THE VIOLENCE PROJECT

MASA Spring Conference
March 11, 2021

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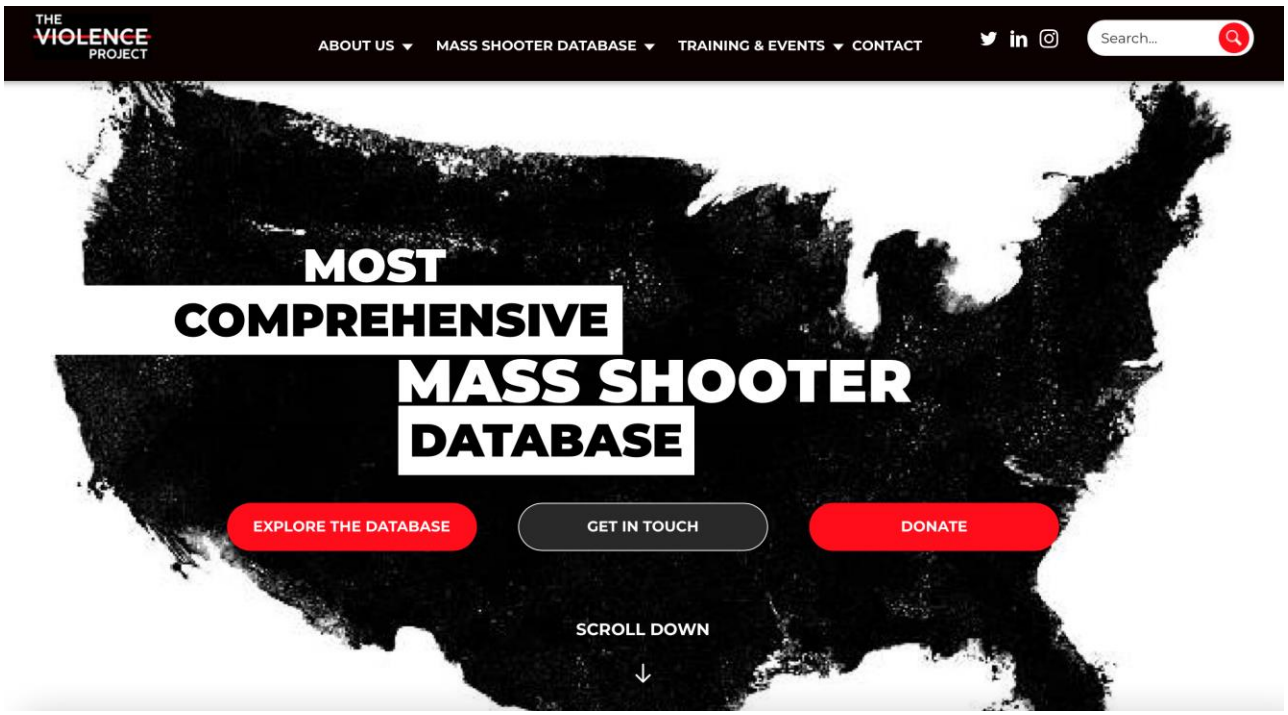

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What is Gun Violence?

Four Categories of Gun Violence in 2017, by Key Characteristics

	1. Suicides by Firearm	2. Criminal Homicides by Firearm	3. Domestic Violence Homicides by Firearm	4. Mass Shooting Fatalities
Fatalities per year	23,854[6]	14,542[7]	Estimated 1,000 – 2,000	117[8]
Most Common Victims	White males, 50+ years old	Black males, 18-34 years old	Females	Random
Type of Gun Commonly Used	Legal handguns	Illegally possessed handguns	Handguns that were originally purchased legally, but may be illegally owned due to criminal convictions	Mostly handguns, but a larger proportion of rifles than in other categories of shootings

