

SHOOTING

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ago for stating he one day wanted to become a professional school shooter. Even after being flagged by the FBI, Cruz purchased the AR-15 legally.

"He fired out over 150 bullets in seven minutes and then he dropped the gun and walked out with peers with his hands up. That seems to make no sense at all to have that kind of fire power for a 19-year-old, to stroll in, show his license or whatever he did and just walk out with it," Laughon said.

According to police reports obtained by CNN, the police were called to Cruz's home 39 times over seven years. Cruz's adoptive mother passed away last November and he had previously underwent treatment at a mental health clinic, but had not received treatment in more than a year.

"Not that anybody cares at the moment about him, but he didn't become that way in a minute. There was probably a long pattern of the usual things you see in the school shooter backgrounds, that led him to this moment," Laughon said.

There has been little to no research done on school shooters and gun violence in general as it is difficult to predict the behavior of one person out of a population.

While the behavior of school shooters may be difficult to predict, schools can still take action to keep the communities safe.

UNCA has taken its own measures to ensure safety for its students and employees.

"For the last 20 years or so we have always had emergency management on campus," said Eric Boyce, assistant vice chancellor for public safety.

In July, UNCA completed a multi-agency emergency planning exercise. Outside agencies such as the Asheville Police Department, Asheville Fire Department, Buncombe County's Offices of Emergency Services and EMS, Mission

Health and EnviroSafe, a preparedness consulting firm, worked with UNCA to ensure, in case of emergency, students and staff would be able to receive immediate help.

While tragedies are inevitable, Boyce said he feels there is always a lesson to be learned from them.

"One very important lesson learned is communication. Having a coordinated response and being able to get together with our community partners and campus partners and talk about our exercises that we do," Boyce said.

UNCA conducts tabletop and emergency preparation exercises biannually. The tabletop sessions discuss how to better execute and develop emergency plans. Once every three years UNCA executes the full multi-agency emergency planning exercise to keep communication and strategy plans updated.

"We've learned that you can't just sit there and allow this to happen. You have to do something and that's why we implemented the ALICE program," Boyce said.

ALICE is an active shooter training institute program that stands for alert, lockdown, inform, counter and evacuate. According to the website, the training institute was created after the Columbine shooting in 1999.

David Weldon, director of emergency management in environmental health and safety, feels the best thing a school can do is educate and prepare their students and faculty.

"If you face that situation, there are options. You don't just have to sit there and allow a person to walk by and commit this act," Weldon said.

Weldon said he encourages students to let someone know on campus if they ever feel uneasy about a specific person.

"Just like with this last, you saw that there were a lot of flags that had somebody followed up on, it might have had a different outcome," Weldon said.

The ALICE program is offered to

any student organizations or groups who are interested. Athletes also go through the program as they travel frequently and the information provided may help them in similar situations in other schools or airports.

"If you're not there you can't become a victim. If you recognize danger, you need to move away from the danger immediately," Weldon said.

There are resources online for students interested. One resource found on the UNCA police website is the run-hide-fight strategy.

"If you can get out, get out. If you can't get out, hide out. If you can't hide out and your life is in imminent danger, you should fight. We've done that at freshman orientation for several years now. The training

is also available to students in an organization or if they just have a group of students that just want to learn more," Boyce said.

The lack of a cure-all solution to school shootings leaves schools with the responsibility of educating their students and faculty on how to respond to these situations.

"There's always lessons learned," Boyce said. "I don't know if we can totally stop it, but we know from the past events that have happened and the information we have been able to gather that we've got some things that we learned from those, which is unfortunate that tragedies have to happen, but also equally unfortunate if we don't learn from those things and try to prepare our students better."

