



**“Critical Thinking Solutions in Crime”**

***The* BROWARD COUNTY  
CRIME COMMISSION**

**Presents**

**Active Shooter Killers:  
Are the Solutions Really that  
Complex?**

**Webinar Conference**

Wednesday, 28 September 2022

7:30 a.m. to Noon

As Part of the Building Bridges Mental Health Conference Series

TEL: (754) 423-1976; TEL: (954) 803-2139; EMAIL: [info@BrowardCrime.org](mailto:info@BrowardCrime.org);

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## **ABOUT THE CRIME COMMISSION:**

### **Purpose:**

The Broward County Crime Commission is a 45 year old independent, state chartered office, acting judiciously on behalf of law – abiding citizens, in overseeing local, state, and federal Criminal Justice System protocols, processes, methodologies, and approaches, to better protect and assist the citizens of Broward County...from *Crime*.

### **Mission:**

The Crime Commission assesses and evaluates crime in Broward County (and south Florida), and works in concert with Law Enforcement, the General Public, and the Criminal Justice System, to derive solutions against crime, as well as social issues that can transpire into crime, in order to enhance public safety.

### **Role:**

As an independent, fact – finding agency, the Crime Commission has distinguished itself as a laureate governing body, which works diligently to improve the integrity of the Criminal Justice System, as well as strengthen and preserve the key components of Public Safety in Broward County, on behalf of the Broward County citizenry.

### **Operations:**

The Crime Commission executes its operations through a cadre of meritorious program's involving perspective, education, research, white paper studies, technology, analytics, advocacy, certifications, outreach rehabilitative and counseling programs, and facilitation of findings to both the Criminal Justice System and the residents of Broward County.

### **Programs:**

The Crime Commission embodies innovative, preemptive, and proactive protocols (versus reactive programs), especially with guiding and mentoring children, so that they do not succumb to a life of crime, or suffer the ill fate of a heinous crime.

### **Programs for 2020/2021 include:**

1. The Building Bridges Mental Health Conference Series, to Prevent and Preempt Crime Based Upon Behavioral Health Analytics
2. The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual CSI: STEM Leadership & Technology Summer Camp
3. High School Criminal Justice Certification Programs (and Curriculums)
4. Verbal De-escalation, Conflict Resolution, Critical Thinking, and Logic & Reasoning Certification
5. Police Chief Think Tank Forums

6. Law Enforcement Recruitment Programs
7. Hurricane Contractor Fraud Prevention



## AGENDA & 15 SPEAKERS:

**“Active Shooter Killers – Are the Solutions Really that Complex? Webinar Program – Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

### Three Panels and One Presentation on the Day:

7:50 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Opening Comments, James DePelisi, Broward County Crime Commission

8:00 a.m. to 8:55 a.m. - Panel I/Presentation:

Educators, Law Enforcement, Behavioral Health & Artificial Intelligence(AI) Strategies to INTERCEPT Active Shooter Killers

Retired District Attorney, Matt Mangino, Lawrence County, PA

Dr. Allison Paolini, Assistant Professor of School Counseling, Program Director, Arkansas State University

J.T. Wilkins, Senior Vice President of Government Solutions, Zero Eyes

Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D., Director of Threat Assessment Georgetown University

Ret. Colonel Alvin Pollock, Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO)

**MODERATOR:** James DePelisi, Director, Broward County Crime Commission

**BREAK:** 8:55 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

**9:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m - Panel II:**

**Are Guns the Root Cause of Active Killer Events?  
Analysis and Debate**

**Mr. John Lott, President, Crime Prevention Research Center**

**Dr. Ragy Girgis, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry,  
Columbia University Department of Psychiatry and New York State  
Psychiatric Institute**

**MODERATOR:** James DePelisi, Director, Broward County Crime  
Commission

**BREAK: 9:55 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.**

**10:00 a.m. to 10:55 a.m. -Dual Presentation:**

**How to Talk to Your Children About Active Killer Tragedies**

**Dr. Thomas DeMaria, National Center for School Crisis & Bereavemet**

**Dr. Robin Gurwitch, Professor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Duke  
University School of Medicine; the National Child Traumatic Stress Network  
(NCTSN)**

**BREAK: 10:55 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

**11:00 a.m. to Noon - Panel III:**

**Survivors of Active Shooter Attacks - Hear How They Cope  
and Move Forward**

**Mr. David Sallak, Citizen, Highland Park, Illinois, July 4th Shooting**

**Mr. Tony Brosio, Citizen, Highland Park, Illinois, July 4th Shooting**

**Ms. Nancy Rotering, Mayor, Highland Park, Illinois, July 4th Shooting**

**Mr. Eric Graves, Community Journalist, FOX 59 TV, Indianapolis, on Behalf  
of the Citizens of the Greenwood Park Mall Shooting, Indiana**

**MODERATOR:** Mrs. Sandra Welch, Vice Mayor, City of Coconut Creek,  
Florida





<https://nypost.com/2022/07/27/air-force-testing-system-to-stop-active-shooters-with-robots-and-drones/>

## **Air Force testing system to stop active shooters with robots and drones**

**By**  
**Michael Lee , Fox News**  
**July 27, 2022 6:17pm**

The US Air Force is testing a system that uses artificial intelligence and drones on its bases aimed at putting a stop to an active shooter.

“The entire idea behind the platform is being able to take a robot and ultimately impede, disorient an active threat on an installation before they can do any more damage,” ZeroEyes Senior Vice President of Government Solutions JT Wilkins, whose company is developing the technology for the government, told National Defense.

The system will build off the company’s AI gun-detection software that is already in use in the security camera system at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, which will then be able to deploy drones or robots to combat a potential active shooter.

The drones or robots will use non-lethal means aimed at disorienting a shooter, including sirens and strobe lights.

Wilkins said research shows shooters expose their weapons two to 30 minutes prior to firing their first shots, which once detected could give the robots a chance to intervene ahead of a violent incident.

“So that’s ultimately where we want to be able to get these detections out and be able to send a robot to potentially interdict while we’re getting up a squad car from one side of the base to the other,” he said.

But the robots won’t act on their own after detecting a potential weapon, Wilkins said, noting that there will be a human there to review positive alarms.

“You know that every AI is going to throw false positives, and that’s why we put a human reviewer in there to make sure that we can mitigate some of that,” Wilkins said.

After verifying an active threat, the human will be able to release the robot or drone to intervene. The machines will not replace physical security or police, but act as a “force multiplier” that can assist first responders heading to the scene.

The trial period for the system will be 15 months, with Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, also receiving the AI gun-detection software without the robotic interdiction system.

The news comes after multiple mass shootings have rocked the US in recent months, including one instance in which an [armed civilian at an Indiana mall](#) was able to intervene and stop the shooter before he was able to claim more lives.

Watkins said that the ZeroEyes system will not just be limited to government clients, noting that the company has 50 commercial clients and that he expects more businesses to adopt the system once it is fully developed.

**NOTES:**

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## **Reducing Gun Violence in Schools: A School Counselor's Role (Abridged)**

**Allison C. Paolini**  
**Winthrop University**

### **Abstract**

This article focuses on gun violence in the school setting and the role of the counselor in helping to reduce gun violence. Gun violence in schools has become pervasive for many reasons, including lack of adequate support staff, undiagnosed mental health issues, students who experience isolation, anger, depression, bullying, as well as access to guns and rifles combined with a failure to conduct extensive background checks on purchasers of weapons of mass destruction. This article explores the instrumental role school counselors have in identifying, assisting, supporting, and empowering students who are struggling mentally, behaviorally, socially, and academically. A definition of gun violence, statistics, warning signs of perpetrators, and the impact of gun violence on students, are presented.

### **Reducing Gun Violence in Schools: A School Counselor's Role**

Gun violence within schools has become more prevalent than in the past. Some reasons for the growing number of school shootings include, but are not limited to, having a lack of school counselors and mental health practitioners in the school setting to work with at-risk students, lack of fiscal resources and budgeting issues that prevent hiring mental health professionals, access to fire arms without extensive background checks, undiagnosed mental illnesses, students with violent tendencies, or students who are isolated, bullied, angry, are looking to retaliate in order to feel empowered, and experience a sense of control as a result of intentional mass chaos.

TIME Magazine recently assessed reports on 86 attacks in EveryTown's data since 2013 that are labeled as, an attack on other persons resulting in injury or death. School shootings were characterized as having at least one victim injured or killed, either the shooter or victim was a student or teacher, the attack occurred on school property, and injury occurred as a result of gunfire (Wilson, 2018). From 2013 to 2019, there have been 549 school shootings in the United States (EveryTown, 2020a). In 2013, EveryTown began to examine gun shootings in K-12 schools and universities and over the next 3 years identified 184 incidents (both fatal and non-fatal) assaults, suicides, and unintentional shootings (EveryTown, 2020a). Research substantiates that of the shootings carried out by minors in primary and secondary levels, more than half of those perpetrators obtained a gun from home (EveryTown, 2020b). Research has

consistently shown that regardless of those involved in a shooting or the context of the shooting, gun violence in schools (both K-12 and universities) undermines and destroys the sense of safety and security that all students should be guaranteed in their learning environments (EveryTown, 2020b).

Between 2013-2015, EveryTown identified 184 school shootings and approximately 55% of those shootings took place in K-12 schools and 45% took place on college or university campuses nationwide (EveryTown, 2020a). In comparison to other countries, including European and Asian countries, the United States has the highest rate of gun violence school tragedies due to gun access and a lack of mental health services to serve all of those in need (Erickson, 2018). According to the Statista Research Department (2020), 116 school shootings took place in 2018—the highest number of school shootings of any year since 1970. 110 school shootings took place in 2019. 54 school shootings took place in 2017, which means that between 2018-2019 school shootings have more than doubled in this country in the K-12 and university settings. School shootings are taking place nationwide. Therefore, it is important to note that school shootings are not limited to a particular geographic location and impact students from all backgrounds, races, religious affiliations, and socioeconomic statuses.

### **Warning Signs of At-Risk Students**

According to the National School Safety Center (Kamenetz, 2018), there are definitive warning signs displayed by students who are at risk for carrying out an act of violence in a school setting. Most school shootings in the United States are perpetrated by male students ages 14-17. Additionally, many of the perpetrators may have a violent temper, may be cruel to animals, and may struggle with mental health issues. These issues may include diagnoses (i.e., conduct disorder, oppositional defiance disorder) or other troubling behaviors such as: bringing weapons to school, posting cryptic messages about harming themselves or others on social media, posting disconcerting pictures of weapons on social media, making threats, having serious disciplinary issues including suspension or expulsion, having few friends, bullying others or is a victim of bullying, having a preoccupation with weapons, having a lack of family or guardian supervision, being fascinated by violence, or being depressed or having suicidal thoughts or tendencies (National School Safety Center, 2019).

It is important to clarify that a direct correlation does not exist between mental illness and acts of violence. In fact, those struggling with mental illness are more likely to be victims of violence (Kamenetz, 2018). It is also relevant to note that each of these warning signs are indicative of the fact that students demonstrating and displaying these behaviors are in need of mental health support. One in five K-12 students struggle with a mental health disorder and four out of five of those students struggling with mental health issues are untreated. Additionally, given that there is typically one school counselor for every 500 students and one school psychologist for every 1,400 students, there are likely students who are in significant need of assistance, but are not being helped because there aren't enough practitioners and support staff to identify and assist

these struggling students (Kamenetz, 2018). In light of the number of atrocities being committed in schools nationwide, there is a considerable need to allocate funds for mental health awareness, and to hire more school counselors and mental health support staff who can identify, work with, counsel, and provide resources and referrals to students who demonstrate a tendency to carry out violent acts (Teasley, 2018).

### **Threat Assessments and Crisis Interventions**

Threat assessments are critical components in helping to identify at risk students, as they provide insight into the degree to which students pose a threat to themselves or others. It is beneficial for counselors to be able to identify early warning signs that may be indicative of a student who is struggling. Warning signs may include behavioral issues, being bullied, suicidal or homicidal tendencies, drug/alcohol usage, withdrawal, violent drawings, outbursts of anger, or impulsiveness (Bray, 2016). Using threat assessments helps counselors to determine how likely a person is to repeat an incident or follow through on a threat.

Counselors and other stakeholders must work efficiently to determine whether a student is a danger to themselves or others. Conducting threat assessments in a collaborative manner is helpful because stakeholders may provide additional perspectives concerning the threat that students pose in regard to their personality, life experiences, academics, home life, social situations, and previous peer interactions. Warning signs are not indicative that a student poses an absolute threat, but they do provide counselors and stakeholders with opportunities to meet with and address student concerns in order to determine the most impactful intervention (Bray, 2016). It is important for counselors to be attentive of student backgrounds, especially those who have experienced trauma, so that the student can be encouraged to focus on how the trauma has impacted them and be offered resources and referrals to support them.

In addition, crisis training may also be very beneficial. Counselors can help organize teacher training, work with the school resource officers, and enhance outreach to parents. Counselors are also encouraged to facilitate social emotional learning groups addressing conflict resolution, time and stress management, motivation, leadership, optimism, and emotion regulation for students. Crisis training helps stakeholders learn how to de-escalate potentially dangerous or volatile situations, how to intervene, and when to intervene. It provides school personnel with enhanced empathy skills, compassion, and approachability (Bray, 2016)



<https://www.monitorsaintpaul.com/stories/mental-health-and-school-shootings-a-call-for-intervention,5679?>

## **Mental health and school shootings: a call for intervention**

**Posted Wednesday, May 11, 2022 9:12 am**

**By Hannah Ericson, Kenzie Harstad, Savannah Lyytinen, Hannah Moore and Isabel Quevedo**

The rise of school shootings and school shooting threats within the last five years in the United States has left school officials and law enforcement in a state of perplexity in attempting to address this issue. Recent findings show that 93% of school shootings are premeditated, meaning that perpetrators come up with a comprehensive plan for executing their shooting, according to Allison Paolini in her study, “School shootings and Student Mental Health.”

In 2021, the Center for Homeland Security reported there were 240 incidents of non-active and active shooters in K-12 schools in the United States – this resulted in 18 individuals killed from school shootings in K-12 schools. Right here in Minnesota, a school shooting occurred on the grounds of District 287 in Richfield. Prior, a federally funded grant had been given to them to improve the mental health system within their school system, yet this deadly event still took place.

