



School Safety Newsletter

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Study Finds Students Aren't Reporting Suspicious Behaviors

Lincoln Journal Star, July 3, 2016

http://journalstar.com/news/local/911/study-finds-students-aren-t-reporting-suspicious-behaviors/article_51289e32-8851-5994-adac-f2863723b09b.html

The public can help decrease violent crime by reporting suspicious or threatening behavior, but a new study from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln shows many people don't and experts say the failure to do so is a troubling trend among college students.

The study by UNL graduate student and former University of Nebraska Public Policy Center research assistant Brandon Hollister and psychology Professor Mario Scalora takes a comprehensive look at the reporting of pathway behavior and campus safety concerns, as well as the variables that may have affected reasons for reporting.

Scalora said it's important to recognize that even in safe environments, people may exert warning signs which can lead to range of crimes.

"Whether you're talking about low-level crimes or extreme events, in a vast majority of cases, people close to the perpetrator said there were warning signs," he said. "We wanted to learn more about what those signs are and how people view them so we can encourage earlier and quicker reporting."

Hollister surveyed 1,735 undergrads and found they didn't report 87 percent of pathway behaviors, which include stalking, making violent statements or acquiring weapons.

Hollister said they learned something unexpected: The intensity of the behavior didn't factor into how likely a student was to report such behavior but witnesses were more likely to report if they saw multiple types of behavior.

"People might be waiting until they see multiple concerns from one person before they tell authorities, or they don't immediately recognize that these behaviors are related to later violence," he said. "They might see an incident as a one-time deal, but there is an escalation to violence and if someone is doing one thing that is problematic, they're likely doing more."

When examining reasons why the students, who were surveyed anonymously, decided whether to report, the researchers learned that those with more positive feelings toward campus police and who had not observed concerning behavior earlier on campus had a greater willingness to report. Reasons for not doing so included fear of police action and peer loyalty.

"We should recognize that reporting doesn't mean punitive action would happen," Scalora said. "Sometimes it means that person will get the help they need. Secondly, getting (a friend) in trouble is a lot better than other outcomes. It's better to deal with the behavior early on than wait for it to escalate."

Hollister said UNL police are experts at knowing what resources are available for people who are struggling.

"They can refer them to the appropriate services," he said. "That alone can stop something from happening."

Hollister said the study builds on targeted violence research and is one of only a few to look at reporting behaviors before a violent incident.

"I'm focused on what's getting people to report behaviors," he said. "Reporting is often the first step in prevention of these attacks. As so much attention has focused upon the extreme behavior, such as shootings, it is important to know that such behaviors have warning signs."

*Protecting our
future through
information
sharing*

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Former Classmate: Mahin Khan, Man Arrested On Terrorism Charges, Showed Signs of Radicalization

KGUN9, Updated July 5, 2016

<http://www.kgun9.com/news/local-news/exclusive-interview-with-classmate-of-mahin-khan>

TUCSON, AZ (KGUN9-TV) - A former classmate of the man accused of planning to commit acts of terrorism against government buildings in Maricopa and Pima counties says there were signs of trouble. Khan was arrested on July 1, 2016 for planning to commit acts of terrorism in Pima and Maricopa Counties.

The 18-year-old attended Catalina Foothills and that's where his classmate says he saw plenty of warning signs. "We would talk about a global issue or something and he would go and immediately blame Jewish people or anytime he would hear something about the middle east and something America has done there he would become really mad. He would always tell me how much he did not like America," the classmate told KGUN9.

Khan is facing two charges of conspiracy to commit terrorism and terrorism. He is currently in custody of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

Catalina Foothills High School confirmed that Khan was a former student. During his time there he met this man who became one of Khan's only friends. "He was quiet but it was not long before he started to get very strange. He at one point had actually asked to purchase a firearm from me. And I obviously turned him down. Because that's a very weird question," the classmate said.

We then asked the classmate what his reaction was to Khan's request. "I said no dude, that's not how things work," the classmate said. The classmate did not pursue what Khan wanted the firearm for.

"He was very difficult to talk to. He had seemed to have taken me up as a friend and so he was a little more open with me and me and my friend had hung out with him a lot at lunch, trying to help him assimilate into Foothills."

