

# KNOW THE SIGNS



January 2025



## Pinpointing Signs of Gun Violence

In 2024, the United States saw 112 school shootings with victims that were injured or killed, according to the [Gun Violence America \(GVA\)](#) database. In most cases there are signs leading up to these events. Shockingly, in 4 out of 5 school shootings, one or more people have seen signs of violence and failed to report them.

In this blog we will discuss the early warning signs of violent ideations. There are many behavioral and emotional indicators that might mean that a youth is at a higher risk to commit violence. Identifying these signs and reporting them is key in protecting your community.

However, it is important to note that these signs, on their own, are not a prediction of gun violence. Rather, they are red flags for further analysis and intervention. Some children will show these signs and never commit a violent act. Similarly, may never show these signs but will engage in violence. For this reason, Safe Harbor encourages consultation with licensed and trained professionals .

### Warning signs of youth Violence:

Withdraw

Bullying

Expression of Violence

Intolerance of Differences

Excessive Irritability

Social Isolation

Patterns of Violence

Victim of Violence

Access to weapons

Serious Threats

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## SIGNS



### Isolation and Withdrawal

Excessive loneliness and rejection can be a painful experience, especially in adolescent development. Though this is normal, feeling isolated can lead some children to aggression. They then often seek support from similarly aggressive peers to reinforce their emotions.



### Bullying

Being singled out and picked on excessively can cause an individual to withdraw. They often feel alone and unwelcome.

Similarly, victims of bullying and violence tend to do the same bullying and violence to others. This is especially common in victims of bullying at home.



### Expression of Violence

Children often express their emotions through drawings and stories. Listen and pay attention to the children around you.

Many children will express violent ideations in their drawings. Over time, this can signal a problem.



### Intolerance of Differences

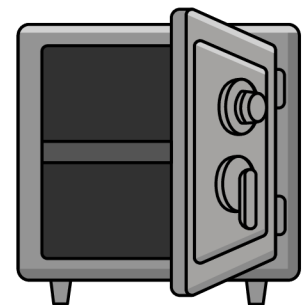
Expressing prejudice towards others can be a warning sign of violent acts. Hate based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, or appearance can lead to violence against such groups if combined with other signs.



### Excessive Irritability

Getting upset and frustrated is a normal emotion. It becomes excessive when the anger is extremely frequent and over mild irritants.

This can be a sign of a deeper anger that can manifest into violence.



### Access to Weapons

Inappropriate access to firearms can increase the risk of violence. Research shows having access to firearms increases the risk of firearm violence. Families can reduce the risk by restricting and monitoring the child's access. Restricted access to weapons can aid anyone when they are in an impulsive and emotional situation.

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## Signs



## Pattern of Violence and Cruelty

Past history of violence and aggression is a key indicator. This can manifest in a variety of actions.

An early pattern of violence can be impulsive hitting, chronic pushing, intimidation, and bullying. This aggression can also manifest into more intense patterns of violence. Children who engage or express interest in animal cruelty can lack a natural sense of empathy.

Similarly, behaviors such as lying, stealing, cheating, self harm, vandalism, and fire starting are red flags. Without proper intervention by both experts and trusted adults, these behaviors can lead to violence in adolescence.

## Witness or Victim of Violent Acts

People who have experienced violence growing up are more likely to act violently in their own lives. There are many examples of this:

- A child witnessing parents be abusive to each other
- A child witnessing an assault
- A child being physically or mentally abused
- A child being sexually assaulted
- A child who has experienced sex trafficking



## Serious Threats of Violence

Making minor idle threats is a normal response to daily stressors. The key is to know the difference between an idle threat and a serious threat. A serious threat is often a detailed specific threat to use violence. This can include dates, times, places, names, and weapons. Threats like these should be reported, especially when combined with the signs discussed above.



## Now that we have learned the signs, how do you know when to intervene?

Education of warning signs is the first step to a safer community. There are many identifying signs of school violence, but the most important thing is context. Use your best instincts when determining best steps.

### **DO NO HARM**

“Do No Harm” is a practice that focuses on identifying warning signs without inflaming the situation. It is important that the individuals do not feel further isolated or punished because they show warning signs. The goal is not to predict school violence; rather to identify people who are struggling. By doing this, the child can receive the support they need. Support can vary depending on the child and warning signs.

