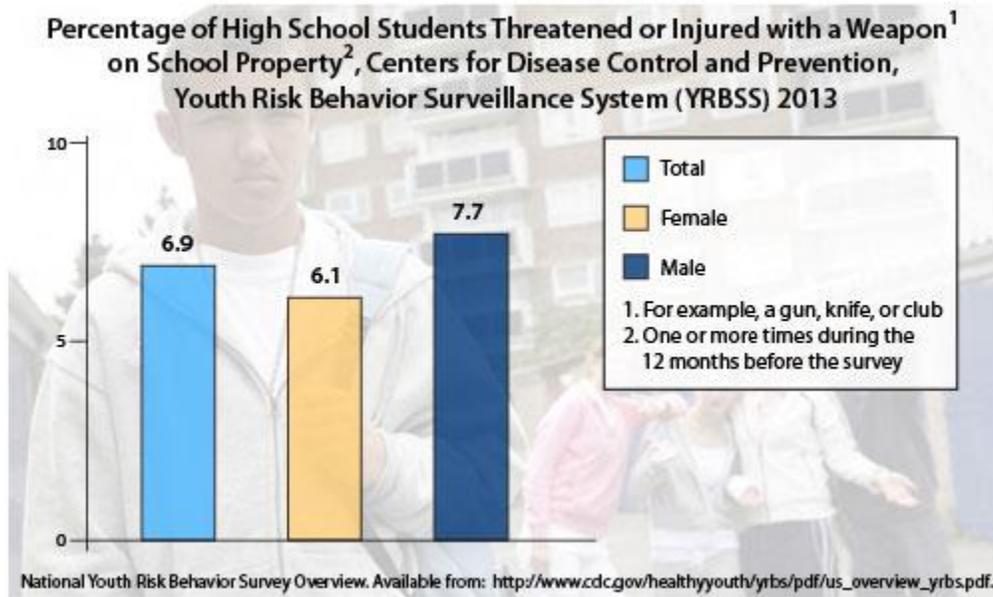
- In 2014, students residing in rural areas had higher rates of total victimization at school (53 victimizations per 1,000 students) than students residing in suburban areas (28 victimizations per 1,000 students).

Violence in the school impacts students and teachers. Approximately 9% of teachers report that they have been threatened with injury by a student from their school; 5% of school teachers reported that they had been physically attacked by a student from their school (CDC, 2015).

In 2011, 18% of students ages 12–18 reported that gangs were present at their school during the school year (CDC, 2015).

In a 2013 nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9-12 (CDC, 2015):

- 8.1% reported being in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months before the survey.
- 7.1% reported that they did not go to school on one or more days in the 30 days before the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.
- 5.2% reported carrying a weapon (gun, knife or club) on school property on one or more days in the 30 days before the survey.
- 6.9% reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property one or more times in the 12 months before the survey.
- 19.6% reported being bullied on school property and 14.8% reported being bullied electronically during the 12 months before the survey.



School associated violent deaths are rare, but do occur (CDC, 2015):

- 11 homicides of school-age youth ages 5 to 18 years occurred at school during the 2010-2011 school year.
- Of all youth homicides, less than 1% occur at school, and this percentage has been relatively stable for the past decade.

In New York State, each school district is required to submit Violent and Disruptive Incident Reports (VADIR) for each school building on an annual basis. The report for 2014-2015 can be found at [http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/school\\_safety/school\\_safety\\_data\\_reporting.html](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/school_safety/school_safety_data_reporting.html).

Results from the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) (Kann, et al., 2016), an annual survey of high school students conducted by the CDC, indicated that many high school students are engaged in priority health-risk behaviors associated with the leading causes of death among persons aged 10–24 years in the United States.

During the 30 days before the survey,

- 41.5% of high school students nationwide among the 61.3% who drove a car or other vehicle during the 30 days before the survey had texted or e-mailed while driving,
- 32.8% had drunk alcohol, and 21.7% had used marijuana.

During the 12 months before the survey:

- 15.5% had been electronically bullied,
- 20.2% had been bullied on school property, and
- 8.6% had attempted suicide.

Many high school students are engaged in sexual risk behaviors related to unintended pregnancies and STIs, including HIV infection. Nationwide,

- 41.2% of students had ever had sexual intercourse,
- 30.1% had had sexual intercourse during the 3 months before the survey (i.e., currently sexually active), and
- 11.5% had had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during their life.

Among currently sexually active students,

- 56.9% had used a condom during their last sexual intercourse.

## **Reducing School Violence**

Since violence is so insidious in our culture, it is difficult to examine the topic, particularly how to prevent violence, in a manner that is systematic and productive. There has been much in the literature about violence prevention; however there is limited research in the area. Multiple perspectives exist, including violence prevention models. In the models there is significant overlap in approach. Covered in this course are: The Public Health Model for Violence Prevention, The Ecological Model and the New York State SAVE Legislation Model.

### The Public Health Model for Violence Prevention

The focus of public health is on the health, safety and well-being of entire populations. A unique aspect of the field is that it strives to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people (CDC, 2015a).

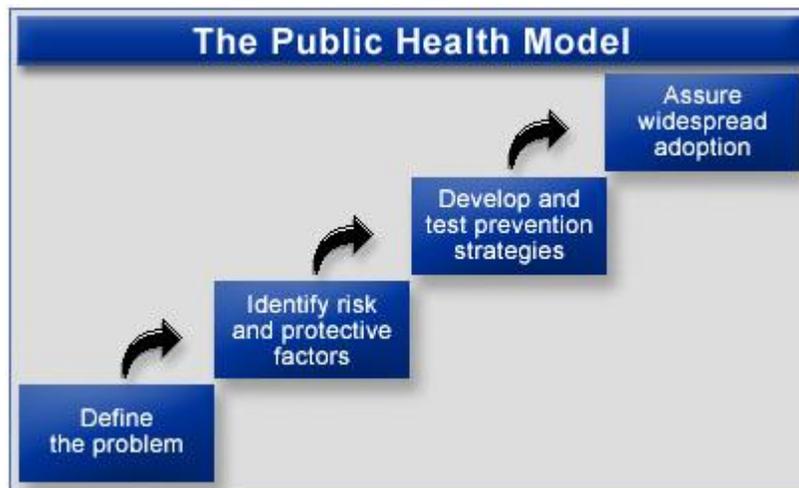
Public health draws on a science base that is multi-disciplinary. It relies on knowledge from a broad range of disciplines including medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, criminology, education, and economics. This broad knowledge base has allowed the field of public health to respond successfully to a range of health conditions across the globe (CDC, 2015a).

