

Fatal Grievances

Committee for Retired Faculty/Osher Lifelong Learning
Institute

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WHO AM I?

- Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology, University of Nebraska (1997)
- Professor in the School of Counseling & Well-Being
- We came to WVU in 2008

FATAL GRIEVANCES

Forecasting and Preventing Active Killer Threats
in School, Campus, and Workplace Settings



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Special thanks to my co-authors:
- Dr. Greg Vecchi
- Dr. Mary Ann Markey

WHY?

WHY?

- Suki
- Columbine



WHAT?

- I've been studying violence prevention since 2001.
 1. Averted School Shootings
 2. School Captive-Takings
 3. GHosT-RAP
 4. LEO Ambushes
 5. Mass (Active) Killers
 6. LEO Suicide

WHAT?

MASS VIOLENCE

- What comes to mind when I say **Mass Violence**?

MASS VIOLENCE

- Maybe
 - Columbine?
 - Uvalde?
 - Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School?
 - The Pulse Nightclub?
 - Las Vegas?

MASS VIOLENCE

- What do all these have in common?
- They were mass *shootings*.

MASS VIOLENCE

- How about
 - Bath, Michigan?
 - Nice, France?
 - Săpoca Hospital, Romania?

MASS VIOLENCE

Location	Fatalities	Injuries	Weapon
Bath, Michigan	44	58	Bombs
Nice, France	86	458	Truck
Săpoca Hospital, Romania	7	6	Metal Infusion Stand

MASS VIOLENCE

- 25% of all mass killings involve the use of something other than a firearm.
- Thus, if we only focus on mass shootings, we miss a large segment of cases.
- We, therefore, study ***Active Killers***.

MASS VIOLENCE

- **Serial Murder**
- **Spree Murder**
- **Mass Murder**

MASS VIOLENCE

- **Motives**

1. Power
2. Loyalty
3. Ideology
4. Profit
5. ***Grievance*** (AKA, Revenge)



ACTIVE KILLER MOTIVES

- Seventy percent of mass shootings take place in schools, campuses, and workplaces
- Most of these are motivated by a **grievance**.

GRIEVANCE

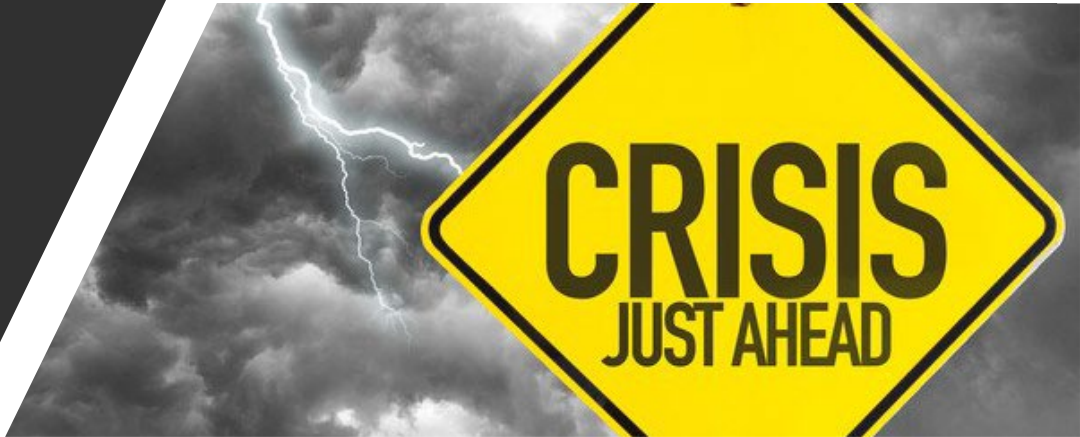
- Normal grievances
- How does a grievance boil over into violence?



Elisabeth Schmitt / Getty Images

INGREDIENTS

- One ingredient is a crisis.
- Another is the person's perceptions/beliefs



PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of
Crisis (Beyond
Ability to Cope +
Nobody Can or
Will Help)



Recent Loss,
Lack of Social
Support, Feeling
Wronged,
and/or Feeling
Persecuted



**FATAL
GRIEVANCE**

THE FATAL GRIEVANCE

- Extensive literature review
- Years of professional experience
- Analyzed 64 cases of completed and averted active school, campus, and workplace killings throughout the world.

