When advocating for either the development or the revision of your school's safety and crisis planning initiatives, you can complete this top 10 list of activities to arrive at the desired goal.

1. **Develop Good Relationships.** Develop a good relationship with your school’s principal and administration. Having a good rapport with the administration will increase your ability to present to the administration any concerns you have about the safety of the school.

2. **Attend Trainings.** Attend trainings on different areas of school crisis planning and school crisis teams. Receive professional development in these areas and then present the material to your school administration. See if the administration will allow you to present the information to school staff.

3. **Research Legal Requirements.** Find out the legal requirements for crisis planning for your state and pertinent school board policies relevant to crisis planning. Most states require school districts to have a crisis plan and to revise it on either an annual or a biannual basis.

4. **Take Advantage of Opportunities.** Take advantage of opportunities that occur after a crisis event in your school, your school district, or in another district. Events that have media attention will give you a chance to make your school administration more aware of vulnerabilities that exist. If your school needs to improve its crisis planning, this is the perfect time to advocate for these improvements. Even if you have discussed your concerns with your school principal previously, bring it up again in light of other events.

5. **Request Funding.** After a crisis event has occurred, you can also request funding for crisis planning activities. Make sure to request funding before the next school year’s budget cycle starts. For many school districts, budgets for the next year are due to the budget office around February or March. The actual budget cycle typically begins July 1 of that calendar year.

6. **Follow the Chain of Command.** When advocating for school crisis planning, remember to follow the chain of command. Jumping in at a school board meeting to say how your school does not comply with state law in regard to crisis planning is frowned upon. A typical line of progression to change is speaking with the school administrator in charge of crisis planning first. This can be either the assistant principal or principal, depending on the size of the school. With the support of the principal, you can then present your suggestions to the district-level administrator. The district-level administrator can then go to the superintendent and then the school board for support.

7. **Conduct Planning at District Level.** For larger school districts, crisis planning may be done at a district level. The district may determine what the crisis plan for the individual school will look like. If you notice that the district crisis plan is 5 years old or older, speak with your principal about contacting someone at the district office about revising the plan. If opportunities arise for your school’s representatives to work with the district office during the revision process, ask your principal to see if you could represent the school.

8. **Use a Team Approach.** If you are asked to create or revise your school’s crisis plan, seek the help of others. One person cannot revise a crisis plan by himself or herself. In addition, research helpful tips from local, state, and national agencies. Remember that you do not have to re-create the wheel. Many states have crisis plan templates that they want schools to follow. In addition, the National Association of School Psychologists, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security have information about school crisis planning.

9. **Be Patient!** Changing the culture of a school can take at least 5 years. One person cannot make the school culture aware of the importance of crisis planning. To change the culture, you must first get your school leadership on board to make the change. Second, the majority of the school staff have to acknowledge the importance of change and want to change. Then staff have to be trained to make those changes. After the initial training of staff, begin the gradual process of implementation and evaluation to monitor the change process.
This can be a slow process; it is important to not move at a quick pace. Moving quickly may force people to change when they are not ready. If you do not have buy-in, your plan will not move in a positive direction.

10. Be Confident That Anyone Can Effect a Change! From a first-year school employee to a 20-year veteran, anyone can start the change process. If you have a desire to see improvement in crisis planning in your school, be persistent and look for those opportunities that arise that will help you follow your goal.