

# The Warning Signs Were Always There. The Framework to Act on Them Wasn't.

For mayors, city councils, and leaders who carry responsibility for community safety.

## THE CORE INSIGHT

“For decades, we have said we failed to connect the dots. But you cannot connect dots you have never collected. The real failure — from 9/11 to Parkland to communities across America — has been the absence of a framework to collect warning signs from all sources, connect them, and empower the right people to act. That framework has been missing for decades. Until now.”

— *First Preventers Framework™*

## THE DATA

# 100%

### OF ATTACKERS SHOWED WARNING SIGNS

173 mass attacks in public spaces (2016–2020) studied by the U.S. Secret Service NTAC. Nearly half made direct threats or displayed concerning behaviors beforehand.

*NTAC, Mass Attacks in Public Spaces, 2023*

# 100%

### OF SCHOOL ATTACKERS SHOWED WARNING SIGNS

41 targeted school attacks studied by NTAC. Every attacker showed warning signs — 94% at school. In 2 of 3 cases, someone saw something but had no system to act on it.

*NTAC, Protecting America's Schools, 2019*

## PATTERN OF MISSED WARNINGS

### The same failure, repeated across decades.

#### 2001 September 11 Attacks

Intelligence existed across the CIA, FBI, and other agencies but no framework existed to collect warning signs from all sources and connect them to existing resources to act. The nation created new agencies, but the collect, connect, act problem from community-level up was never solved.

■ **Failure to collect & connect across sources and resources**

#### 2018 Parkland, FL — Marjory Stoneman Douglas

The FBI received two direct tips — including a warning the shooter had a “desire to kill people.” School staff, mental health, and law enforcement each held pieces of the picture. None were connected. 17 lives were lost.

■ **Dots existed. No framework to collect and connect them.**

#### 2025 Brown University, Providence, RI

A custodian observed suspicious individual (shooter) conducting pre-attack surveillance and other concerning behaviors and reported it. No framework existed to collect and automatically connect warning signs to resources. “It was like I could see him and nobody else could.”

■ **Warning signs seen and reported. No community-wide framework to act.**

# The Framework That Has Been Missing for Decades

## The problem was never attention. It was infrastructure.

In case after case, someone saw something — a teacher, a peer, a custodian, a federal agent. The warning signs existed. What was missing was a community-wide framework to collect those signals, connect them across agencies, and route them to the right resources before harm occurred. Seeing a warning sign without a system to act on it is not prevention — it is tragedy deferred.

### THE FIRST PREVENTERS FRAMEWORK

## A community-wide system in three steps.

#### STEP 1 — COLLECT

### Collect the Dots

Warning signs, reports, history, and observations from every community source — schools, law enforcement, hotlines, mental health providers, trusted adults, agencies, social media, family, friends — into one secure, centralized framework.

#### STEP 2 — CONNECT

### Connect the Dots

Connect information dots with community resource dots to see behavior patterns and escalations over time that no single silo can see alone. When resources see the full picture of every at-risk individual, they can assess and determine next steps.

#### STEP 3 — ACT

### Act on the Dots

First Preventers and resources can help, intervene, disrupt, and act to prevent incidents before harm occurs and proactively prevent future re-escalations with accountability, legal and audit-ready documentation, and analytics to improve prevention. Prevention only happens when all three steps are complete.

### WHAT BECOMES POSSIBLE

## When a community has the First Preventers Framework.

Without the Framework	With the First Preventers Framework
Warning signs siloed across agencies	All signals collected into one community-wide picture
Someone sees something — no system to act on it	Every observation routed to a system that can act
Agencies respond after incidents occur	Pre-incident patterns surface before harm happens
Community resources not connected to risk	Every warning sign matched to the right intervention
Leaders act with hindsight	Leaders act with collective foresight

#### THE BOTTOM LINE

Every city has First Responders trained to arrive after harm. The First Preventers Framework gives communities the system to act before First Responders are ever needed — combining multiple technology capabilities into a community-wide service that finally matches the commitment every leader has already made to safety.

**Every city has First Responders. Now, every community can have First Preventers.**

Sources: U.S. Secret Service NTAC, Mass Attacks in Public Spaces: 2016–2020 (2023) — NTAC, Protecting America’s Schools (2019) — The 9/11 Commission Report (2004) — FBI review of Parkland tip-line failures (2018) — Brown University incident investigative reporting (December 2025)

### Ready to bring the First Preventers Framework™ to your community?

Contact Rick Shaw to schedule a briefing: [Rick.Shaw@Awareity.com](mailto:Rick.Shaw@Awareity.com) • [www.Awareity.com](http://www.Awareity.com)

# The Cost of Not Connecting the Dots Is Now Measured in the Hundreds of Millions.

For mayors, city councils, school superintendents, city attorneys, and risk officers who carry institutional responsibility for community safety.

## THE LEGAL REALITY

Courts, juries, and the federal government have established a clear standard: when warning signs exist and institutions fail to collect them, connect them, and act on them, liability follows. The question is no longer whether your community could face this exposure. It is whether you have the framework to prevent it.

