

Response to **Mass Violence for Communities**

DISCUSSION



While there is no basis for the public's generalized fear of people with mental illness, communities are encouraged to take steps to identify those at higher risk and intervene appropriately. Strong community partnerships can help identify individuals at risk and intervene at points when a situation can be defused. But, access to care is difficult for many Americans. According to "America's Mental Health 2018," (Cohen Veterans Network, National Council for Behavioral Health) 76 percent of Americans think mental health is just as important as physical health; however, 96 million Americans have had to wait longer than one week for mental health services.

Greater cooperation between organizations that interact with people at higher risk of committing mass violence is a common-sense response. Creating a multidisciplinary threat assessment team with representatives from security and law enforcement, behavioral health care, human resources, legal and management is another. Training programs like Mental Health First Aid helps reduce community-wide fear-induced stress and foster a better informed community that is trained to responsibly respond to mental health issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS



- Create and support partnerships with behavioral health, law enforcement, schools, faith and medical communities and other organizations that interact with people who may be at risk for committing violence.
- Improve behavioral health treatment access, quality and patient engagement. One in four Americans must choose between mental health treatment and paying for daily necessities (America's Mental Health 2018).
- Recognize high-risk people who are fixated on thoughts and feelings of injustice who have few social relationships and have experienced recent stresses.
- Establish threat/risk assessment and management teams with representatives from mental health, security, human resources, legal and law enforcement.
- Provide Mental Health First Aid training, which teaches laypeople skills to respond to the signs of mental and substance use disorders.

EXPERT PANEL



An expert panel appointed by the National Council for Behavioral Health Medical Director Institute examined the issue from multiple perspectives and found the solutions are as complex as the problem. The insightful and evidence-based response, "Mass Violence in America: Causes, Impacts and Solutions," provides a call to action to respond to this complex issue.

Membership of Expert Panel

- Medical Directors of mental health and addiction treatment provider organizations
- CEOs of mental health and addiction treatment provider organizations
- Members from the American Psychiatric Association
- Members from the American Psychological Association
- Member from the American Association of Emergency Psychiatrists
- Members representing law enforcement/courts
- Members from National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
- Content experts on mass violence and trauma
- Mental health consumer/patient representatives/parents of a mass shooter