The field also emphasizes input from diverse sectors including health, education, social services, justice, policy and the private sector. Collective action on the part of these stakeholders can help in addressing problems like violence (CDC, 2015a).

The public health perspective asks the foundational questions: Where does the problem begin? How could we prevent it from occurring in the first place? To answer these questions, public health uses a systematic, scientific approach for understanding and preventing violence.

The public health approach is a four-step process that is rooted in the scientific method. It can be applied to violence and other health problems that affect populations (CDC, 2015a; CDC, 2016). Many people, organizations, and systems are involved at each step along the way.

**Figure 1. The Public Health Model**



***STEP 1: Define the Problem***

The first step in preventing violence is to understand it. Grasping the magnitude of the problem involves analyzing data such as the number of violence-related behaviors, injuries, and deaths. Data can demonstrate how frequently violence occurs, where it occurs, trends, and who the victims and perpetrators are. These data can be obtained from a variety of sources. In the community, police reports, medical examiner files, vital records, hospital charts, registries, population-based surveys, and other sources can be used to obtain data.

It is important that data be collected in a systematic and unbiased manner with uniform definitions and uniform reporting methods. Without such standardization, it is difficult to make use of the data. One teacher, with a higher tolerance for activity and noise from students, may not identify bullying behavior and may see it as a playful interaction among peers. Another teacher may have a lower tolerance for noise and activity, or a greater awareness of what constitutes bullying. Obtaining information from these two teachers would yield significantly different information. What one agency defines as “violent behavior”, another may define as an “assault”. Clearly without uniform definitions and reporting methods, it is difficult to utilize the data and even more difficult to generalize any information from such data.

The federal government requires that states establish a uniform management and reporting system to collect information on school safety and drug use among young people. The states must include incident reports by school officials and anonymous student and teacher surveys in the data they collect. This information is to be publicly reported so that parents, school officials and others who are interested have information about any violence and drug use at their schools. They can then assess the problems at their schools and work toward finding solutions. Continual monitoring and reports will track progress over time.

New York State has uniform reporting procedures as well. These will be covered during the specifics related to the SAVE legislation.

## **STEP 2: Identify Risk and Protective Factors**

It is not enough to know the magnitude of a public health problem. It is important to understand what factors protect people or put them at risk for experiencing or perpetrating violence. Why are risk and protective factors useful? They help identify where prevention efforts need to be focused.

<p><b>Risk Factor</b> Characteristic that increases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence</p> <p><b>Protective Factor</b> Characteristic that decreases the likelihood of a person becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence because it provides a buffer against risk</p>
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There is a growing understanding of how trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) not only affect the brain and learning, but can lead to numerous behavior challenges, including aggression and impulse control (Felitti, et al., 1998). The ACE study relates to the 1998 CDC-Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, a groundbreaking public health study that discovered that childhood trauma impacts children's developing brains profoundly and leads to the later or adult onset of chronic diseases, depression and other mental illness, violence and being a victim of violence. The ACE Study has published about 70 research papers since 1998. Hundreds of additional research papers based on the ACE Study have also been published.

In the landmark Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (1998) and successive research since then, it was identified that childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. As such, early experiences are an important public health issue. Much of the foundational research in this area has been referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Some examples of these adverse experiences include emotional, physical, sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect, mother treated violently, household substance abuse, household mental illness, parental separation/divorce, incarcerated household member.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study referred to previously also determined that these adverse experiences have been linked to:

- risky health behaviors (for example, tobacco smoking, drug use, alcohol use, unsafe sexual behavior, etc.),
- chronic health conditions (for example, obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide, sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, broken bones, etc.),
- low life potential (for example, impact on high school graduation rates, academic performance and achievement, poor occupational options, unemployment, lost time from work, etc.) , and
- early death.

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for these outcomes.

Not all children who witness violence or who are victims of abusive or neglectful behavior will experience long-term consequences. Outcomes of individual cases vary widely and are affected by a combination of factors, including (CDC, 2016):

- The child's age and developmental status when witnessing or experiencing the abuse or neglect;
- The type of abuse (physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, etc.) witnessed or experienced;
- Frequency, duration, and severity of abuse;
- Relationship between the child, victim, and the abuser.

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. However, educators and parents, and sometimes students, can recognize certain early warning signs. In some situations and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward self or others. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, especially when they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention (CDC, 2016a; NYSCSS, 2001).

We know from research that most children who become violent toward self or others feel rejected and psychologically victimized. In most cases, children exhibit aggressive behavior early in life and, if not provided support, will continue a progressive developmental pattern toward severe aggression or violence. However, research also shows that when children have a positive, meaningful connection to an adult, whether it be at home, in school, or in the community, the potential for violence is reduced significantly (CDC, 2016; NYSCSS, 2001).

The following early warning signs are **risk factors**. They are presented with the following qualifications: They are not equally significant and they are not presented in order of seriousness (CDC, 2016b).

- **Social withdrawal.** In some situations, gradual and eventually complete withdrawal from social contacts can be an important indicator of a troubled child. The withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, persecution, unworthiness, and lack of confidence.
- **Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone.** Research has shown that the majority of children who are isolated and appear to be friendless are not violent. In fact, these feelings are sometimes characteristic of children and youth who may be troubled, withdrawn, or have internal issues that hinder development of social affiliations. However, research also has shown that in some cases feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently.
- **Excessive feelings of rejection.** In the process of growing up, and in the course of adolescent development, many young people experience emotionally painful rejection. Children who are troubled often are isolated from their mentally healthy peers. Their responses to rejection will depend on many background factors. Without support, they may be at risk of expressing their emotional distress in negative ways, including violence. Some aggressive children who are rejected by non-aggressive peers seek out aggressive friends who, in turn, reinforce their violent tendencies.
- **Being a victim of violence.** Children who are victims of violence including physical or sexual abuse, in the community, at school, or at home are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.
- **Feelings of being picked on and persecuted.** The youth who feels constantly picked on, teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, and humiliated at home or at school may initially withdraw socially. If not given adequate support in addressing these feelings,

some children may vent them in inappropriate ways including possible aggression or violence.