## THE PRICE OF MISSING WARNING SIGNS

# \$500M

**MSU / NASSAR**

Reports of abuse filed as early as 1997. MSU failed to investigate. Warning signs present for nearly 20 years. Largest university settlement in U.S. history.

*MSU settlement, 332 victims, 2018*

# \$144.5M

**DOJ — SUTHERLAND SPRINGS**

U.S. Air Force failed to report the shooter's criminal history to the FBI background check system. A federal court found the Air Force 60% liable. 26 killed at First Baptist Church, TX.

*Federal settlement, 80+ victims, 2023*

# \$127.5M

**DOJ / FBI — PARKLAND**

FBI mishandled two direct tips warning the shooter had a desire to kill people. Tips were never connected or acted upon. 17 lives lost.

*DOJ settlement, 40 civil cases, 2024*

## THE EMERGING PRECEDENT

### A pattern of liability courts are now enforcing.

#### 2018 MSU — Michigan State University / Larry Nassar

##### **\$500 Million Settlement**

Reports of abuse filed as early as 1997. MSU failed to investigate adequately. Warning signs were present for nearly 20 years. The largest university settlement in U.S. history.

■ **Failed to collect & act on reported warning signs**

#### 2023 DOJ — Sutherland Springs, TX — First Baptist Church

##### **\$144.5 Million Federal Settlement**

The Air Force failed to submit the shooter's criminal history to the FBI background check system, which would have blocked his firearm purchase. A court found the Air Force 60% liable. 26 killed at First Baptist Church.

■ **Known record. Not reported. Not connected to the right system.**

#### 2024 DOJ / FBI — Parkland, FL — Marjory Stoneman Douglas

##### **\$127.5 Million Federal Settlement**

The FBI received two direct tips — including a warning the shooter had a desire to kill people. Tips were never forwarded or acted upon. 17 students and staff were killed.

■ **Tips received. Not connected. Not acted upon.**

#### 2025–2026 Newport News, VA — Richneck Elementary

##### **\$10 Million Civil Verdict + Criminal Trial May 2026**

A first-grader shot his teacher. The assistant principal was warned multiple times the child had a gun and failed to act. Jury found gross negligence. 8 felony counts. Criminal trial: May 18, 2026.

■ **Warned repeatedly. Did not act. Now faces criminal charges.**

# The Framework That Addresses This Liability Gap

## WHAT COURTS HAVE NOW ESTABLISHED

Three duties. Each one priced by courts and the federal government.

### Duty to Collect

Institutions have a legal duty to take reports and warning signs seriously. Ignoring or filing away a credible warning is no longer defensible.

✓ Addresses: collection failure

### Duty to Connect

Multiple agencies holding separate pieces of information must correlate them. Siloed knowledge across departments is treated as institutional failure.

✓ Addresses: coordination failure

### Duty to Act

Collecting and connecting without routing to action creates liability. Courts are now holding individuals — not just institutions — criminally accountable.

✓ Addresses: action failure

## THE FRAMEWORK THAT HAS BEEN MISSING

For decades, after every tragedy, we have said we failed to connect the dots. But you cannot connect dots you have never collected. The failure has always been the absence of a framework to collect warning signs from all sources, connect them across agencies, and route them to the right resources. Until now, that framework did not exist.

## THE FIRST PREVENTERS FRAMEWORK

A community-wide framework that directly addresses each layer of legal exposure.

### STEP 1

#### Collect the Dots

Warning signs, reports, history, and observations from every community source — schools, law enforcement, hotlines, mental health providers, trusted adults, agencies, social media, family, friends — into one secure, centralized framework.

✓ Addresses: Duty to Collect

### STEP 2

#### Connect the Dots

Connect information dots with community resource dots to see behavior patterns and escalations over time that no single silo can see alone. When resources see the full picture of every at-risk individual, they can assess and determine next steps.

✓ Addresses: Duty to Connect

### STEP 3

#### Act on the Dots

First Preventers and resources can help, intervene, disrupt, and act to prevent incidents before harm occurs and proactively prevent future re-escalations with accountability, legal and audit-ready documentation, and analytics to improve prevention.

✓ Addresses: Duty to Act

## THE BOTTOM LINE

The courts have priced the cost of inaction. Every mayor, superintendent, city attorney, and risk officer must now answer whether their community has the framework to meet the legal standard courts have established — or whether they are carrying liability that has not yet been triggered.

**The First Preventers Framework is how communities close that gap.**

Request a 20-minute briefing: Rick Shaw • [Rick.Shaw@Awareity.com](mailto:Rick.Shaw@Awareity.com) • [www.Awareity.com](http://www.Awareity.com)

Sources: MSU / Larry Nassar \$500M settlement (2018) — DOJ / Air Force Sutherland Springs \$144.5M settlement (2023) — DOJ / FBI Parkland \$127.5M settlement (2024) — Newport News, VA: Richneck Elementary civil verdict & Commonwealth v. Parker criminal proceedings (2025–2026) — U.S. Secret Service NTAC, Protecting America's Schools (2019)