Intervention is needed at the individual and institutional level to reduce incidents like these from occurring. Successful intervention involves tailoring programs to the needs and development of adolescents. One holistic approach to solving problems within schools is through the use of restorative practices.

Restorative practice is a process in which an individual acknowledges wrongdoing, takes needed steps to repair harm, and is then reintegrated into the appropriate environment. Such practices typically occur after the shooting or threat that consist of: victim-impact panels, retribution, and rehabilitation. These practices and more are effective for reducing recidivism in juvenile school shooters. Restorative justice allows the ability for the perpetrator and victim(s), as well as the school community, to address the harm that took place and to work towards taking responsibility and finding closure.

Mental illnesses go hand-in-hand with a greater risk of suicide, and the majority of those with mental illnesses are actually non-violent. Therefore, preventative mental health care is a step in the right direction, with policy recommendations promoting and addressing mental health and suicide awareness in schools. By acknowledging mental health and

suicide awareness, students could attend educational mental health-oriented assemblies. This also means that school districts are provided more in-depth mental health services. James Densley, a criminal justice professor at Metro State University and co-founder of The Violence Project, spoke on how Minnesota has some of the worst student-to-counselor ratios. To address this issue, he explained that we need to provide more opportunities for students to feel connected in schools, other than just having a counselor. This leads to a need for a student to feel loved, seen, and heard in their school setting. If each student had a meaningful connection to an adult in their school, we would see a decrease in violence in schools. “Smaller class sizes are a step towards violence prevention,” Densley stated.

By using James Densley’s philosophy as policy recommendation, the school districts should create smaller class sizes and create weekly meetings including all staff members to promote more changes and ideas to help improve mental health, along with a check in on how their students are doing.

We talked to another professional in the field, Robin Burge-Ross, who is a clinical social worker in Minnesota that has experience with at-risk youth, corrections, and public education. Most of her time is spent in alternative learning centers (ALC). She explained that in these settings, the class sizes are much smaller. This allows students to cope with their anxiety, and teachers can build more meaningful relationships with their students. Most ALC settings “prioritize mental health and basic needs,” Burge-Ross states, and these resources are what students need. Many of the students she has worked with have turned to drugs as a means to self-medicate. Her strength-based approach with students and families is what students need to be able to learn more healthy coping mechanism strategies and overall identify their feelings. This includes listening to what their bodies are telling them, and providing tools to students to cope with big emotions that are being felt.

A great recommendation for not only Minnesota but nationally would be to require school districts to include behavioral health needs as a reason for an excused absence, alongside physical health problems. This approach and the many resources that alternative settings provide will allow youth to be successful in life and school. *The authors of this column are students at Hamline University.*



<https://ncpolicywatch.com/2022/08/11/to-prevent-shootings-teachers-need-to-be-armed-with-information-not-guns/print/>

## To prevent shootings, teachers need to be armed with information, not guns

Posted By *Matthew T. Mangino* On 8/11/2022 @ 6:00 am In Original Commentary, Other Voices, Progressive Voices, Top Story



A law enforcement officer walks near Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas – Photo: Brandon Bell/Getty Images

Schools do not need more resource officers, armed guards or for that matter armed teachers. Schools need to become adept at gathering information, sharing intelligence and, most importantly, making sense of what they learn.

In Uvalde, Texas we've learned far too well that good guys—many good guys—with guns can't always stop a bad guy with a gun. In Florida, Nikolas Cruz is on trial for his life after killing 17 people at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018. The school's resource officer is also criminally charged for failing to enter the school and confront Cruz.

Nearly every school in America has prepared for a shooting. The *Washington Post* reported that more than 96 percent of public schools hold active-shooter drills.

Active shooter training, although needed, is a reaction to a shooting not an effort to prevent one.

“A pricey, multilayered security plan can be undone by something as small as an open door and a school police force can fail to prevent a worst-case scenario,” according to the *Post*.

The idea that more police officers, more metal detectors, more drills and more guns will stop school massacres—has stretched the bounds of credulity. That hasn’t impeded the rush to bring even more guns into schools.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, nearly 60 percent of states allow individuals other than police or security officials to carry guns on school grounds.

The sheriff in Madison County, North Carolina announced last week <sup>[2]</sup> that AR-15 semi-automatic weapons would be placed in each of the county’s schools for the purpose of helping to prevent shootings.

In Florida, according to *The New York Times*, more than 1,300 school staff members serve as armed guards in 45 school districts, out of 74 in the state. The program was created after the Marjory Stoneman Douglas massacre.

In Texas at least 402 school districts participate in a program that allows designated people, including school staff members, to be armed, according to the *Times*. This is the same state in which more than 400 armed police officers from the Uvalde Police Department, Uvalde School Police, Uvalde County Sheriff’s Office, among others, failed to enter the building for 78 minutes with an active shooter inside.

In Ohio, employees have for years been allowed to carry guns on school grounds with the consent of the local school board, if they completed the same 700 hours of police officer training required of law enforcement officials or security officers who carry firearms on campus.

After Uvalde, according to the *Times*, the legislature, with the acquiescence of Gov. Mike DeWine, enacted a new law that provides for a maximum of 24 hours of training before teachers can carry guns at school.

In Pennsylvania, state Sen. Doug Mastriano, the Republican nominee for governor, is proposing legislation to allow school employees to be armed on school property if they have a concealed carry permit and complete a firearm training course.

School attacks are often the result of meticulous planning. With planning comes the potential for leaving clues. Jeff Kaas, author of “Columbine: A True Crime Story,” wrote in the *Post* that 81 percent of school shooters tell someone about their plans.

In addition, most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the attack that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.

An attack involving time-consuming preparation, and a planner who is talking about his

lethal intentions, lends itself to being detected and prevented, if those close to the planner—teachers, administrators and staff—know what to look for.

Training and education are keys to prevention. Suspicious conduct, indirect threats, even alarming expressions in school assignments need to be documented. Information must be shared so that a coherent snapshot can be created of a potentially volatile situation.

School districts need to collect, document and share intelligence. To that end, schools should establish fusion coordinators, “Intel Officers,” who can synthesize documented activity occurring in school, outside of school and on social media networks. Teachers, administrators and staff should have regular roundtable discussions about unusual behavior, threats, bullying and social isolation of students.

Here is an example of how important information can fall through the cracks without a designated “Intel Officer.” John Smith is in 12th grade. His little sister tells the school nurse that her brother has a journal where he draws weird pictures of guns. The nurse passes the information along to the school counselor.

A classmate of John tells a teacher John said he has thousands of rounds of ammunition for target practice. The teacher mentions it to the assistant principal.

Another classmate tells his basketball coach that he overheard John tell someone that January 10 is going to be a big day at the high school. John’s social media posts include photographs of him in camouflage, military garb, body armor and what looks like a semiautomatic weapon.

The teacher, school counselor, coach and assistant principal never get together to share their information. No one is monitoring social media posts.

If John’s school had an intelligence officer designated to receive all reports of unusual or alarming information, the intel officer would have been able to connect the dots and make sense of the multiple bits of information. The intel officer does a follow-up internet search and an intervention is made, possibly averting a tragedy.

The accumulation of intelligence can and must be done without violating a student’s civil rights, and in compliance with Family Educational Rights Privacy Act and other state and federal regulations.

Would a school district be better served with another armed resource officer or an intelligence office armed with a laptop, cell phone, email and some intelligence software serving as a central point of contact synthesizing information from teachers, staff, students and outside public sources?

Intelligence has been cultivated and used effectively in this country’s anti-terrorism efforts. An intelligence model would not only help prevent a violent rampage, but also



<https://lawandcrime.com/opinion/we-may-never-see-police-accountability-in-the-texas-school-shooting-this-is-why/>

OPINION

## We May Never See Police Accountability in the Texas School Shooting — This Is Why

Matthew T. Mangino

Jun 9th, 2022, 12:08 pm



Flowers and photographs are placed at a memorial dedicated to the victims of the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School on June 3, 2022 in Uvalde, Texas. 19 students and two teachers were killed on May 24 after an 18-year-old gunman opened fire inside the school. (Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

The first 911 call from Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas came at 12:03 p.m. on May 24. Seventy-eight minutes later, a U.S. Border Patrol tactical team killed the 18-year-old gunman, who had by that time killed 19 children and two adults.

According to *The New York Times*, a teacher, **Eva Mireles**, spoke to her husband, a school district police officer in Uvalde, while she was barricaded with her students in a classroom. Mireles was killed sometime after that call.

As America collectively shook its head, the obvious question was—why would law enforcement wait 78 minutes to enter the building? The next question— as Americans

reach for the proverbial torch and pitchfork: Can the police be held accountable criminally, or civilly, for their inaction?

As the police department, police chief and school district continue to revise, amend and disavow their original versions of what happened outside of Robb Elementary School on that fateful day, we may never truly know why the police did not immediately enter the building. We know that Uvalde School District's policy with regard to active shooters, and the state of Texas policy, were very similar. Their training had units entitled "stop the dying" and "stop the killing"—neither of which happened for 78 minutes.

That brings us to the second question, accountability. The school police in Uvalde will not face criminal or civil liability for failing to confront the shooter who killed 19 students and two teachers. Most people would be surprised to know that the government is not required to protect its citizens—the U.S. Supreme Court has said as much.

The lack of accountability is not unique to Texas. The result would probably no different in Pennsylvania and probably every other state in the union.

### **Criminal Charges**

Experts who spoke to *The New York Times* said a negligent homicide charge would revolve around whether the officers had a duty to act in that moment and whether the failure to do so amounted to deliberate indifference. The Texas penal code says criminal negligence results when a person "ought to be aware of a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the circumstances exist or the result will occur."

Uvalde school district's police force had recently gone through active shooter training. The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement training "Active Shooter Responses for School Base Law Enforcement" warns participants that "first responders to the active shooter scene will usually be required to place themselves in harm's way and display uncommon acts of courage to save the innocent."

Initially, some law enforcement officers attempted to confront the shooter but were wounded. At that point the chief of police ordered down the officers on scene. Apparently, the police command decided to pursue a different tactic. More than an hour passed before a second, and successful, confrontation with the shooter occurred.

### **Civil Liability**

Qualified immunity provides enormous protection from civil liability for police officers when acting in the line of duty. Qualified immunity grants law enforcement officers performing "discretionary functions" immunity from civil liability unless the claimant can prove that the officer violated "clearly established statutory or constitution rights of which a reasonable person would have known".

The U.S. Supreme Court has said that “Qualified immunity balances two important interests — the need to hold public officials accountable when they exercise power irresponsibly and the need to shield officials from harassment, distraction, and liability when they perform their duties reasonably.”

The discretionary function in the Uvalde shooting was: “Is this an active shooter or a barricaded assailant?”

The U.S. Supreme Court has held that the government has no duty to act to save innocent lives. In 1989, the Supreme Court reviewed a case brought against a Wisconsin child welfare agency by the family of a child beaten so severely he would remain institutionalized for the rest of his life.

The suit was brought under Section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act—the federal statute that allows a claimant to sue state and local officials in federal court for violating federal constitutional rights—alleging the child welfare agency failed to intervene to protect the child.

The lawsuit alleged that the failure to act deprived the child of his liberty in violation of the 14th Amendment’s due process clause. The Supreme Court disagreed.

“Nothing in the language of the due process clause itself requires the state to protect the life, liberty and property of its citizens against invasion by private actors,” the high court found.

Sixteen years later, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the appeal of **Jessica Gonzales** against the Castle Rock, Colorado Police Department. Gonzales had a restraining order against her ex-husband. He kidnapped their children and Gonzales pleaded with the Castle Rock Police to enforce the restraining order.

The officers made no effort to locate or arrest Gonzales’ ex-husband. He later showed up at the police station and engaged in a gun fight with police resulting in his death. Tragically, the police found the three children murdered and thrown in the trunk of the ex-husband’s car.

Gonzales also sued the police department under Section 1983. She argued that the Colorado legislature had made enforcement of the restraining orders mandatory and that, as a result, the police had violated the Due Process Clause by not carrying it out.

Again, the Supreme Court disagreed. Justice **Antonin Scalia** wrote “were a mandate for enforcement to exist, it would not create an individual right to enforcement.”

The Uvalde School District itself will be insulated from liability through the doctrine of sovereign immunity. Other than the scrutiny of a U.S. Justice Department investigation and an investigation by the Texas legislature, there does not appear to be any clear path to accountability in Uvalde, Texas.



<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10861967/MOST-school-shooters-behave-way-attack-DR-MARISA-RANDAZZO-ex-Secret-Service.html>

## **MOST school shooters behave the same way BEFORE they attack which means we may be able to stop them, but only if we know what to watch for, writes DR. MARISA RANDAZZO, ex-Secret Service chief research psychologist**

By Dr. Marisa Randazzo

**Published: 15:35 EDT, 27 May 2022 | Updated: 10:27 EDT, 28 May 2022**

Marisa Randazzo, Ph.D. is the former chief research psychologist for the U.S. Secret Service and Executive Director of Threat Management for Ontic

After school shootings, I'm often asked 'what is the profile of school shooter?'

It's human nature to want to understand why bad things happen – in large part so we can figure out how to avoid them in the future

With over 20 years of experience studying school shootings, interviewing shooters in prison, and managing thousands of active threat cases, here's what I can tell you about school shooters in the U.S.



Author Marisa Randazzo, Ph.D. is the former chief research psychologist for the U.S. Secret Service

There was no accurate or useful profile of a school shooter – meaning no common demographic or external characteristics that described all or most of the school shooters.

This information comes from research conducted primarily by the U.S. Secret Service and FBI.

However, the behavior of school shooters is very similar and it suggests that many of these killers can be stopped before they decide to attack.