### **REPORTING SIGNS OF VIOLENCE**

Options include reporting to school administrators, counselors, psychologists. Outside school options include reporting to your local non emergency line, or in life threatening situations, calling 911.

### **IMMEDIATE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

For immediate mental health support, there are numerous helplines available to the public:

[998 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#): speak with a trained counselor for any issue.

[HOPELINE](#): Text 741741 to connect with a trained counselor for any issue.

[Disaster Distress Helpline](#): Call (800)985-5990 to speak with a trained counselor about natural or human caused disasters

[County Crisis Lines](#): Each county in Wisconsin offers a crisis line that can be called to speak with mental health professionals. **Full list of Counties with Numbers are listed below.**

Information Provided By:

*Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools* published by the U.S. Department of Education.  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Crisis Services: Someone to Contact

# WISCONSIN COUNTY CRISIS LINES

**Ashland County**  
866-317-9362

**Adams County**  
888-552-6642

**Barron County**  
888/552-6642

**Bayfield County**  
866-317-9362

**Buffalo County**  
888-552-6642

**Brown County**  
920-436-8888

**Burnett County**  
888-552-6642

**Calumet County**  
920-849-1400 (business hours)  
920-849-9317 (after business hours)  
920-832-4646 (after business hours)

**Chippewa County**  
888-552-6642

**Clark County**  
800-863-3560

**Columbia County**  
888-552-6642

**Crawford County**  
888-552-6642 (after business hours)

**Dane County**  
608-280-2600

**Dodge County**  
920-386-4094 (business hours)  
888-552-6642 (after business hours)

**Door County**  
920-746-2588

**Douglas County**  
715-392-8216  
715-395-2259

**Dunn County**  
888-552-6642

**Eau Claire County**  
888-552-6642

**Florence County**  
866-317-9362

**Fond du Lac County**  
920-929-3535

**Forest County**  
888-299-1188

**Grant County**  
800-362-5717

**Green County**  
888-552-6642

**Green Lake County**  
920-294-4070 (business hours)  
920-294-4000 (after business hours)

**Iowa County**  
800-362-5717

**Iron County**  
866-317-9362

**Jackson County**  
888-552-6642

**Jefferson County**  
920-674-3105 (business hours)

**Juneau County**  
608-847-2400 (business hours)  
800-777-7386 (after business hours)

**Kenosha County**  
262-657-7188  
800-236-7188

**Kewaunee County**  
866-317-9362

**La Crosse County**  
608-784-4357

**Lafayette County**  
888-552-6642

**Langlade County**  
715-845-4326  
715-848-4600  
800-799-0122

**Lincoln County**  
715-845-4326  
715-848-4600  
800-799-0122

**Manitowoc County**  
920-683-4230 (business hours)  
888-552-6642 (after business hours)

**Marathon County**  
715-845-4326  
715-848-4600  
800-799-0122

**Marinette County**  
715-732-7760 (business hours)  
888-552-6642 (after business hours)

**Marquette County**  
888-552-6642

**Menominee County**  
715-799-3861

**Milwaukee County**  
414-257-7222

**Monroe County**  
888-552-6642

**Oconto County**  
920-834-7000

**Oneida County**  
888-299-1188

**Outagamie County**  
920-832-4646

**Ozaukee County**  
877-375-4043

**Pepin County**  
888-552-6642

**Pierce County**  
888-552-6642

**Polk County**  
888-552-6642

**Portage County**  
866-317-9362

**Price County**  
866-317-9362

**Racine County**  
262-638-6741

**Richland County**  
888-552-6642

**Rock County**  
608-757-5025

**Rusk County**  
888-636-6655  
715-532-2299

**Sauk County**  
800-533-5692 (business hours)  
888-552-6642 (after business hours)

**Sawyer County**  
888-317-9362

**Shawano County**  
715-526-3240

**Sheboygan County**  
920-459-3151

**St. Croix County**  
888-552-6642

**Taylor County**  
866-317-9362

**Trempealeau County**  
888-552-6642

**Vernon County**  
888-552-6642

**Vilas County**  
888-299-1188

**Walworth County**  
262-741-3200  
800-365-1587

**Washburn County**  
888-860-0373

**Washington County**  
262-365-6565

**Waukesha County**  
262-548-7666 (business hours)

**Waupaca County**  
800-719-4418

**Waushara County**  
920-787-6618 (business hours)  
920-787-3321 (after business hours)

**Winnebago County**  
920-233-7707

**Wood County**  
888-552-6642