

K-12 Case Study

Sal

Case Details

Sal, a 17-year-old student, was born in Fargo, North Dakota, and moved to your town when he was seven. He had limited contact with his father growing up. His mother had numerous boyfriends in and out of the house. There were reports of Sal being assaulted by one of these boyfriends and additional reports of drug use within the home. Sal is described as shy and quiet and has a slight speech impediment.

After the move, Sal quickly fell behind and was labeled as an “at-risk” kid, though he received no IEP or other educational support. During elementary school, he wore the same clothes most days and was bullied in fourth grade due to his stutter.

Over the course of recent months, he has been absent from school more than he has been in attendance. He is a lonely teen with few friends and becomes further isolated by wearing all black with combat boots and his long, unkempt hair. Other students call him “emo” and “school shooter,” and make fun of him because of his clothes. They use homosexual slurs against him. When teased, he says things like, “I’m going to do something soon.” Sal also has come to school with self-inflicted cuts on his face and talked about his “lil secret” he was going to show everyone soon.

Sal was recently fired from his job at Whataburger for threatening a female co-worker and, before that, was fired from Wendy’s for talking about rape and videos of beheadings and suicides online. He asked a co-worker if they would buy him a gun if he gave them money for it and told his girlfriend he wouldn’t live past 18. He plays online video games like *Call of Duty* and *Grand Theft Auto* and talks in the chats about not feeling

Questions to Consider

- What are the concerns outlined in terms of risk factors and threats?
- How would you describe the threats made in this case?
- Sal’s poor attendance record limits the school’s ability to address these issues. What approaches might be considered?
- At what point would the school begin to talk more directly to law enforcement?
- Score the case on Pathways.
- What are some interventions or next steps you would consider in a case like this?

human, making negative comments about women calling them bitches and whores, and becoming enraged when he loses. He has posted videos of him firing BB guns at other people around town. There was a rumor he had found and kept some kind of dead animal, and was posting videos online to become “internet famous.”

He recently moved from his mother’s home to live with his grandmother. There have been intense conflicts and arguments at both his mother’s house and at his grandmother’s. They argue over cell phone plans, his desire to purchase a gun when he turned 18, and a conversation he had with a cousin where Sal said he didn’t want to live anymore. Recently, Sal has received items in the mail at his grandmother’s house that have included 30 and 60-round magazines, rifle slings, a red dot sight, and shin guards, as well as a body armor carrier.