



# On-line Threats/Risks:

Helping kids recognize and act on potentially violent or suicidal situations.

When Violence Becomes Entertaining Conference

Oct 21, 2011 – London



# CONNECTED:

- ◆ Canadian kids are among the most connected in the world
- ◆ Access to information has gone well beyond the home computer/internet, and is now virtually “at hand” on a continual basis
- ◆ While still an issue, password protection, identity theft and web cam concerns have now been joined by sexting, electronic aggression, radicalization, netiquette, suicide chat rooms; the list is endless



## Where are they on-line?

- ◆ More parents/educators/police have grown up with technology
- ◆ We are getting better, but
- ◆ We will never be able to protect our kids 100% of the time
- ◆ They are seeing things which should disturb and frighten
- ◆ Do they know what to do?



## Two Key Issues

- ◆ High-End Violence  
(e.g. school shootings)
- ◆ Suicide



# 10 key findings of the Safe School Initiative

- ◆ Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely sudden impulsive acts
- ◆ Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan
- ◆ Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack
- ◆ There is no accurate or useful “profile” of students who engage in targeted school violence



## 10 Key findings cont'd

- ◆ Most engaged in some prior behaviour which caused concern or indicated a cry for help
- ◆ Most were known to have difficulty coping with significant loss or personal failures. Many had attempted suicide.
- ◆ Many felt bullied, persecuted or injured by others prior to the attack



## 10 Key findings cont'd.

- ◆ Many had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack
- ◆ In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity
- ◆ Despite prompt police response, most shooting incidents end before police arrive





# Lessons learned from Columbine

- ◆ Apr 20, 1999 – Columbine shooting, 15 killed:
  - 12 students, 1 teacher, 2 shooters (suicide)
- ◆ Eric Harris had a website
- ◆ Mar 1998 - Brookes Brown, student found his name on Harris's website, parents went to police
- ◆ Dec 1998 - Devon Adams, student found her name on a hit list on the website and went to the Asst. Principal
- ◆ Reference to “Doom”





## Jokela Finland – Nov 7, 2007

- ◆ 18 year old Pekka-Eric Auvinen - 9 killed:
  - 5 male, 2 female students and female principal, then commits suicide
- ◆ Posted “Jokela high school massacre 11/07/2007” on YouTube, within the two weeks prior to the shooting
- ◆ Posted a rambling manifesto on another website in advance of the shooting



## Red Lake, Minn. - Mar 21, 2005

- ◆ Jeffrey Weise, 16 – killed 10 including:
  - 5 students, 1 teacher, 1 security guard, grandfather, grandfather's girlfriend, self
- ◆ Numerous on-line postings in advance
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> individual charged, not convicted
- ◆ The two were connected via their computers
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> deadliest secondary school incident behind Columbine



## Suicide – quick facts:

- ◆ 24% of all deaths for age group 15-24
- ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for Canadians between 10-24 years of age
- ◆ 73% of hospital admissions for attempted suicide, are for people 15-44 years of age
- ◆ Someone commits suicide on average every 40 seconds globally. In 2000 more died from suicide than armed conflict (300,000+)



## Suicide closer to home

- ◆ Nov 2010, Michael Wilson 11 years old from Oshawa, allegedly mugged, bullied iPhone stolen
- ◆ Michael committed suicide early in Sept 2011, just hours after learning he would have to testify against his attacker
- ◆ Michael's father believes the attack sent his son into a deep depression
- ◆ Matter remains before the courts



## Suicide closer to home cont'd

- ◆ Thurs, Sep 8, 2011 – Hamilton
- ◆ Christopher Howell, 17, called his mother to say he loved her and his father and was going to kill himself, and did so.
- ◆ Suffered from Tourette's syndrome
- ◆ Parents & friends indicate Chris had been bullied for years
- ◆ A close friend said he had been threatened over the summer and it started again on day 1 of school



## .....most recent Suicide

- ◆ Last Saturday Oct 15, 2011
- ◆ 15 year old Jamie Hublely of Ottawa
- ◆ Openly gay
- ◆ Suffered from depression as a result of ongoing and constant bullying
- ◆ Posted last thoughts on his blog





