December 2023 Newsletter





The Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation at Western Connecticut State University is funded from appropriations through the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the Office of Higher Education.





Center's Website

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The Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation formed in 2021 from an agreement between the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Western Connecticut State University. The Center provides professional development related to all aspects of school safety planning, and it conducts research on prevention, crisis, safety, and trauma related to students and schools. The Center also establishes relationships among area school districts and community stakeholders to create both formal and informal networks. Moreover, the Center provides consultation and on-site support to school districts. This newsletter provides a venue for the Center to become a clearinghouse for school safety related trainings, meetings, research, and resources.



Dear School Safety Partners,

It is amazing to think that the Center is approaching its two year anniversary. I am proud to report on the accomplishments that our team, along with our many partners have achieved:



- We established four additional **Regional Crisis Teams (RCT)** providing coverage across the state.
- The RCT were deployed ten times to support school districts.
- Staff from the Center provided over 80 direct consultations to school districts on school safety related issues.
- We now have over 3,000 subscribers to our monthly Newsletter.
- The Center completed two research studies and will soon release the findings of our Weapons in CT Schools research report.
- Our team and partners have provided low-cost/no-cost professional development to over 1,800 participants from over 100 municipalities.
- We worked collaboratively to form a Multidisciplinary and Multiagency Working Group on Preventing Targeted Violence in Schools that has created swatting guidance, and provided insight into our strategic planning.
- Our team was awarded a Department of Homeland Security grant to expand and enhance the capacity for all schools across the state of Connecticut to become better prepared to manage school-related threats.

As we bring this calendar year to a close, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a safe New Year!

Amery

Amery Bernhardt, D.M.

Director CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation



RESOURCES

Webinar from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention -

Recognizing Gang Activity in Schools | National Gang Center (ojp.gov).

This webinar presents formal and informal techniques to recognize signs of gang activity in a school setting. **The insights shared in this session are integral to our responsibilities as School Resource Officers**.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Resources

Bullying Prevention Strategies and Resources for K-12 Schools

This infographic includes an overview of bullying; strategies for schools to consider to help identify, prevent, and address bullying; and bullying and cyberbullying resources available through SchoolSafety.gov. **Dealing with Cyberbullies**

This webpage provides an overview of what cyberbullying is, why it has become such a problem, and how to protect your children from it.

School Climate Resources

Exploring Equity Issues: Introduction to Trauma-Informed Classrooms: Inclusive Learning Strategies for Educators

This guide provides background on trauma and student trauma, offers recommendations on practices educators can use to create safe learning environments, and suggests resources for additional strategies. **Safe and Supportive Environments**

This webpage provides an overview on creating safe and supportive school environments and includes information on strengthening school staff capacity, increasing student access to programs and services, and engaging parents and community partners.

Additional School Safety Resources

The NASSP Principal Recovery Network Guide to Recovery

This guide is a collection of personal best practices and practical advice from principals and assistant principals who led schools in recovery after a shooting.

School Tip Line Toolkit: A Blueprint for Implementation and Sustainability

This resource is designed to help educators, law enforcement professionals, community leaders, and school safety experts navigate key decisions and consider the factors necessary to support successful and efficient tip line implementation as part of an overall school safety strategy.

School**Safety**.gov

For more school safety resources, please check out SchoolSafety.gov

SchoolSafety.gov was created by the federal government to provide schools and districts with

actionable recommendations to create a safe and supportive learning environment where students can thrive and grow.

Read More

RESEARCH

Research:

TDR Technology Solutions completed research identifying how school threats are impacting U.S. schools. These threats included bomb threats, and related swatting type threats. According to their data, school threats averaged 29 threats per month for three years until 2021. In September of 2021, the number of threats increased to 151. They have seen a steady increase in threats over the past two years. In September of 2023, there were 436 threats. As the number of threats has increased, the number of students impacted has increased and the lost education time has increased. In October of 2023, 655,642 students were impacted and 923,130 instructional hours were lost. Their complete reports can be accessed on the resources page of their website.

Op-Ed: The rise in school shooting threats is a cry for help - Los Angeles Times (latimes.com)



School Threats Per Month

Meetings - Please look for meetings in your Region.



Region 1 Gambling Awareness Team consists of community stakeholders working toward raising awareness and developing prevention and treatment capacity in the region. We host gambling awareness trainings and webinars. The team meets quarterly to review gambling trends, needs, gaps, and access to treatment.