**Here's how:**

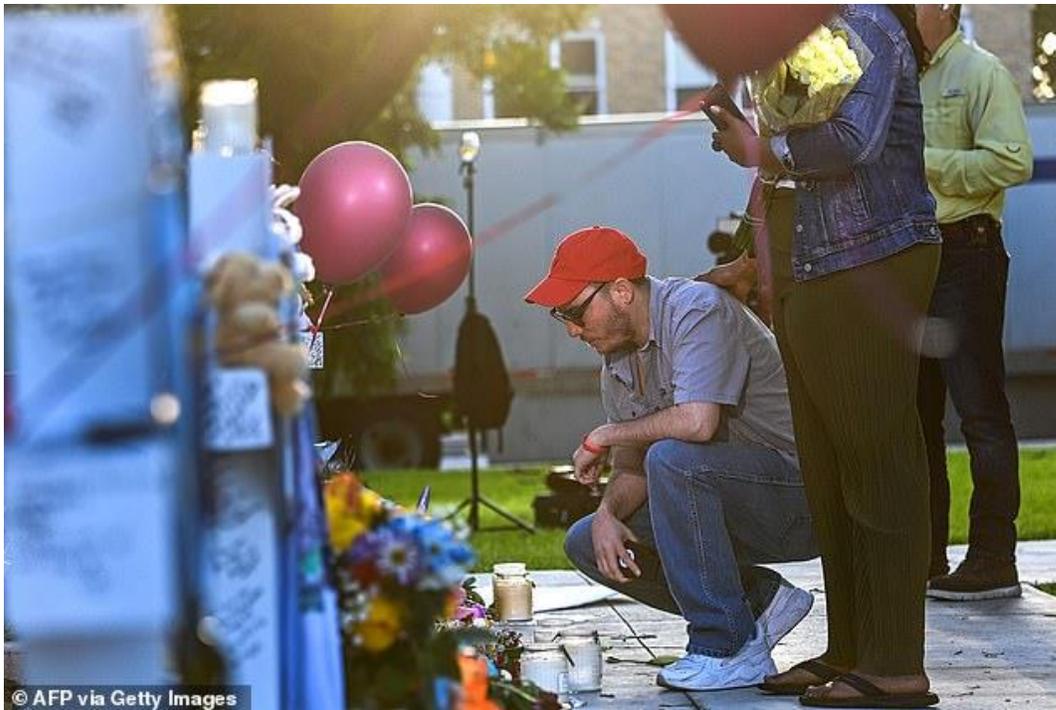
**First**, most school shooters planned their attacks in advance - sometimes for weeks, months, or even years before actually carrying out the shooting.

Their behavior followed a similar progression: (i) they came up with an idea to do harm, (ii) they planned it out in more detail (sometimes researching previous school shootings for guidance or inspiration), (iii) they prepared for the attack, meaning they got the weapon(s) and other gear they intended to use to do harm, and (iv) they carried out the shooting.

In the field of behavioral threat assessment, we refer to this behavioral progression as the 'pathway to violence.'

There are indications that Salvador Ramos, the killer behind the Uvalde shooting, fit this behavior progression.





It's human nature to want to understand why bad things happen – in large part so we can figure out how to avoid them in the future. (Above) A man mourns at a makeshift memorial outside the Uvalde County Courthouse on May 27, 2022

The killer's co-workers at the Wendy's where he worked indicated that he informed them that he was saving money to buy weapons.

'He told us he was saving up money for guns and ammo. We would ask him, "Why would you spend your money on that, spend it on a car or something useful," said co-worker **Grace Cruz**. 'I guess once he got enough money, he quit and stopped showing up.'

Because these shootings are planned in advance, rather than impulsive, we stand a chance at discovering that someone is on that 'pathway to violence' and getting them off of it before they can do harm.

I suspect more evidence of Ramos' advance planning will arise. If the attack was impulsive, it would be an extremely rare example of this type of attack.

We can get potential killers onto a better path by connecting them to medical or psychiatric help, as well as resources to help them solve the underlying problems that got them on a 'pathway to violence' in the first place.

When my colleagues and I spoke with school shooters in prison, they told us they felt ambivalent about their attacks before they carried them out; not indifferent, but ambivalent – that a part of them wanted to or felt they had to do it, but a part of them didn't want to do it.

When working an active threat case, I encourage people to think about that ambivalence – that part of the person whom they are assessing that likely doesn't want to do violence.



Most school shooters planned their attacks in advance - sometimes for weeks, months, or even years before actually carrying out the shooting. (Above) Texas Department of Public Safety's Steven C. McCraw speaks at a news conference on May 27, 2022 showing a crime scene outline of the path of the gunman

I encourage them to find a way to use that to change that person's dangerous trajectory.

**Second**, we know that most school shooters were despondent or even suicidal when they carried out their shootings.

Some were facing problems (such as being bullied) that they felt they couldn't solve, or experienced losses that felt overwhelming, and didn't see any way out of their own pain or desperation.

In the case of Ramos, there are multiple reports that he experienced bullying from his peers.

Of course, there is no excuse for taking innocent lives and this analysis in no way justifies the violent feelings of these individuals.

It is important to note signs of depression, desperation, and suicidality in boys and young men, whom often have active symptoms like rage, quick tempers, aggression, and even attraction to the feelings of hate.

Now to be clear, most people who are suicidal are not a risk to others.

But when we are investigating a threat made by someone who seems filled with rage, it may actually be a symptom of clinical depression – a condition that is quite treatable with counseling and/or medication.

**Third**, most school shooters told other people about their violent plans BEFORE they engaged in any harm.

It is still unclear whether Ramos told anyone about this plans in any timeframe that would have allowed for intervention. But we do know that he was in direct communication with someone on Facebook before and after shooting his grandmother and minutes before he attacked the school.

Shooters typically told fellow students or other peers, whether directly, in written assignments, and/or on social media posts and videos.

It will be extremely rare if more evidence of Ramos' advance communications don't emerge.

When my colleagues and I interviewed school shooters in prison, they said they had told other people about their violent plans because they were hoping someone would stop them.



Nuri Perez, 6, who lost one of her friends in the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School, pets Exon, a crisis response canine, in Uvalde, Texas, U.S. May 26, 2022

**So how can we put all this information into action to help prevent school shootings?**

**Behavioral threat assessment is the best available tool to prevent school shootings.**

**While a lot of schools, universities, and workplaces already have trained behavioral threat assessment teams in place, there are some critical missing pieces that we should start to add immediately:**

1. Provide training for all local law enforcement and state-level law enforcement on how to conduct a threat assessment investigation. While federal law enforcement agents often get this training, local and state law enforcement usually do not.

Most people report threats to their local police, so we need to ensure that local law enforcement knows what to do.

2. Enlist the help of students in school safety. We must find ways to let students know they are likely to hear about violent plans first and therefore are critical to keeping schools safe.

3. Require a depression screening at every doctor's visit for children, teens, and adults. Identifying undiagnosed depression earlier can help reduce the incidence of suicide, mass shootings, and other problems like substance abuse.

These efforts can't bring back the lives lost and forever changed by these horrific events.

But combined with continued efforts to train and use threat assessment teams in schools, colleges, workplaces, and communities, these three strategies can help us start to make our schools and our children safer.



<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/weve-known-how-to-prevent-a-school-shooting-for-more-than-20-years/>

## We've Known How To Prevent A School Shooting for More Than 20 Years

By Maggie Koerth

Jun. 1, 2022, at 1:24 PM



AP Photo / Ed Andrieski = The following is an updated version of [this article](#), published in 2018.

The horror in Uvalde, Texas, last week was horrifyingly familiar to Mary Ellen O'Toole. Part of a small group of academics, law-enforcement professionals and psychologists who published some of the first research on mass shootings in schools more than 20 years ago, O'Toole knows the patterns these events and perpetrators all follow — and the opportunities for prevention that seem to just keep being missed.

I first spoke to her in 2018, after the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, but she has been studying school shootings for more than 27 years. In that time, she and other experts say little has changed. The risk factors they identified two decades ago still apply. The recommendations they made are still valid. And every time another batch of Americans die in this way, researchers like O’Toole are forced to watch in horror, thinking about what could have been prevented and why it wasn’t.

“Honestly, I ... I feel very, very angry,” O’Toole said to me last week. There is always another new example of mass gun violence in America. But mass gun violence in America is no longer new — and neither are efforts to stop it.

“On the news, people are saying we should be concerned about this and that,” O’Toole told me in 2018, “and I thought, ‘We identified that 20 years ago. Did you not read this stuff 20 years ago?’ ... It’s fatiguing. I just feel a sense of fatigue.”

It’s difficult to say definitively how many school shootings have happened in this country — different databases count them in different ways and come up with different numbers of incidents. It’s harder still to prove how many would-be shootings were averted, or how many others could have been if additional steps had been taken. But the people who have spent more than two decades trying to understand this phenomenon are still here and are still trying to sell politicians and the public on possible solutions that are complicated, expensive and tough to sum up in a sound bite.

Any research into school shootings is made more difficult by how uncommon such shootings are. In 2016, FiveThirtyEight wrote about the more than 33,000 people killed by guns in America every year. Of those deaths, roughly one-third — about 12,000 — were homicides, but hardly any were due to mass shootings.<sup>1</sup> If you define mass shootings as an event where a lone attacker indiscriminately kills four or more people, in a public place, unrelated gang activity or robbery, then mass shootings account for a tiny portion of all gun homicides — probably a fraction of a percent. School shootings are an even smaller subset

In 1995, when O’Toole began to study school shootings, they seemed like even more of an outlier than they are today. “I couldn’t even call it a phenomenon,” she said in 2018. “Prior to Columbine, there was no indication that it was going to become one of those crimes that just becomes part of the culture. It looked like it could have faded away.”

These uncommon but high-profile tragedies had also drawn the attention of Marisa Randazzo. In 1999, she was the chief psychologist for the Secret Service and became a part of a joint effort between the Secret Service and Department of Education to better understand school shooters and how to prevent attacks before they happened. Randazzo had previously worked on the Exceptional Case Study Project — a Secret Service project designed to better understand people who threaten the president and other public figures. Like school shootings, assassinations are extremely rare events that have a huge impact on society. That rarity makes them hard to study — and makes it hard to tell blowhards from real threats. But their impact makes them important to understand.

Randazzo found that the project's findings echoed what she was learning about school shootings. For instance, the Secret Service had once focused its energy on threats made by people with a history of violent crime or who had a mental illness that caused them to act irrationally. But the Exceptional Case Study Project analysis showed that most people who actually carry out attacks didn't meet either of those criteria. Instead, a better way to figure out who was really a threat was to talk to friends, family and coworkers — most attackers had discussed their plans with other people.

Randazzo's and O'Toole's parallel reports came to remarkably similar conclusions.

First, these studies determined that there wasn't much point in trying to profile school shooters. Yes, most were (and remain) male and white, but those categories were so broad that they're essentially useless in identifying potential threats ahead of time, Randazzo said. What's more, she said, more detailed profiles risked stigmatizing perfectly reasonable behaviors — like wearing black and listening to loud music.

Instead, the reports focused on the behavior and mental state of the young people who chose to kill. While these teens were deeply troubled, that's not quite the same thing as saying that those who commit school shootings are just irredeemably mentally ill. Nor does it mean those young people suddenly snapped, giving no warning. "School shooters typically do this out of a profound adolescent crisis," said James Garbarino, a professor of psychology at Loyola University Chicago who specializes in teen violence and began studying school shooters in the late 1990s.

Randazzo described a pattern of young people who were deeply depressed, unable to cope with their lives, who saw no other way out of a bad situation. The stressors they faced wouldn't necessarily be problems that an adult would see as especially traumatic, but these young people were unable to handle their emotions, sadness and anger, and they started acting in ways that were, essentially, suicidal.

Some of the best data on the mental state of school shooters has come from interviews with those shooters (and would-be shooters) who survived the attack. Randazzo described one such living school shooter,<sup>2</sup> currently serving multiple life sentences, who told her that before the attack he spent weeks vacillating between suicide and homicide. Only after he tried and failed to kill himself did he settle on killing others in hopes that someone would kill him. Garbarino, who has interviewed dozens of people who went to prison for life as teenagers, both for school shootings and other violent crimes, heard many similar stories.

"The reason I emphasize this is that we know so much about how to help someone who is suicidal, and those same resources can be used very effectively with someone who is planning to engage in school violence," Randazzo said. So how do we spot the ones who are planning an attack at a school? The studies she and O'Toole published years ago showed that, like people planning to attack the president, would-be school shooters don't keep their plans to themselves. They tell friends or even teachers that they want to kill. They talk about their anger and their suicidality. They lash out violently against family

and friends. And as more teens have attacked their schoolmates, that pattern has proved to hold true over time. It was true for Nikolas Cruz, the Parkland shooter. It was true for Payton Gendron, the Buffalo shooter. It was true for Salvador Ramos, the Robb Elementary shooter.

While all the experts I spoke with said that policies that keep guns out of the hands of teenagers are an important part of preventing mass shootings, they all also said it is crucial to set up systems that spot teens who are struggling and may become dangerous. You can't predict violent events or who will go from threatening behavior to murder, O'Toole said. But it is possible for us to look around and see the people who are having problems and need intervention. Interventions can prevent violence, even if we can't predict it, she told me. For example, at least four potential school shootings that were averted in the weeks after Parkland all stopped because the would-be killers spoke or wrote about their plans and someone told law enforcement.

And there's usually time to spot these things coming. While homicides in general are almost never premeditated, mass shootings — including school shootings — almost always are, said Adam Lankford, a professor of criminology at the University of Alabama. That makes sense, O'Toole said, because it takes time for a person who is drowning in self-pity and anger to decide their misery is someone else's fault, to dehumanize those other people to the point of being able to kill them and to isolate themselves from any reality checks that could break through these dangerous thought patterns.

But time also erodes the systems that schools have implemented in the past to prevent violence. Randazzo told me that her team had trained numerous school districts in school shooting prevention back in the early 2000s and that, as of 2018, many of those districts no longer had prevention systems in place. Thanks to staff turnover and budget reprioritization, such institutional knowledge simply withered away. And ironically, that happens precisely *because* school shootings are so rare. "It takes time and effort for a school to create a team and get training," Randazzo said. "And, fortunately, threatening behavior doesn't happen often enough" to spur schools to action.

Maggie Koerth is a senior science writer for FiveThirtyEight.



<https://riskandinsurance.com/there-are-lives-in-the-balance-how-threat-assessment-teams-can-be-utilized-to-staunch-the-school-shooting-epidemic/>

## **There Are Lives in the Balance. How Threat Assessment Teams Can Be Utilized to Staunch the School Shooting Epidemic**

**A former secret service agent provides insights on what K-12 and higher education risk managers can do to stop school shooters in their tracks.**

**By: Courtney DuChene | July 18, 2022**

**Topics: Crisis Management | Critical Risks | Education**

It's impossible to forget May 24, 2022, when 18-year-old Salvador Ramos walked into Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, fatally shooting nineteen students, two teachers and wounding seventeen others.

In the months after the shooting, horrific details about the multitude of ways law enforcement failed to intervene have emerged, including failing to enter the classroom for a full 77 minutes while students and teachers pleaded for help.