- **Low school interest and poor academic performance.** Poor school achievement can be the result of many factors. It is important to consider whether there is a drastic change in performance and/or poor performance becomes a chronic condition that limits the child's capacity to learn. In some situations such as when the low achiever feels frustrated, unworthy, chastised, and denigrated acting out and aggressive behaviors may occur. It is important to assess the emotional and cognitive reasons for the academic performance change to determine the true nature of the problem.
- **Expression of violence in writings and drawings.** Children and youth often express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions in their drawings and in stories, poetry, and other written expressive forms. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, an overrepresentation of violence in writings and drawings that is directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, other adults) consistently over time, may signal emotional problems and the potential for violence. Because there is a real danger in misdiagnosing such a sign, it is important to seek the guidance of a qualified professional such as a school psychologist, counselor, or other mental health specialist.
- **Uncontrolled anger.** Everyone gets angry; anger is a natural emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.
- **Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors.** Children often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. However, some mildly aggressive behaviors such as constant hitting and bullying of others that occur early in children's lives, if left unattended, might later escalate into more serious behaviors.
- **History of discipline problems.** Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met. These unmet needs may be manifested in acting out and aggressive behaviors. These problems may set the stage for the child to violate norms and rules, defy authority, disengage from school, and engage in aggressive behaviors with other children and adults.
- **Past history of violent and aggressive behavior.** Unless provided with support and counseling, a youth who has a history of aggressive or violent behavior is likely to repeat those behaviors. Aggressive and violent acts may be directed toward other individuals, be expressed in cruelty to animals, or include fire setting. Youth who show an early pattern of antisocial behavior frequently and across multiple settings are particularly at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior. Similarly, youth who engage in overt behaviors such as bullying, generalized aggression and defiance, and covert behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, lying, cheating, and fire setting also are at risk for more serious aggressive behavior. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. For example, children who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age (before age 12) are more likely to show violence later on than are children who begin such behavior at an older age. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the child's history with behavioral experts and seek parents' observations and insights.
- **Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes.** All children have likes and dislikes. However, an intense prejudice toward others based on racial, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and physical appearance, when coupled with other factors, may lead to violent assaults against those who are perceived to be different. Membership in hate groups or the willingness to victimize individuals with disabilities or health problems also should be treated as early warning signs.
- **Drug use and alcohol use.** Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, drug use and alcohol use reduces self-control and exposes children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, as victims, or both.

- **Affiliation with gangs.** Gangs that support anti-social values and behaviors--including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students, cause fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by these groups, those who emulate and copy their behavior, as well as those who become affiliated with them may adopt these values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations. Gang-related violence and turf battles are common occurrences tied to the use of drugs that often result in injury and/or death.
- **Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms.** Children and youth who inappropriately possess or have access to firearms can have an increased risk for violence. Research shows that such youngsters also have a higher probability of becoming victims. Families can reduce inappropriate access and use by restricting, monitoring, and supervising children's access to firearms and other weapons. Children who have a history of aggression, impulsiveness, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms and other weapons.
- **Serious threats of violence.** Idle threats are a common response to frustration. Alternatively, one of the most reliable indicators that a youth is likely to commit a dangerous act toward self or others is a detailed and specific threat to use violence. Recent incidents across the country clearly indicate that threats to commit violence against oneself or others should be taken very seriously. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of these threats and to prevent them from being carried out.

Research on youth violence has increased our understanding of factors that make some populations more vulnerable to victimization and perpetration. Risk factors increase the likelihood that a young person will become violent. However, risk factors are not direct causes of youth violence; instead, risk factors contribute to youth violence. Risk factors as well as protective factors (described below) can be conceptualized as pertaining to the individual, to the family, to social and peer groups and the broader community (CDC, 2016b).

#### Individual Risk Factors

- History of violent victimization or involvement;
- Attention deficits, hyperactivity, or learning disorders;
- History of early aggressive behavior;
- Involvement with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco;
- Low IQ;
- Poor behavioral control;
- Deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities;
- High emotional distress;
- History of treatment for emotional problems;
- Antisocial beliefs and attitudes;
- Exposure to violence and conflict in the family.

#### Family Risk Factors

- Authoritarian childrearing attitudes;
- Harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices;
- Low parental involvement;
- Low emotional attachment of parents or caregivers;
- Low parental education and income;
- Parental substance abuse or criminality;
- Poor family functioning;
- Poor monitoring and supervision of children;

### Peer/School Risk Factors

- Association with delinquent peers;
- Involvement in gangs;
- Social rejection by peers;
- Lack of involvement in conventional activities;
- Poor academic performance;
- Low commitment to school and school failure.

### Community Risk Factors

- Diminished economic opportunities;
- High concentrations of poor residents;
- High level of transiency;
- High level of family disruption;
- Low levels of community participation;
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods.

**Protective factors** buffer young people from risks of becoming violent. These factors exist at various levels. Protective factors serve to mediate the negative impact of risk factors that are associated with violence. To date, protective factors have not been studied as extensively or rigorously as risk factors. However, identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as researching risk factors (CDC, 2016b).

### Individual Protective Factors

- Intolerant attitude toward deviance;
- High IQ;
- High grade point average (as an indicator of high academic achievement);
- Positive social orientation;
- Highly developed social skills/competencies;
- Highly developed skills for realistic planning;
- Religiosity.

### Family Protective Factors

- Connectedness to family or adults outside the family;
- Ability to discuss problems with parents;
- Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high;
- Frequent shared activities with parents;
- Consistent presence of parent during at least one of the following: when awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime or going to bed;
- Involvement in social activities;
- Parental / family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping).

### Peer/School Protective Factors

- Possession of effective relationships with those at school that are strong, close, and prosocially oriented;
- Commitment to school (an investment in school and in doing well at school);

- Close relationships with non-deviant peers;
- Membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behavior;
- Involvement in prosocial activities;
- Exposure to school climates that characterized by:
  - Intensive supervision
  - Clear behavior rules
  - Consistent negative reinforcement of aggression
  - Engagement of parents and teachers.

