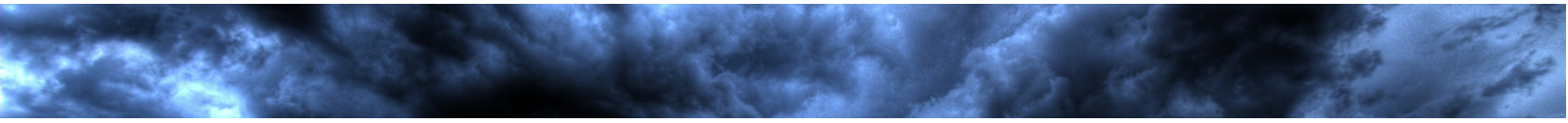


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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CLINICAL SECURITY SOLUTIONS



## SAME THREAT. TWO OUTCOMES

These are turbulent and unsettled times. Our society is on edge. A cursory review of headlines shows us the world is becoming more violent. Recent FBI crime statistics and other studies confirm. Here are just a few of the more recent indicators:

- **Homicide rate has increased by 30% in the past year** (Source: FBI Uniform Crime Report)
- **In May 2022, the FBI identified an alarming 50% increase in school shootings from the prior year.** (Source: Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2021 – FBI May 2022)
- **As of June 1, 2022, there have already been 250 mass shootings (four or more victims) in the United States**
- **Mass shootings, where four or more people — not including the shooter — are injured or killed, have averaged more than one per day so far this year.** (Source: Washington Post)
- **Not a single week in 2022 has passed without at least four mass shootings.** (Source: Washington Post)

The recognized best practice for the identification, assessment and management of those who intend to harm others is Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM). There is nothing more frustrating to those who work in the field than seeing missed opportunities for intervention and prevention. After shootings, we often hear the same refrain, "there were no warning signs, he just snapped." **The truth is, mass shooters do not just snap.** We need to be aware, watch for, and act on warning signs.

Two recent incidents highlight the importance of early reporting in the workplace. Organizations need to emphasize training for first-line managers. Most importantly, first line managers must be trained on how to respond and who to notify when an employee exhibits troubling behavior.

In Buffalo, New York, 2022, a lone attacker walked into a local supermarket and began shooting. He killed 10 customers and wounded three others.

The Buffalo shooter previously came to the attention of law enforcement and his school administrators several years prior when in high school. During a school assignment, where students were asked to describe their postgraduate plans, the Buffalo shooter responded by stating he would be conducting a mass shooting followed by suicide.

**On that day the system worked.** The school made a referral to law enforcement. They responded and placed the individual on an involuntary mental health hold and transported him to a local mental health facility for evaluation. After two and a half days, the future shooter was released from the hospital.



## CONTINUED

After high school this individual dropped off the radar. There was no community threat assessment team for the high school threat assessment team to hand this case off to. The shooter had no further interactions with law enforcement until the time of the attack.

### **After the attack, as law enforcement began their investigation, disturbing clues were found.**

The shooter had adopted a radical racist ideology that had not been observed previously. In writings published online, the shooter described the process behind his radicalization. The shooter stated that during a prolonged period of boredom and isolation during COVID-19 he became increasingly drawn to Internet forums regarding mass shootings, white supremacy, and other extreme racist ideologies.

In his writings, the shooter referenced several other high-profile mass shootings with racist motives, particularly the March 2019 shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the June 2015 church shootings in Charleston, South Carolina. Most notable is the connection to the Christchurch shooting. That shooter expressed similar racist and extreme ideologies and livestreamed his attack on social media. This shooting had a profound effect on the Buffalo shooter.

**In this case, the warning signs were there, but who was looking?** The majority of this shooter's troubling comments were publicly available on several online forums yet there were no reports. Has this kind of material become normalized? **If someone were to be alarmed by the content and wanted to report it, would they know who to call?**

### **In another similar case, the outcome was drastically different.**

On June 24, 2022, a fire alarm sounded at a large distribution warehouse in San Antonio TX. This ultimately turned out to be a false alarm, but workers were evacuated. As they were leaving the building, one worker turned to another and said, "It would be a good idea to pull the fire alarm to have employees exit so a person could do a mass shooting." while standing outside waiting to reenter the building the same individual surveyed the scene around him and told his coworkers **"I'm going to do a mass shooting."**

Unfortunately, the employees who heard these statements did not report them at the time. They later said this employee was known to make "crazy" statements frequently. One worker who was disturbed by these statements stewed on the matter over the weekend. She recalled other disturbing statements made by this same individual. **When the topic of the recent school shooting in Uvalde, Texas came up, this individual stated that the shooter was his "idol."**

In another conversation where the worker told the individual what school her children attended, he replied by saying "now I know which school I am going to shoot up." she also recalled that he would frequently say that he was "tired of living" and had purchased many rifles and pistols.



## CONTINUED

**First thing Monday morning, the alarmed coworker reported all these disturbing comments to her supervisor.** The supervisor, who had been trained in workplace violence prevention immediately contacted security, and the company's Threat Management Team was activated. After a brief but detailed review of the facts, the Threat Management Team determined that this individual posed a high threat to the organization, and law enforcement was notified.

**The law enforcement response was immediate and effective.** Police officers responded to the workplace and conducted a series of collateral interviews with coworkers, which corroborated all the disturbing statements. Simultaneously other police officers responded to the home of the would-be shooter. Family members there told police that the individual had a history of mental illness and was currently unmedicated. They also stated that he had recently purchased several rifles and pistols. Family members told the police they were afraid for their safety.

Utilizing this information, the police immediately contacted a local prosecutor who obtained an arrest warrant for this individual, charging him with making terroristic threats. He was quickly located and safely taken into custody.

An attack was averted and now this individual will work his way through the criminal justice system and the mental health system. **No question about it - lives were saved in this instance.** Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management will work if we pay attention to the warning signs.

**We encourage all organizations to reexamine their existing workplace violence prevention policies and related training efforts. Workers need to be trained in recognizing behaviors of concern, and managers and supervisors need to be trained on the reporting process for workplace violence allegations. Particular attention should be paid to reporting mechanisms for threats. Multiple reporting options, including an anonymous reporting mechanism, are an industry best practice. There is no wrong door to report this information.**

Wondering how to get started? **We can help.** Our team of experts can help you select and train your own workplace violence prevention multidisciplinary team. We can even act as your multidisciplinary team through our and you will Virtual Threat Manager® retainer program. We can also conduct a comprehensive worksite gap analysis to include a comprehensive policy review to ensure you're in compliance with industry standards and best practices.

**Call us at 1-888-705-1007 for a free consultation.**