Meanwhile schools in Texas and across the U.S. faced threats of copycat shootings, leaving many teachers, school administrators and parents wondering what, if anything, they can do to keep children safe.

“We’re seeing a specific, significant increase in school shootings, and especially in mass shootings and mass killings, at K-12 and higher ed,” said Dr. Marisa Randazzo, executive director of threat management for Ontic and director of threat assessment for Georgetown University.

Randazzo, who formerly served as the Secret Service’s chief research psychologist, spoke during a June United Educators webinar “Preventing School Shootings: A Question & Answer Session.” Here are some key insights from her talk.

### **Are School Shootings on the Rise?**

One of the first questions Randazzo answered was whether or not school shootings have been on the rise in recent years.

“We have absolutely seen an increase in a whole range of violent incidents and disruptive incidents that are impacting our educational institutions at the K-12 level and at the higher education level as well,” she said.

So far, Education Week’s school shooting tracker counts 27 incidents in 2022, with Uvalde being the most deadly since 2012’s Sandy Hook shooting.

“We’ve absolutely seen an uptick, especially post-COVID, in the number of shooting incidents and mass killing incidents that are impacting our educational institution[s],” Randazzo said.

“The research we are starting to see is showing, yes, an increase in not only school shootings but a whole host of disruptive and violent behavior at our educational institutions, generally.”

The reasons for this uptick in violence vary from school to school and individual to individual, but the financial, emotional and physical health stressors brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic are likely exacerbating these situations.

Classes were disrupted, students and teachers had to adapt to online schooling and many experienced instability in their homes as a result of the pandemic. Now that many are back in the classroom, Randazzo expects they may be acting out, even on a small scale.

Take recent data from Miami Dade County Public Schools as an example. Between July 2021 to April 2022 the school saw 323 student aggression claims, *Risk & Insurance*® reported in May. The period from July 2019 to April 2020 saw 282 student aggression claims.

### **How Threat Assessment Teams Help Prevent School Shootings**

Given the high risks of school shootings, many K-12 and higher education institutions have started forming threat assessment teams to detect any members of their communities who might be at-risk of carrying out violence, so that the institution can intervene before anyone is hurt.

These teams often look for signs that a student or staff member may be plotting a shooting or another kind of assault.

“The whole point of having a threat assessment process is to be able to identify a concern and intervene,” Randazzo said.

In the K-12 space, threat assessment teams often include representatives from the school district, such as principals or school board members, local mental health professionals and local law enforcement, often a school resource officer.

Higher education teams tend to be more expansive as they tend to address any dangers from faculty or staff and any domestic violence cases that may affect campus in addition to student behavior cases.

Human resources staff, student counseling services, mental health professionals who work with the school's employee assistance programs, local law enforcement, campus safety and any deans and administrative staff who oversee faculty and student behavior are all part of a robust higher education threat assessment team.

"The key for any behavioral threat assessment team, whether it's K-12 or higher ed, is multidisciplinary," Randazzo said.

"That multidisciplinary perspective helps you come up with a multifaceted plan or access resources that you wouldn't know you could or wouldn't be able to access if it were just a school-based team alone."

Though threat assessment teams are best equipped to detect threats within the community, they can also monitor social media to see if someone outside the school is making threats. In these cases, they'll need to rely more heavily on local law enforcement to help diffuse any potentially dangerous situations.

## **The Pathway to Violence**

According to Randazzo, school shooters typically follow a similar path, which enables threat assessment teams to identify people who might be at risk and to step in before they commit any harm.

"We call this whole trajectory a pathway to violence, from idea to plan, to preparation, to implementation," she said.

### **She identified the following signs that someone might be at risk of committing a shooting:**

**1) They research ways to do harm.** Many school shooters start the process by researching how other shooters prepared for mass shootings. During this time, they begin to identify with shooters while making their own plans to commit harm.

**2) They make a plan to commit violence.** After the initial research, a potential shooter will start making a plan to commit their heinous crime. This stage usually includes acquiring weapons and drawing up the specifics of their plan.

At this point, a shooter may begin to confide their plan to others. They may tell a close friend or a teacher. Or they may begin writing about mass shootings in their school work. Whatever the case, teachers and administrators should be prepared to flag this behavior and get students the help they need.

"People planning out school shootings typically often tell other people beforehand about their violent plans before they get to the point of being violent," Randazzo said.

“They’re telling other people in part because they want someone to help them to stop those thoughts, to get them off the pathway to violence.”

**3) Implementing the plan.** The final step on the pathway to violence Randazzo described is implementing their plan.

By this time, many are deeply depressed and actively suicidal, Randazzo said. That’s why mental health support is such an important part of a threat assessment team.

“The vast majority of people who have carried out school shootings in the past have done so when they were at a point of personal desperation or were actively suicidal,” she explained.

“Now, I want to put a caveat here that the majority of people who are suicidal, who are considering taking their own life, are not going to be at risk of violence to other people. However, when we are working on a case of someone who is talking about carrying out a school shooting, telling other people, researching past school shootings, we need to ask, ‘Why are they doing that? Are they at a point of personal desperation, or are they at a point of being actively suicidal?’ ”

If a threat assessment team detects any of these risk factors in a student or staff member, they’ll need to plan a series of interventions to help get that individual off the pathway to violence. Following up with individuals in these circumstances is key to make sure these dangerous thoughts are truly gone for good.

“These incidents are absolutely preventable,” Randazzo stressed.

“The people who carry out school shootings in K-12, as well as in higher ed, typically follow a detectable progression of behavior ... We know the threat assessment process is the best available tool to identify someone on that pathway and to get them off that pathway.”

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<https://www.ue.org/risk-management/premises-safety/school-shooters-what-we-know-and-why-prevention-is-possible/>

# School Shooters: What We Know and Why Prevention Is Possible

Dr. Marisa Randazzo, Ph.D.  
December 2021

A campus violence prevention expert and former Chief Research Psychologist for the U.S. Secret Service shares her research — previously published by [Ontic](#) — on school shooters and how threat assessment can stop them.

*Note: This report contains references to graphic content related to harm of adults and minors.*

This past month marked the nine-year anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting, which took the lives of 20 children and six adults. Sadly, this grim date comes on the heels of yet another school shooting, this time in Oxford, Mich.

In the aftermath of shootings, many K-12 schools, colleges, and universities evaluate their practices and wonder if they're doing enough. To help institutions, this article summarizes what my Secret Service colleagues and I learned when we worked with the Department of Education to talk with school shooters and analyze their pre-attack behaviors. It also covers how to use these pre-incident indicators as part of your threat assessment process to reduce the risk of violence.

## Major Commonalities Exist Among Shooters

*School shooters don't "just snap" when they carry out violent acts.*

Many school shooters plan their violence and their planning behavior is often observed by their friends, classmates, and sometimes family members beforehand. In fact, their pre-attack behavior often follows what the Secret Service and FBI call a "pathway to violence."

- They develop some **idea** to do harm (often to try to solve a problem or handle a situation where they don't see other options).
- They **plan** how they want to carry out the harm.
- They **prepare** for the violent act by accessing firearms, other weapons, and other gear they think they'll need.
- They **implement** the plan for violence.

***School shooters almost always tell others.***

Whether it be their friends, classmates, or online followers, shooters often talk about their violent plans before they carry them out. The FBI calls these communications “leakage.”

***Most carry out their shootings because they are feeling desperate, despondent, or in many cases are suicidal.***

- They often hope that police will kill them during the school shooting, or they plan to kill themselves at the end of their attack. Some even attempted suicide, but failed, and resorted to carrying out a school shooting instead with the hope that police would end their life.

**Oxford Shooter Followed a Similar Pattern**

Although the investigation is ongoing, current reporting about the Oxford High School shootings shows a similar pattern of behavior by the accused student prior to the school shooting.

For example:

- He posted photos and captions a few days before the shooting on Instagram showing his new 9 mm gun. His mother posted on her social media that she and her son were practicing at the gun range with the gun. From a different account, the student appeared to post a phrase about “becoming death,” and “See you tomorrow, Oxford.”
- Several students at the school stayed home that day or went to a friend’s house instead of going to school, allegedly after hearing about the student’s plans for a school shooting that day. During the shooting, one of his classmates posted a TikTok from lockdown that said, “He’s being true to his word.” This again suggests the shooter posted beforehand about (and/or told friends and classmates about) his plans for a school shooting.
- Law enforcement said they found a journal in the student’s backpack with details about his ideas and plans to shoot up his school.
- He created two videos on his cellphone with details about his intentions to shoot up his school.

I’m often asked why school shooters tell other people beforehand. The answer is that they are hoping someone will stop them. In case after case, students who engaged in violence and students who were stopped beforehand have told us they were uncomfortable with the violent thoughts they were having but didn’t know how to handle them. The same seems true in the Oxford shooting: His teacher found a note on his desk with drawings of a gun, someone being shot, blood, and the words “The thoughts won’t stop. Help me.”

## Using Threat Assessment to Stop School Shootings

How can we use this information to stop a school shooting? In short, we have the potential to stop school shootings by using a process called Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) or “threat assessment” for short.

A threat assessment is a fact-finding process where:

- We look for signs that a person is on a “pathway to violence,” including evidence of planning, leakage, and trying to access lethal weapons to carry out violence.
- If we determine someone is on a pathway to violence, we ask why. The person may be despondent and see violence as a way out.
- When we know the why, we can determine a plan to get the person off the pathway to violence and keep them off. Resources we use to prevent suicide can also be used to prevent school shootings.

When my colleagues and I interviewed school shooters in prison, they often described feeling torn about their violent plans beforehand. The shooters said a part of them felt they had to be violent but a part of them didn’t want to at the same time. So, when my colleagues and I work on threat cases, we always look for that ambivalence because it’s usually there. Even if the person we are assessing has moved far down the pathway to violence, we look for the part of them that doesn’t want to do it. When we can get them help to solve the underlying problems, including by getting them mental health treatment, we can get them off the pathway. My colleagues and I have provided — and continue to provide — threat assessment training to thousands of K-12 schools, colleges, universities, mental health professionals, and law enforcement professionals nationwide.

Continuously, we hear back from training participants — sometimes even years later — that they were able to use threat assessment to stop a school shooting in their community and got a struggling student help.



<https://abc6onyourside.com/news/nation-world/armed-civilians-have-stopped-several-would-be-mass-shootings-researcher-says-dr-john-lott-crime-prevention-research-center-greenwood-park-mall-indiana-mass-shooting-jonathan-douglas-sapirman-elisjscha-dicken-indianapolis-shopping-mall-shooting>

## Armed civilians have stopped several would-be mass shootings, crime researcher says

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By: The National Desk

Tuesday, July 19th 2022

WASHINGTON (TND) — At Greenwood Park Mall in Indiana Sunday, an armed civilian was able to intervene just moments after a deadly shooting broke out, saving lives.

The gunman, 20-year-old Jonathan Douglas Sapirman, [shot five people](#) at the suburban Indianapolis shopping mall — killing three of them — before 22-year-old Elisjscha Dicken shot and killed him.

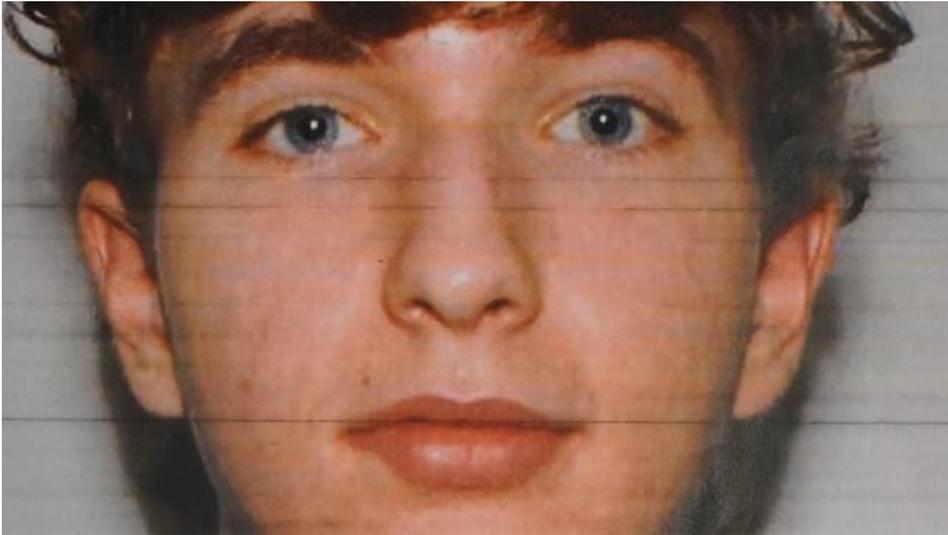
Many are calling Dicken a hero and according to crime researcher and gun rights advocate Dr. John Lott, despite mainstream media reports claiming this was a statistically unusual event, research indicates that incidents like this happen more often than people realize.

“In the last year, there have been 10 of these — what police say would have been mass public shootings — that would have been worse if not for the presence of somebody legally carrying a gun. Since the beginning of 2020, you have 23 of these instances that have been stopped,” Lott said. “They rarely get national attention.”

Lott says that in many cases of mass shootings, diaries or manifestos left behind by the killers make note that their goal is to get media attention and they often note that they know the more people they kill, the more media attention they're going to get.

“The Buffalo mass public shooter, in his manifesto, he explicitly talks about how he picked the target that he did and the number one thing that he looked at was whether or not the victims there, the civilians, were going to have concealed handguns still going protect themselves,” Lott said. “These guys may be crazy in some sense but they're not stupid.”

The Greenwood Park Mall has a gun-free policy in place, which Lott says may have contributed to the shooter's decision to target that particular venue.



The image provided on Monday, July 18, 2022 by the Greenwood Police Department shows Jonathan Douglas Sapirman, 20, who police say fatally shot two people, Sunday, July 17, after he opened fire with a rifle in a food court and before an armed civilian shot and killed him at the Greenwood Park Mall in Greenwood, Ind. (AP Photo/Greenwood Police Department via AP)

“Time after time after time, when these people leave statements about why they hit the target that they did, they explicitly talk about going to a place where they know victims can't defend themselves. They're not stupid,” Lott said. “They know that if people are able to go and defend themselves, they're not going to be able to kill as many people and that means they're not going to get as much media attention as they want to get.”