### Characteristics of Youth Who Have Caused School-Associated Violent Deaths

The National Safe School Center studied school-associated violent deaths in the United States during the 1990s. They identified common characteristics of youth who have caused such deaths. The following list identifies behaviors, which could indicate a youth's potential for harming him/herself or others. While there is no guarantee that these characteristics and behaviors identifying potentially dangerous students who may harm themselves and/or others, they are clearly red flags that should be further considered (NSSC, nd).

In the review of such violent incidents, in most cases, a troubled youth has demonstrated these behaviors or has talked to others about problems with bullying and feelings of isolation, anger, depression and frustration. These characteristics should serve to alert school administrators, teachers and support staff to address needs of troubled students through meetings with parents, provision of school counseling, guidance and mentoring services, as well as referrals to appropriate community health/social services and law enforcement personnel. Further, such behavior should also provide an early warning signal that safe school plans and crisis prevention/intervention procedures must be in place to protect the health and safety of all school students and staff members so that schools remain safe havens for learning (NSSC, 1998).

- Has a history of tantrums and uncontrollable angry outbursts.
- Characteristically resorts to name calling, cursing or abusive language.
- Habitually makes violent threats when angry.
- Has previously brought a weapon to school.
- Has a background of serious disciplinary problems at school and in the community.
- Has a background of drug, alcohol or other substance abuse or dependency.
- Is on the fringe of his/her peer group with few or no close friends.
- Is preoccupied with weapons, explosives or other incendiary devices.
- Has previously been truant, suspended or expelled from school.
- Displays cruelty to animals.
- Has little or no supervision and support from parents or a caring adult.
- Has witnessed or been a victim of abuse or neglect in the home.
- Has been bullied and/or bullies or intimidates peers or younger children.
- Tends to blame others for difficulties and problems s/he caused her/himself.
- Consistently prefers TV shows, movies or music expressing violent themes and acts
- Prefers reading materials dealing with violent themes, rituals and abuse.
- Reflects anger, frustration and the dark side of life in school essays or writing projects.
- Is involved with a gang or an antisocial group on the fringe of peer acceptance.
- Is often depressed and/or has significant mood swings.
- Has threatened or attempted suicide.

### ***STEP 3: Develop and Test Prevention Strategies***

Research data and findings from needs assessments, community surveys, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups are useful for designing prevention programs. Using these data and

findings is known as an evidence-based approach to program planning. Once programs are implemented, they are evaluated rigorously to determine their effectiveness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Center for Injury Prevention and Control (CDC-NCIP) developed *Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action* (2002). The goal of this document, which expanded on the earlier 1993 version, was to share the experience of those who have successfully intervened in preventing youth violence. It serves as a blueprint for communities, and the various agencies and organizations serving the community, including schools. The strategies outlined in this document include:

**Parent and family based strategies.** These are designed to improve family relationships. There is growing evidence that these interventions, especially those that start early and recognize all the factors that influence a family, can have substantial, longterm effects in reducing violent behavior by children. Parent and family-based interventions combine training in parenting skills, education about child development and the factors that predispose children to violent behavior, and exercises to help parents develop skills for communicating with their children and for resolving conflict in nonviolent ways. This type of intervention is ideal for families with very young children and for at-risk parents with a child on the way.

**Home visiting strategy.** Many European countries provide home visits to all families, regardless of risk status. Some advocates have argued that this service should be made available to all families in the United States, as well. But home-visiting interventions are resource intensive, and few communities have the financial and human resources needed to carry out an effective program on such a large scale. Therefore, targeting select groups for home-visiting services is typically most appropriate. A needs assessment conducted with input from the community will help identify families who could benefit most from a home-visiting intervention. Community leaders should play a key role in this decision, as they are often in a position to direct the allocation of resources.

**Social Cognitive strategy.** Researchers have linked a lack of social problem-solving skills to youth violence. When children and adolescents are faced with social situations for which they are unprepared emotionally and cognitively, they may respond with aggression or violence. Many assert that we can improve children's ability to avoid violent situations and solve problems nonviolently by enhancing their social relationships with peers, teaching them how to interpret behavioral cues, and improving their conflict-resolution skills. Social-cognitive interventions strive to equip children with the skills they need to deal effectively with difficult social situations, such as being teased or being the last one picked to join a team. They build on Albert Bandura's Social-Cognitive Theory, which posits that children learn social skills by observing and interacting with parents, adult relatives and friends, teachers, peers, and others in the environment, including media role models (Bandura, 1986). Social-cognitive interventions incorporate didactic teaching, modeling, and role-playing to enhance positive social interactions, teach nonviolent methods for resolving conflict, and establish or strengthen nonviolent beliefs in young people.

**Mentoring Strategy.** Research has shown that the presence of a positive adult role model to supervise and guide a child's behavior is a key protective factor against violence. The absence of such a role model—whether a parent or other individual—has been linked to a child's risk for drug and alcohol use, sexual promiscuity, aggressive or violent behavior, and inability to maintain stable employment later in life. Mentoring is the pairing of a young person with a volunteer who acts as a supportive, nonjudgmental role model. It has been touted by many as an excellent means of providing a child or adolescent with a positive adult influence when such an influence does not otherwise exist. Evidence has shown that mentoring can significantly improve school attendance and performance, reduce violent behavior, decrease the likelihood of drug use, and improve relationships with friends and parents.

In 2007, the CDC published the Task Force on Community Preventative Services' systematic review of universal school-based violence prevention programs. Programs were identified as "universal" because they were administered to all children in classrooms regardless of individual

risk, not only to those who already manifested violent or aggressive behavior or those who had risk factors for these behaviors. The Task force concluded (CDC, 2007, p. 1):

***"The results of this review provided strong evidence that universal school-based programs decrease rates of violence and aggressive behavior among school-aged children. Program effects were demonstrated at all grade levels. An independent meta-analysis of school-based programs confirmed and supplemented these findings. On the basis of strong evidence of effectiveness, the Task Force recommends the use of universal school-based programs to prevent or reduce violent behavior."***

No plan will make a school immune to violence. However, schools can plan for, and execute, violence prevention strategies as well as effective responses when prevention efforts are not effective. A violence prevention and response plan in place reduces the likelihood of violence and helps schools respond quickly and effectively to violent incidents that may occur. Just as the causes of violence in our society, as well as in our schools, are multi-dimensional, so are the interventions to reduce or eliminate violence.

