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School Shootings

School Shootings Presentation

Friday, April 29, 2022

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. PDT,

or

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. EDT

Disclaimer

- This presenter does not have any conflicts surrounding this presentation
- He does have a book on the Virginia Tech shooting tragedy, which is in press
- When this book is finished copies will be sent to the Dean of Fielding Graduate University, the school library, and the ACFP
- The opinions expressed are the opinions of this presenter. They are not meant to be represented as those of the ACFP, or of The Fielding Graduate University
- No permission to videotape or audiotape this talk.

IF ONE SCHOOL SHOOTING IS
PREVENTED IN THE FUTURE,
THIS WORK IS NOT IN VAIN

Please Note:

This Presentation will stop 15 minutes before the scheduled end of the talk, irregardless of where the discussion is at that point. This will allow time for questions and answers.

If time runs out and any questions are left unanswered, please send an email with that question to the speaker at jlbrittain2@aol.com.

This Presentation Will Include:

- Method of data collection
- Definitions
- Controversy over school shootings and reports
- Touchstone school shootings
- Question of “are school shooters mentally ill?”

RESEARCH INTO GUN VIOLENCE

IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

Definitions

- Active Shooter: Person or people “actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill” people in a populated area.
- Mass Shooter: The FBI and Federal Government classified a “Mass Shooting” as when four or more were killed, including the shooter. In 2013, both organizations changed that definition to three or more being killed.
 - The FBI says a mass shooting “. . . Includes any shooting in which more than three people are killed. It excluded domestic violence, and drug and gang related violence”.
 - A mass shooter is preoccupied with a high body count, racing to accomplish it as quickly as possible, and avoid the police as long as possible.
- Targeted Shooter: A shooter who goes to a place in search of one particular victim
- Serial Killer: Someone who kills one or more persons, waits at least 24 hours, and then kills again. May go months or years before another murder. Ted Bundy, the Green River Killer David Berkowitz and Eileen Wernos, the only known female serial killer of the modern era, are examples.
- Attempted Suicide: Shooter attempted, but did not complete suicide.
- Committed Suicide: Shooter committed suicide.

Definitions

- Murder-Suicide: Shooter kills someone else, then kills himself/herself.
- School Year: In this study, a school year is characterized as beginning on August 1 of a year thru July 31 of the following year. For example, the school year of the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre was August 1, 2006, to July 31, 2007.
- Rescue versus Recovery: Rescue is when there has been a disaster and EMTs, police and first responders arrive on the scene. In the event of a shoot, their task is to locate the shooter, and shoot him/her or take them alive. Recovery begins once this has been done, and continues until every victim, alive or deceased, has been located, and triage begun to send to nearest medical facility. Recovery ends when the last victim, alive or deceased, has been removed from the site of the attack.
- Neutralize: Police argot for killing the shooter or shooters.

Controversy Over School Shootings and Reports

- No centralized School shooting database exists
- High School and Elementary School principals (anecdotal data) are discouraged from reporting school violence of all kinds
- No agreed-on definitions
 - Example: February 2, 2015. Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota. “0 injured, 0 killed, shooter committed suicide”
 - Author’s comment: A school shooting death is a school shooting death.
- Defunding of research on gun violence: In 1998, Congress cut off funding for the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) gun violence research. W. Jasper stated that “Research on gun violence is not advocacy, it is critical public health research that gives all Americans information that they need.”

Important Landmark Study

2002 Study by the U.S. Secret Service:

Safe School Initiatives: 10 Myths About School Shootings, May 2002. 10 Key Findings of their “Safe School” Study and Initiative:

1. Incidents of targeted violence at school were rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
2. Prior to the attacks, other people knew about the attacker’s idea, and/or plan to attack people at the school.
3. Most attackers did not directly threaten their targets prior to carrying out their attack.
4. There is no accurate or useful “profile” of students who engaged in school violence.
5. Most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that caused others concern, or indicated a need for help.

Important Landmark Study: 2002 Study by the U.S. Secret Service

6. Most attackers had difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures. Moreover, many had considered suicide or attempted it.
7. Most attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured, by others prior to the attack.
8. Most attackers had access to, or had used weapons, prior to the attack.
9. In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
10. Despite prompt law enforcement responses, most shooting incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention, including SRO's (school resource officers, teachers, school staff, and in some incidences, other students).