BEHAVIOR

BEHAVIORS

- We distinguish between ***direct*** and ***indirect*** behaviors associated with the fatal grievance.

INDIRECT BEHAVIORS

- Examples:
 - Demographics
 - Leakage
 - Mental Illness
 - Background Factors
 - Engagement with Violent Media

INDIRECT BEHAVIORS

- They are *concerning* but not *predictive*.

FOUNDATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS

1. A focus on indirect behaviors is ineffective.
2. Assessment and analysis of detectable behaviors may lead to identification and interventions that prevent an active killing.

FOUNDATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS

3. School, campus, and workplace attacks are predominantly motivated by a **grievance**.
4. Active killers progress along a predictable pathway of escalating detectable behaviors.
5. If we can correctly assess and analyze these behaviors, we can intervene to interrupt the attacker's plans.

DIRECT BEHAVIORS

**We Have Found that
Fatal Grievance =**

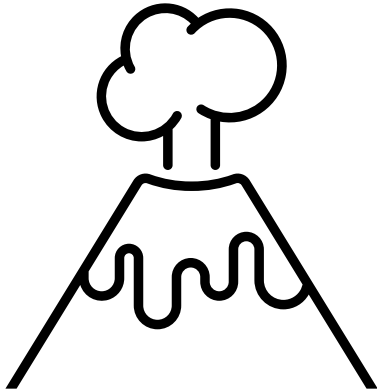
Ideation & Intent

Research & Planning

Preparing & Optimizing

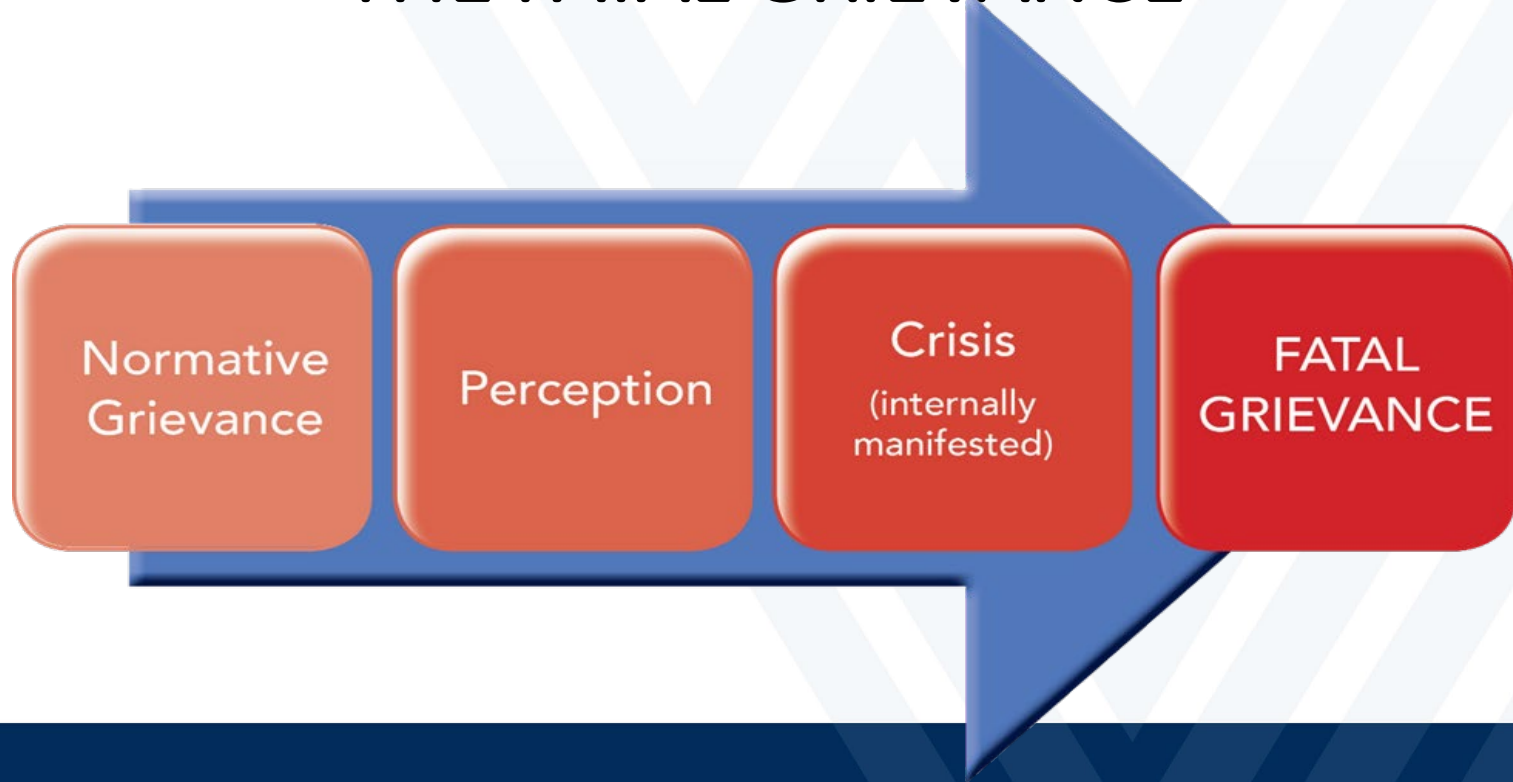
Breaching & Attacking

THE FATAL GRIEVANCE



- So, what is a fatal grievance?

