Charleston and What You Can Do in the Workplace

Of course, we can't help but watch the Charleston images and be stunned, saddened, and scared. Yet, we may also feel lifted up by the inspiring words of victims' relatives as they forgave the shooter and by the courageous act of Debbie Dills, the florist who spotted the shooter and followed him for 35 miles while talking on the phone to police even though she was scared. http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/dylann-roof-north-carolina-florist-tip-article-1.2263256

Most of all, we feel helpless. What can we do to prevent such senseless tragedies? What - if anything - can we do to improve the state of race relations in this country and to help prevent violent acts?

One thing we can do is to not just ignore the warning signs of violence. When we teach classes on preventing threats and violence in the workplace, we emphasize that - according to FBI statistics - violent actors almost always threaten before they act. In this case, we're starting to learn that the shooter did tell friends that he had some plans to hurt people. http://abcnews.go.com/US/charleston-shooting-closer-alleged-gunman-dylann-roof/story?id=31865375

Easy to dismiss, of course, if you're a young acquaintance and you think he's just blowing smoke. However, we want to make sure that we're not the bystander who could have done something but didn't.

What can you do?
Take threats seriously. Tell someone who can help stop the behavior. Don't just look the other way. Stand against casual derogatory comments about race and ethnic slurs. Be the hero, like Debbie Dills, not the one who has the regret that you could have acted, but did not.