



Schools across the country have recently experienced an increase in threats of violence; some have been called in and some have witnessed threats on social media. These threats may have caused disruptions to school schedules and can create a heightened sense of anxiety for school communities. While never acceptable, the current threats are occurring at a time when many have already experienced a recent trauma or witnessed violence, are struggling with ongoing impacts of COVID-19, and/or racism. When people have experienced these traumas, they become more aware of dangerous situations and have an increased need to keep themselves and those that they love safe. Here are some suggestions to support school communities during this time of heightened anxiety:

- School shootings are very rare, but there is still a need to treat all threats as serious. The phrase “See Something/Say Something” means if you or your family have heard about a concern, notify authorities at school or in your community so they can investigate the concern.
- Talk with your children about what they have heard that is concerning to them including any threats. Listen as they share what they have seen/heard.
 - Acknowledge the feelings you all are having about this information.
 - Let them know what you and the school or community is doing to address the threats.
 - Ask your children if they have lingering safety concerns or are worried about other safety issues. Address these safety concerns accordingly.
- For threats on social media or potential videos of violence being shared (i.e., via Tik Tok, Instagram), encourage the “Take a Break” idea. “Take a Break” means not using social media for a few days, so your children are not watching these upsetting videos. You can also increase parental controls temporarily or discuss ways to block or avoid potentially distressing posts.
- Discuss with your children other messages that they may want to post that are aligned with your family values which might include themes of connection, kindness, or love.
- Consider, as a family, what actions you will take regarding going to school or remaining at home if a threat identifies your children’s school and/or a specific timeframe.
 - If you keep your children home that day, discuss your decision with them. If a special event is happening at school that day (e.g., holiday celebration), find ways to adapt the activity at home or with their peers.
 - If your children do go to school, discuss if there needs to be any adaptations to the routine (e.g., a check in text during the day, remind them of their favorite staff person who can support them while at school, or how to talk with their friends).
- School staff and parents/caregivers are also concerned and may be feeling worried also. During the day, find ways to reset and stay centered (e.g., give a colleague gratitude, do a relaxation activity yourself or with the entire class, or send a text to a loved one).
- Learn what the school is doing to enhance or address safety concerns. If you have additional ideas about how to enhance everyone’s safety in the community, share these with school administrators.
- Reach out to those who might have experienced a trauma to see what supports they may need. Connecting with others and feeling support from others are important ways to help all of us get through these challenging times together.

It is important that we respond to these threats, but we do not want to over-react to them. Finding ways to partner with others to share and develop strategies for maximizing a supportive school culture that prioritizes everyone’s well-being will help create effective solutions for all.

NCTSN has additional resources for schools and addressing trauma <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/creating-trauma-informed-systems/schools>

For those that are needing technical assistance or additional resources, please don’t hesitate to contact Dr. Melissa Brymer at mbrymer@mednet.ucla.edu.