

# School violence: cause and remedies

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



School Violence: Causes And Remedies Educators and policy makers have been grappling with the issue of violence in schools for decades. Educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, political scientists, anthropologists, and sociologists have all weighed in on the possible causes. Sifting through the theories can be overwhelming, and implementing effective violence prevention programs is often frustrating. No wonder, then, that teachers and administrators often feel defeated when they confront the dangerously aggressive behavior of some pupils.

According to a federal survey. Seventy-one percent of all public elementary and secondary schools reported at least one violent incident during the 1999-2003 school years. Causes: Violent behavior and the intent to act violently are potential symptoms of numerous psychiatric disorders. Conduct Disorder, a state of persistent disregard for social conventions and rules and manifesting as criminal and antisocial behavior before the age of 18, is perhaps the most frequently mentioned diagnosis among violent youth.

In addition substance abuse and dependence can contribute substantially to violent acts, either by reducing inhibitions among otherwise nonviolent students or by creating a climate through drug transactions in which violence is central. More rarely, impulsive behavior found in conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder can lead to violent outbursts. Finally, diagnoses such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, and a range of psychotic disorders have been associated with the development of violent behavior among youth.

In addition to certain psychiatric diagnoses, characteristics such as low verbal IQ, immature moral reasoning, poor parental modeling, poor social

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skills, and lack of social supports have all been associated with the development of violent behavior in children. Studies examining characteristics particular to the school environment have found that a weakly structured school and a student's poor academic performance, low commitment to education, and, perhaps most important, poor attachment to the school are all strong indicators of potential violence.

In addition, schools that tolerate physical and social aggression, especially when perpetrated by elite student groups within the school, are increasingly at risk for the outbreak of violence on or around school grounds. These characteristics alone are not sufficient to predict the occurrence of violence. Remedies: Clinicians and school officials must pay special attention to potential motives for and means of committing violence.

They must be willing to discuss provocative and threatening journal writing and art projects with students and with designated school authorities who decide what actions to take to protect the student and the school. Listening to students who express concern about another student's behavior is particularly important. Ignoring violent behavior or wanting to let "someone else" deal with the problem is a normal parental reaction. Discussing with your child ways to protect themselves is not "scaring" them unnecessarily, but is equipping your child to not be a victim.

There are things you can do to help your child if the unthinkable does occur. Studies of extremely violent behavior in schools have found that those who commit high-profile acts of violence have almost always made their intentions known to peers through direct or indirect communications. Educators must foster a setting in which students are comfortable making

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their concerns known to teachers and peers. Interventions both to curb and to address student violence must be multifaceted. Serious psychiatric disorders indicate the need for counseling and possibly medication. The treatment plan must integrate legal considerations.

Recent innovative approaches show promise for addressing violent behavior in schools. One of them is Multi systemic Treatment, which involves multiple and active interventions for young people who commit violence, has attracted increasing attention during the past decade. Schools are an important setting for addressing violent youth, and the extent to which students feel attached to their school has direct bearing on the likelihood of later and ongoing violence. Schools, therefore, are a necessary part of the complicated equation that will ultimately make learning and development safer and more rewarding for everyone.