

Addressing School Violence:

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Disclosures of Potential Conflicts:

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Source	Consultant	Advisory Board	Stock or Equity >\$10,000	Speakers Bureau	Research Support	Honorarium for this presentation or meeting	Expenses related to this presentation or meeting
NCPA						X	Parking Voucher

I acknowledge that today's activity is certified for CME credit and thus cannot be promotional. I will give a balanced presentation using the best available evidence to support my conclusions and recommendations.

This presentation will not include discussion of pharmaceuticals that have or not been approved by the FDA, so I will not be discussing unapproved or "off-label" uses of pharmaceuticals, unless you ask me some pharmaceutical question, in which case I'll try to clarify whether that agent has been approved. To date, no agent has been approved by the FDA for decreasing school violence.

In Defense of Violence

- Humans are, by nature, prone to sometimes seek what they want (this can be perceived by others as aggression)
- When others block our desires, we may seek to change the rules (to be in control); the more thwarted, the more unusual the approach
- If you challenge my rules, I'll crush you" ("I'll expel you.")

Rose I. School Violence 2009

“Life is teleology par excellence; it is the intrinsic striving towards a goal, and the living organism is a system of directed aims which seek to fulfill themselves. The end of every process is its goal. Youthful longing for the world and for life, for the attainment of high hopes and distant goals, is life’s obvious teleological urge which at once changes into fear of life, neurotic resistances, depressions and phobias if at some point it remains caught in the past, or shrinks from risks without which the unseen goal cannot be achieved.”

School Violence: National Research Council (2003)

- Male: 100%
- White 80%
- Loners 70%
- 62% substance abuse
- 48% preoccupied with war/weapons

School Violence: National Research Council (2003)

- 46% arrest history,
- 43% bullied by others,
- 42% history of violence,
- 37% divorced/separated families
- 23% had psychiatric history

School Violence: National Research Council (2003)

- Youth experienced alienation from adults AND parents had little info about what child was experiencing (100%); teachers knew them less well, too
- Intense awareness/concern about their social standing; majority reported being bullied
- School decline in month(s) preceding incident

Profiling a potential threat

- There are no accurate or useful “profile” of students who engage in targeted school violence
- They vary with their:
 - Demographics
 - Personality
 - School History
 - Social Characteristics
- A U.S. Secret Service study of 37 incidents of school shootings since 1974 found a wide range of social and individual characteristics
 - Family situations ranged from intact to neglectful
 - Range of academic performances from outstanding to failing
 - Socially isolated to popular
 - Some with behavioral problems including discipline problems, some not
 - Few had been diagnosed with psychiatric illnesses or drug or ETOH abuse prior to the attack

*Don't focus on the
“type of student” but
instead focus a
student's behavior*

Threat Assessment

- 1) *Evaluate the Threat (often Principal)***
- 2) *Transient? (transient results in reprimand, parent notification, resolved)***
- 3) *Substantive? (raises concern of injury to others) how serious (injure vs. kill); protect by notifying others (targets), and very serious extend to police involvement***
- 4) *Safety Plan: protect others and address student (particularly educational needs; MH clinicians extend to therapeutic support, outside supports)***

(Cornell D & Williams F (2012): Threat Assessment, in Jimerson SR et al, Handbook of School Violence and School Safety), 2nd ed.

Threat Assessment

- 1) VA Youth Violence Project: 188 cases in K-12**
- 2) Males: 76%**
- 3) “hit” 41%, “kill” 15%, “shoot” 13%, “stab” 11%**
- 4) Transient: 70%**
- 5) Substantive: 30%; half suspended 1-3 days, 3 students (long hx of discipline problems) long-term suspension**
- 6) One-year followup: 18% students “worse, 43% “improved” (conflict worse 5%, better 32%)**

(Cornell D & Williams F (2012): Threat Assessment, in Jimerson SR et al, Handbook of School Violence and School Safety), 2nd ed.