It remains a contentious issue as gun rights advocates and gun control activists continue debate how best to protect the American public. Lott says he hopes this case could lead to more meaningful discussions about gun rights among U.S. lawmakers.

“I hope we begin to realize that 96% of these mass public shootings take place in areas where people are not able to defend themselves,” Lott said. “Let's try to talk about things that actually matter. This young man, this hero, this 22-year-old, was an example of how we can stop these attacks.”



<https://www.newsweek.com/indianapolis-just-latest-time-good-guy-gun-stopped-mass-shooting-opinion-1725737>

## OPINION

# Indianapolis Just Latest Time a Good Guy With a Gun Stopped a Mass Shooting | Opinion

**John R. Lott, Jr.**, President, Crime Prevention Research Center  
On 7/19/22 at 6:00 AM EDT

In Indianapolis on Sunday, a law-abiding citizen carrying a concealed handgun stopped another mass public shooting. But these heroic acts happen much more frequently than most imagine, because they rarely get national news coverage.

A 22-year-old, legally carrying man fatally shot an attacker at an Indianapolis shopping mall. The headline at Fox News mentions the "good Samaritan," and CNN and The Washington Post mention that an "armed bystander stopped the attack." The attacker was heavily armed and had already murdered three people and wounded three others, after firing about 20 shots.

According to my research, there have been at least 10 similar cases over the last year, and 21 since the beginning of 2020. And there is no reason to believe those tallies are comprehensive, given how little media coverage is usually devoted to these heroic acts. My organization has reviewed 64 total cases, but it is difficult to dig up cases from further back, since local news stories are likely to have disappeared from internet search results.

Another recent case that attracted national attention was one in Charleston, West Virginia, on May 25. There, a man with "an extensive criminal history" started firing into a crowd. Fortunately, a legally carrying woman stopped the attack. "Instead of running from the threat, she engaged with the threat and saved several lives last night," Charleston Police Department Chief of Detectives Tony Hazelett said at the time. The Associated Press and even the BBC covered the case.

On December 29, 2019, a concealed handgun permit holder named Jack Wilson stopped an attack at a church just outside of Fort Worth, Texas. It probably got national coverage because the initial news reports, such as CNN, said that a "church security team member" shot the gunman. But Wilson told me that anyone with a concealed handgun permit received this honorific. In fact, Wilson estimated that 19 to 20 members of the congregation were armed when the attack occurred. The church didn't monitor which congregants were carrying.

But take some of the many other cases not covered by the national media. One can only image the national and international news coverage these cases would have received if law-abiding citizens legally carrying guns hadn't been there to stop these attacks.

**Fort Myers, Florida, July 22, 2022** — A convicted felon, who illegally possessed a gun, fired multiple shots into a crowd before a bystander returned fire. When the bystander confronted the attacker, he stopped attacking and "threw his gun in a parking lot." Fortunately, no one was injured in the attack.

**South Fulton, Georgia, May 3, 2022** — A teenager fired his gun at multiple people attending a "Stop the Violence" rally. Fortunately, two individuals at the event had permitted concealed handguns and were able to shoot and stop the attacker.

**Syracuse, New York, August 31, 2021** — The district attorney credited a property manager with saving the lives of several individuals after he pulled a legally possessed 9mm handgun and fatally wounded a man who opened fire on a crowd outside a building.

**Fort Smith, Arkansas, May 15, 2021** — Zachary Arnold, 26, fatally shot Lois Hicks, 87, in her apartment and then began shooting at other people in neighboring apartments. The attacker fired 93 rounds. Wallace A. West, 58, used a gun to stop the attack. "Mr. West acted lawfully when he shot Mr. Arnold and likely saved a number of lives in the process," a police department news release stated.

**Brownsburg, Indiana, July 14, 2020** — Joshua Christopher Hayes started shooting at men working in the local cemetery in the afternoon. A passing motorist got out of his car and returned fire. "This tragic event could have been much more disastrous. So, victim three not only saved victim two's life, but he saved potentially the lives of many others," said Captain Jennifer Barrett, of Brownsburg Police Department, at the time.

**Titusville, Florida, August 4, 2018** — A shooting occurred at a back-to-school event for children and their families, but a concealed handgun permit holder quickly stopped it. Over 200 people, primarily children, were present at the event. "Based on the information that we've gathered," said Titusville Police Sgt. William Amos. "This person stepped in and saved a lot of people's lives." This event turned out very differently than the school shooting earlier that year in Parkland, but it got no national media coverage outside of Florida.

**Lyman, South Carolina, June 28, 2016** — The same month of the notorious Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando, a 32-year-old man started shooting at others at another nightclub. Fortunately, unlike in Florida, concealed handguns were permitted in South Carolina bars. Before the attacker could shoot a fourth person, a permit holder was able to shoot back and wound the attacker in the leg. The attacker still had over 100 rounds on him when the permit holder shot him. A South Carolina sheriff credited the man with preventing further violence.

The entire gun control debate would likely be very different today if the media, even once in a while, would mention that 94% of successful mass public shootings occur in places where civilians are banned from having guns.

A single uniformed police officer has an almost impossible job in stopping mass public shootings. Even if an officer is in the right place at the right time, his very uniform amounts to a neon sign saying, "Shoot me first." Once the officer is killed, the attacker has free rein to go after others. But where concealed carry is allowed, the attacker will have to worry that someone behind him is also armed.

Americans would better understand the importance of gun ownership if they got to hear more about heroes such as the one in Indianapolis on Sunday.

*John R. Lott, Jr. is the president of the Crime Prevention Research Center and the author most recently of Gun Control Myths.*

*The views expressed in this article are the writer's own*

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<https://www.cbsnews.com/dfw/news/most-mass-shooters-share-these-four-defining-moments-research-shows/>

## **Searching For Answers**

# **Most mass shooters share these 4 defining moments, research shows**

**By Brian New**

**August 25, 2022 / 10:26 PM / CBS DFW**

**FORT WORTH, Texas (CBSDFW.COM) --** What causes someone to be a mass shooter?

It's a question Pastor Jeff Laster has wrestled with ever since a gunman walked into his Fort Worth church 23 years ago and shot him.

"You don't forget what happened," Laster said. "It's just something you have to choose to live with and move forward."

In 1999, a 47-year-old gunman fired more than one hundred rounds at a youth prayer rally at the Wedgewood Baptist Church, killing seven and wounding another seven before killing himself.

Laster said nearly every time there's another mass shooting, he finds himself thinking about what led these gunmen to act.

"What was his background? Was it family life? Did he have some mental health issues that pushed this? That's kind of thing I've always wondered about," he said. "There's always more to the story."

While mental illness is often blamed for mass shootings, research shows childhood trauma and suicidal crisis are better predictors.

According to the Columbia University Department of Psychiatry's research, only 8% of all mass shooters were diagnosed with a severe mental illness, such a Schizophrenia or severe bipolar disorder.

"While I will always advocate for increase funding for mental illness, the contribution of people with psychiatric illnesses or psychotic illnesses to mass shootings is very small," said Ragy Girgis, MD, a professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University.

Columbia University's study of more 1,800 mass murders worldwide showed a larger percentage of mass shooters, 25%, suffered from less severe mental illnesses, like depression and anxiety. This closely mirrors the general population.

While mental illness is not the common denominator among mass shooters, The Violence Project, a research center that has compiled a database of mass shootings, has identified four defining moments most perpetrators experience on the way to a mass shooting.

"We are not saying here's the check list - if you have done this, this, and this, you are going to be a school shooter," explained Dr. Jillian Peterson, who co-founded The Violence Project with Dr. James Densley. "It's looking at these warning signs. What is the commonality? What do we see happening in these perpetrators' lives over and over and over again?"

The path to violence, according to The Violence Project, often begins with early childhood trauma. At a young age, 42% of all mass shooters experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse, parental suicide, or were a victim of severe bullying. If unaddressed, Densley said later in life this trauma can feed a perpetrator's rage.

The second step on the pathway to violence is crisis. This can come in the form of a loss of a job, a break-up in a relationship, or a feeling of hopelessness. In many cases, it's suicidal crisis.

The Violence Project found 72% of mass shooters in its database were suicidal either before or at the time of the shooting.

Those suicidal thoughts lead to the third step, the radicalization. The Violence Project found perpetrators time and again searched for guidance - going to the internet where they read manifestos of past gunmen and visited chat rooms where mass shooters are revered. Many then shared their own plans online. Forty-four percent of mass shooters leaked their plans, often posting about it on social media.

The final stage on the pathway of violence is access to a firearm. According to the National Institute of Justice, 77% of mass shooters got their guns through a legal purchase, often gaining access close to the time of the shooting.

By knowing the pathway, Dr. Densley said they now know where to intervene.

"We all play that role in mentoring the young men in our lives to try and prevent this from ever happening again," he said. "So, if it's something like safe storage of a firearm at home if you have a teenager at home, or if it something like reaching out with an act of kindness to somebody that you know is struggling, or if you see something - saying something and reporting that so there is an intervention in place."

After the Wedgewood Church shooting, the family of the gunman reached out to the church to apologize.



<http://www.cpreview.org/blog/2022/9/banning-guns-cannot-be-the-end-all-be-all-solution-how-understanding-and-yes-empathy-can-mitigate-violence>

## Banning Guns Cannot be the “End all be all” Solution — How Understanding and, yes, Empathy can Mitigate Violence

Evelyn Yu - September 12, 2022



Photo taken in March 2013, at the Rally to Prevent Gun Violence. Picture [by](#) Jay Baker in Annapolis, MD.

In just 2022 alone, over 300 recorded mass shootings have taken place in America. Of all these tragedies, three of the most prominent shootings—Buffalo, Ulvade and Highland Park—have gripped the nation. These shootings share a common denominator: the perpetrators were all between the ages of 18 to 21, hardly qualifying as real-world “adults”. Committing horrific acts of violence at such a juvenile age is exceedingly alarming. While the perpetrators must take individual responsibility and be held accountable, we cannot ignore the uniquely American culture that breeds young shooters and how it came to be.

In response to increased gun violence, which makes near-weekly headlines, Democrats have been pushing for stricter gun reform: raising the minimum age to purchase assault weapons or even outright banning assault weapons on the federal level. Though these solutions represent strong solutions to curb violence, such measures are unlikely to pass in Congress, given Republican opposition towards limiting access to firearms coupled with the current Supreme Court's interpretation of the Second Amendment. According to the court, the amendment protects the private right of individuals to bear arms for self-defense, unconnected with service in a militia. Most recently, the Supreme Court struck down a New York state law requiring applicants for a license to carry a gun outside of their homes to have a "proper cause," stating that this law violates the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Just two days later, President Biden signed into law a bipartisan gun bill to prevent dangerous people from purchasing firearms, increase mental health investment, and bolster background checks for buyers between the ages of 18-21. Yet, the string of gun violence has continued to catch national attention. Fast forward a few weeks on July 4th, Robert Crimo opened fire in Highland Park, killing seven and wounding 30 people. So while the historic bill represents a solid push to mitigate gun violence, banning weapons on the federal level is simply not feasible. What can be done, however, is to understand gun violence through the lens of the perpetrator—not just the gun itself.

As a society, we cannot turn a blind eye to the alarming new pattern of shooters: young perpetrators who both follow and create social media content rooted in violence, that fosters nihilism and ultimately destruction. Moreover, shootings in the past few years are no longer limited to the familiar categories of white supremacists, radical Islamist, or anti-government militias that the public could neatly categorize. This new mold of young shooters—entrenched in a dark social media and isolated domain—raises a critical point: we ought to investigate the external factors that breed this culture of violence, especially among young men.

One narrative—commonly espoused by the right—attempts to explain the rise of gun violence by deferring to mental illnesses. Yet, people who suffer from mental illness account for a miniscule proportion of perpetrators of mass shootings, according to research by Dr. Ragy Girgis, an associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University. Perpetrators' psychologically desolate and dire circumstances are a better explanation of what drives them to pick up a gun and land their name on the next breaking news headline. Nonetheless, it is still worthwhile to note the *correlation* between external circumstances and mental illnesses, or the outside forces that can lead to internal turmoil. A study by the Research Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the University College London concluded that those who experienced two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), defined as any traumatic event between the ages of 0-17, were over two-times more likely to experience psychological distress, leading to a higher chance of violent or impulsive behavior.

18-year-old Gendron’s attack on a supermarket in a predominately-Black community in Buffalo was no doubt racially motivated and rooted in hatred. Months before the attack, Gendron wrote out extensive plans to kill Black people and admitted that his plans were espoused by the “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory, which suggests that Democrats are bringing in more nonwhite immigrants into the U.S. to “replace” white Americans, in hopes of gaining more votes from the former group. Our society should acknowledge the inherently racist nature of Gendron’s thought process, and also acknowledge an additional twisted piece of the puzzle—his dark and isolated “internet life” that fueled his racism and hate towards Black people.

Gendron’s writings on Discord, a messaging platform, obtained by the Washington Post reveal an isolated teenager whose motivation behind the shooting was a cocktail of poor circumstances and psychological distress. No reporting has established that Gendron suffered from a formally diagnosed mental health disorder; yet, his various accounts of violence represent a strong indicator of his mental distress. One disturbing detail is when Gendron posted a photo of a decapitated and bloody cat on social media. In his “virtual diary”, he stated that he had found a feral cat attacking his own cat, and stabbed the feral cat with a knife and subsequently chopped its head off. In his own words, he states “Honestly right now I don’t feel anything about killing that cat...I literally just feel blank.” This and previous arguments with students portray him as someone who had few friends and found “refuge in hate,” according to Shawn Boburg from the Washington Post. In his isolated and numb life, Gendron submerged himself in reading anonymous messages on 4chan, an Internet message board where users celebrate racism and violence. Fast forward a few months, his relationship with his parents fell apart—he lied about attending classes at community college and instead, focused on preparing for the attack by producing an extensive 180-page document laying out his racist justifications for the shooting.

It is worth noting that Gendron, in his own words, did not consider himself a “true racist” until 2020, when he started immersing himself in the 4chan virtual space. He must be held accountable for his explicitly racist and unforgivable actions; yet, as a society we must also wonder how he entered this dark internet space. As David Brooks from the New York Times summarizes, one common thread among young shooters is that they are frequent “ghosts”, whose early childhood trauma leads to bullying, which leads to self-inflicted isolation, accumulating to a desolate circumstance.