The Bully Society. School Shootings and the Crisis of Bullying in America's Schools. Klein, J. 2012

“For Every Complex Problem, there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong”
H.L. Mencken

Is There a Profile?

After an interrupted planned shooting of President Ford, the Secret Service researched school shootings from 1974 to 2000. They sought to see if there was a profile of a “typical school shooter”.

“The researchers found that the killers do not snap. They plan, they acquire weapons, they tell others what they are planning. These children take a long, planned, and public path toward violence”.

“And, there is no profile”.

Example: The Beltway Snipers, Washington, D.C.

Is There a Profile?

The closest that one may come to a “profile” is a characterization by school shooting expert, Peter Langham.

He divided them into 3 categories:

- A. Psychopathic: Eric Harris
- B. Psychotic: Seung Hui-Cho, Dylan Klebold
- C. Traumatized: Jeffrey Weiss

This author adds -

Those who are chronically, mentally ill, may include all of the above, PLUS.

Touchstone School Shootings

1. University of Texas, Austin. August 1 1966

- Shooter: Charles Whitman, 25 yo at his death, called the “Texas Tower Shooter”
 - Eagle Scout at Age 12
 - Stanford Binet, IQ was tested at 138
 - Former Marine, expert marksman, Court Martialed out of the Marines
 - Had previously been seen by a University Psychiatrist on March 29, 1966, (four months before the shooting), who wrote:
 - “Repeated inquiries attempting to analyze his exact experiences were not too successful with the exception of vivid references thinking about going up on the tower with a deer rifle and start shooting people.”
 - The physician’s solution: No medication given to this youth at this time, an he was told to make an appointment for the same time next week, and should he feel that he needs to talk to this therapist he could call me any time during this interval.
- Killed his wife and mother then went to the University the next day, shot and killed 14 there, before he was killed by two policemen.
- 17 total died
- Left a suicide note, said he wanted an autopsy to know what was wrong with his brain. At his autopsy, found to have an Astrocytoma on his Amygdala.
- No armed police on college campuses when this happened.

Touchstone School Shootings

2. Columbine High School, April 20 1999

- Shooters:
 - Eric Harris 18 yo
 - Dylan Klebold, 17 yo
- 15 people killed, including the two shooters
- The two had long planned the shooting. They planted propane tanks, rigged to go off in various places in the school. Most of them left in the cafeteria. Fortunately, they did not detonate.
- Lawsuit against Luvox, settled in 2002 – plaintiff dropped charges, and the company donated \$10,000 to charity.
- Major thing the police learned from this tragedy: *The importance of this shooting on subsequent teens simply cannot be overstated.*

Touchstone School Shootings

3. Virginia Tech: April 16, 2007

- Shooter: Seung Hui-Cho
- Had been psychiatrically hospitalized in 2006. His parents picked him up two days after this psychiatric hospitalization. They did not know about this until multiple police units showed up at their home in Centerville, Virginia on the evening of April 16, 2007.
- 33 killed, including the shooter.
- ****FERPA changes, TAT's initiation of Threat Assessment Teams.

Touchstone School Shootings

4. Cases of two shooters expelled from their college, who went into the community and killed multiple people: James Holmes and Jared Loughner.
 - Jared Loughner, 23 yo
 - Went to a Tucson, AZ, shopping Mall and shot and killed 12, including a Federal Judge. Shot Congresswoman Gabby Gifford, who survived.
 - James Holmes, 25 yo
 - In 2012, went to an Aurora, CO, theater where he shot and killed 12 people and was arrested outside the theater. At trial, he was given the longest prison sentence in American Legal History.

Both were expelled from their colleges. Loughner was expelled by his Community College's TAT. Holmes was about to go before his school's TAT when he failed an important exam, and was expelled.

In both cases, no attempt was made to notify the local police of these two students who were deemed to be a menace.