Threat Assessment

- 1) Replicated in Memphis City Schools (2008 published);
- 2) Similar findings as VA
- 3) No threats carried out
- 4) Discipline referrals dropped 55% AFTER the threat assessment (6.4 referrals pre to 2.9 post)
- 5) “Key Goal” of training became to convince school administrators to use threat assessment approach rather than “zero tolerance”

(Cornell D & Williams F (2012): Threat Assessment, in Jimerson SR et al, Handbook of School Violence and School Safety), 2nd ed.

MICRO

1. What drew attention to the student, the situation, and possibly the targets
 - What behaviors and/or communications were reported?
 - Who, if anyone, witnessed the reported behavior of concern?
 - What was the context of the reported behavior, i.e., what else was going on at the time of the reported behavior?
 - When and where did this occur?
 - What was done?
 - Did the student say why he or she acted as they did?

2. Information about the student

- History of relationships and conflicts
- History of harassing others or being harassed by others
- Any changes in emotions and interest
 - “Often such children are perceived to have changed and narrowed their focus of interest and have shown extremes in emotion” rather than their typical behavior
 - Often develop a compulsion to aggressively blame others
 - Develop a dark sense of humor contrast to typical oppositional behavior

2. Information about the student

- Family and home situation
- Criminal behavior
 - Risk for murder doubles if family hx of criminal behavior
 - Risk triples if history of arrest
- Social networks
- Academic performance
- Access to and use of weapons
 - History of weapon use triples risk (Malek et al., 1998)

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- Any “downward” progression in social, academic, behavioral, or psychological functioning

2. Information about the student

- Recent hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair, including suicidal thoughts, gestures, attempts
- Pending crisis or change in circumstances
- Mental health/substance use history
 - Risk of murder doubles if hx of substance use
 - Hx of neurological problems and impairment of thinking
 - Risk triples (Zagar et al., 1991)
- History of grievances and grudges
- History of violence towards and self and others
- Known difficulty of coping with a stressful event

3. Information about “attack-related” behaviors

- Most attacks are preceded by discernible behaviors
 - Ideas or plans about injuring him/herself
 - Communications or writings that suggest that the student has an unusual or worrisome interest in school attacks
 - Mimicry of media figures: One student at high school in Kentucky killed a teacher and a janitor in the same way as described in Stephen King’s short story *Rage* (Twemolow et. al., 2002)
 - Weapon-seeking behavior
 - Communication or writings that the student is condones or is considering violence to redress a grievance or solve a problem
 - Rehearsals of attack

5. Motives

- Revenge for a perceived injury or grievance
- Yearning for attention, recognition, or notoriety
- A wish to solve a problem otherwise seen as unbearable
- A desire to die or be killed

6. Target Selection

- Most school shooters identified their targets to friends and fellow students before the attack
 - Information about a student's targets may provide clues to the student's motive, planning and attack-related behavior

7. School Information

- What is known about the student from records, teacher interviews and school officials?
- Is the student well known to any adults?
- Has the student come to attention for any behavioral concerns? If so, what?
- Is there anyone with whom the student shares worries, frustrations, and/or sorrow?
- Is there any information that the student has considered ending his or her life?

7. Parent/Guardian Interview

- Seek the help of student's parents in understanding the student's actions and interests
 - Recognize that parents may or may not know much about their child's thinking and behavior
- Explore the student's interest in weapons, as well as his or her access to weapons at home

8. Interviews with the Student of Concern

- Goal is to understand the situation of the student and possible targets. This will assist in assessing risk of violence.
- Be professional, neutral and non-confrontational, rather than accusatory or judgmental
- Helpful if prior to the interview, review has been made of available information concerning the student's background, interest, and behaviors.

8. Interviews with the Student of Concern

- Explore student's motive(s) and goals?
 - What motivated the student to make the statements or take actions that caused him or her to come to attention?
 - Does the situation or circumstances still exist that led to actions?
 - Does student have major grievance or grudge?
 - Has the student communicated their concerns to someone else?
- Interview the student also gives students of concern the opportunity to tell their personal stories, to be heard, and to reassess and redirect their behavior away from activities that are of concern.

9. Interview with Potential Target(s)

- Ask about relationship to the student of concern
- Gather information about grievances and grudges that the student of concern may hold against a target or against others

MACRO

“There is a large body of evidence that school-based interventions can reduce aggressive behavior...effective programs include social competence training, cognitive-behavioral counseling to improve social interaction and problem-solving skills, and conflict resolution programs.”