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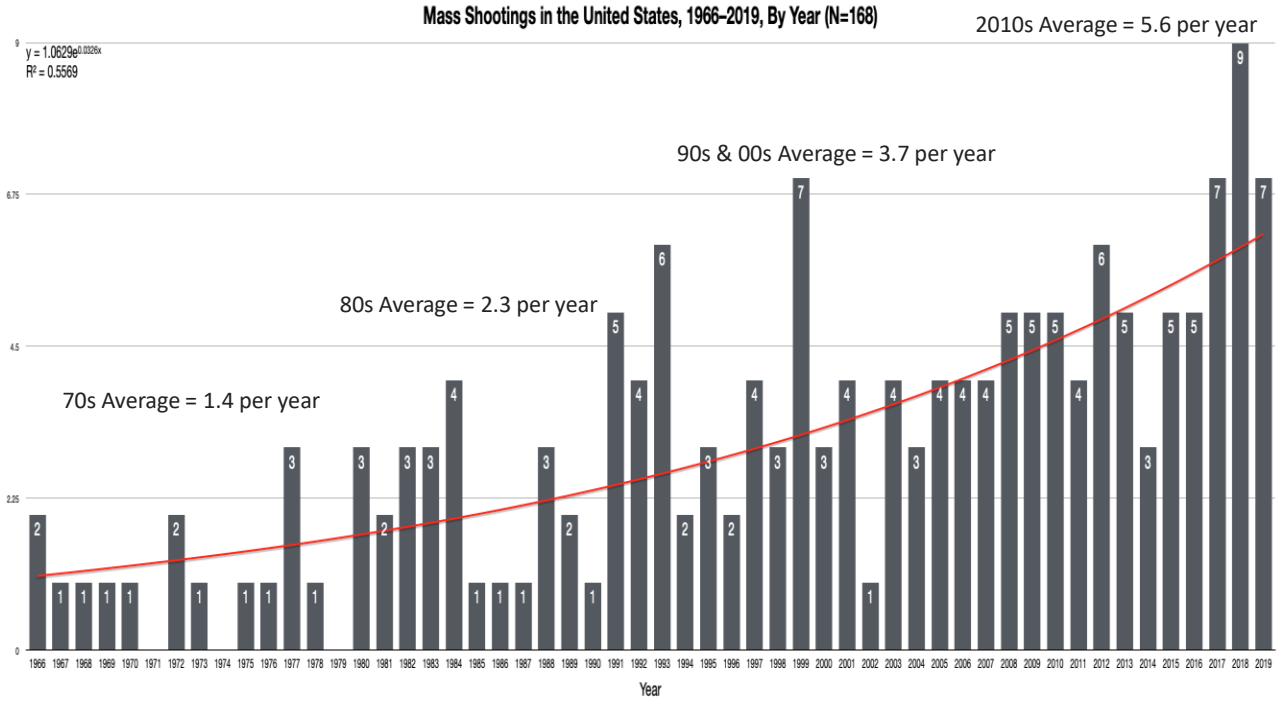

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Why did they stop?

1. Opportunity
2. Contagion
3. Grievance

When will they start?

Can we prevent them from returning?

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Risk Factors

- Disconnection
- Loneliness
- Hopelessness
- Fear
- Family conflict
- Transitions
- Current events

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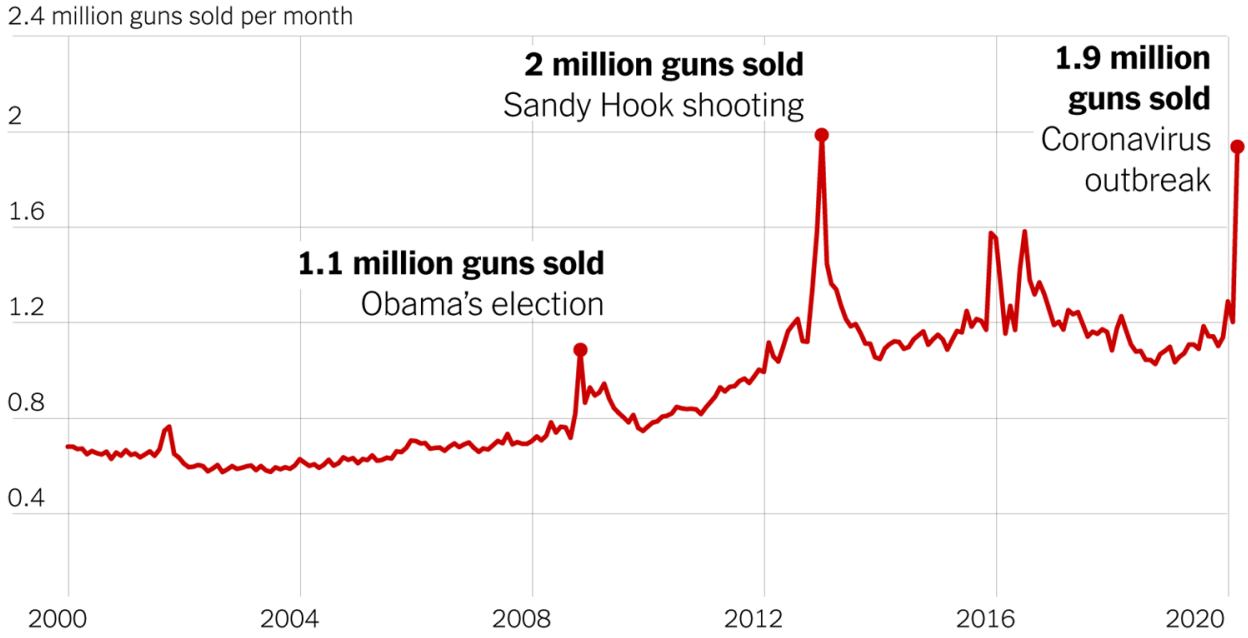