The classmate then told KGUN9 they were only friends for about a month before he had to cut ties. "He started to express some of his political views to me. In person he would, at one point he went as far as to say 'what Hitler did was good. And he told me that he did not like the Jewish people. And that's when I realized he's not a normal person....it was not long after that that he was beginning to tag me on Facebook in these calls to Jihad posts' and stuff for radicalizing Islam."

The classmate described those Facebook posts as being violent and combative. "I immediately blocked him, untagged myself, reported him, distanced myself as much as I could because I knew there was something seriously wrong there," the classmate said.

KGUN9 asked the classmate what his reaction was about a person like Khan living in the area and going to his high school. "I always felt really unsafe after he was gone. People asked if he would come back to Foothills in a more hostile way. I had actually always been somewhat uncomfortable there after it," the classmate said.

The FBI has said there is no credible threat to any Fourth of July activities. The Arizona Attorney General's Office says Khan's court records have been sealed but will re-open sometime this week.

Students Complained About Tucson Terror Suspect

KVOA, July 8, 2016

<http://www.kvoa.com/story/32398891/students-complained-about-tucson-terror-suspect>

TUCSON, AZ – The Catalina Foothills High School principal called the sheriff's department about a teenager arrested for plotting terrorist attacks.

On July 1, Mahin Khan, 18, was arrested in Tucson and booked in the Maricopa County Jail. He is accused of plotting attacks against government buildings in Maricopa and Pima Counties.

At the beginning of the 2013 school year students complained about Khan. They said he used racial slurs against several ethnic groups and stated he did not like Jewish people, according to PCSD reports.

Monthly Webinars!

Normally first
Wednesday of Every
Month at 10 am.

Next Webinar

**Wednesday August
10, 2016**

Each webinar has a round table discussion at the end. Questions are always welcome!

To participate, you must be a vetted member. For more information please email schoolsafety@isp.state.il.us

Students Complained About Tucson Terror Suspect (Continued)

The principal talked to Khan and his mother and learned he had problems at schools in Chandler as well.

After the meeting, students reported Khan said, "Bin Laden was innocent. He only killed 7,000 people." They also said Khan hoped the Taliban killed the American military, and he wanted the SEALs that killed Bin Laden to die, according to the reports.

He did not make any threats against students or the campus.

Shortly after the report Khan withdrew from Catalina Foothills and enrolled in an online school, according to the report.

Orlando Nightclub Shooter Omar Mateen Disciplined Dozens of Times in Grade School, Rejected from College Police Program

NY Daily News, June 16, 2016

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/orlando-nightclub-shooter-disciplined-dozens-times-school-article-1.2675967>

The terrorist who slaughtered 49 people inside a Florida gay bar struggled in school for more than two decades — from an elementary record filled with write-ups for hitting his classmates to his rejection from an intense college law enforcement program last year.

Omar Mateen — who was shot and killed by police after he opened fire on Pulse nightclub in Orlando — was disciplined 31 times between 1992 and 1999 for his disrespectful and sometimes violent behavior, according to his elementary and middle school records, obtained by the Treasure Coast News.

His difficulties in school culminated last spring, when he was denied admittance to Indian River State College's six-month criminal justice program, which prepares students to work as police officers, students told NBC News.

Mateen, who was born in Queens, moved to Florida with his family in 1991 midway through his kindergarten year. He bounced between three different St. Lucie County elementary schools, racking up disciplinary marks on his record at each one.

The young Mateen struggled with English classes — his first language was Farsi, which was spoken at home, records showed — and often lacked attention, his teachers said. One kindergarten instructor wrote he was "basically an intelligent student but does not always follow through with his responsibility."

But by third grade, Mateen's troubles in school grew more violent. He started hitting other students and became verbally abusive to his classmates and his teachers, records showed.

A year later, school officials organized a "student study" team for the difficult Mateen: a teacher, psychologist, guidance counselor and parent met to discuss his continued striking attacks on other students and his habit of screaming at his teachers.

His attention deficient continued to be a problem, and his grades slipped each year, records showed. In the fourth grade, he earned almost all Cs; by fifth grade they had worsened to Ds and Fs, the Treasure Coast News reported.

"Omar needs to apply himself," his fifth-grade teacher wrote in a progress report. "He is capable if he could just stay focused more than 5 minutes."