- *When:* 2nd Tuesday of the month, Quarterly; from 2:30-4pm (1/9/24 Teams Meeting, March no meeting to celebrate PGAM, 4/9/24 Teams Meeting, 6/11/24 In person at The Burroughs Community Center)
- *Where:* Virtually
- Who Should Attend: Meetings are open to all.
- *RSVP to* **Dena Miccinello** by emailing **Dmiccinello@ryasap.org** for the meeting link and with any questions or comments.

The DEMHS Region 2 School Safety & Security Group Meeting

- When: 12/20 from 2:30-3:30pm
- Where: Virtual
- *Who Should Attend:* This meeting is for Administrators, Facility Directors, Business Officials, SRO's, Security Personnel, Emergency Management Personnel, Mental Health Professionals, Technology Leaders, etc.
- As always, we ask others to share this great networking opportunity with all of their school safety partners. Please share my contact information as well.
- Those who are interested in being part of our group are encouraged to email their contact information to **Jeff Nielsen** at **Jnielsen@milforded.org**. Group membership includes receiving correspondence related to meeting announcements and information related to school safety/security.

The DEMHS Region 3 Capitol Emergency Management Meeting

- When: 12/14 from 1-2:30pm (12/14, 3/28)
- Where: In-Person
- *Who Should Attend:* This meeting is for Administrators, Facility Directors, Business Officials, SRO's, Security Personnel, Emergency Management Personnel, Mental Health Professionals, Technology Leaders, etc.
- *RSVP* to Claudia Nardi at Cnardi@cantonschools.org or call 860-693-7704 if you plan on attending or sending a representative.

The DEMHS Region 4 ESF5 School Safety Sub-Committee

- *When: 01/03* from 9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m.
- *Where:* Hybrid (Both Zoom and In-Person) In-Person held at East Lyme Public Safety Complex located at 277 West Main Street, Niantic, CT.
- *Who Should Attend:* For those organizations within Region 4's territory: Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Mansfield, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old

Lyme, Plainfield, Pomfret, Preston, Putnam, Salem, Scotland, Sprague, Sterling, Stonington, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Waterford, Willington, Windham, Woodstock. Attendance/membership for this group could include, but not be limited to: Any school staff who are responsible for school safety planning in their districts; SROs; Emergency Managers; Public Safety Chiefs/Department Heads; Public Health Officials; any others with vested interest.

- *If you are interested in attending:* pls. send an email with your interest to **Julie C. Wilson** at **Jwilson@eastlymepolice.org** in order to be added to the meeting email distribution list, and to receive the Zoom Link.
- *Please save the dates* for future School Safety Subcommittee meetings. All meetings will be held 9:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. and will be Hybrid on Zoom and In-Person. Meetings: 2/7/24, 3/6/24, 4/3/24, 5/1/24, 6/5/24

Newly formed - <u>DEMHS School Reunification Planning Committee</u> (Note: meets (hybrid) immediately after the Region 4 ESF5 School Safety Sub-Committee Meeting)

- *When: 01/03* from 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.
- *Where:* Hybrid (Both Zoom and In-Person) In-Person held at East Lyme Public Safety Complex located at 277 West Main Street, Niantic, CT.
- Who Should Attend: For those organizations within Region 4's territory: Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Mansfield, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Plainfield, Pomfret, Preston, Putnam, Salem, Scotland, Sprague, Sterling, Stonington, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Waterford, Willington, Windham, Woodstock. Attendance/membership for this group could include, but not be limited to: Any school staff who are responsible for school safety planning in their districts; SROs; Emergency Managers; Public Safety Chiefs/Department Heads; Public Health Officials; any others with vested interest.
- *If you are interested in attending:* pls. send an email with your interest to **Julie C. Wilson** at **Jwilson@eastlymepolice.org** in order to be added to the meeting email distribution list, and to receive the Zoom Link.
- *Please save the dates* for future School Reunification Planning Committee Meetings. All meetings will be held 10:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m. and will be Hybrid on Zoom and In-Person. Meetings: 2/7/24, 3/6/24, 4/3/24, 5/1/24, 6/5/24

The DEMHS Region 5 School Safety and Security Working Group

- *When:* 1/25 from 11:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.
- *Where:* Virtually
- The mission of this group is to provide a school safety and security network consisting of school resources who can share lessons learned and quality information pertaining to maintaining a safe and secure environment for our schools.
- *If you are interested in attending:* please email **John Field** at **John.field@ct.gov**.
- *Please save the dates* for future School Safety and Security Working Group Meetings: 1/25/24, 2/22/24, 3/2/24, 4/25/24, 5/23/24, 6/27/24.