THE FATAL GRIEVANCE



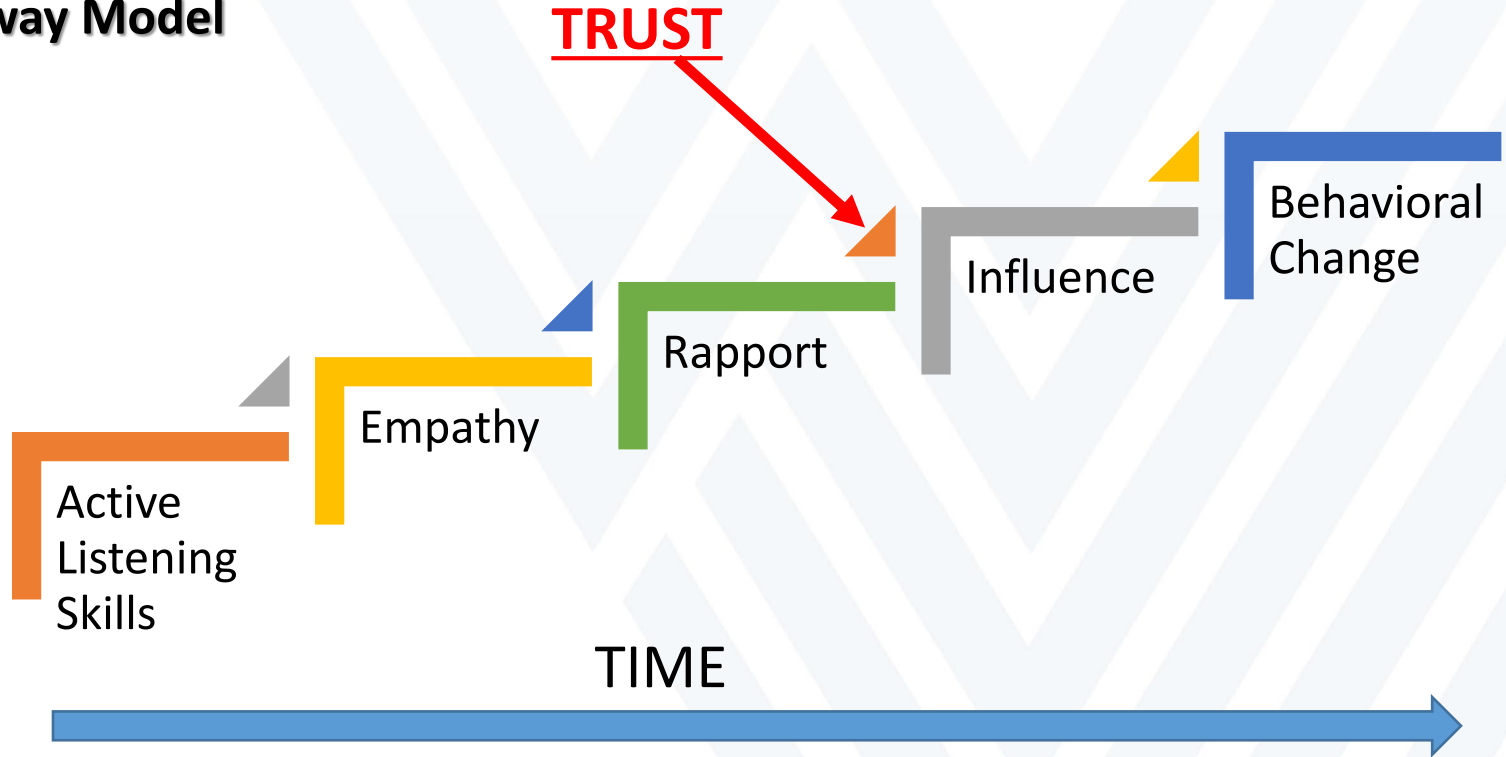
ASSESSMENT

1. Assess baselines and anomalies
2. Seek to gauge the *imminency* and *immediacy* of planned lethal violence.
3. Assess the presence of *direct behaviors*.
4. Assess the presence of *indirect behaviors*.

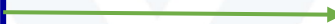
Level of Threat	Fatal Grievance Stage	Interventions
Marginal	No Direct Behavioral Indicators	Informally monitor – watch & wait
Minimal	Fatal Grievance/Crisis	Formally monitored – watch & report
Probable	Violent Ideation/Intent	Informal or formal third-party intermediaries
