Overview

1. School safety is a paramount concern, but must be placed in perspective.
2. School shootings have generated fears that schools require massive security efforts.
3. Schools are safe.
4. In the US, the problem is gun violence, not school violence.
5. Violence can be prevented.

Prevalence of Multiple Casualty Homicides in the US: How Dangerous are Schools?
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Building Security Measures

Bullet-Proof Building Entrances

Metal detectors and x-ray screening

School shootings are so traumatic that they skew perceptions of school safety and convince the public and policymakers that there are dramatic needs for security measures.
Building Security Measures

Security Cameras

Camera Monitoring Systems

Increased use of firearms for school security

Gun group offers training for Utah teachers

Extra security in Hillsborough schools would cost $4 million

School security measures could cost millions locally

Additional Florida School Security Could Cost $100 Million

School security wish list would cost Marion County $160M

Armed guards in every Minn. school would cost $138 million

NRA proposal would cost state schools about $130 million

(DeAngelis, Brent, & Ianni, 2011)

Lockdown drills.

Many states mandate 1 or more lockdown drills per year.

School Shooter Drills Are Widely Practiced
How Dangerous Are Schools?
Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

Students are involved in shooter drills.

Students escorted from school during a shooter drill.

Simulated Injuries

Schools Are Safe: Risk of Violence Exaggerated

- How often do school shootings occur?
- How frequently do shootings occur outside of school?
- How do schools compare to other locations?

Sources of Data on U.S. School Homicides

- Media reports
  (inconsistent standards)
- Centers for Disease Control/Prevention
  (no locations except schools)
- National Crime Victimization Surveys
  (no homicides)
- FBI Uniform Crime Reports
  (no location data)

“School Shootings” since Sandy Hook
June, 2014

Includes shootings in and near schools and campuses.
http://www.relevantmagazine.com/slices/map-shows-every-school-shooting-sandy-hook
How Dangerous Are Schools?
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July 17, 2014

How many shootings in the United States?

- **81,300** nonfatal injuries
- **31,672** deaths
- **112,972** Total Shootings
- **308 shootings per day**
- **86 deaths per day**


What is the likelihood of a student committing a homicide at your school?

- **93** student homicides cases in 10 years = **9.3/year** (1992-93 to 2001-02)
- **119,000** schools
- **119,000 ÷ 9.3/year =**
- **1 case every 12,796 years**

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

- **FBI improvement on Uniform Crime Reports**
- **More detailed reports of crime incidents**
  - multiple crimes
  - multiple victims
  - multiple offenders
  - location and other characteristics
- **Voluntary system, not fully implemented**

Firearm Deaths per 100,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>11.3</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Czech Rep</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected countries. Note that some countries have a higher death rate than the U.S. – Jamaica, Honduras, El Salvador, Swaziland, Brazil, South Africa, Colombia, Mexico, Panama. Data from United Nations Homicide Statistics.

Sources: CDC National Center for Health Statistics and School Associated Violent Death Surveillance Study (All annual totals are approximate, using the school year for school homicides and the calendar year for non-school data).

Homicides At School vs Outside of School

Ages 5-18

- **37 states**
- **29% of U.S. population**
- **18,873 homicides in six years**
What is a mass homicide?

- At least 2, 3, or 4 victims?
- Must all victims die?

Research should consider all cases with multiple victims, even if some of the victims survive, and find a cut-off with empirical support.

NIBRS Homicides 2005-2010

- 18,873 homicides in six years
  - 78% one victim
  - 15% two victims (51% both killed)
  - 4% three victims (40% all killed)
  - 1.5% four victims
  - 1% five or more victims

How do offense characteristics change as the number of victims increases?

Ran truncated Poisson regressions to predict increases or decreases in the number of victims based on offense characteristics: location, weapon, offender-victim relationship, offender sex, age, and race, and number of offenders per incident.

A fixed effects regression model controlled for state and year of the incident.

School homicides tend to have multiple victims

Victim counts in schools were 246% higher than victim counts in residences. Of note, there were only 49 (0.3%) incidents at schools in the dataset, but schools had the lowest percentage of single victims among all location categories: 78% of all incidents across all locations had one victim whereas only 54% of school homicides had one victim. In conclusion, although homicides occurred infrequently at schools, when they occurred, they were more likely to involve multiple victims than homicides at home.
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How do shootings differ from other non-shooting homicides?

Ran hierarchical logistic regressions to compare shootings with non-shootings:

- First block controlled for state and year of the incident.
- Second block entered offense characteristics: location, weapon, offender-victim relationship, offender sex, age, and race, and number of offenders per incident.
- Third block added number of victims.

Shooting homicides no more likely than non-shooting homicides to occur at school

No difference in likelihood of a shooting versus a non-shooting homicide at schools. Shooting homicides were more likely than non-shooting homicides at gas station/convenience stores, roads, parking lots, restaurants, and stores, as opposed to residences.

School violence has declined.

Indicators of school crime and safety; 2012. Table 2.1. National Crime Victimization Study data reported by National Center for Education Statistics (Robers et al., 2013)
Prevention means “to keep something from happening.”

Crisis response is not prevention.

A crisis occurs when prevention has failed.

Prevention must start before the gunman is at your door.

Shootings seem unpredictable, but, Prevention does not require prediction!

Prevention does not require prediction.

We cannot predict who will have an accident, but safety regulations make safer roads, cars, and drivers.

Prevention does not require prediction.

We cannot predict who will get cancer, but we can identify risk and protective factors that reduce cancer rates dramatically.
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How Can Schools Prevent Violence?

- Intensive interventions
  -clear and consistent discipline
  -positive behavior support system
  -school security program
  -programs for bullying and teasing
  -character development curriculum
  -conflict resolution for peer disputes

At-Risk Students
Students with some problem behaviors

Schoolwide Prevention
All students

- Clear and consistent discipline
- Positive behavior support system
- School security program
- Programs for bullying and teasing
- Character development curriculum
- Conflict resolution for peer disputes

Numerous Effective Programs

- Anger management
- Bullying prevention
- Conflict resolution
- Family therapy
- Parenting skills
- Problem-solving
- Social competence
- Substance abuse resistance
- Etc.

Reviewed 221 studies of diverse school-based violence prevention programs
Average effect size = .25 for demonstration programs, which would reduce fighting 50% in a typical school

2013 NREPP Listing


http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu

Legally defensible procedures for responding to student threats
Step-by-step guidelines and decision-tree
Research-based and field-tested
Covers K-12, regular and special education

Available from Amazon.com

Interventions

• Anger management
• Bullying prevention
• Conflict resolution
• Family therapy
• Parenting skills
• Problem-solving
• Social competence
• Substance abuse resistance
• Etc.