The Western Regional Crisis Team Meetings (covering RESC regions of EdAdvance & CES)

- When: 12/12 from 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.
- At our next meeting, our topic will be "Building a Student Advocacy Team.
- Where: Virtually via Zoom

- *Who Should Attend:* These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals servicing our K-12 students.
- For more information or to join the Team: please email Tanya Iacono at Iaconot@wcsu.edu.
- Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 1/23/24, 2/13/24, 3/12/234, 4/23/24, 5/14/24, 6/4/24 Planning Meeting.

The ACES Regional Crisis Team Meeting

- *When:* 12/21 from 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.
- At this meeting, **Thea Korythoski**, from DCF will be presenting on Child Trafficking.
- Where: Virtually via Zoom
- *Who Should Attend:* These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals servicing our K-12 students.
- For more information or to join the Team: please email Sadie Witherspoon at Witherspoons@wcsu.edu.
- Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 1/18/24, 2/15/24, 3/21/24, 4/18/24, 5/16/24.

The North Central Regional Crisis Team Meeting (Covering RESC Capitol Region Education Council)

- When: 12/13 from 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.
- At this Virtual meeting, our guest speaker will be **Amanda Pickett** from CT State Department of Education will be conducting a Discussion of the Restorative Practices Response Policy for the school year commencing July 1, 2025, and each school year thereafter, Section 74 of Public Act 23-167 requires each board of education to adopt a restorative practices response policy to be implemented by school employees for incidents of challenging behavior or student conflict that is nonviolent and does not constitute a crime. In addition, she will also be talking about addressing challenging behaviors and crisis response.
- Where: Zoom Link, Meeting ID: 870 9664 2732, Passcode: 856200
- *Who Should Attend:* These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals servicing our K-12 students.
- For more information or to join the Team : please email Kimberly Myers at Myersk@wcsu.edu.
- Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 1/10/24.

The Northeastern Regional Crisis Team Meetings (EASTCONN RESC region)

- This team will meet jointly with the Southeastern Regional Crisis team.
- When: 12/13 from 9:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.
- Where: Virtually via Zoom
- *Towns:* Andover, Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, Franklin, Griswold, Hampton, Hebron, Killingly, Lebanon, Lisbon, Mansfield, Marlborough, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sprague, Stafford, Sterling, Thompson, Tolland, Union, Voluntown, Woodstock, Willington, Windham
- *Who Should Attend:* These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals supporting our K-12 students.
- For more information or to join the Team: please email Kiley Young at Youngki@wcsu.edu
- Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 1/10/24, 2/14/24, 3/13/24, 4/17/24, 5/8/24, June planning meeting date TBD.

The Southeastern Regional Crisis Team Meetings (LEARN RESC region)

- This team will meet jointly with the Northeastern Regional Crisis team.
- When: 12/13 from 9:00 a.m. -10:30am
- Where: Virtually via Zoom
- *Towns:* Chester, Clinton, Deep River, East Haddam, East Hampton, East Lyme, Essex, Groton, Guilford, Haddam, Killingworth, Ledyard, Lyme, Madison, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Preston, Salem, Stonington, Waterford, Westbrook
- *Who Should Attend:* These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals supporting our K-12 students.
- For more information or to join the Team: please email Kiley Young at Youngki@wcsu.edu
- Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 1/10/24, 2/14/24, 3/13/24, 4/17/24, 5/8/24, June planning meeting date TBD.

CT Center for School Safety Training

Our goal is to make trainings accessible to all Connecticut schools, so our trainings are low cost. However, because we do not want cost to be a barrier, we offer scholarships for individuals and districts who are unable to afford training costs.

December 14, 2023 | Digital and Social Media Threat Virtual Training

Session from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Presented by **TFC James White**, CT State Police and CT Statewide D.A.R.E. Coordinator. (**bio**) This is the second of our quarterly **Free** training sessions that will focus on digital / social media threats and concerning behavior. There will be an in-depth discussion on the latest trends in student social media use and an exploration of high-risk apps and trends in online misbehavior. There will also be an opportunity for networking with federal, state, and local partners to help build the digital / social media knowledge base and plan for information sharing across the state of CT. This training is appropriate for anyone involved in school safety including but not limited to educators, administrators, mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, security, facility managers and school resource officers.