Additionally, school violence occurs in a unique context in every school, making a one-size-fits-all approach ineffective. No one particular plan for school safety will address the issues in all schools or for every child. The issues related to safety in schools is addressed through multiple levels, including the federal and state governments, the school district, the specific school, the classroom and individual teachers and students.

The Task Force (CDC, 2007) found additional benefits of such violence prevention programs:

- Reduced truancy;
- Improvements in school achievement;
- Reduction in "problem behavior";
- Reduced activity levels;
- decreased attention problems;
- Improved social skills;
- Decreased internalization of problems (e.g., anxiety and depression).

According to the New York State Center for School Safety (2001), educational strategies that are promising in reducing or preventing violence include:

- Mentoring;
- Social skills development;
- Conflict resolution skills;
- Peer mediation;
- Parental involvement.

#### **STEP 4: Assure Widespread Adoption**

Once prevention programs have proven effective, they must be disseminated. Communities are encouraged to adapt programs to meet their own needs and to evaluate the program's success. Dissemination techniques to promote widespread adoption include training (such as this course you are now completing), technical assistance, and process evaluation.

A critical method for insuring adoption is to enact laws governing dissemination of information. The 2000 New York State SAVE legislation is one such method for insuring adoption of violence prevention strategies. The SAVE legislation mandated this course as well as the specific violence prevention strategies that will be covered later in this course.

## Other Models for Creating School Safety

Multiple organization have attempted to identify models of intervention for school safety. The following are other models for the prevention of school violence:

- The National Association of School Psychologists, along with multiple other organizations (link to this page to show the other professional groups <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/a-framework-for-safe-and-successful-schools> ) have identified “best practices” for the management of school safety (2013).
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration maintains a National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices. They list the current programs that have shown, through research, to be effective in reducing violence. This research can be found at <http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/AdvancedSearch.aspx>.
- The University of Southern California, Los Angeles (2015) offers a Violence Prevention and School Safety program online that is not copyright protected, but offered for use by others. It can be accessed at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/violence/violence.pdf>.

## SAVE Legislation Model

The New York State Legislature addressed the concepts of violence prevention in the SAVE legislation. There are three critical domains that form the core of violence prevention efforts: **education, legal/regulatory, and environmental domains**. The SAVE legislation requires that all of these domains are integrated into the school's comprehensive safety plan (NYSCSS, 2001).

### *Educational Domain*

- Education covers the areas of information dissemination and skill teaching and development. Through SAVE, the education domain is addressed through training of school personnel in violence prevention and the training of students in character education and development of non-violent communication skills.

New York State health mandates utilize research based educational strategies in the curricula that teach specific skills to students in:

- Anger management;
- Empathy and perspective taking;
- Social problem solving;
- Communication;
- Peace building.

The skills that students learn through the health mandates help them with specific violence prevention strategies such as:

- Mentoring (this requires skill in communication, self-management and advocacy);
- Social skills (requires communication, advocacy and social problem solving skills);
- Conflict resolution (requires communication, decision making, planning, self-management, social problem solving and advocacy skills);

- Peer mediation (requires communication, decision making, planning, self-management, problem solving and advocacy skills);
- Parent involvement (requires communication, planning and goal setting skills).

Additionally, education is aimed at teachers and school staff in order to identify and intervene in potentially violent situations. Staff must be aware of warning signs of escalating behaviors and know what are the procedures for intervention.

Some warning signs, which may be signs of imminent crisis include (NYSCSS, 2001):

- The verbalization of lethal violence;
- Presentation of a detailed plan (which would include, time, place and method) to harm self or others;
- Exhibiting self-injurious behavior;
- Displaying severe rage;
- Engaging in serious physical fighting with peers or others;
- Severe destruction of property.

Interventions in imminent crisis include:

- Take threats seriously; don't dismiss threats as idle talk;
- Talk with the student, if possible. Ask open ended questions in effort to keep the person talking.
- Do not leave the youth alone, but make sure to keep a safe distance, utilizing environmental barriers as needed, depending on the student's behavior.
- Avoid exhibiting aggressive body movements; avoid the projection of authority.
- Utilize mental health professionals if the student is unwilling to talk or is continuing to express violent or dangerous thoughts or behavior.
- Alert school administration, school psychologist/counselor, parents/guardians, mental health professionals or police as needed.
- Whenever possible, attempt to verbally diffuse the situation until help arrives.

### *Legal/Regulatory Domain*

Legal/regulatory includes Codes of Conduct, rules, policies and procedures, laws and disciplinary codes. Under SAVE the legal/regulatory domain is extensive, for example:

- Required Codes of Conduct;
- Detailed procedures for pupil removal and suspension; and
- Coordination of efforts between the juvenile justice system and the school.

Additional items related to this domain will be covered in more detail in the next section of this course.

### *Environmental Domain*

The environmental domain encompasses the physical and social environment. The physical and environmental domains are addressed under the SAVE law by examining the school environment and physical plant for safety and security and continual refinement of the school's safety plans.

- The **physical environment** includes lighting, landscaping, width of hallways, doorways and other modifications to the actual physical plant. The focus is on safety.
- The **social environment** includes activities such the social climate of the school, after school programs and day care.

The environmental domain also includes recognition of the emotional climate of the school in the event of a critical incident involving violence. The aftermath of such an incident impacts students and staff and can have long term consequences for all involved. Imperative to all is the recreation of security, both physical and emotional for children and staff who witnessed or who heard about a violent incident. Counseling and mental health services should be offered to students and staff who have been impacted. Such interventions can mitigate consequences of violence such as acute traumatic stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and other emotional or behavioral reactions to a critical incident. It is important to remember that anniversary dates of such incidents may also invoke a significant emotional or behavior response.

