



# CSPV SCHOOL VIOLENCE FACT SHEET

FS-SV11

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## Community Policing, Schools, and Mental Health

- Most poor children in America experience a double jeopardy.
  - They have the most health problems, but have the least access to medical care;
  - They are at high risk for academic failure, but often attend the worst schools; and
  - Their families experience the most stress, but have the fewest social supports.
- The number of potential psychological casualties of violence far outnumbers the physically wounded seen in emergency rooms.
- A basic sense of safety is critical for the healthy psychological development of a child.
- When children witness or experience violence this sense of safety is jeopardized. They often experience a disruption in the normal capacity to anticipate, adjust to, and assimilate events and emotions.
- When the capacity to anticipate and contain dangerous events is lost, behavioral and mental systems are immobilized.
- Whether as victims, witnesses, or perpetrators of violence, children's psychological reactions are all too often ignored or misunderstood.
- The strategies for intervening on children's behalf in the wake of violent events typically tend to be fragmented, inadequate, and ineffective.
- The three key youth serving community institutions that need to collaborate to help children experiencing or committing violence include: public schools, mental health services, and police departments.
- The juvenile justice system also needs to collaborate because it is often the first and most significant point of intervention in lives that have already deviated from optimal developmental pathways.
- Juvenile justice is still a largely self-contained system. Once in the system, youths are unlikely to be put in contact with other agencies.
- Some important collaboration efforts between agencies include:
  - Police informing the juvenile justice system about accused juveniles who are the most dangerous to the community;
  - School personnel providing juvenile authorities with valuable information about an accused child's history of attendance and academic performance;
  - Mental health professional informing the judicial process about a child's internal experience of his/her violent behavior and the meaning of it in context of the child's life history;
  - Police departments assigning officers to specific schools to increase safety;
  - Police officers and probation officers integrating and sharing the supervision and monitoring of juveniles; and

- Coordination and training between mental health professionals and police officers. This will ensure that police officers are trained on the psychological roles they can play as providers of security and mental health professional are oriented to police practices.
- A barrier for collaborative activities is the breaching of traditional professional boundaries.
- A collaborative approach to juvenile delinquency requires all professionals involved with children to reexamine the traditional concepts of their work.
- Research indicates that traditional "turf boundaries" of social institutions can be over come when a shared frame of reference is applied. This type of collaboration has great potential for improving the lives of American children.

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The information for this fact sheet was excerpted from the following book chapter. *Violence in American Schools* was developed by CSPV through a grant from the W.T. Grant Foundation:

Marans, S., & Schaefer, M. (1998). Community Policing, Schools, and Mental Health: The Challenge of Collaboration. In D.S. Elliott, B. Hamburg, & K.R. Williams (Editors), *Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective*, (pp. 312-347). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

For more information on how to obtain a copy of this book, please contact Cambridge University Press, 110 Midland Avenue, Port Chester, NY 10573. Telephone: (800) 872-7423, E-mail: [orders@cup.org](mailto:orders@cup.org), or URL: [www.cup.org](http://www.cup.org).