



Say Something Protective Action Guide

Together we CAN protect our children from gun violence by teaching them to Say Something when they read, hear or see something a potential threat

Did you know ...

In 7 out of 10 acts of gun violence, at least one other person was told that an act of violence would be committed. And in one study of 30 school shootings, the attacker had told at least one other person of his plans ahead of time 4 out of 5 times¹.

Imagine if one of those people who heard something took action. How many tragedies could be prevented? How many lives would be saved?

What you can do ...

Start TODAY and educate yourself and the teens in your life to Say Something! This simple, yet life-saving conversation teaches teens to:

- Recognize the signs and signals of potential threats
- Take action with that information
- Know that when they Say Something, they save lives.

Below are the steps you need to take in order to have a conversation --- Young people are the eyes and ears of our schools and our communities. If they read, hear or see something in social media or in person about someone wanting to hurt themselves or others – we must teach them to Say Something.

Who Should Learn and Act ...

Parents, educators, community leaders – and most importantly – young people. We need parents to talk to teens, teachers to talk to students, community leaders to talk to community members and, most importantly, that teens talk to other teens.

Steps to Say Something...

Teach young people to Say Something to a trusted adult when they read, hear or see signs and signals of an individual who may hurt themselves or others by ...

1. Learning the Most Common Signs and Signals

The following are the most common warning signs and signals compiled by Sandy Hook Promise. Look for these signs and signals in social media and in actions and behaviors you observe.

- Bringing/threatening to bring weapons to school/place where children and young people gather
- Talking about seeking violent revenge; Uncontrollable rage or anger
- Feeling hopeless or saying they have no purpose
- Wanting or boasting to buy or take a relative or family friend's weapon
- Playing with and/or boasting about a firearm (own, relative's, etc)
- Posting threats, unusual photos involving violence or guns on social media
- Uncharacteristic withdrawal, isolation and detachment – suddenly shutting the world off
- Uncharacteristically anxious, reckless in actions and words, displaying extreme mood swings
- Telling friends to stay away from school or other location on a certain day
- Talking or eluding to plans to commit violence at school, to self or in your community
- Talking about wanting to kill self and/or other people

Signs and signals are not exact and perfect – they are a guide. You shouldn't report someone just because they dress different, play video games or because of the music they listen to. It's not about *who* someone is. It's about what they *say* and *do* – *what signs and signals they provide*.

¹ *According to a 2002 U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education analysis of 30 school shootings*

2. Teach, Learn and Share To Take All Threats Seriously

If you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, it's important to *Say Something*. Trust your instinct, keep your eyes and ears open – you must take all threats seriously, every time. Do not take a chance that a fellow friend and/or classmate may hurt themselves or others. It is better to err on the side of being safe, than to not Say Something and have something tragic happen.

3. Identify a Trusted Adult and/or Call the Police. Ensure the Adult Takes Action.

Identify a trusted adult in your life who you can confide in. Be prepared to share what you read, heard or saw. Examples of trusted adults could be family members, relatives, educators, mentors and/or coaches – to name a few. ALWAYS ensure the adult takes action. If they did not, go to someone else immediately. Adults must take every threat seriously.

To learn more about bringing Sandy Hook Promise Say Something or other gun violence prevention training programs to your school or community organization, please contact Mary Hamilton at programs@sandyhookpromise.org.