## **Specifics of New York State SAVE Legislation**

New York State has a comprehensive approach to school safety. Passed by the New York State legislature in 2000, the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) legislation requires that persons seeking educational certification in New York State must participate in a two-hour violence prevention training. This training outlines what is required for each school district and specific school regarding school safety. The components of this legislation can, and should, be integrated into all aspects of the school environment. It is important that all stakeholders (students, teachers, principals, administrators, parents, families and communities) understand what is required and understand the consequences of any violent threats or actions.

The SAVE legislation has multiple requirements: District-wide school safety plans, building level emergency response plans, codes of conduct, teacher authority/principal authority, uniform violent incident reporting, instruction in civility, citizenship and character education, school violence prevention training, whistle blower protection, fingerprinting, assaults on teachers, child abuse reporting, prohibition of silent resignations, teacher discipline and court reporting.

### ***I. District-wide School Safety Plans***

Each school district in the state must appoint a team to develop a comprehensive safety plan, which should include policies and procedures for:

- Responding to threats
- Responding to acts of violence
- Appropriate prevention/intervention strategies such as:
  - Training for security personnel who may be called to de-escalate a potentially violent situation
  - Conflict resolution
  - Peer mediation
  - Youth courts
  - Extended day programs
- Contacting law enforcement
- Contacting parents and/or guardians
- School building security
- Dissemination of informative materials regarding early detection of potentially violent behaviors
- Annual school safety training for staff and students
- Protocol for responding to bomb threats, hostage taking, intrusion and kidnapping
- Developing strategies to improve communication among students and between students and staff
- Description of duties of hall monitors and other school safety personnel

This team must include a representative of the board of education, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations and other school and school safety personnel. Representatives must be appointed by the board of education.

Learners who are completing this course as a requirement of the SAVE legislation should recognize that such a plan exists in the school district in which the learner will be working. It is important to identify where the district-wide School Safety plan is located and become familiar with its policies and procedures.

Additionally, as noted above, the SAVE legislation requires annual school safety training for staff and students. While this training that you are now taking will fulfill the initial requirement, it is important to recognize that additional training is required to be provided on an annual basis. This course should be considered as an overview of the topic, with additional, focused training on safety occurring annually at the district level.

## ***II. Building Level Emergency Response Plan***

The principal of each school must appoint a team, utilizing the guidelines established by the board of education. This team is to include teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel, community members, law enforcement and local ambulance or other emergency response agencies. This plan must be submitted to local law enforcement agencies and the New York State Police.

This building level plan must include:

- Policies and procedures for safe evacuation, to include evacuation routes, shelter sites, procedures for addressing medical needs, transportation, and emergency notification to parents/guardians;
- Designation of an emergency response team;
- Access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics of school interior, grounds, and road maps of surrounding area;
- Internal and external communication systems;
- Implementation of an incident command center (ICS);
- Coordination with Statewide Disaster Mental Health Plan;
- Procedures to review and conduct drills and exercises to test components of the plan;
- Policies and procedures for securing and restricting access to the crime scene.

Learners who are completing this course as a requirement of the SAVE legislation, should identify where the building level Emergency Response Plan is located in their school. The learner should become familiar with the policies and procedures for responding to any school emergency, including a situation of violence.

## ***III. Codes of Conduct***

Each school is required to adopt codes of conduct for the maintenance of order on school grounds. The rules of conduct must apply to teachers, students, personnel and visitors

The Code of Conduct must include, at a minimum:

- Appropriate dress and language
- Security issues
- Removal from the classroom
- Disciplinary procedures for those who violate the Code of Conduct
- Policies and procedures for detention, suspension, and removal of the disruptive pupil
- Procedures for reporting Code violations and imposing penalties

- Provision to insure compliance with State and Federal laws in relationship to students with disabilities
- Provisions for notifying law enforcement of violations (e.g., violent crimes)
- Procedures for parental notification
- Committee to review actions relating to the Code
- Procedures regarding PINS petitions and juvenile delinquency provisions
- Procedures for referral to human services agencies
- Minimum suspension periods for students who are repeatedly and substantially disruptive
- Minimum suspension periods for acts that qualify a student as violent

District-wide School Safety Plans, Building Level Emergency Response Plans, and Codes of Conduct, are subject to public hearing, reviewed and updated annually, and filed with the Commissioner of Education no later than 30 days after adoption.

#### ***IV. Teacher Authority/Principal Authority***

Consistent with the Code of Conduct, this authority allows teachers to remove disruptive or violent students from the classroom, utilizing appropriate procedural safeguards for affected students.

Principals are added to those empowered to suspend students from school entirely, without specific board delegation of that authority.

Required in the Codes of Conduct, school districts must include minimum periods of suspension for violent or repeatedly disruptive pupils.

A ***disruptive pupil*** is defined as one who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or interferes with the teacher's authority over the classroom.

A ***violent pupil*** is defined as one who

- Commits an act of violence on a teacher, other school district employee, or fellow student
- Possesses, displays, or threatens to use a gun, knife, or other dangerous weapon
- Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school district property

Removal procedures:

- Teachers report and refer violent pupils to administration for minimum suspension period.
- Administration has the authority to suspend for up to five days without delegation from the board of education.
- District shall implement policies and procedures to provide for continued educational programming for removed pupil.
- Student must be informed of the reason for removal by teacher.
- Principal must be informed of reason for student removal by teacher.
- Sets time lines for negotiations of removal to student and parent.
- Requires notification of charges and an explanation for suspension with timelines as required by legislation.

#### ***V. Uniform Violent Incident Reporting***

In order to effectively deal with the problem of unsafe schools, data must be collected in a systematic and unbiased manner. Each school district, each school building, each person within the school environment must approach the prevention of violence utilizing the policies and procedures outlined within the School Safety Plan which are consistent with all other policies

within the educational environment. Each violent act must be defined and must be specific in order for the response to violence to be applied evenly throughout the system. Only through such consistency can the data that is collected be useful in helping to evaluate the effectiveness of violence prevention strategies.

This section of the legislation that addresses the uniform incident reporting was established by the New York State Education Department and the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services. Schools are required to report annually to the Commissioner of Education on the following:

- Number and types of violent incidents;
- Number of suspensions and other forms of discipline;
- Location where incidents occurred;
- Whether the incident involved a weapon;
- Actions taken by the school;
- Ages and grades of disciplined pupils;
- The nature of the victim and victim's age when appropriate.