(Cornell D & Williams F (2012): Threat Assessment, in Jimerson SR et al, Handbook of School Violence and School Safety), 2nd ed.

Violence Prevention

- 1) *Belonging, Connection, Care: SCHOOL connectedness most important protective factor for M/F against acting out (behind family connectedness for internalizing symptoms)***
- 2) *Social Emotional Learning: CASEL; emotional regulation (attitudes, behaviors, performance all improve)***
- 3) *Positive Behavioral Approaches: PBIS; state small # rules positively***

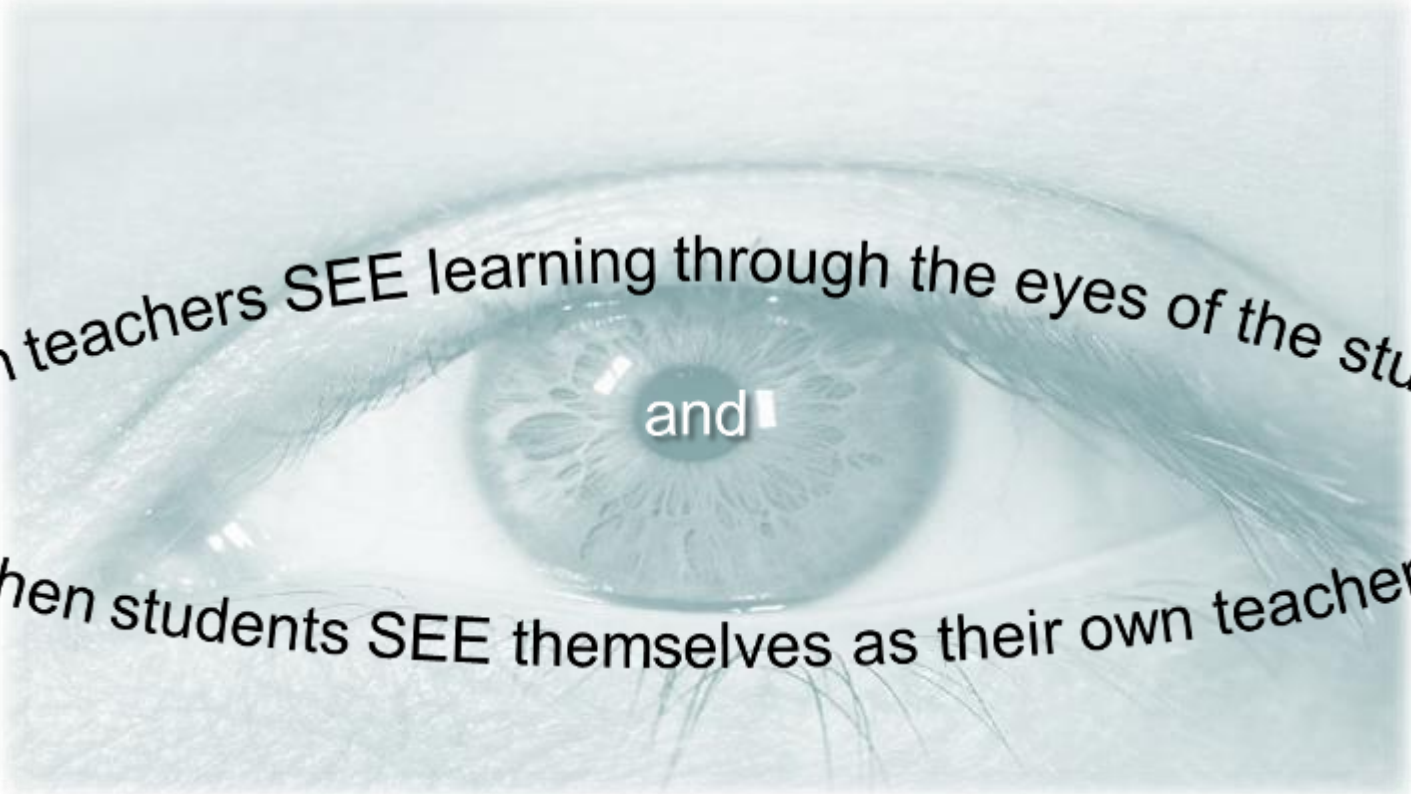
(Osher D et al (2012): Threat Assessment, in Jimerson SR et al, Handbook of School Violence and School Safety), 2nd ed.