Salvador Ramos descended into violence in a shockingly similar way, leading up to his mass murder in Uvalde. Though without racial motives, family and friends of Ramos describe him as growing up in a “troubled” life—he endured constant bullying for a speech impediment and as he got older started lashing out frequently and resorted to erratic behavior. According to Santon Valdez Jr., one of Ramos’s childhood friends, he recounts one time when Ramos pulled up to a park with cuts all over his face, shrugging off the concern and said that his cat had scratched him. Ramos later admitted that he used a knife and cut his face over and over again. While the motivation behind this behavior remains unclear, what is clear is the bullying he endured, which perhaps led to struggles with his mental health. As his stutter and strong lisp worsened in high school, another

friend, Stephen Garcia, told the Post that he [Ramos] would “get bullied over social media, over gaming, over everything.” Similar to Gendron, Ramos soon took refuge socializing online on Yubo, an online “Tinder-style” platform for users to play games and chat. Here, he unleashed all his pent-up anger and channeled them into dangerous thoughts. Teenage users of Yubo claim that he threatened to commit sexual violence and school shootings, regularly. Amanda Robbins, 19, claimed Ramos verbally threatened to break down her door, rape and then murder her after she rejected his initial sexual advances. Another user by the name of Hannah reported that Ramos also threatened to shoot up her school, rape and then kill her and her mother during a livestream session. Hours before the attack, Ramos shot his grandmother and then proceeded to kill at least 19 children and two adults at Robb Elementary School. Yet, despite his horrendous history, Garcia described him as “the nicest kid, the most shy kid. He just needed to break out of his shell...”

The Highland Park shooter, Robert Crimo, has a history that is sadly analogous to the previous two, and it won't be the last story of this kind to air. Crimo grew up in a home where his parents regularly called the police on each other. In school, classmates often saw Crimo roam the halls alone. In 2019, Crimo “attempted to commit suicide with a machete,” according to police officers responding to a call from his home. A few months later, police were called back after Crimo threatened to “kill everyone.” With his troubled childhood, he eventually fell into a spiral of despair. Ethan Absler, a former classmate of Crimo, described him as “reserved and mysterious” and acting “in his own world.” Unsurprisingly, Crimo's isolated lifestyle led him to create his own virtual world on Discord and Documenting Reality, where he constantly shared violent pictures and videos of people dying.

These three shooters, among various others, all bathed in a withdrawn and remote world where they were unrecognized and *undesired* by society. They are “mysterious” and “odd”. They stutter or they are always the ones staring at their phone alone at the lunch table. These young men often struggle with social skills. Their circumstances lead to the honest question of “why doesn't anybody like me?”, “what is wrong with me?”. The stressors accumulate and many shooters consider suicide. Reaching an identity crisis, perpetrators start to question “Is this life my fault or the world's fault?” As David Brooks elegantly puts, “Victimhood turns into villainy...they [shooters] craft a narrative in which they are the hero. The world is evil and they will stand up to the world.” In Gendron's eyes, he is the hero of white Americans being “replaced”. In Ramos and Crimo's eyes, they are seeking revenge on those who bullied them.

Understanding the basis of these perpetrators' psyche, though tough to empathize with, may be one feasible solution to combat gun violence. Other solutions could entail increasing spending on mental health services—currently in the U.S., only 5% of healthcare spending goes to mental health treatment. Moreover, over 5.4 million public school students attend districts with no school counselors. Increasing this number could help catch mental health red flags and provide aid to potentially dangerous students, such as Ramos and Crimo, struggling from bullying, family troubles, and other circumstances. Finally, implementing stricter social media regulation and *actually following through* on

reported comments could help catch perpetrators before the tragedy happens. Legislation introduced by Senator Anna. M Kaplan (D-North Hills) is aimed at addressing the proliferation of hate on social media, which “helped radicalize” the Buffalo shooter to commit the racist shooting.

These young assailants' circumstances, and possible mental health issues, is in no way a justification for the horrific acts of violence they commit. While an immensely difficult pill to swallow, offering a potential perpetrator empathy and support while they are still receptive to it may be all that’s needed to get them to put down their weapon. Instead of pushing these struggling and perhaps violent men out, let’s do what may be hardest to do when confronted with these troubled young men: bring them in and offer them a slice of compassion they have never tasted before.

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<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/helping-children-cope-with-traumatic-stress.htm>

**PTSD & Trauma**

## **Helping Children Cope with Traumatic Events**

**Children and teens are more vulnerable to being traumatized by accidents, pandemics, violent crime, or other disasters. But with the right parental support, they're also able to recover faster.**



### **The effects of trauma on children and teens**

Being involved in a serious accident, violent crime, terrorist attack, global pandemic, or natural disaster, such as an earthquake or hurricane, can be overwhelmingly stressful for children. A disaster, crisis, or other troubling event can cause traumatic stress, undermine your child's sense of security, and leave them feeling helpless and vulnerable—especially if the event stemmed from an act of violence, such as a mass shooting or terrorist attack. Even kids or teens not directly affected by a disaster can become traumatized when repeatedly exposed to horrific images of the event on the news or social media.

Whether your child lived through the disturbing event itself, witnessed it, or experienced traumatic stress in the aftermath, they're likely to be affected by an array of intense,

confusing, and frightening emotions. While unpleasant symptoms may fade over time, there's plenty you can do as a parent or guardian to support and reassure a traumatized child. Using these coping tips, you can help your child manage symptoms of traumatic stress, rebuild their sense of safety, and move on from the traumatic event.

## **Signs and symptoms of traumatic stress in kids and teens**

Traumatic stress is a normal reaction to a natural or manmade disaster or other disturbing event. It can leave children of any age feeling overwhelmed by stress and trigger a wide range of intense emotions and physical or behavioral reactions. These in turn can affect your child's mood, appetite, sleep, and overall well-being.

### **Signs of Trauma in Kids and Teens**

#### **Infants under age 2 may:**

- Fuss more or be harder to soothe.
- Exhibit changes in sleep or eating patterns.
- Appear withdrawn.

#### **Children age 2 to 5 may:**

- Show signs of fear.
- Cling to parent or caregiver more.
- Cry, scream, or whine.
- Move aimlessly or freeze up.
- Regress to earlier childhood behaviors, such as thumb sucking or bedwetting.

#### **Children age 6 to 11 may:**

- Lose interest in friends, family, or activities they used to enjoy.
- Experience nightmares or other sleep problems.
- Become moody, disruptive, or angry.
- Struggle with school and homework.
- Complain of physical problems such as headaches or stomachaches.
- Develop unfounded fears.
- Feel depressed, emotionally numb, or guilty over what happened.

#### **Adolescents age 12 to 17 may:**

- Have flashbacks to the event, suffer from nightmares or other sleep problems.
- Avoid reminders of the event.
- Abuse alcohol, drugs, or nicotine products.
- Act disruptive, disrespectful, or aggressive.
- Complain of physical ailments.
- Feel isolated, guilty, or depressed.
- Have Suicidal Thoughts; Lose interest in hobbies and interests.

Whatever the age of your child, it's important to offer extra reassurance and support following a traumatic event. With your love and guidance, the unsettling thoughts and feelings of traumatic stress can start to fade and your child's life can return to normal in the days or weeks following the crisis or disturbing event.

### **Helping your child cope with a disaster or traumatic event**

Your child's reaction to a disaster or traumatic event can be greatly influenced by your own response. Children of all ages—even independence-seeking teenagers—look to their parents for comfort and reassurance at times of crisis. If you experienced the traumatic event alongside your child, it's crucial to take steps to cope with your own traumatic stress. Even young infants can pick up on their parents' anxiety and stress.

By taking care of your own emotional health and well-being, you'll be more of a calming influence and better able to help your child. Since the childhood impulse to imitate is strong, if your child sees you taking steps to cope with the effects of the trauma, they're likely to follow.

#### **You can also:**

**Remember that children react to trauma in different ways.** And their feelings can come and go in waves. Your child may be moody and withdrawn at certain times, frozen with grief and fear at other times. There's no "right" or "wrong" way to feel after a traumatic event so don't try to dictate what your child should be thinking or feeling.

**Encourage your child to openly share their feelings.** Let them know that whatever feelings they're experiencing are normal. Even unpleasant feelings will pass if your child opens up about them. While many teens may be reluctant to talk about their feelings with a parent, encourage them to confide in another trusted adult such as a family friend, relative, teacher, or religious figure. It's important to talk—even if it's not with you.

**Allow them to grieve any losses.** Give your child time to heal and to mourn any losses they may have experienced as a result of the disaster or traumatic event. That could be the loss of a friend, relative, pet, home, or simply the way their life used to be.

**Discourage your child from obsessively reliving the traumatic event.** Continually dwelling on or replaying footage of the event can overwhelm your child's nervous system. Encourage activities that keep your child's mind occupied so they're not solely focusing on the traumatic event. You could read to your child, play games together, or simply watch an uplifting movie.

**De-stress as a family.** Even young children can use simple breathing exercises to relieve stress and feel more at ease in the world, while older kids may be able to master other relaxation techniques.

## **Kids and trauma recovery tip 1: Rebuild trust and safety**

Trauma can alter the way a child or teen sees the world, making it suddenly seem a much more dangerous and frightening place. Your child may find it more difficult to trust both their environment and other people. You can help by rebuilding your child's sense of safety and security.

**Make your child feel safe again.** Hugging and reassuring can help make a child of any age feel secure. While teens may try to tough it out and avoid being held, your physical affection is still important in making them feel safe again.

**Encourage your child to pursue activities they enjoy.** Try to make sure your child has space and time for rest, play, and fun.

**Maintain routines.** Establishing a predictable structure and schedule to your child's life can help to make the world seem more stable again. Try to maintain regular times for meals, homework, and family activities.

**Speak of the future and make plans.** This can help counteract the common feeling among traumatized children that the future is scary, bleak, and unpredictable.

**Keep your promises.** You can help to rebuild your child's trust by being trustworthy. Be consistent and follow through on what you say you're going to do.

**If you don't know the answer to a question, don't be afraid to admit it.** Don't jeopardize your child's trust in you by making something up.

**Remember that children often personalize situations.** They may worry about their own safety even if the traumatic event occurred far away. Reassure your child and help place the situation in context.

## **Tip 2: Minimize media exposure**

Children who've experienced a traumatic event can often find relentless media coverage to be further traumatizing. Excessive exposure to images of a crisis or disturbing event—such as repeatedly viewing video clips on social media or news sites—can even create traumatic stress in children or teens who were not directly affected by the event.

**Limit your child's media exposure to the traumatic event.** Don't let your child watch the news or check social media just before bed, and make use of parental controls on the TV, computer, and phone to prevent your child from repeatedly viewing disturbing footage.

**As much as you can, watch news reports of the traumatic event with your child.** You can reassure your child as you're watching and help place information in context.

**Avoid exposing your child to graphic images and videos.** It's often less traumatizing for a child or teen to read the newspaper rather than watch television coverage or view video clips of the event.

### **Tip 3: Engage your child**

You can't will your child to recover from a traumatic experience, but you can play a major role in the healing process by simply spending time together and talking face to face—free from TV, phones, video games, and other distractions. Do your best to create an environment where your kids feel safe to communicate what they're feeling and to ask questions.

**Provide your child with ongoing opportunities to talk** about what they went through or what they're seeing in the media. Encourage them to ask questions and express their concerns but don't force them to talk.

**Communicate with your child in an age-appropriate way.** Younger children, for example, will respond to reassuring hugs and simple phrases such as "It's over now" or "It's all going to be okay." Older children, though, will draw more comfort from hearing facts and information about what happened.

**Acknowledge and validate your child's concerns.** The traumatic event may bring up unrelated fears and issues in your child. Comfort for your child comes from feeling understood and accepted by you, so acknowledge their fears even if they don't seem relevant to you.

**Reassure your child.** The event was not their fault, you love them, and it's okay for them to feel upset, angry, or scared.

**Don't pressure your child into talking.** It can be very difficult for some kids to talk about a traumatic experience. A young child may find it easier to draw a picture illustrating their feelings rather than talk about them. You can then talk with your child about what they've drawn.

**Be honest.** While you should tailor the information you share according to your child's age and personality, honesty is important. Don't say nothing's wrong if something *is* wrong.

**Do "normal" activities with your child** that have nothing to do with the traumatic event. Encourage your child to seek out friends and pursue games, sports, and hobbies that they enjoyed before the incident. Go on family outings to the park, enjoy a games night, or watch a movie together.

#### **Tip 4: Encourage physical activity**

Physical activity can burn off adrenaline, release mood-enhancing endorphins, and help your child or teen sleep better at night.

**Find a sport that your child enjoys.** Activities such as basketball, soccer, running, martial arts, or swimming that require moving both the arms and legs can help rouse your child's nervous system from that "stuck" feeling that often follows a traumatic experience.

**Offer to participate in sports, games, or physical activities with your child.** If they seem resistant to get off the couch, play some of their favorite music and dance together. Once a child gets moving, they'll start to feel more energetic.

**Encourage your child to go outside** to play with friends or a pet and blow off steam.

**Schedule a family outing** to a hiking trail, lake, or beach. Spending time in nature can ease stress and boost a child's overall mood.

**Take younger children to a playground,** activity center, or arrange play dates.

#### **Tip 5: Feed your child a healthy diet**

The food your child eats can have a profound impact on their mood and ability to cope with traumatic stress. Processed and convenience food, refined carbohydrates, and sugary drinks and snacks can create mood swings and worsen symptoms of traumatic stress.

Conversely, eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, high-quality protein, and healthy fats, especially omega-3 fatty acids, can help your child or teen better cope with the ups and downs that follow a disturbing experience.

**Focus on overall diet rather than specific foods.** Kids should be eating whole, minimally processed food—food that is as close to its natural form as possible.

**Limit fried food, sweet desserts, sugary snacks and cereals, and refined flour.** These can all negatively affect a child.

**Cook more meals at home.** Restaurant and takeout meals have more added sugar and unhealthy fat so cooking at home can have a huge impact on your kids' health. If you make large batches, cooking just a few times can be enough to feed your family for the whole week.

**Make mealtimes about more than just food.** Gathering the family around a table for a meal is an ideal opportunity to talk and listen to your child without the distraction of TV, phones, or computers.

## **When to seek treatment for your child’s trauma**

Usually, your child’s feelings of anxiety, numbness, confusion, guilt, and despair following a crisis, disaster, or other traumatic event will start to fade within a relatively short time. However, if the traumatic stress reaction is so intense that it interferes with your child’s ability to function at school or home—or if the symptoms don’t begin to fade or even become worse over time—they may need help from a mental health professional.

