



CDSE

Center for Development
of Security Excellence

INSIDER THREAT **JOB AID**



Potential Risk Indicators: Kinetic Violence *What is the “something” we should be looking for?*

The following includes excerpts from a FBI report titled,
“A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2013.”

In 2017 there were 30 separate active shootings in the United States, the largest number ever recorded by the FBI during a one-year period. With so many attacks occurring, it can become easy to believe that nothing can stop an active shooter determined to commit violence. But, there is cause for hope because there is something that can be done. In the weeks and months before an attack, many active shooters engage in behaviors that may signal impending violence. While some of these behaviors are intentionally concealed, others are observable and — if recognized and reported — may lead to a disruption prior to an attack. Unfortunately, well-meaning bystanders (often friends and family members of the active shooter) may struggle to appropriately categorize the observed behavior as malevolent. They may even resist taking action to report for fear of erroneously labeling a friend or family member as a potential killer. Once reported to law enforcement, those in authority may also struggle to decide how best to assess and intervene, particularly if no crime has yet been committed.

We’ve all heard the expression, “If you see something, say something!” But what, exactly is the “something” we should be looking for? In 2014, the FBI published a report titled *A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2013*. Phase II of this study assessed the pre-attack behaviors of the shooters themselves.

On average, each active shooter displayed four to five concerning behaviors over time that were

observable to others around the shooter. Concerning behaviors are observable behaviors exhibited by the active shooter.

The most frequently occurring concerning behaviors were related to the active shooter’s mental health, problematic interpersonal interactions, and talk of violent intent.

For active shooters under age 18, school peers and teachers were more likely to observe concerning behaviors than family members. For active shooters 18 years old and over, spouses/domestic partners were the most likely to observe concerning behaviors.

When concerning behavior was observed by others, the most common response was to communicate directly to the active shooter (83%) or do nothing (54%). In 41% of the cases the concerning behavior was reported to law enforcement. In those cases where the active shooter’s primary grievance could be identified, the most common grievances were related to an adverse interpersonal or employment action against the shooter (49%). But, just because concerning behavior was recognized does not necessarily mean that it was reported to law enforcement. Since the observation of concerning behaviors offers the opportunity for intervention prior to the attack, it’s essential that you can recognize “Concerning Behaviors” and report them to the proper authorities. The goal is to get the person help, before the situation gets out of control.



The FBI Top 21 Concerning Behaviors

1. Mental health
2. Interpersonal interactions
3. Communicating intent to harm someone
4. Quality of thinking or communication
5. Work performance
6. School performance
7. Threats/confrontations
8. Anger
9. Physical aggression
10. Risk-taking
11. Firearm behavior
12. Violent media usage
13. Weight/eating
14. Drug abuse
15. Impulsivity
16. Alcohol abuse
17. Physical health
18. Other (e.g. idolizing criminals)
19. Sexual behavior
20. Quality of sleep
21. Hygiene/appearance



- Active shooters showed, on average, 4.7 concerning behaviors
- At least one person noticed a concerning behavior in every active shooter's life
- On average, people from three different groups noticed concerning behaviors
- Concerning behaviors were noticed via verbal communication by the active shooter (95% of the time)
- Concerning behaviors were observed in the physical actions of the potential active shooter (86% of the time)
- Concerning behavior displayed online was observed (16% of the time)
- Most active shooters (89%) demonstrated concerning behaviors in multiple ways

For further information see the CDSE [Insider Threat eLearning Course](#) and the [Kinetic Violence](#) Tab of the CDSE Insider Threat Toolkit.



If you see something, say something!
Report concerning behaviors to your Insider Threat Program Office