This includes an annual report to the governor and the legislature regarding the prevalence of violent incidents on school grounds and at school-sponsored functions and inclusion of such information on school report cards.

#### ***VI. Instruction in Civility, Citizenship, and Character Education***

School districts are required to include a civility, citizenship, and character education component in the K-12 course of instruction concerning the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity, and other positive traits.

#### ***VII. Health Curriculum***

The Board of Regents is required to review the current health curriculum requirements to ensure that students have sufficient time and instruction to develop the skills needed to address issues of violence prevention and mental health.

NYS's educational mandates are based on a skills-based approach in six critical areas (NYSCSS, 2001):

- Communication;
- Decision making,
- Planning and goal setting;
- Self-management;
- Stress management; and
- Advocacy.

#### ***VIII. Interpersonal Violence Prevention Education***

The Commissioner of Education is to develop and distribute an interpersonal violence prevention package to schools for use in health and related areas.

#### ***IX. School Violence Prevention Training***

The legislation also set the requirement that all individuals seeking certification as of February 2001 must have completed a two hour course in violence prevention, such as the one you are now taking. However, this training provides an overview regarding the SAVE legislation, so that

the learner understands that violence prevention and training for violence prevention in the school is part of a comprehensive plan for school safety. The mandatory training that you are now engaged in is just the beginning. Additional Violence Prevention training must be included in the Superintendent's Conference Days annually. Violence prevention training for current staff must be addressed in the annual professional development plan.

#### ***X. Whistle Blower Protection***

Protection is provided for those employees who report violent incidents. Employees may not be disciplined or fired for reporting violent incidents and are protected from any civil liability.

#### ***XI. Fingerprinting***

School district employees and applicants for certification are required to be fingerprinted for a criminal history background check in order to be cleared for employment. Volunteers are not required to be fingerprinted.

The SAVE legislation allows that current employees of a school district are not required to be fingerprinted. However, should a current employee terminate employment and seeks employment in a different school district, the individual must undergo the fingerprinting process. The law also applies if a currently certified individual applies for additional certification, for example if a teacher applies for an administrator's certificate.

The New York State Education Department will collect the fingerprints and a processing fee from each applicant and submit to the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services. Provisions exist for a waiver of the fee for applicants for employment who demonstrate to the district that payment of the fee would create a financial hardship. Criminal history records, if any, will be sent by the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services and the FBI to the NYS Education Department for review and consideration of whether any convictions or outstanding arrests justify denial of clearance for employment or certification. Applicants who are denied clearance will be afforded an opportunity to challenge the determination by the NYS Education Department and to review and challenge content of criminal history records through the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services process.

#### ***XII. Assaults on Teachers***

Penalties for assaults on teachers were increased in the SAVE legislation. They went from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class D felony.

#### ***XIII. Child Abuse Reporting***

As mandated reporters, school officials who include, but are not limited to: school teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, school administrators, or other school personnel required to hold a teaching or other administrative license or certification, must report their suspicions of child abuse or maltreatment/neglect directly to the New York State Central Registrar (SCR). In New York State the mandated reporter express line is: **1.800.635.1522**.

Reflecting changes to the child abuse reporting laws impacting teachers in 2007, whenever a mandated reporter suspects child abuse or maltreatment while acting in her/his professional capacity as a staff member of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility or agency, he or she must report the child abuse, as required by law and then immediately notify the person in charge of that school, facility institution or her/his designated agent. That individual is then responsible for all subsequent administrative efforts related to that report. Any report must include the names, titles and contact information for each staff person in the institution who has

direct knowledge of the allegations in the report. The law does not require more than one report from the institution, school, facility or agency on any one incident of suspected abuse or maltreatment.

The 2007 changes made by the New York State Legislature clarified that **reporting internally to the person in charge does not discharge the mandated reporter's obligation to report to the State Central Register**. Additionally, the revised law states that any person in charge of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility or agency may not prevent the staff member, who is a mandated reporter, from making a report. The revised law specifically states that no retaliatory personnel actions can be taken against mandated reporters by the institution. Additionally, 2007 revision to the law stated that no school, school official, child care provider, foster care provider, residential care facility provider, hospital, medical institution provider, or mental health facility provider may impose additional conditions about reporting, such as prior approval or prior notification, upon any staff members who are mandated reporters of child abuse and maltreatment.

Individuals who comply with the reporting requirements in good faith will be entitled to immunity from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise result from such actions.

For more information about Child Abuse Identification and Reporting, The New York State Mandated training, go to <https://www.accesscontinuingeducation.com/ACE2000-16/course.htm>.

#### ***XIV. Prohibition of Silent Resignations***

The SAVE legislation ends the practice of allowing persons to resign rather than disclose allegations of child abuse. It is now a Class E felony, punishable by up to four years in prison, and a civil penalty not to exceed \$20,000 for those superintendents who allow employees to resign under such circumstances.

#### ***XV. Teacher Discipline***

The SAVE legislation provides for a range of discipline measures. In addition to revocation of a teaching certificate, discipline will now include suspension, continuing education, limitation on certificates and monetary fines.

#### ***XVI. Court Notification***

Family and criminal courts are to notify schools about juvenile delinquency adjudications. This will help to increase the coordination between the juvenile justice system and the schools. It requires schools to appoint a Designated Educational Official (DEO) to receive records and coordinate student's participation in programs.

Such notification and coordination cannot be part of the student's permanent record; information can only be used in the execution of the student's educational plan.

### **Conclusion**

The issue of violence in our society is complex and no one course will be able to arm the learner with the knowledge and skills to prevent violence in the schools. However, it is important for employees of New York State schools to understand that a comprehensive approach to safety and the prevention of violence exists and that laws, policies, procedures, educational interventions exist to help promote safety and to intervene effectively when violence does occur.

The learner is urged to identify and review the District Safety Plan as well as the Building Level Emergency Response Plan of the facility where you will spend the school day.