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School Mass Shootings

- **91%** were students or former students of the school
- **87%** were in a crisis prior to the shooting
- **80%** were suicidal prior to the shooting
- **78%** leaked plans ahead of time
- More likely to steal guns, used more guns (average = **3.3**)
- Younger shooters had **more risk factors** for violence than older shooters

off-ramp

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134 Nearly Mass Shootings

- 10% started at a different location and then moved to the school
- Half of the time, perpetrator specifically targeting someone
- Average age = 18
- Mostly current or former students

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MOST COMMON

Time

AM

10

MOST COMMON

Date

20th

11

MOST COMMON

Month

Sept/Oct
Jan/Feb
May

12

MOST COMMON

State CA

13

91%

14

942

Ave. enrollment

15

Nearly Mass Shooters

• Male	98%
• Discipline record	46%
• Violent history	42%
• Criminal record	36%
• Bullied	56%
• Mental health signs	62%
• Leaked plans	40%
• Highly planned	40%

Highly planned shootings:

- More people killed
- Suburban
- Current student
- Studied others
- Leaked plans

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Nearly Mass Shooters

- Attempted to escape: 32%
- Stopped on own 13%
- Weapon failure 5%
- Killed themselves: 22%
- Law enforcement: 28%
- Someone else: 21%

off-ramp

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Armed Officer on Scene

3x death rate

Why?

1. Weapons effect
2. Suicidality
3. Insiders

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Research Letter | Public Health

Presence of Armed School Officials and Fatal and Nonfatal Gunshot Injuries During Mass School Shootings, United States, 1980-2019

Jillian Peterson, PhD; James Densley, DPhil; Gina Erickson, PhD

Introduction

After deadly school shootings at Columbine, Sandy Hook, and Parkland, many states mandated School Resource Officers or provided funding for districts to hire them.[1] Lawmakers also considered arming teachers. Florida now requires a law enforcement officer or trained school guardian in every school.[2]

By examining every recorded incident where one or more people was intentionally shot in a school building during the school day, or where a perpetrator came to school heavily armed with the intent of firing indiscriminately, we examine the association between the presence of an armed officer on scene and the severity of shootings in K-12 (kindergarten through 12th grade) schools.

Author affiliations and article information are listed at the end of this article.

