

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL SHOOTINGS!

We are mourning the loss of some of our own this week, and it is a sobering reminder that violence does not discriminate. It can hit close to home...Jenna Von Oy

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ In a study in Mother Jones, of the 61 shootings that occurred in the last 30 years, more than half the shooters had mental illness that was apparent to others before the killings
- ❖ Researcher Katherine S. Newman found:
 - That school killers do not snap; rather they plan and acquire weapons.
 - They take a long and often public path toward violence
 - They are not "loners" but "joiners" whose attempts at joining fail
 - They frequently let their thinking and plans be known to others
 - School shootings are **rarely** impulsive acts and are typically thought out and planned out in advance
 - Prior to most shootings others knew the shooting would occur and did not try to stop it or alert anybody
 - There is no "profile" of a school shooter as they differ in numerous ways
- ❖ Signs of school shooters include: being excessively introverted, lacking strong social attachments, are pessimistic about their future, have low self-esteem, may have been harassed or rejected, and may have been pressured by peers and teachers
- ❖ They are often high achieving and intelligent but others see them as losers, weak, unmanly and unattractive
- ❖ Frequently rejected by others, shooters often look to gain attention and feel important
- ❖ Research by the US Secret Service found:
 - That alienation or persecution drove shooters to their violent behaviors
 - Almost all school shootings are done by young males; only 4 of the 101 school shootings worldwide since 1974 have been committed by females
 - Most of the shooters took antidepressants which can have the side effects of producing violence and aggressive behaviors
- ❖ Contributing to these shootings is easy access to weapons and the failure of the healthcare system to identify early and treat mentally ill people
- ❖ One approach to preventing these school shootings is to identify potential shooters early and send them for treatment as well as preventing lethal weapons from getting in to hands of the angry, alienated, and isolated
- ❖ Having relationships with others and not feeling alone or isolated may be one of the best ways to prevent mass violence

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Do not try to find out every detail and limit your TV watching as the media provides "train wreck entertainment"; healing occurs by getting out of the obsessive pattern of watching and reliving the tragic event
- ❖ To overcome the emotional effects of the tragedy which may be affecting you, resist viewing negative images, walk away from negative conversations, keep up your daily patterns, try not to be alone, and appropriately hug friends/family
- ❖ Seek professional help if you cannot overcome feelings of hurt, anxiety, anger, depression, and helplessness

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [**DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com**](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates
5571 N University Drive, Suite 101
Coral Springs FL 33067