Touchstone School Shootings

5. Sandy Hook Elementary School, December 14, 2012, Newtown, MA

- Shooter: Adam Lanza, 20 yo
- Diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome
- 28 killed. 27 at the school, and his mother at their home
- 20 First Graders, 6 Staff members
- Killed his mother at home, prior to the shooting at the school. Spree shooter
- Families won a lawsuit against Remington for \$73 Million for marketing this to children in video games and other reasons. First successful lawsuit against a firearms company. Remington filed bankruptcy in 2020.
- Federal law changed to include K-12 to what was prior mandates for college, Threat Assessment Teams and implementation because of Sandy Hook.
- After Sandy Hook, President Obama tried to reinstate funding for research into school gun violence (removed from CDC in 1996 by Congress). His efforts failed.
- In 2019, Dr. Rosenberg and Mrs. Dickey helped persuade Congress to restore funding for such research. Congress awarded \$25 Million to be equally split between the CDC and NIH for “Firearm Injury Protection”.

Touchstone School Shootings

6. Oxford High School, Suburb of Detroit, MI, November 30, 2021

- Shooter: Ethan Crumbley, 15 yo
- 4 Killed, 7 wounded
- Parents charged with involuntary manslaughter on December 3, arrested on December 4, 2021. The first time a parent or guardian has been charged for a teen who got unfettered access to a firearm which was used to shoot someone.

School Shooting Data

Deaths by years for 3 decades

School Shooting Deaths by Year

Year	Deaths	Year	Deaths	Year	Deaths
1991-1992	27	2001-2002	17	2011-2012	41
1992-1993	43	2002-2003	32	2012-2013	55
1993-1994	47	2003-2004	19	2013-2014	56
1994-1995	19	2004-2005	34	2014-2015	50
1995-1996	41	2005-2006	16	2015-2016	68
1996-1997	27	2006-2007	88	2016-2017	21
1997-1998	44	2007-2008	51	2017-2018	59
1998-1999	28	2008-2009	41	2018-2019	16
1999-2000	26	2009-2010	28	2019-2020	73
2000-2001	36	2010-2011	30	2020-2021	60
TOTALS:	338		356		499

School Shooting Data

- 1991-92 thru 2000-01 338 deaths
 - 2001-02 thru 2011 356 deaths
 - 2011-21 thru 2021 499 deaths
- TOTAL: 1,193 deaths**

These numbers are from several different and sometimes conflicting source materials. They include Pre-K, K thru 12th grade, and college.

They will be reviewed again, and submitted to the ACFP journal for consideration. That publication will update these numbers, and note any changes or corrections. A text will also be sent to ACFP offices, and the offices of Fielding Graduate School for distribution, as may be needed.

Are School Shooters Mentally Ill?

Can We, As Mental Health
Professionals, Predict Future
Violence Better Than
Laypersons?

Questions and Answers

Pretest Questions

1. The youngest known school shooter where there was not a death was how old?
 - a. 5 yo
 - b. 6 yo
 - c. 9 yo
 - d. 10yo
2. True / False: There are no known school shooting fatalities in Pre-K schools.
3. The youngest known school shooter, where there was a fatality, was the same age as his victim. How old were they?
 - a. 5 yo
 - b. 6 yo
 - c. 9 yo
 - d. 10 yo
4. The youngest known student to have committed suicide at school was how old?
 - a. 9 yo
 - b. 10 yo
 - c. 11 yo
 - d. 12 yo

Pretest Questions

5. True / False: A mass murder is when a shooter kills 3 or more victims at one time. There are no known female mass murderers.
6. School shootings peak in one particular month. What month might that be, and why might so many happen in that month?
7. True / False: According to the Secret Service Report, there is no known or established profile of a typical school shooter.
8. A targeted shooter is someone who goes to a specific location to shoot one person. In many cases, this involves a man going to a school to shoot a woman. Why might this be?
9. Ted Bundy, the BTK Killer, the Green River Killer, David Berkowitz, and Aileen Wuornos are all examples of what kind of killer?

Pretest Questions

10. Charles Whitman killed his wife and his mother, and slept in the house before going to his college to continue his shooting rampage. What kind of shooter is this?
11. What Federal Law prevented, rightly or wrongly, high schools and colleges from sharing information about a student whom they had concerns about? It changed because of the Virginia Tech Massacre.
 - a. HIPPA
 - b. ADA
 - c. FERPA
 - d. TARASOFT (sic)

Websites

- www.everytown.org/articleschoolshootings
- www.stoptheshootings.org
- www.columbine.angels.com
- www.secretservice.gov/ntac
- www.chds.us/ssdb