Table 1. Descriptive and Missing Case Information for All Variables

Variable	Cases, No. (%)	Persons injured, mean (SD), No.	Persons killed, mean (SD), No.	Missing cases, No. (% imputed)
Persons killed per case, mean (SD) [range], No.	NA	NA	1.34 (3.25) [0-27]	NA
Persons injured per case, mean (SD) [range], No.	NA	3.15 (5.06) [0-32]	NA	NA
Weapons per case, mean (SD) [range], No.	1.63 (1.22) [1-8]	NA	NA	3 (2.24)
Armed officer	29 (23.58)	3.86 (5.45)	2.07 (4.16)	11 (8.21)
Lockdown drills	53 (44.92)	2.91 (4.75)	1.77 (4.63)	16 (11.94)
Targeted	57 (47.11)	2.74 (3.54)	1.11 (1.73)	13 (9.70)
No. of shooters				
One	124 (92.54)	2.94 (4.93)	1.29 (3.18)	NA
More than one	10 (7.46)	5.80 (6.12)	2.00 (4.16)	NA
Known weapon type				
Any AR or SMG	14 (10.45)	7.79 (9.69)	5.36 (8.05)	NA
Any handgun	92 (68.66)	3.18 (3.18)	1.45 (3.24)	NA
Any shotgun	29 (21.64)	3.72 (5.20)	1.79 (3.37)	NA
Any rifle	23 (17.16)	3.74 (5.56)	0.87 (1.49)	NA
Region				
South	39 (29.10)	3.36 (4.45)	1.41 (3.17)	NA
Midwest	35 (26.12)	1.60 (1.85)	0.83 (1.69)	NA
Northeast	19 (14.18)	1.37 (1.54)	2.05 (6.16)	NA
West	41 (30.60)	5.10 (7.41)	1.39 (2.38)	NA
Urbanicity				
Urban	34 (25.37)	2.82 (4.46)	0.56 (1.05)	NA
Suburban	58 (43.28)	3.60 (5.73)	1.67 (4.46)	NA
Rural	42 (31.34)	2.79 (4.57)	1.32 (2.24)	NA
School type				
Elementary	17 (12.69)	5.53 (8.44)	2.94 (6.44)	NA
High school	81 (60.45)	3.15 (4.89)	1.21 (2.67)	NA
Middle or combined	36 (26.87)	2.03 (2.86)	0.89 (1.86)	NA
Institution type				
Public	122 (91.04)	3.28 (5.24)	1.42 (3.37)	NA
Private/other	12 (8.96)	1.83 (2.44)	0.58 (1.44)	NA

Abbreviations: AR, assault rifle; NA, not applicable; SMG, submachine gun.

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JAMA Network Open. 2021;4(2):e2037394. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.37394 February 16, 2021 1/4

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Effects of SROs on school crime

A study of 33 schools that increased SRO staffing vs. a matched sample of 72 schools that didn't:

+ SROs = **+** drug offenses

+ SROs = **+** weapons offenses

+ SROs = **+** exclusionary disciplinary actions

"increasing SROs does not improve school safety and that by increasing exclusionary responses to school discipline incidents it increases the criminalization of school discipline."

Gottfredson, D. et al. (2020). Effects of school resource officers on school crime and responses to school crime. *Criminology & Public Policy,* 19(3), 905–940.

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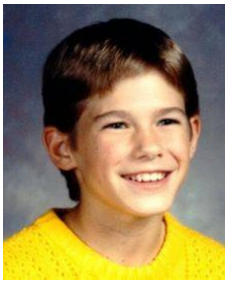
Writing the script – generation lockdown

1950s-60s

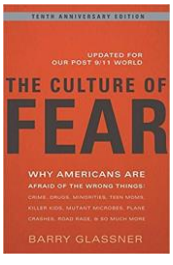
1970s-80s



1990s

2000s

Today



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Research shows that lockdown drills increase student fear, inflate perceptions of risk, and decrease perceptions of school safety

(Huskey & Connell, 2020; Peterson et al. 2015)

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Solutions for schools

- **Trauma:** Warm environments, social emotional learning
- **Crisis:** Build crisis response teams, train all adults
- **Script:** Media literacy, anonymous reporting
- **Access:** Safe storage campaigns for parents

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A New Approach – Crisis Response Teams

- Students reported to the CRT will receive holistic, compassionate, and appropriate supports and services.
- The CRT investigates and *supports* students who are in crisis.
- The team connects students with best fit services. It is *not* a label maker.
- A crisis is a marked *change* in behavior. This change will look different for each student.
- Anyone reporting a student to the CRT will be seen as *concerned* about the student's overall well-being

(1) Create & Promote Safe School Climates

- Develop a positive climate built on a culture of safety, respect, trust, and social/emotional support.
- Positive, trusting relationships
- Break down "codes of silence"
- Develop programs that encourage peer connection

(2) Establish a Team

- Variety of personnel
- Designated leader
- Regular meeting schedule
- When to call an emergency meeting
- Protocols and procedures