Additional Trainings and Events

- December 5, 2023 | <u>Getting to the Heart of Youth Transformation—Creating</u> <u>Pathways for Youth Involvement in Violence Reduction Efforts</u>. Hosted by: The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This webinar will feature programs that have intentionally engaged youth perspective and involvement in the strategic planning and development of youth violence reduction strategies.
- **December 6, 2023** | <u>Preventing Mass Attacks in Our Communities</u>. Hosted by: The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center. In this virtual training event, NTAC researchers discuss important findings from our research on mass attacks perpetrated in public and semi-public spaces, including businesses,

restaurants, bars, retail outlets, houses of worship, schools, open spaces, and more. This training will provide guidance on how communities may develop or improve existing violence prevention programs utilizing a behavioral threat assessment model. **Intended Audience:** Law enforcement and other community stakeholders.

• December 6, 2023 | Lessons from the Field - Free to Learn Miniseries: Creating a Welcoming Environment. Hosted by: National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. The Free to Learn Miniseries offers webinars focusing on evidence-based practices to prevent, address, and ameliorate the effects of bullying, violence and hate while also supporting school safety, schoolbased mental health, and positive school climates. This series will provide these strategies at the key moments in a student and family's school experience as they: enter the school or classroom, engage with learning and extracurricular activities, navigate circumstances that might result in differences of opinion or conflict, and utilize various supports and opportunities to enhance their school experiences and academic achievement.

• December 7, 2023 | Empowering People Working with Youth to Understand and Prevent Racism. Hosted by: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention National Training and Technical Assistance Center (OJJDP NTTAC). This webinar will discuss the history of racism in the United States and how it drives some individuals to commit acts of hate and identity-based bullying against African Americans. The webinar will provide participants with strategies to communicate effectively with youth about racism, mitigate hate and bias-based bullying, and create a positive culture and future for all youth.

• December 12, 2023 | <u>School Mental Health Virtual Learning Series:</u> <u>Strengths-Based Holistic Approaches to Youth Mental Health</u>. *Hosted by: Central East Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, National Center for School Mental Health*. This virtual learning series will focus on advancing high quality, sustainable school mental health from a multi-tiered system of support, traumainformed, culturally responsive, and equitable lens.

• December 13, 2023 | Lessons from the Field - Free to Learn Miniseries: Creating a Welcoming Environment. Hosted by: National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. The Free to Learn Miniseries offers webinars focusing on evidence-based practices to prevent, address, and ameliorate the effects of bullying, violence and hate while also supporting school safety, schoolbased mental health, and positive school climates. This series will provide these strategies at the key moments in a student and family's school experience as they: enter the school or classroom, engage with learning and extracurricular activities, navigate circumstances that might result in differences of opinion or conflict, and utilize various supports and opportunities to enhance their school experiences and academic achievement.

• January 9, 2024 | Foundations of Trauma-Informed Care. Hosted by: CREC RESC Alliance. This foundational module is part of the UPLIFT Trauma-Informed Care Practice Series. This Free In-Person training module is designed to offer all school-based personnel a basic understanding of the prevalence of trauma and trauma-informed care practices at all tiers, from universal practices to individualized supports. To Learn More about the UPLIFT Trauma-Informed Care Practice Series, please see Flyer.