Violence Prevention

- 4) *Academic Engagement/Support: high expectation and position students to succeed***
- 5) *Technical Factors (organization of curriculum, instruction); high-quality teaching (advance organizers, connect subjects, cooperative learning)***
- 6) *School Cultural/Structural Factors: problem-solving over blame; everyone important***
- 7) *Student-Specific Factors; some students have greater vulnerabilities that require assistance***

(Osher D et al (2012): Threat Assessment, in Jimerson SR et al, Handbook of School Violence and School Safety), 2nd ed.

Visible Teaching – Visible Learning



When teachers SEE learning through the eyes of the student

and











When students SEE themselves as their own teachers

Various Influences

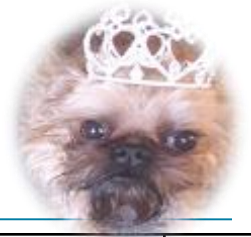
	<u>Metas</u>	<u>Studies</u>	<u>People</u>	<u>Effects</u>	<u>ES</u>	<u>se</u>
Teacher	29	2,052	.5m	5,379	.50	.05
Curricula	135	6,892	7m	29,476	.45	.07
Teaching	344	24,906	52m	50,953	.43	.07
Student	133	10,735	7m	37,308	.39	.04
Home	31	1,998	10m	3,968	.35	.06
School	96	4,019	4m	13,609	.23	.07
Average	768	50,602	82/241m*	140,693	.40	.06











The Disasters ...



Rank	Category	Influence	Studies	Effects	ES
100		Mobility (shifting schools)	181	540	-.34
99		Retention	207	2675	-.16
98		Television	31	235	-.14
97		Summer vacation	39	62	-.09
96		Open vs. traditional	315	333	.01
95		Multi-grade/age classes	94	72	.04
94		Inductive teaching	24	24	.06
93		Reading: Whole language	64	197	.06
92		Perceptual-motor programs	180	637	.08
91		Out of school experiences	52	50	.09

The Winners ...



Rank	Category	Influence	Studies	Effects	ES
1		Self-report grades	209	305	1.44
2		Absence of disruptive students	140	315	.86
3		Classroom behavioral	160	942	.80
4		Quality of teaching	141	195	.77
5		Reciprocal teaching	38	53	.74
6		Prior achievement	3387	8758	.73
7		Teacher-student relationships	229	1450	.72
8		Feedback	1276	1928	.72
9		Providing formative evaluation to teachers	21	21	.70
10		Creativity programs	658	814	.70

Thus ...

- Provide correct feedback .43
- About previous attempts .55
- Related to more difficult goals .51
- That does not discourage .33
- or threaten student self-esteem .47

“Psychiatrist Role”

- Social Emotional Learning: Emotional Regulation, Social Pragmatics
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapeutics
- Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Executive Functioning Skills

Non-violent Schools

“Early Warning, Timely Response”

- Focuses on Academics (expectations high)
- School links to Community and to Family (police, mental health, faiths, etc.)
- Emphasizes Social Inclusion of ALL students (mentoring)
- Promotes Equal Treatment

(Fast J, Ceremonial Violence, 2008, pp. 241-242)

Non-violent Schools

“Early Warning, Timely Response”

- Openly discusses safety
- Promotes Students Sharing with Staff
- Offers Extended Day Programs
- Assist Students making transitions to adult life and workplace

(Fast J, Ceremonial Violence, 2008, pp. 241-242)

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- 1/3 of American homes have guns (mostly rifles, shotguns, though handguns on the rise)
- 40% men, 10% women possess; usually nonurban, >40yo, friends and parents have/had guns, conservative (don't believe police care or can protect)

Hemenway D. 2011. Risks and benefits of a gun in the home.
Am J of Lifestyle Med; DOI: 10.1177/1559827610396294