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(3) Identify Resources

- Mental health – counseling, inpatient, and outpatient treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Social services
- Housing
- Education (special education, alternative education)
- Employment and training
- Community crisis teams
- Peer support
- Parent and family resources
- Security and law enforcement

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Behavioral Signs of a Crisis

Disruptive
Behaviors that interfere with the environment

Distressed
Behaviors that cause concern for the person's well-being

Dysregulated
Behaviors that cause others to feel uncomfortable or scared

Dangerous
Behaviors that threaten safety or well-being

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(5) Create a Centralized Reporting System

- App, email, Google form, text or phone number
- Train everyone how to report
- Reporting will result in care and concern, appropriate intervention
- Proactively monitor incoming reports
- Anonymous reporting is recommended

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(6) Determine Criteria for Intervention

- Each crisis is unique and fluid
- Weapons and acts of violence should go to law enforcement
- Clear criteria when resources are utilized

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(7) Train all Stakeholders

- Faculty, staff, and administrators
- Students
- Parents/guardians and families
- Law enforcement
- Community mental health providers
- Community stakeholders (health and human services, juvenile services etc.)
- Volunteers
- Bus drives, coaches, club leaders, tutors - anyone who works with the school's students

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S-A-V-E Model

Slow	Slow down, calm yourself, don't take it personally
Aware	Be aware of who you are, where you are, avoid distractions and audience
Voice	Verbal de-escalation, empathy, focus on feelings, how you speak
Engage	Active listening, body language, be flexible

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(8) Plan Communication Strategies

- Communicate approach to entire community
- Plan to notify community, victims, and targets
- Resources for consultations

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Responding to the crisis

- Determine assessment leader
- Interview reporting person if possible
- Involve law enforcement if immediate risk to self or others
- Contact parents or family if appropriate
- Fact finding interviews
- Interview student / person in crisis
- Gather additional records

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Avoid Punitive Response

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Individualized Plan of Support

- Referral to counseling, support services, social services, community services
- Mediation and restorative practices
- A plan for regular check-ins with school staff
- Mentoring (adult or peer)
- Removal or safe storage of guns in the home
- Removal of prescription drugs and/or alcohol from the home
- Law enforcement resolution for criminal behavior
- Emergency detention for mental health crisis

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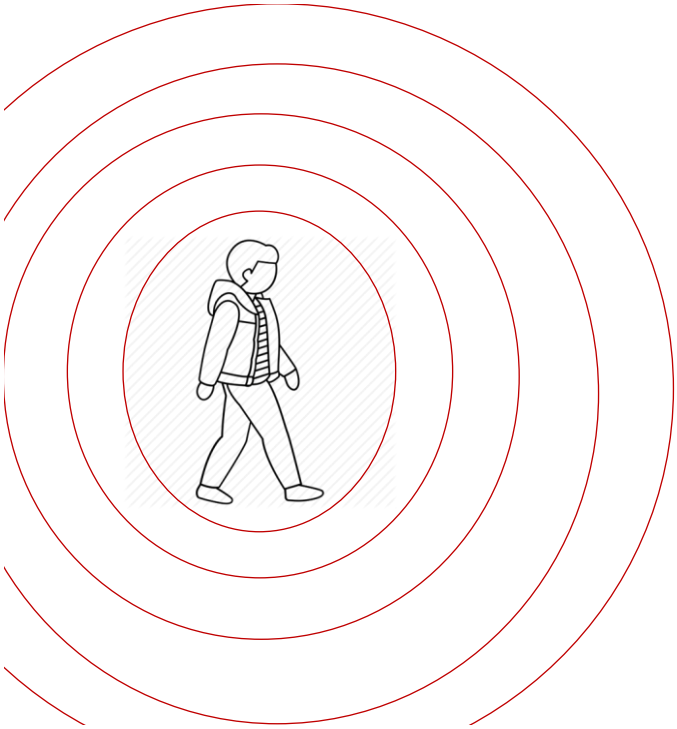

Diffusion of Benefits

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Upcoming Event!
May 14
11:00-1:00
Virtual

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www.theviolenceproject.org
- Download our database
- Join our mailing list

www.off-ramp.org
- Register for the May 14 training

Coming Sept. 7: The Violence Project book!

admin@theviolenceproject.org

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