- January 9, 2024 | Enhancing School Safety Using Behavioral Threat Assessment Hosted by: The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). In this Virtual training event, NTAC researchers highlight the key findings and implications from our research on school violence prevention. In this training, you will learn about the background, thinking, and behavior of school attackers and how some schools discovered and stopped plots before violence occurred. This training will provide guidance on how schools may develop or improve existing violence prevention programs utilizing a behavioral threat assessment model.
 Intended Audience: School teachers, administrators, counselors, mental health professionals, school resource officers (SROs), law enforcement officers, and other school safety stakeholders.
- January 29-February 9, 2024 | <u>CT D.A.R.E. Officer Training</u> Hosted by: The Connecticut State Police D.A.R.E. Unit. Applications are now being accepted for the CT D.A.R.E. Officer Training. Classes will begin January 29, 2024, and end on February 9, 2024 (Monday-Friday only) Candidates must be available to attend all ten days of training. Spots are Limited. Interested applicants should submit an application through their Chief Executive Training Officer, to the CT State Police D.A.R.E. Unit. See Flyer and Application. If you have any questions, please contact TFC James White #1343 (ctdare@ct.gov). Applications should be sent in no later than 12/29/23. Applicants must be a Certified Police Officer, have at least two years of Police experience, and a strong desire to work with school aged children. Upon completion of the course each candidate will be certified to teach the K-12 curricula.
- February 5, 2024 | Preventing Mass Attacks in Our Communities -Sponsored by The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). In this Virtual training event, NTAC researchers discuss important findings from our research on mass attacks perpetrated in public and semi-public spaces, including businesses, restaurants, bars, retail outlets, houses of worship, schools, open spaces, and more. This training will provide guidance on how communities may develop or improve existing violence prevention programs utilizing a behavioral threat assessment model. Intended Audience: Law enforcement, corporate security, mental health professionals, faith-based community leaders, university faculty, threat assessment team members, and other community safety stakeholders.
- <u>Recognizing Gang Activity in Schools</u> | National Gang Center (ojp.gov)- Hosted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This webinar presents formal and informal techniques to recognize signs of gang activity in a school setting. The insights shared in this session are integral to our responsibilities as School Resource Officers.
- Incident Command System (ICS) in Schools An Overview of ICS for Connecticut School Systems - sponsored by the State of CT Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security. This program is designed to introduce you or re-introduce the concepts of ICS and how they apply to school systems in Connecticut. The program will also cover several resources available to schools. The course is generally delivered as a **2-hour in-person program**. Please see <u>Flyer</u> for more information.

If you have any questions, please contact DEMHS Training Points of Contact: **Michael Paradis**, Trainer, email: **Michael.Paradis@CT.Gov**

Free UPLIFT Trauma-Informed Care Trainings



What is UPLIFT?

UPLIFT is a trauma-informed care (TIC) training program created by the RESC Alliance and designed for schools interested in individualized guidance on how to strategically embed TIC practices into their existing protocols and tiered supports. UPLIFT offers nine different training modules, hands-on consultation, progress monitoring, and train-thetrainer programming.

What can I expect from an UPLIFT Workshop?

Standalone training does not always lead to implementation, but it does foster awareness and professional growth. Each workshop offers information pertaining to one key area of TIC, and each allows participants to explore strategies that support the reduction of trauma responses in students, staff, and families.

For more information on UPLIFT

or how you, your school, or your district can receive support, contact Dr. Diana Perry at <u>diperry@crec.org</u> or complete our Interest Form at www.crec.org/c/UPLIFT



Foundations of Trauma-Informed Care

This module is designed to offer all schoolbased personnel a basic understanding of the prevalence of trauma and traumainformed care practices at all tiers, from universal practices to

individualized supports.

IN-PERSON | Tuesday, January 9, 2024 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. | CREC Central

Click here to register

Harnessing Resilience Through Peer Support

This module focuses on steps for building trauma-informed peer support programs that build on shared experiences and foster mutually supportive relationships amongst students, staff, and caregivers. VIRTUAL | Tuesday, February 13, 2024 8 – 10 a.m. | Zoom

Click here to register

TIC in Practice - Combo Workshop #1: Fostering a Sense of Safety & Prioritizing Trustworthiness & Transparency

Participants will learn about the key components of physical and psychological safety as well as ways to strengthen these critical domains of well-being. Participants also explore how effective communication and a commitment to transparent decision-making are essential in establishing a school climate that supports all individuals (students, staff, and families).

IN-PERSON | Tuesday, March 12, 2024 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. | CREC Central



TIC in Practice - Combo

Workshop #2: Cultural Humility: Unpacking & Addressing Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues; & Empowerment, Voice & Choice for All

Participants will explore the impacts of educational and social inequities on students. Also included is an explanation of cultural humility and a review of Cultural Responsive Teaching strategies that foster inclusivity.

IN-PERSON | Tuesday, April 9, 2024 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. | CREC Central

Click here to register

Taking Steps Toward Collaboration & Mutuality

In this module, participants will explore the nuances and many variables that exist when implementing collaboration strategies aimed at students, staff, caregivers, or community members. VIRTUAL | Tuesday, May 14, 2024

8 – 10 a.m. | Zoom

Click here to register

All UPLIFT Workshops are free.

In-person events take place at 111 Charter Oak Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106, in rooms 101 & 102. You can view all the descriptions and register at <u>www.crec.org/events</u>

Contacts



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CONTRIBUTE to our NEWSLETTER

If you have content such as meetings, trainings, resources, and/or research to include in the next issue of our newsletter, please email **Mary Pupazzoni** at **Pupazzonim@wcsu.edu** no later than the 15th of the month prior.

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