



CPA Statement on Gun Violence Released April 13, 2018

The Board of Directors of the California Psychological Association (CPA), and the representatives of 19 of our chapters who attended the CPA Leadership and Advocacy Conference in Sacramento on March 20, 2018, unanimously agreed that CPA should take a public position on the issue of gun violence. With the seemingly endless series of killings and firearm deaths, gun violence continues to ravage homes, schools, neighborhoods, and work settings in our country. CPA joins our colleagues at the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Medical Association, and many other professional associations who believe that gun violence in the US is a public health crisis.

Gun violence leads to over 35,000 deaths each year. In 2017, 15,000 homicides were committed with guns, and guns were responsible for 22,000 suicides. Daily deaths from guns averaged 61 suicides and 42 homicides. Gun violence jeopardizes the health and safety of the general public and leaves those of us who work in educational and health care settings feeling deeply concerned about the safety of our students, our clients, and ourselves.

The psychologists and students who joined us in Sacramento last month made 90 visits to legislative offices at the state Capitol. We shared our statement of concern about gun violence with these officials and reminded them about the science-based knowledge and clinical skills of our members. We offered to provide unbiased and bipartisan research about gun violence that can help them, as legislators, develop policies and resources that lead to better understanding the causes and reduce the incidence of gun violence in our communities. CPA also wishes to help elected officials and the public understand that individuals with mental illness are more likely to be the victims of gun violence than they are to be the perpetrators. The best US data puts the population attributable risk for violence due to mental illness between 3% and 5%. Individuals with mental illness should not be looked upon with fear or stigmatized as a result of gun violence.

CPA believes it is possible to separate the issue of gun ownership from the public health crisis of gun violence. In the coming month, the California Psychological Association will form a Gun Violence Task Force whose charge will be to:

1. Gather research about the many contributing variables to gun violence and make this available to elected officials and the public.
2. Develop a directory of our members who have skills in risk assessment and program development to serve as resources in the reduction of gun violence.
3. Provide a list of our members who are skilled in assisting with the consequences of gun violence.

California is a leader in efforts to reduce gun violence, and CPA wants to support and encourage further bipartisan legislative and public policy efforts in addressing this crisis.

USEFUL REFERENCES

[Gun Violence Prediction, Prevention, and Policy \(American Psychological Association\)](#)

[Gun Violence Archive](#)

[Everytown Research](#)

[National Institute of Justice Research](#)

[Gun Violence Data Base](#)

[Center for Disease Control: Firearm Mortalities by State](#)

[Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#)

[UC Davis What You Can Do To Stop Firearm Violence](#)

For more information, please contact the [California Psychological Association](#) Phone: 916.286.7979