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Children in USA 11 times more likely to be accidentally killed by a handgun than children in other similar Countries.
- For every fatality, 10 others injured requiring ER treatment (by shooting, but doesn't include bb guns or other injuries (e.g., powder burn, hit with gun, recoil, etc.)
- 2 teen suicides/day by gun, 3.5 in 20-24yo/day; more fatalities than all other suicide means combined (high lethality)

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Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Simply put (by James Rowen): for every time a gun in or around the home was used in self-defense, or in a legally justified shooting, there were **four unintentional shootings, seven criminal assaults or homicides, and 11 attempted or completed suicides**. That's one self-defense shooting for **22 accidental, suicidal or criminal shootings** -- hardly support for the notion that having a gun handy makes people safer. Other studies show that **women and children are disproportionately the victims of such gunshots**, and that when children commit suicide, guns in their home or at their friends or relatives' homes are used.

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- The Vast Majority of Adolescent Suicide Guns Come From Parents or Other Family Members

Johnson RM et al. Who are the owners of firearms used in adolescent suicides? *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*. 2010; 40:609-611.

Guns and Suicide

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Fatality rates over 90% for firearms
- Under 5% for drug overdoses, cutting and piercing (the most common methods of attempted suicide)
- Hospital workers rarely see gun-suicides (not taken to ER' s)

Miller M, Azrael D, Hemenway D. The epidemiology of case fatality rates for suicide in the Northeast. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*. 2004; 723-30.

Guns and Suicide

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Firearm ownership rates increase suicide rates across 50 States
- Accounting for differences in suicide attempts, and demographics (urban, poverty-status)

Miller M, Barber C, Azrael D, White R. Firearms and suicide in the United States: is risk independent of underlying suicidal behavior? *American Journal of Epidemiology* 2013.

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Most suicides are impulsive (no note, etc.)
- Fewer than 10% of suicide attempters proceed later to suicide successfully
- Of those who would have died without ER treatment of gunshot wounds (self-inflicted), none attempted in the subsequent 2 yrs
- Lethal suicidality 85-90% transient (only 10-15% remain committed to suicide)

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Am J of Lifestyle Med; DOI: 10.1177/1559827610396294

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Unlocked guns more dangerous
- Loaded guns more dangerous
- Mental illness and family conflict increase risk of suicide with a gun
- Guns in the actual home (vs. found elsewhere) more dangerous

Hemenway D. 2011. Risks and benefits of a gun in the home.
Am J of Lifestyle Med; DOI: 10.1177/1559827610396294

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Most burglaries occur with no one at home (70%)
- 7% burglaries that involve violence occur among people who knew or were familiar to those being burglarized
- Of violent crime, only 5% perpetrated by strangers to someone in the home

Hemenway D. 2011. Risks and benefits of a gun in the home.
Am J of Lifestyle Med; DOI: 10.1177/1559827610396294

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Atlanta Police Data:
- Only 1.5% cases were home owners able to deter intruders
- Twice as often the intruder obtained the home owner's gun

Hemenway D. 2011. Risks and benefits of a gun in the home.
Am J of Lifestyle Med; DOI: 10.1177/1559827610396294

Risk: Benefit Ratio of Having A Gun in the Home

- Self-defense
- Criminal Court Judges reviewing 35 cases found that most cases of self-defense were illegal (escalations of arguments)

Hemenway D. 2011. Risks and benefits of a gun in the home.
Am J of Lifestyle Med; DOI: 10.1177/1559827610396294

American Academy of Pediatrics:

- The AAP recommends that pediatricians incorporate questions about guns into their patient history taking and urge parents who possess guns to remove them, especially handguns, from the home.

Firearm-related injuries affecting the pediatric population. Committee on Injury and Poison Prevention. American Academy of Pediatrics. Pediatrics. 2000;105(4, pt 1):888-895

Media and Violence: Alternative Viewpoints

- Is there a positive value of aggression and violence in media?
- What is the role of sublimation?
- What is the value of fantasy in preventing acting out?
- Can violent media be a format for productive discussion?
- What are the dangers of censorship and prohibition?
- Are we attending to the wrong place? Shouldn't we be considering better access to mental health care, improving the quality of education and safety in schools, homes and communities?