

5 FACTS ON EMOTIONAL ILLNESS & SCHOOL SHOOTERS

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1. New medical research shows a pronounced difference between mental illness and emotional illness.

- Mental illness is related to organic and neurological health (ex. clinical depression, bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia, etc.).
- Emotional illness is related to social and emotional health (ex. feeling unwanted and unloved, lack of empathy, unable to regulate emotions such as anger, suffered a loss, etc.).

SOURCE: Nick Haisman-Smith, Director of The Institute for Social and Emotional Learning, 2017.

2. Only 22% of mass killers show signs of being mentally ill. Only 17% of school shooters evidence signs of being mentally ill.

SOURCE: Columbia University study of 235 mass murderers, 2015. Southern Illinois University School of Medicine study of 157 school shooting incidents, 2014.

3. Virtually all teen school shooters suffer from acute emotional illness.

- They are either neglected or abused at home.
- They are shunned, humiliated, and ostracized at school. Many are bullied.
- Tormented by feelings of resentment and revenge, they vent their rage by “making the world pay” for their soul-shattering feelings of emotional isolation.

SOURCE: “Case Studies on Violence and Social Rejection,” Clemson University/Wake Forest University/Winston-Salem University, 2003.

4. Research shows that a key element in helping a child to confront adversity is to have a stable, supportive relationship with at least one caring adult.

SOURCE: Bari Walsh, “The Science of Resilience,” Harvard Graduate School of Education, March 23, 2015.

5. Every school should have an on-going program helping teachers to practice empathetic teaching techniques--providing the unconditional care and regard that allows all students to feel valued and wanted.

- The program should keep students responsible and accountable for their actions, and, at the same time, discipline misbehavior while still valuing students as persons.
- The program should train teachers to be on the lookout for the “outliers,” students who seem bereft of emotional support, and providing them with intentional care.

SOURCES: Stanford University, 2016. “Aldine Middle School Dropout Prevention Project,” Sam Houston State University, and Aldine ISD database, 2011-2017. Lone Star Magazine, April, 2018.

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