



School Shootings Around the World

Win McNamee/Staff/Getty Images News



School shootings have been recorded in America for at least the past 150 years, although the number has increased in the past 20 years. The mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012 by Adam Lanza, which resulted in 26 deaths, and the attack of Seung-Hui Cho at Virginia Tech in 2007, which resulted in 33 deaths, brought to the forefront the need to understand why individuals perform such acts. Quick answers such as the side

effects of drugs or violent video games have been part of the discussion.

Others have considered how mental illness plays a role in these cases. Both Adam Lanza and Seung-Hui Cho showed difficulties in previous situations. In a number of press articles, various psychopathologies have been suggested. However, blaming horrific situations such as these school shootings on a mental disorder does not serve society well. Experiencing a mental disorder does not lead directly to violence, although society tends to believe that individuals with mental disorders are more prone to violence. In general, data does not support this generalization.

Overall, these terrible situations offer society an opportunity to consider how to recognize those with difficulties and offer them the necessary help. This requires considerations on a number of levels. Teachers and other professionals need to be trained to recognize individuals with mental health problems. As a society, we need to consider ways to fund mental health services so that individuals without money are not left on their own. We also need to consider laws that recognize when

individuals need to be treated.

Although stigma appears to be part of the human condition, allowing bullying or making fun of those who are unusual does not strengthen the fabric of society.

This map shows where school shootings have occurred since 1996. Although there are examples of shootings worldwide, the majority have happened in America. The occurrence of such violence is a critical topic to understand.

Thought Question: Since school shootings seem to be more of a problem in the United States than elsewhere in the world, what kinds of questions can we ask at different levels of analysis, such as community or culture, to help identify possible solutions?

School Shootings Around the World Since 1996

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