When traumatic stress symptoms don’t ease up and your child’s nervous system remains “stuck,” unable to move on from the event for a prolonged period of time, they may be experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### **Warning signs include:**

- Six weeks have passed, and your child is not feeling any better.
- Your child is having trouble functioning at school.
- Your child is experiencing terrifying memories, nightmares, or flashbacks.
- The symptoms of traumatic stress manifest as physical complaints such as headaches, stomach pains, or sleep disturbances.
- Your child is having an increasingly difficult time relating to friends and family.
- Your child or teen is experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- Your child is avoiding more and more things that remind them of the traumatic event.

## **Suicide prevention in traumatized kids and teens**

Take any suicidal talk or behavior seriously. It’s not just a warning sign that your child or teen is thinking about suicide—it’s a cry for help. Please read Suicide Prevention or call a suicide helpline:

- In the U.S., call National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.
- In the UK, call Samaritans at 08457 90 90 90.
- In Australia, call Lifeline at 13 11 14.
- In other countries, visit IASP to find a helpline near you.

*Authors: Melinda Smith, M.A., Lawrence Robinson, and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D.*



<https://abcnews.go.com/US/witness-describes-gunman-roof-highland-park-shooting-began/story?id=86224644>

## Highland Park 4th of July parade shooting survivors speak out

"All I could say to myself was, 'This isn't real,'" Abby Brosio said.

By: Kevin Shalvey, Jon Haworth, and Doug Lantz  
July 5, 2022, 7:28 AM

As Abby Brosio stood with her father-in-law watching the Fourth of July parade in Highland Park, Illinois, on Monday morning, a hail of bullets began to fly from top of the building directly across the street.

"I remember looking around to try to figure out where the sound was coming from," Brosio told "Good Morning America" on Tuesday morning. "And I, in fact, looked up at the neighboring business across the street and saw the shooter on the roof and I just screamed that it was a shooter."

She said she saw "long hair and a gun." As she turned to pull her 1-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son into Gearhead Outfitters, a store managed by her husband, Tony, she was grazed by a bullet, she said.



An American flag blanket is seen abandoned along the parade route after a mass shooting at a Fourth of July parade in the Chicago suburb of Highland Park, Illinois, on July 4, 2022.  
Cheney Orr/Reuters

Her father-in-law was shot in the leg, she said.

Six people were killed and more than 24 others were injured in [Monday's mass shooting](#) in Highland Park, a suburb north of Chicago, according to officials. Police said on Monday they took into custody Robert "Bobby" Crimo III, 21, in connection with the incident.



Tony Brosio and Abby Brosio appear on "Good Morning America," July 5, 2022.  
ABC News

Tony Brosio was inside Gearhead Outfitters as the shooting began. As parade spectators rushed the store, looking to take cover, he helped coordinate. Video from inside the store shows crowds running inside. Some stumble, others glance behind them.

"We were just trying to get as many people as we possibly could inside," he told "GMA" on Tuesday. "Like I said, it was just instinct."

Both the Brosios had the feeling that it "could never happen" to them that they'd be in an active shooting situation, he said.



Belongings are shown left behind at the scene of a mass shooting along the route of a Fourth of July parade on July 4, 2022, in Highland Park, Illinois.  
Mark Borenstein/Getty Images

"You always have that, 'It could never happen here,'" he said. "It just did."

"It was like a dream. All I could say to myself was, 'This isn't real,'" Abby said.

As Abby and her father-in-law reached the safety of Gearhead Outfitters, she realized that they'd both been hit by bullets, she said. Both were taken to a local hospital and later released, she said.



<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/highland-park-community-remembers-victims-lost-in-last-months-mass-shooting>

## 'It's heavy, it's always heavy': Highland Park remembers shooting victims a month after tragedy

By Kasey Chronis

Published August 4, 2022

Highland Park

FOX 32 Chicago

**HIGHLAND PARK, Ill.** - One month has passed since a gunman opened fire on a crowd during Highland Park's Fourth of July parade.

It's a somber milestone for the community, but as time passes, their determination to make a difference becomes stronger.

On Thursday, community members met near Central and St. Johns avenues to reflect on the past month and to remember those who were killed.

"It's a spectrum of emotions for everybody," said David Sallak, who lives in Highland Park. "It's heavy, it's always heavy."

There, a memorial for the seven people killed remains in place.

For many, it's a space to honor those who were taken, but also a place to pursue change.

"I wanted to honor the community members and neighbors we lost through action and one of the ways we've been doing that is through advocacy," said Rachel Jacoby.

Jacoby is one of the city's many residents who's taken her efforts to Washington, D.C. — demanding a nationwide assault weapons ban.

"Even though it passed the House, it still has to pass the Senate, so we have an uphill battle, but we're absolutely not giving up the fight," said Jacoby.

U.S. Representative Brad Schneider was also in attendance Thursday evening, where family, friends and strangers had a moment of silence.

Schneider said the community has already made a major impact for future generations.



<https://fox59.com/greenwood-park-mall-shooting/police-communications-expert-provide-insight-into-law-enforcement-response-at-greenwood-park-mall/>

**Greenwood Park Mall shooting**

## **Police communications, expert provide insight into law enforcement response at Greenwood Park Mall**

by: **Eric Graves**

**Posted: Jul 21, 2022 / 05:10 PM EDT**

**Updated: Jul 21, 2022 / 05:20 PM EDT**

**GREENWOOD, Ind.** — From the first gunshots to when police cleared the Greenwood Park Mall of any threats, multiple agencies worked to ensure the mall was empty.

According to the Simons Malls website, the Greenwood Park Mall has more than 150 stores, is 1,288,000 square feet and is the second biggest regional mall in all of Indiana.

Former FBI Indianapolis Special Agent In Charge and current Cofounder of Phaktor LLC, Paul Keenan, said a scene of this size presents a tall task for first responders.

”Because of all the different stores and all of the different nooks and crannies you’re going to be searching for people in,” Keenan said. “My first thought is this is going to take multiple teams from multiple agencies.”

At the scene, Greenwood Police Chief James Ison said SWAT teams from Greenwood PD, State Police and IMPD worked to clear the mall of any threats.

In newly released audio from the moments and hours after law enforcement responded to shooting, we’re getting an inside look at how police operated.

”Alright we got multiple people running through the parking lot now. They are advising there is a male shooter possibly in the food court,” this came in over police radios just seconds after shots were first fired.

You could then hear officers heading into the Greenwood Park Mall.

”Lets get some crime scene tape in here.”

In the first few minutes, you hear officers securing the scene at the food court and then fanning out.

"All units at the Greenwood Park Mall we have units that are actively searching every corridor."

At the same time, people are covering in closet, back rooms and hallways. Calling 911 to let them know where they are.

"They tried to barricade the door in the back of a shoe store," said one person calling into the Johnson County 911 Center.

Keenan said the search throughout the large mall would have to be very methodical.

"They each would have a sector to clear, or a certain number of stores to clear," Keenan said.

As the operation goes on, Keenan said law enforcement would always have to be ready.

"Just seeing that there is only one shooter doesn't mean that there isn't someone hiding that was an accomplice," Keenan said.

He said it's not just physically exhausting, but mentally too. Responders have to be ready for a threat while searching for innocent civilians.

"They have to be prepared for the civilians popping out and really, really be careful about what their actions are when they see people coming out," Keenan said.

Teams searched the mall multiple times, continually getting communication on where people were hiding.

"I believe they're in the hallway, I've got 10 civilians and a baby still hiding," said dispatch during the search.

As law enforcement cleared a store or area, officers would check back in with dispatch to let them know.

"Be advised Barnes and Noble is clear."

Officers did not leave any area untouched.

"We have units on the mall roof right now."

Law enforcement is still searching for a motive to this shooting. Greenwood Police Chief James Ison said Greenwood PD met with the FBI again Wednesday. The FBI is handling search warrants for the shooter's social media and analyzing the shooter's laptop and cell phone.



## BIOGRAPHIES OF DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS & PANELISTS PARTICIPATING!

**1. Mr. Tony Brosio, Citizen, Highland Park, Illinois, July 4th Shooting – Panelist - Panel Discussion III**

Mr. Tony Brosio is a survivor of the unfortunate and tragic Highland Park, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Active Shooting event. During the aftermath of this ordeal, Mr. Brosio has shown unparalleled leadership in keeping the community together.

Mr. Brosio is also the Store Manager for Gearhead Outfitters in Highland Park. Gearhead Outfitters was founded in 1997 by owner, Ted Herget, who desired to bring the active mountain lifestyle to his hometown of Jonesboro, Arkansas. From its humble beginnings in a friend's living room, the company has now grown into a nationwide brand with 18 stores across the country, including Rock/Creek stores that were acquired in 2019. Gearhead Outfitters exists to help customers live active, fulfilling lives by creating an exceptional shopping experience for guests. Through the relaxed environment, specialized inventory and personalized customer service, Gearhead strives to build relationships with customers and serve the local communities.

**2. Dr. Thomas DeMaria, National Center for School Crisis & Bereavement Presenter – Dual Presentation**

Dr. Demaria is both a clinical and school psychologist and Fellow in both the Trauma and Clinical Divisions of the American Psychological Association. He has over 20 years' experience in behavioral health leadership and is recognized for his accomplishments as a teacher and mentor. Dr. Demaria was recognized by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies for his clinical work with World Trade Center families and First Responders and he is a two-time recipient of the New York State Liberty Award for community service following disasters. Dr. Demaria assists with coordination of the NCSCB's Coalition to Support Grieving Students initiative and provides consultation to schools dealing with crisis and loss.

**3. James DePelisi, Director/Chairman, Broward County Crime Commission MODERATOR – Panel Discussion I and II**

James DePelisi has been an appointed Director with the Broward County Crime Commission since 2005, as sworn in by then Attorney General Charlie Crist. Over the past 16 years, he has served in the capacity of Director, President and CEO, and currently Chairman/CEO.

In addition to Public Safety, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice functions, Mr. DePelisi has a background in the areas of Economics and Finance, Quantitative Measures, Technical Analytics, Planning and Logistics, Operations Management, Quality Control, and the field of Communications.

Under Mr. DePelisi's guidance, the Broward County Crime Commission has implemented a cadre of preventive and awareness programs, extending from

Narcotics Distribution, to Child Abuse, to Identity Theft, to Hurricane Contractor Fraud.

The Crime Commission's primary, and ongoing programs, currently include: its Police Chief Think Tank Forums (implemented in 2006); its Law Enforcement Recruitment Program (implemented in 2007); its Building Bridges Mental Health Conference Series Forums (implemented in 2013); its CSI: STEM Leadership & Technology Summer Camp (implemented in 2015); and its High School Criminal Justice Certification Program (implemented in 2015). The Building Bridges Mental Health Conference Series was conceived with the notion of analyzing the finite details of Behavioral Health Issues Associated with Crime, so that particular crimes can be Prevented and Preempted.

Since November of 2013, the Crime Commission has hosted and executed a body of work comprising more than 18 conferences in the areas of Narcotics Trafficking, Domestic Violence, Workplace Violence, Societal Violence, School Campus Violence, Juvenile Violence, Bullying As It Leads to Violence, Hate Crime Violence, Sextortion, and Cyber Crime Ransomware Extortion. More than 3,000 people have attended these acclaimed forums.

Mr. DePelisi possesses a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Degree in Finance, and is a Veteran of the United States Air Force (USAF), receiving an Honorable Discharge in 1989, as a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), with the rank of Sergeant.

**4. Dr. Ragy Girgis, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Columbia University Department of Psychiatry and New York State Psychiatric Institutes - Panelist – Panel Discussion II**

Ragy Girgis, MD, MS, is an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the Columbia University Department of Psychiatry and New York State Psychiatric Institute. He is an expert in severe mental illness, and in particular schizophrenia, with a focus on brain imaging as well as the development of experimental treatments in individuals with early psychosis. He has published important findings on violence in severe mental illness as well as the prediction of syndromal psychosis among those at risk.

Dr. Girgis has published 80 peer-reviewed scientific papers in these fields and has also published numerous books and chapters on severe mental illness, including a recent book on the interface between religion and psychiatry, "On Satan, Demons, and Psychiatry: Exploring Mental Illness in the Bible" published by Wipf and Stock.

**5. Mr. Eric Graves, Community Journalist, FOX 59 TV, Indianapolis, on Behalf of the Citizens of Greenwood, Indiana - Panelist – Panel Discussion III**

Eric Graves joined the great team at FOX59 in July of 2021. He came to FOX59 from WAFF 48 in Huntsville, Ala. Before Alabama, he was (and always will be) a Missouri Tiger. Eric graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in the Spring of 2019 after spending four great years loving life in Columbia, Mo. During his time there, he worked at KOMU 8 News and learned the business from some of the best in the industry. Eric Graves covers anything and everything and is the voice for the people in the Indiana area. He's always up for something new and always ready to listen.

**6. Dr. Robin Gurwitch, Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Duke University, and the Center for Child and Family Health; the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) – Dual Presenter – Dual Presentation**

Dr. Robin Gurwitch, a professor in the Duke University Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and the Center for Child and Family Health, is a recognized expert in understanding and supporting children in the aftermath of trauma and disasters. She received her doctorate in Clinical/Medical Psychology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, completed her internship in Pediatric Psychology at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago and completed a fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

Since the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, Dr. Gurwitch has focused much of her clinical work, training and research on improving the outcomes and increasing resilience in children who have experienced trauma or crisis events, including terrorism, natural disasters and stressors related to military deployment. She has served on state and national committees and task forces including the National Commission on Children and Disasters Subcommittee on Human Services Recovery and served as a subject-matter expert in the area of at-risk populations for the Disaster Mental Health Subcommittee of the National Bio-Defense Science Board for the Pediatric Preparedness and Response in Public Health Emergencies and Disasters for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (DHHS/ASPR). She is a member of the American Psychological Association's Disaster Response Network and provides expertise on children and disasters/terrorism for the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). She was a member of the inaugural HHS National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters.

A prolific writer and educator, Dr. Gurwitch has co-authored book chapters, scientific journal articles and public education materials on the topics of trauma, resilience, psychological first aid, terrorism, disasters and preparedness. She authored a trauma treatment manual for use following disasters for children and adolescents. Dr. Gurwitch regularly presents on topics related to her specialty area at regional, national and international conferences. An active volunteer of the American Red Cross, she worked with the American Red Cross to develop materials related to terrorism and disaster for use in disaster mental health training courses and for use in schools.

