

# Mental Illness and Gun Violence

A diagnosis of serious mental illness does not increase the risk of violence. Most people with mental illness never become violent and most gun violence is not caused by mental illness.

4%

Only 4% of overall violence is associated with serious mental illness alone.

2%

Mental illness is a factor in only 2% of the gun violence in the U.S.



Reckless behavior, anger, **traumatic life events such as job loss or divorce**, and **problems with alcohol use** are all **stronger risk factors for gun violence**. Not mental illness.



More than **60% percent** of gun deaths in the U.S. are suicides. Mental illness is a significant underlying cause of suicide.



People with serious mental illness are **12x** more likely to be victims of violence than the overall U.S. population.

**Gun laws that prohibit gun dealers from selling guns to certain categories of people with mental illness continue the myth that mental illness leads to violence.**

**There is no evidence that expanding these laws will reduce gun violence in the U.S. However, these laws could reinforce stigma towards mental illness and further discourage people from seeking help when needed.**



**Estimated 32,514 people die from gun violence** in the United States each year. That is 89 people dying every day from gun violence.



Another **75,962 people are injured by firearms**.



Between 2007 and 2011: **averaged of 62 children under age 14 killed every single day**.



Over **17,000 children (age infant to 19) are shot by firearms per year**: intentionally, accidentally, or otherwise.

# Resources on Mental Illness & Gun Violence

## **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

<https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Public-Policy/Violence-and-Gun-Reporting-Laws>

## **Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (Ed Fund)**

The Ed Fund was funded in 1978 as a 501(c)(3) affiliate of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. The Ed Fund develops and implements evidence-based policy advocacy campaigns about gun death and injury.

[www.efsgv.org](http://www.efsgv.org)

## **Fact Sheet on Guns, Public Health and Mental Illness**

<http://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Guns-Public-Health-and-Mental-Illness-1.pdf>

## **UC Davis Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (BHCOE)**

The UC Davis BHCOE bridges neuroscience research, mental health care and policy to improve the lives touched by those with mental illness.

[www.behavioralhealth.ucdavis.edu](http://www.behavioralhealth.ucdavis.edu)

## **Health Affairs**

Health Affairs is the leading journal of health policy thought and research. The peer-reviewed journal was founded in 1981 under the aegis of Project HOPE, a nonprofit international health education organization.

[www.healthaffairs.org](http://www.healthaffairs.org)

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/pdf/10.1377/hlthaff.2016.0017>

## **National Academies Press**

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) are distinctively qualified to provide nonpartisan, objective guidance for decision makers on pressing issues. From the time of their founding in 1863, they marshal the energy and intellect of the nation's critical thinkers to respond to policy challenges with science, engineering, and medicine at their core. The National Academies Press (NAP) publishes authoritative reports issued by NASEM.

**Violence and Mental Health Report: Opportunities for Prevention and Early Detection: Proceedings of a Workshop**

<http://nap.edu/24916>

## **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**

This is the lead federal agency for research on mental disorders. NIMH is one of the 27 Institutes and Centers that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the largest biomedical research agency in the world. NIH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

**Health Education - Mental Health Public Information: Suicide Prevention**

**Suicide in America: Frequently Asked Questions**