## Resources

### New York State Resources

#### **New York State Police**

Programs for schools and communities  
518-457-2180

#### **New York State Education Department**

Comprehensive Health and Pupil Services Team  
518-486-6090

#### **Upstate Center for School Safety**

914-255-8989

#### **Downstate United Way**

New York City Technical Assistance Center  
212-973-3894

#### **New York State Office of Mental Health**

School-based program and county mental health services  
518-474-8394

#### **New York State Office of Children & Family Services Public Information**

Aggression Replacement Training (ART)  
Getting Kid Smart  
518-473-7793

#### **Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services**

School and community-based prevention, intervention and treatment programs  
800-522-5353

#### **New York State Department of Health**

Public Information  
518-474-5422

#### **New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services**

Office of Funding & Program Assistance  
518-457-8462

#### **Council on Children and Families**

Resource guides from child serving state agencies  
518-474-6294

### National Resources

#### **United States Department of Education**

Safe and Drug Free Schools  
202-260-3954

Online: [www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS)

#### **Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office**

Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action  
916-323-2183

Online: [www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/index.html](http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/safety/index.html)

#### **Safe Schools, Safe Students (manual)**

A guide to Violence Prevention Strategies  
202-289-9070

Online: [www.drugstrategies.org](http://www.drugstrategies.org)

#### **Center for Safe Schools**

Toolkit for School Safety Planning  
Online: [www.center-school.org](http://www.center-school.org)

#### **Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc.**

Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training Programs

800-558-8976  
Online: [www.crisisprevention.com](http://www.crisisprevention.com)

**Youth Crime Watch America**  
Peer programs to reduce crime and drugs in schools  
305-670-2409  
Online: [www.ycwa.org](http://www.ycwa.org)

**National PTA**  
800-307-4782  
Online: [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

**National School Safety Center**  
805-373-9977  
Online: [www.nssc1.org](http://www.nssc1.org)

**National Crime Prevention Council**  
202-466-6272  
Online: [www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

**American Association of School Administrators**  
703-528-0700  
Online: [www.aasa.org](http://www.aasa.org)

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of America**  
215-567-7000  
Online: [www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)

**Boys and Girls Clubs of America**  
404-815-5700  
Online: [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

**Center for the Prevention of School Violence**  
800-299-6054  
Online: [www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/cep/PreViolence](http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/cep/PreViolence)

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**Course Test: Safe Schools: Preventing School Violence  
NYS Mandatory Course**

**\*If you have downloaded the course off the Internet and wish to submit your test online you must return to our website ([www.accesscontinuingeducation.com](http://www.accesscontinuingeducation.com)) to do so.**

1. The Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) legislation, enacted in 2000, requires a comprehensive approach to the prevention of school violence. This law requires those who are seeking educational certification in New York State to complete a 2-hour violence prevention training course. Additional Violence Prevention training must be included in the Superintendent's Conference Days annually.
  - A. True.
  - B. False.
  
2. The SAVE legislation incorporates which of the following domains:
  - A. Public health, ecological and legal/regulatory.
  - B. Education, public health and mediation.
  - C. Education, legal/regulatory and environmental.
  - D. None of the above.
  
3. Classroom management is facilitated through all the following components of the SAVE legislation **EXCEPT**:
  - A. Codes of Conduct that identify for student behavior.
  - B. Authority is provided to teachers to remove disruptive or violent students from the classroom.
  - C. Silent Resignations that allow teachers to resign rather than disclose child abuse.
  - D. District-wide and School Building Safety Plans that delineate procedures for intervening in violent or disruptive behavior, including plans for coordination with law enforcement and mental health professionals.
  
4. A potential individual risk factor for violent behavior in students is
  - A. A strong positive bond with family or another adult.
  - B. Involvement in drugs, alcohol or tobacco.
  - C. Resilient temperament.
  - D. Adults in community involved in criminal behavior.

5. Peer/Family Protective Factors include all of the following **EXCEPT**:
- A. Association with delinquent peers.
  - B. A strong positive bond with family or other adults.
  - C. Adults who set clear standards for behavior and those who show the benefits and consequences of behavior.
  - D. Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high.
6. Community Risk Factors for potential violent behavior include:
- Diminished economic opportunities;
  - High level of transiency;
  - High level of family disruption;
  - Low levels of community participation;
  - Socially disorganized neighborhoods;
  - Poverty;
  - Availability of drugs and firearms;
  - Neighborhood adults involved in crime;
  - Exposure to violence and racial prejudice.
- A. True.
  - B. False.
7. Policies and procedures for the management of threats of violence and acts of violence are uniform throughout each School District, as Districts must develop a Comprehensive District-wide Safety Plan. Additional policies and procedures are required, per the District-wide Safety Plan component of the SAVE legislation, to address specific prevention strategies such as conflict resolution and peer mediation, for example, as well as:
- A. Policies and procedures for contacting family and law enforcement.
  - B. Protocols for responding to bomb threats, hostage taking, intrusion and kidnapping.
  - C. Training on early detection of potentially violent behaviors and developing strategies to improve communication among students and between students and staff.
  - D. All the above.
8. In contrast to the District-wide Safety Plans, the Building Level Emergency Response Plan addresses the management of crises that occur in the school building, including:
- Designation of an emergency response team;
  - Policies/procedures for safe evacuation of the building, including evacuation routes, shelter sites, addressing medical needs, transportation and emergency notification to parents/guardians;
  - Implementation of an Incident Command Center (ICS) with coordination to Statewide Disaster Mental Health Plan and internal and external communication systems.
  - Procedures to conduct drills and exercises to test the plans and review the plans.
  - Policies/procedures for securing the crime scene.
- A. True.
  - B. False.

9. In the SAVE legislation, penalties for assaults on teachers were:
- A. Increased from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class D misdemeanor.
  - B. Decreased from a Class D felony to a Class A misdemeanor.
  - C. Increased from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class D felony.
  - D. Decreased from a Class D misdemeanor to a Class A misdemeanor.
10. Data must be collected in order to evaluate the effectiveness of violence prevention strategies. In regard to the Uniform Violence Reporting component of the SAVE legislation:
- A. Data must be collected in a systematic and unbiased manner.
  - B. Consistency in approaching the prevention of school violence requires that each person within the school environment follow the policies and procedures outlined in Safety Plans.
  - C. All acts of violence must be defined and must be specific in order for the response to violence to be applied evenly throughout the system.
  - D. All of the above.