Middle school wasn't any better for Mateen: In seventh grade, he was still failing reading, language arts, math and science. English classes continued to be a struggle, his teachers said.

"Omar does not suffer from an obvious language deficit," a teacher wrote in a 1999 report after the school organized a "Limited English Proficient" committee meeting for the failing student. "Rather it appears to be language interference in combination with a lack of motivation to perform academic work."

Mateen withdrew from the St. Lucie County middle school in 1999, his eighth grade year, and transferred to the Martin County School District.

The killer eventually earned an applied science degree in criminal justice technology from Indian River State College in 2006, school officials said — but he was rejected from an intensive campus criminal program years later.

In spring 2015, Mateen attempted to enroll in the college's "Academy Track," which prepares students work as law enforcement officials through a six-month hands-on study. Several current students and teachers told NBC News that his application had been rejected, but did not say why.

"To think that I could have been sitting beside him in class just blows my mind, you know? It's scary to think about," said 18-year-old student Mike Brown.

Mateen's dad also confirmed that his son had applied for the police program. "I worked very hard to put him in the police academy," Saddique Mir Mateen told NBC.

Screen Violence -- Real and Fictional -- Harmful for Kids, Experts Say

Mia Ray Langheim

School Intelligence

Officer

CNN, July 18, 2016

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/18/health/screen-violence-children/index.html>

Dead bodies. Bloodied faces. Tears. Terror.

Those are just some of the things that children see when they view news coverage of violent events, such as the truck attack in Nice, France, on Thursday.

Screen violence -- which includes violence in video games, television shows and movies -- is associated with aggressive behavior, aggressive thoughts and angry feelings in children, according to a policy statement released by the American Academy of Pediatrics early Monday.

"Screen violence, particularly when it is real but even if it is virtual, is quite traumatic for children regardless of age," said Dr. Dimitri Christakis, director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at Seattle Children's Research Institute and lead author of the statement.

"It is not uncommon to see increases in nightmares, sleep disturbances and increased general anxiety in the wake of these events. While it is true that the horrific events of this past week can happen at any time, the real risk to individuals remains low," he said. "Children need [that] reassurance."

For the statement, which was published in the journal *Pediatrics*, Christakis and colleagues reviewed and summarized more than a dozen studies and meta-analyses about the effects of virtual violence and aggression on children's attitudes and behaviors. They defined virtual violence as forms of violence experienced or witnessed virtually on a screen.

After the review, the statement authors made specific recommendations for doctors, parents, the media industry and policy makers to better prohibit easy access to violent media for young children.

"Parents should be mindful of their children's media diet and reduce virtual violence especially if their child shows any aggressive tendencies," Christakis said.

During a time of much conflict in the news, Christakis advises parents to reassure their children that there are still mostly good people in the world. He recommends that parents show children stories of people helping each other, and not hurting each other.

"We have done research showing that such events frighten children," said Brad Bushman, professor of communication and psychology at Ohio State University, who was not involved in the new statement.

The statement authors also called for the federal government to oversee the development of its own media rating system, rather than relying on the entertainment industry's rating of violent content in video games, movies and television.

"We know from hundreds of studies on thousands of children that there is a link between 'virtual violence' and real-world aggression," Christakis said. "On average, the effect is in what we would deem the small to moderate range, but equivalent to the link between passive smoke exposure and lung cancer -- something that municipalities have reacted to by enacting non-smoking ordinances."

Christakis is quick to point out that there are benefits when children consume nonviolent media. For instance, he led a 2013 study that found that prosocial and educational screen time -- including television and video games -- can significantly enhance social and emotional competence in children.

What do other scientists think of the new statement? Dr. Douglas Gentile, a professor of psychology at Iowa State University who has studied screen time and children, said the new statement suggests that often it's not the quantity of media but the quality that can influence aggression in children.

"Often, there are people who like to take extreme positions. Either the studies show games are creating a generation of shooters, which the science does not support, or they say there is no evidence that there are harmful effects, which the science also doesn't support," Gentile said.

"It is important to have our public health organizations do these types of reviews so the public can cut through all of that opinion out there," he said. "Everyone has an opinion, but not all opinions are supported by the science."



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