## Suicide - Online

- ◆ Mar 10, 2008 – Carleton student Nadia Kajouji commits suicide (Life Trumps Privacy case)
- ◆ May 4, 2011 – Minnesota nurse William Melchert-Dinkel, 48, convicted of aiding a suicide (2<sup>nd</sup> victim hung himself in 2005)
- ◆ Sentence: 360 days total (180 for each death), must spend anniversary of each death in jail for one day, for next 10 years
- ◆ Posed on-line as a suicidal nurse, encouraging others to hang themselves in view of a web cam while he watched





# Bullying

- ◆ Key factor in many youth suicides
- ◆ An issue in a number (not all) school shootings
- ◆ Not everyone who is bullied commits suicide or resorts to high end violence
- ◆ Cyber-bullying creates additional challenges
- ◆ An on-going societal issue, more needs to be done



# Key Elements in Creating a Safe/Connected School

- ◆ Assessment of the school's emotional climate
- ◆ Emphasis on the importance of listening in schools
- ◆ Prevention of, and intervention in, bullying
- ◆ Involvement of all members of the school community in planning, creating and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect



## Key Elements in Creating a Safe/Connected School (cont'd)

- ◆ Adoption of a strong, but caring stance against the code of silence
- ◆ Developing of trusting relationships between each student and at least one adult at school; and
- ◆ Creation of mechanisms for developing and sustaining safe school climates



# Breaking the Code of Silence

- ◆ Some improvement – kids are reporting more often
- ◆ Freedom High School, North Tampa
- ◆ Aug 2011, tip lead police to the home of 17 year old Jared Cano. Mom consented to a search of his bedroom. Significant planning for a “Columbine style” attack.
- ◆ Thanks to the tip, likely many lives saved.



## Code of Silence cont'd.

Referring back to Elements in Creating Safe Schools:

- ◆ Relationship with trusted adult
- ◆ Strong but caring stance against Code of Silence
- ◆ Emphasis on the importance of listening



# Breaking the Code of Silence?

- ◆ No clear and easy answers
- ◆ Kids need to know that it is not ratting and coming forward may prevent a tragedy
- ◆ Telling someone may save the life of their best friend, favourite teacher, sibling or their own life
- ◆ Multiple avenues for reporting should be made available to youth, including anonymous reporting



# Anonymous Reporting

Crime Stoppers – 3 methods:

- ◆ Phone: 1-800-222-8477
  - ◆ Web tips: [www.tipsubmit.com](http://www.tipsubmit.com)
  - ◆ Text tips: “CRIMES”(274637)
  - ◆ [www.smscrimetips.com](http://www.smscrimetips.com)
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- ◆ Absolutely confidential and cash rewards may be paid
  - ◆ Every school should have a Student Crime Stoppers Program





## Cybertip.ca

- ◆ Canada's National Tipline for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children
- ◆ Report: **Child pornography, Online luring, Child exploitation through prostitution, Traveling to sexually exploit children, Child trafficking**
- ◆ 1-866-658-9022
- ◆ Online at: [www.Cybertip.ca](http://www.Cybertip.ca)
- ◆ Numerous excellent teaching resources



# Kids Help Phone

- ◆ Anonymous & Confidential
- ◆ Phone & Web Counseling for kids under 20
- ◆ Available 24/7
- ◆ 1-800-668-6868
- ◆ [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)
- ◆ Excellent resources for kids, parents and teachers



# Local Anonymous Reporting

- ◆ Some Schools have developed local, anonymous reporting systems
- ◆ Must ensure confidentiality
- ◆ Must be monitored on a regular and frequent basis
- ◆ Many challenges with locally developed systems



# How can we help?

- ◆ Telling someone about a situation or an individual in trouble, is not ratting
- ◆ Ensuring strong support for the reporter, including feedback
- ◆ Protecting the reporter if necessary
- ◆ Ensuring every child has one trusted go-to adult at school
- ◆ Creating a culture where reporting is accepted and expected
- ◆ The Code of Silence is unacceptable



# Keeping our kids & schools safe

- ◆ Next to our homes, our schools should be the safest places for our kids
- ◆ We must be relentless in our pursuit of safe schools and protecting our kids
- ◆ Preventing high end violence and suicide is everyone's business
- ◆ Engaging everyone in the school community, greatly increases the safety and perception of safety in our schools

# Questions/Comments?

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Thank you