Imminent	Researching/Planning	Formal third-party intervention or direct intervention
Immediate	Preparing/Optimizing	Direct intervention or alerting first responders

The Behavioral Change Stairway Model

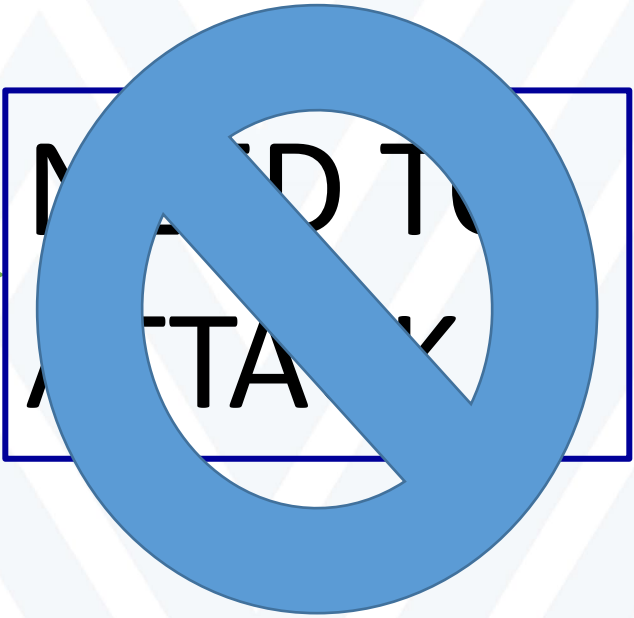
Fuselier & Daniels, 2011



CRISIS



**NEED TO
ATTACK**



WHAT'S NEXT?

NEXT STEPS

- Validation with a larger dataset
- Non-Profit

CONCLUSIONS

- Most mass killers are motivated by a fatal grievance.
- The individual is likely in crisis.
- If we resolve the crisis, the fatal grievance will be, in theory, eliminated.
- Good assessment and analysis are necessary for appropriate intervention.

QUESTIONS?