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# The Impact of Gun Violence on Youth and Young Adults

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## Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence

The Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence was founded in 2013 after the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. As an umbrella organization, the Coalition brings together organizations and institutions across MA to address the epidemic of gun violence that plagues our communities and takes the lives of so many of our citizens, in suburbs, in rural areas, and certainly in cities. Through education, advocacy and holding those in power accountable, we will bring about change that will lessen the likelihood of someone you love becoming a victim of gun violence.

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## Types of Gun Violence

1. Mass Shootings
  2. Accidental Shootings
  3. Community Violence
  4. Domestic Violence Homicides
  5. Firearm Suicides
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# Scope of Gun Violence in America

Every day, **100 Americans** are killed with guns and hundreds more are shot and injured

Americans make up **less than 5 percent** of the world's population, yet they own roughly **45 percent** of all the world's privately held firearms.

**58 percent** of American adults or someone they care for have experienced gun violence in their lifetime.

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## Children, Gun Violence, and America

Compared to other high-income countries, American children aged 5 to 14 are **21 times more likely** to be killed with guns, and American adolescents and young adults aged 15 to 24 are **23 times more likely** to be killed with guns.

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# The Deadly Impact of Guns On American Children and Teens

Annually, nearly 2,900 children and teens (ages 0 to 19) are shot and killed, and nearly 15,600 are shot and injured—that's an average of **51 American young people every day.**

An estimated **three million children** witness a shooting each year. Children exposed to violence, crime, and abuse are more likely to misuse drugs and alcohol; suffer from depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder; resort to aggressive and violent behavior; and engage in high risk activities.

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## Impact of Witnessing Violence

“When there is violence in a community, even if a kid has nothing to do with it,” he says, “it captures their attention — it leads to higher levels of stress, it leads them to be more vigilant, to focus their attention on the threat.”

-Patrick Sharkey, Princeton sociologist

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# Child and Teen Gun Deaths per Year, by Intent

**HOMICIDE 58%**  
1,685 deaths

**SUICIDE 36%**  
1,045 deaths

**UNINTENTIONAL 4%**  
112 deaths

**UNDETERMINED 2%**  
46 deaths

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## Intersection of Domestic Violence and Mass Shootings

Between 2009 and 2017, **86 percent** of child victims (17 and under) of mass shootings died in incidents connected to domestic violence.

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# Youth and Firearm Suicide

**36 percent** of child and teen gun deaths are suicides—**over 1,000 per year.**

Over the past decade, the firearm suicide rate among children and teens has increased by **76 percent.**

Research shows that an **estimated 4.6 million** American children live in homes with at least one gun that is loaded and unlocked. **Over 80 percent** of child gun suicides involved a gun belonging to a parent or relative.

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# Gun Violence and Racial Disparities

Firearms are the leading cause of death for Black children and teens in America, and they are **14 times** more likely than their white counterparts to die by gun homicide.

Black children are **10 times** more likely to be hospitalized for a firearm assault than white children.

Latinx children and teens are **3 times** more likely to die by firearm homicide than their white peers.

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# Gun Violence in Schools

There have been **at least 405 incidents** of gunfire on school grounds from 2013 to 2018. Of these, **260** occurred on the grounds of an elementary, middle, or high school, resulting in **109 deaths and 219 injuries**.

Although Black students represent approximately **15 percent** of the total K-12 school population in America, they constitute **24 percent** of the K-12 student victims of gunfire who were killed or injured on school grounds.

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## Location Matters

**92 percent** of all hospitalizations of children for firearm injuries occur in urban areas (counties with over 50,000 residents).

Fifteen- to 19-year-olds in urban areas are hospitalized for firearm assaults at a rate **eight times higher** than 15- to 19-year-olds in rural areas.

Urban and low-income youth are much more likely to witness gun violence than suburban and higher-income youth.

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**How do we address the impacts  
of gun violence in a trauma  
informed way for all youth?**

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# Policy Recommendations

1. Background checks on all gun sales
  2. Extreme Risk (Red Flag) Laws
  3. Responsible gun storage and child access laws
  4. Reducing access for those with a history of DV
  5. Safe and equitable schools
  6. Youth-centric intervention programs
  7. MA specific - data analysis on crime guns
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