



| Webinar for Schools

School Safety & Prevention Series
with Rick J. Kaufman, APR

The Columbine Tragedy: 20 Years Later

Courtesy of Lioness Productions/Virgil Films

— WE ARE —
C O L U M B I N E



What we'll cover...

- The Tragedy: A Brief History
- Principles the Columbine Tragedy Taught Us



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On April 20, 1999, in a senseless act of violence, twelve students and one teacher were killed, and many others injured at Columbine High School. It was a tragic event that shook the Columbine and metro Denver communities, horrified and saddened the nation, and changed forever our perceptions of the safety and security within a school typical of so many across America.

Over time, Columbine parents, students, faculty, and community leaders designed and constructed this Columbine Memorial to remember those killed and injured that day and honor their lives. This Memorial is dedicated to those innocent victims, so that they are "never forgotten."

April 20, 1999

A day like any other ...



April 20, 1999

A day like any other ...

#KeepingThePromise



Principles the Columbine Tragedy Taught Us



Tend to victims & victims' families

“Victims are the most powerful players in a crisis with the power to change the course of an organization and its leadership.”

Jim Lukaszewski
America's Crisis Guru

- Stem the anguish and anger
- Timely action and communication
- Empathy
- Apologize

Failure to Plan is a Plan to Fail

- Crisis communication plan
 - Social & Traditional Media
 - Stakeholders
 - Reference, not a roadmap
- Value of a vibrant plan



A crisis communications plan will not protect school systems from falling victim to a crisis. It will prepare your schools and your employees to identify risks and proactively respond as necessary to mitigate the threats.

Communication is Foundational

If the top priority in a crisis is public safety, then the primary objective for crisis communication should be to prevent harm to stakeholders.



Align communication with response

- Absence of timely & effective communications
 - Operational response will break down
 - Stakeholders left in the dark are confused, angry & react negatively
 - Negative perception of organization
 - Length of crisis is dramatically extended
- Do what you know to be right, say what you know to be true.
- Align your actions & words
- Public's trust can only be regained if credibility remains intact

Social or Traditional Media

- Equally effective at reaching, engaging stakeholders
- Operate in different & often divergent means
- Traditional media most efficient to reach broader audience, especially non-social media connected stakeholders
- Communication strategy must incorporate both



Be first to share bad news



There's no "I" in team

- No one person has enough experience, knowledge or expertise to manage a crisis ... too many moving parts
- Cardiac Assessment



Know your limits

- A crisis is a defining moment
- Knowing when to step aside and relinquish control is an art
- Allow yourself to be vulnerable



Leaders are made, they are not born

Sets the emotional tone &
example in a crisis

- Be present
- Be visible
- Be personal
- Be connected

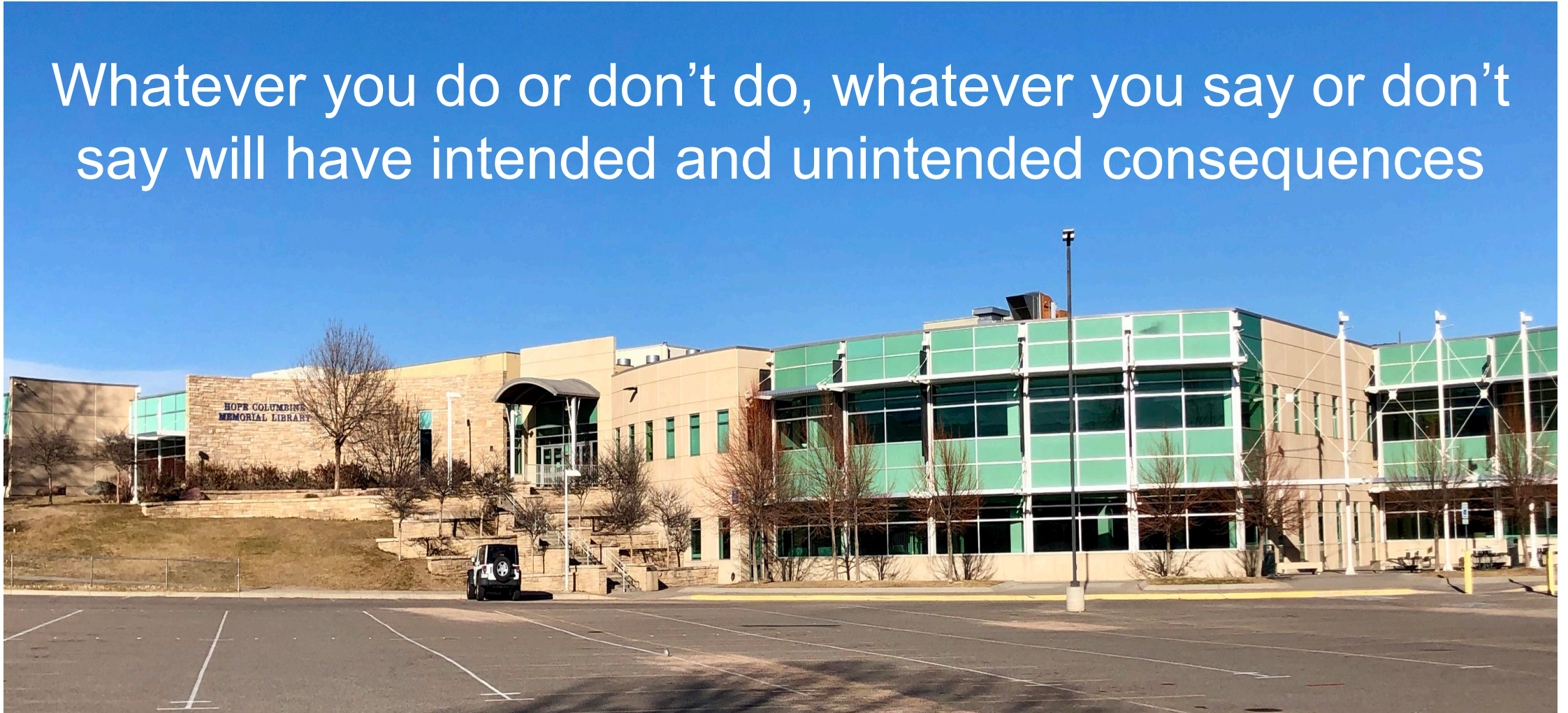
*Leadership is not about being in charge.
Leadership is about taking care of those in
your charge.*

~ Simon Sinek



Every decision has consequences

Whatever you do or don't do, whatever you say or don't say will have intended and unintended consequences



No simple solution to school safety

- Promoting positive school & climate culture
- Teaching & modeling prosocial behaviors
- Intervention when antisocial behaviors occur, including threat assessment & mental health supports
- See something, say something



Real human connections most important



Parting thought...



Cassie Bernall

Corey DePooter

Daniel Mauser

Danny Rohrbough

Kyle Velasquez

Isaiah Shoels

John Tomlin

Dave Sanders

Kelly Fleming

Lauren Townsend

Matthew Kechter

Rachel Scott

Steven Curnow



A Time to Remember, A Time to Hope



We'd like to hear from you!



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Next Webinar: May 21, 2019

A Parent's Guide to School Crisis Response

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Thank you!