A caring clinician, Dr. Gurwitch has been involved in direct care following national and international disasters. She has been an active member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) since it began in 2001. She currently is the Co-PI for the NCTSN grant, NEW DAY (Network for Enhancing Wellness in Disaster Affected Youth). Dr. Gurwitch serves as a Senior Advisor for the National Center of Child Traumatic Stress' Terrorism and Disaster Program of the NCTSN.

Dr. Gurwitch also serves as the Director of the PCIT & CARE Training Program at the Center for Child & Family Health. She is one of only 22 Global Trainers in Parent Child Interaction Therapy, certified by PCIT International. She has led the national efforts for PCIT adaptations for military families and for PCIT with children who have experienced trauma. She is a co-developer of CARE (Child Adult Relationship Enhancement), again leading efforts for military and classroom adaptations. She has published and presented extensively across the United States and Internationally on issues related to PCIT & CARE.

**7. Dr. John Lott, President, Crime Prevention Research Center (CPRC) - Panelist – Panel Discussions II**

CPRC was founded by Dr. John R. Lott, Jr., an economist and a world-recognized expert on guns and crime. During the Trump administration, he served as the Senior Advisor for Research and Statistics in the Office of Justice Programs and then the Office of Legal Policy in the U.S. Department of Justice. Lott has held research or teaching positions at various academic institutions including the University of Chicago, Yale University, the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, UCLA, and Rice University, and was the chief economist at the United States Sentencing Commission during 1988-1989. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from UCLA.

Nobel laureate Milton Friedman noted: “John Lott has few equals as a perceptive analyst of controversial public policy issues.”

Lott is a prolific author for both academic and popular publications. He has published over 100 articles in peer-reviewed academic journals and written ten books, including “More Guns, Less Crime,” “The Bias Against Guns,” and “Freedomnomics.” His most recent books are “Dumbing Down the Courts: How politics keeps the smartest judges off the bench” and “Gun Control Myths.”

He has been one of the most productive and cited economists in the world (from 1969 to 2000 he ranked 26th worldwide in terms of quality-adjusted total academic journal output, 4th in terms of total research output, and 86th in terms of citations). Among economics, business, and law professors his research is currently the 15th most downloaded in the world. He is also a frequent writer of op-eds.

**8. Mr. Matt Mangino, Retired District Attorney, Lawrence County, PA - Panelist – Panel Discussion I**

Matthew T. Mangino is the former district attorney of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania. He also spent a six year term on the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole. He is currently 'Of Counsel' with Luxenberg, Garbett, Kelly and George, P.C. Mangino's book *The Executioner's Toll*, 2010 was published by McFarland & Company. His weekly column on crime and punishment was syndicated nationwide by GateHouse Media and Gannett. He is an adjunct professor at Thiel College.

Mangino's articles have been published in the Washington Post, Philadelphia Inquirer, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Harrisburg Patriot News. He had a regular column in regularly to the Youngstown Vindicator. Mangino is a featured columnist for the Pennsylvania Law Weekly and a regular contributor to The Crime Report.

Mangino is a trial analyst for Law and Crime Network and a regular contributor to Crime Stories with Nancy Grace and a guest legal analyst on Court TV. He has provided legal commentary for ID Discovery, A&E, CNN, MSNBC, FoxNews, Al Jazeera-America and National Public Radio. In addition to his law degree from Duquesne University, Mangino earned a masters degree in criminology from the University of Pennsylvania.

Mangino served on the Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission's Advisory Committee on Capital Punishment.

**9. Dr. Allison Paolini, Assistant Professor of School Counseling, Program Director, Arkansas State University - Panelist – Panel Discussion I**

Allison Paolini proudly serves as the MSE School Counseling Program Director at Arkansas State University! Prior to working in academia, she worked as an Elementary School Counselor at a Title I school in Tampa, Florida. In regard to her teaching philosophy, she is extremely student centered and strives to deliver curricula that is evidence based, data driven, engaging, relevant, experiential, interactive, and practical so that all activities completed in class can be integrated into students' future work setting. She believes in the importance of building strong relationships and having open communication with students, as this helps to foster learning, engagement, connectivity, empowerment, as well as augments personal and professional growth. She works tenaciously to prepare students in becoming transformational school counselors. Her main areas of research interest include social emotional learning and its impact on reducing gun violence, the impact of social emotional learning on college and career readiness, social emotional learning and its impact on amplifying academic performance and student wellness., as well as best practices for mitigating bullying and substance abuse amongst students. I reside in Charlotte, North Carolina with my son, Jordan, and Samoyed dog, Coconut.

**10. Ret. Colonel Alvin Pollock, Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) - Panelist – Panel Discussions III**

Retired BSO Colonel Alvin Pollock began his law enforcement career in 1977 when he joined the Broward County Sheriff's Office. Throughout his career, he worked in several units within the agency including, but not limited to, the Organized Crime Unit, Specialized Services, Crime Suppression Team, Narcotics Unit, Vice Unit, Community Relations, and the Gang and Juvenile Unit. Colonel Pollock rose through the ranks of the agency supervising various units and districts. In 2006, Colonel Pollock was promoted to the rank of Commander, supervised the Court Services Unit, and became Watch Commander. In January 2013, he was promoted to the rank of Colonel and was named the Department of Law Enforcement's Executive Director. Colonel Pollock served in the United States Marine Corp and earned his Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration from Barry University. He is a member of the National Sheriffs Association, the Florida Sheriffs Association and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. Colonel Pollock serves on the Broward County Crime Commission Advisory Board, the Circuit 17 Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, and the Elimination of Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Committee (Promise Program). Throughout his career, Colonel Pollock received numerous awards and was recognized by national, state and local agencies for his dedicated service to his profession.

**11. Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D., Director of Threat Assessment, Georgetown University – Panelist – Panel Discussion I**

Dr. Marisa Randazzo is the Director of Threat Assessment at Georgetown University. She leads strategic consulting and services to support the

development of threat assessment protocols. Previously, she led SIGMA Threat Management Associates LLC as the Chief Executive Officer and Founder, covering threat assessment training and consulting operations as well as strategic initiatives, providing daily management and visionary leadership to all of SIGMA's work. She is recognized internationally as an expert on threat assessment & threat management, school shootings and other types of targeted violence, and protective intelligence investigations. She also serves as Director of Threat Assessment for Georgetown University.

Dr. Randazzo served for ten years with the U.S. Secret Service, most recently as the agency's Chief Research Psychologist. Among her various responsibilities, she co-directed the Safe School Initiative, the landmark federal study of school shootings conducted jointly by the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Randazzo is an accomplished presenter and instructor on threat assessment investigations, having trained over 15,000 professionals in law enforcement, management, administration, mental health, and the intelligence community throughout the United States, Canada, and the European Union. Her research is used in the federal, state, and local law enforcement communities and has been credited in the media with preventing planned attacks.

She is co-author of two leading books on threat assessment: *The Handbook for Campus Threat Assessment and Management Teams* (2008) and *Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project* (2009); both books are referenced as best-practice resources in several federal guides on emergency planning and in an American National Standard. Dr. Randazzo has testified before Congress and has been interviewed by major television, radio, and print news outlets, including 60 Minutes, Good Morning America, Nightline, Today, the Early Show, 48 Hours, Dateline NBC, MSNBC, the New York Times, Esquire Magazine, Redbook Magazine, and National Public Radio. She currently serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Threat Assessment & Management*. She has also published under her maiden name, Marisa Reddy.

Dr. Randazzo received her Ph.D. and Master's degree from Princeton University in Social Psychology, and a B.A. in Psychology and Religion from Williams College. Dr. Randazzo was awarded the Williams College Bicentennial Medal for her work in preventing violence and was recently honored as a Distinguished Alumna of the Spence School. Dr. Randazzo has served as a subject matter expert in testimony before Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy's Sandy Hook Advisory Commission, as a reviewer for the White House's federal Guides to High Quality Emergency Plans (for schools, for higher education institutions, and for houses of worship), and as a member of the American Psychological Association's Expert Panel on Preventing Gun Violence.

**12. Ms. Nancy Rotering, Mayor, Highland Park, Illinois, July 4th Shooting - Panelist – Panel Discussion III**

As the first woman elected mayor in Highland Park, Nancy reformed city government and built a culture of transparency, collaboration, and ethics. After the Sandy Hook tragedy, Nancy led the effort to ban military-style assault weapons in Highland Park. The NRA challenged the law in federal court and appealed all the way to the US Supreme Court, where Nancy and the people of Highland Park prevailed.

An attorney for over 30 years, Nancy Roterling is a graduate of the University of Chicago Law School, has an MBA from Northwestern University and a BA from Stanford University in economics. She practiced law with McDermott Will & Emery in Chicago for seven years focusing on health care fraud and abuse before being elected Mayor of Highland Park three times. She teaches at Northwestern University in addition to serving as mayor.

In 2015, Nancy founded the North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic, providing free legal services and equal access to justice for northeastern Illinois residents navigating housing, immigration, and domestic violence matters. Nancy was honored as the 2013 Rotary Humanitarian of the Year. In 2014, Today's Chicago Woman named Nancy to their "100 Women of Inspiration," and Forbes included her in their "Forty Over 40" list.

Nancy is an Executive Committee member of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, is a member of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and is the immediate Past President of the Northwest Municipal Conference, Nancy and her husband Rob have four sons and live in Highland Park.

**13. Mr. David Sallak, Citizen, Highland Park, Illinois, July 4th Shooting s - Panelist – Panel Discussion III**

Mr. Sallak is a survivor of the unfortunate and tragic Highland Park, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Active Shooting event. During the aftermath of this ordeal, Mr. Sallak has shown unparalleled leadership in keeping the community together, and also as acting as an activist to reduce Active Killing events.

Mr. Sallak is an experienced technologist and evangelist leader in Enterprise-class Media & Entertainment and Commercial High Performance Computing markets, with a history of applying my solutions to improve customer outcomes while exceeding team performance targets. As a senior-level technology change agent, Mr. Sallak guides customers to adopt new data storage technologies and workflows to drive customer re-invention via strategic solution architecture.

With 20 years of experience in media production, Sallak has leveraged his technical and leadership background to design and architect hundreds of scale-out storage solutions worldwide. He has written several whitepapers on M&E workflow design, co-authored a technical guidebook on Apple Final Cut Pro, and presented at many media conferences including NAB, IBC, and CabSat, bringing a wealth of expertise and vision to the global media production and delivery business.

Sallak has also consulted on technical deployments for Turner, ITV, Tribune, Univision, and numerous post-production facility rollouts. He received his B.A. in studio arts and fine arts from The Principia, St. Louis, MO.

**14. Ms. Sandra Welch, Vice-Mayor, City of Coconut Creek, Florida - MODERATOR – Panel Discussion III**

Sandra Welch and her husband Andy, grew up in Southern Illinois and moved to Coconut Creek in 1997. She has held all offices in The Women's Club of Coconut

Creek since joining in 1997. She served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Coconut Creek Parks and Recreation Advisory Board from 2001-2013. Along with other business and civic leaders, Welch served as a facilitator during the City's Vision 2020 strategic planning session. Welch was a member of the first Coconut Creek Citizen's Academy in 2007.

Currently, Commissioner Welch serves at the Broward County level as Vice Chair of the Water Advisory Board, Climate Change Task Force member, and previously served on the Human Rights Board through June 2015. She was recently appointed to represent the City on the Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization, which carries out transportation planning.

At the local City level, she serves on the SAC (School Advisory Council) as Chair of Atlantic Technical High/College, Monarch High School, Dave Thomas Education Center, Coconut Creek High School, and Winston Park Elementary. In addition she is Co-Chair of the Atlantic Technical College Transition Into Employment Advisory Board. Sandra mentors students at Monarch with Take Stock in Children and through Junior Achievement Fellows Program at Atlantic Technical high school earning JA Fellows Mentor of the Year in 2019. She chaired the Coconut Creek/Margate 2014 Relay for Life community fundraiser event, which was held for 10 years at Monarch High School. In relation to BOLD Justice (Broward Organized Leaders Doing Justice), Sandra has served as a team leader.

Commissioner Welch attended Southern Illinois University and retired in 2013 from American Express after 18 years as an Executive Assistant in Customer Service, Billing and Payment Services, and Human Relations/Affirmative Action Plans.

**15. Mr. J.T. Wilkins, Senior Vice-President, Government Solutions, Zero Eyes - Panelist – Panel Discussion I**

JT Wilkins is the Senior Vice President of Government Solutions at ZeroEyes, the industry's premier artificial intelligence company that develops threat detection analytics and integrates them into surveillance systems. Mr. Wilkins is responsible for developing key relationships across government stakeholders, managing governmental security innovation projects, and expanding the use of ZeroEyes threat detection analytics across the whole of government. Mr. Wilkins came to ZeroEyes from Immersive Wisdom, Inc., where he managed a full cycle federal sales team focused on delivering Command and Control tools to the Department of Defense & broader Federal Government Stakeholders. Previously, he served as a Marine Gunnery Sergeant and led intelligence and targeting operations in the Special Operations Forces, finishing his career in the elite Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). Throughout his career in the Marines, Mr. Wilkins operated at every level of the Department of Defense, working directly with the Intelligence Community, Department of Justice, and other governmental agencies to mitigate threats against the United States and Allied Nations. Mr. Wilkins completed three combat deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and influenced operations across the Middle East and Asia. Mr. Wilkin's personal military awards include: Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal with Combat Device, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and Army Combat Action Badge.

JT is a graduate of American Military University and is in pursuit of his MBA from The Pennsylvania State University Originally from Newark, DE he lives in Warwick, MD with his wife Brooke and his daughters Kaylyn, Mia, and Harper.











## **“Critical Thinking Solutions in Crime”**

**ABOUT THE BROWARD COUNTY CRIME COMMISSION:** Founded in 1976, by Proclamation of the citizenry of south Florida, the Broward County Crime Commission is one of 22 Citizen Crime Commissions in America, and the fifth oldest in the entire United States. Its mission, on behalf of the citizens of Florida, is to assess and evaluate crime, and social issues which can transpire into crime, within Broward County (and Florida, in general), and to work in concert with the Criminal Justice System to derive preemptive and preventive solutions to those crimes, through Behavioral Health Analytics, Academic Programs, and Community Outreach Programs.