

STANDING OUR HOLY GROUND

A YEAR-LONG LOOK AT **GUN VIOLENCE** & WHAT THE FAITH COMMUNITY CAN DO ABOUT IT

Study Guide

The “Mental Health Myth”: The Role of Mental Health in Gun Violence & How the Media Often Gets It Wrong - PART 2

Timestamps

Opening Remarks

[0:46](#) - Common Understandings

[3:59](#) - Panelist Introductions

Panelist Presentations

[5:24](#) - Beth McGinty, Professor, Johns Hopkins University's [Bloomberg School of Public Health](#)

Q&A

[22:40](#) – How much of gun violence is attributed to mental health refers to serious mental illness?

[25:14](#) – In the immediate aftermath of a mass shooting, the media often raises issues of mental health. What should we keep in mind when this occurs?

[29:42](#) – Does the violence depicted in video games contribute to gun violence? Does a violent culture impact one's propensity to violence? Is there a connection between cultures of violence and mental health?

[34:30](#) – How can we become better curators of media and more media literate? What are the best media sources to turn to for information?

[39:35](#) – How can congregations address the stigma of mental health in our culture?

[43:57](#) – Where does the funding for research related to gun violence come from? What is the state of gun violence research today?

[46:05](#) – Does the statistic that “4% of interpersonal violence is attributed to serious mental illness” focus only on mass shootings or does it include all gun violence?

[48:55](#) – What call to action would you offer our audience today?

Helpful References

Presbyterian Resources

[Presbyterian Peacemaking Program](#)

[Presbyterian Mental Health Network](#)

[Presbyterian Peace Fellowship](#)

[Standing Our Holy Ground Webinar Series](#)

Mental Health Resources

[Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#)

[Psychiatric News](#)



General Questions

1. How did this webinar engage your **mind**? What thoughts came to mind as you heard from the panelists?
2. How did this webinar engage your **heart**? What emotions and feelings did you experience while hearing from the panelists?
3. How did this webinar speak to your **soul**? What spiritual wonderings emerged while listening to the panelists?

Guided Questions

1. This webinar makes a distinction between various types of mental illness, each of which have a different relationship to violence. Serious mental illness involves psychosis, a severe mental disorder in which thoughts and emotions are so impaired that contact is lost with external reality. It includes schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and only causes 4% of all interpersonal violence. There are also more common mental illnesses and mood disorders such as depression and anxiety, which if it results in violence, usually manifests as suicide or violence towards oneself, not others. Were you aware of these distinctions? Additionally, *“1 in 4 US adults experience mental illness in a given year and over the course of a lifetime half of Americans will experience mental illness.”* Does the fact that mental illness is actually very common change your perception of mental illness and the “stigmatizing” of mental health issues?
2. Beth McGinty’s comments regarding the role of mental health in gun violence echoes Jennifer Bronson’s comments on a previous webinar: *“serious mental illness on its own contributes very little to overall violence towards others but is a bigger risk factor for suicide”*. In fact, *“60% of firearm deaths in the US are suicides”* and *“case-control studies have found that the presence of a firearm in the household is a strong risk factor for suicide”*. If mental illness increases someone’s chance of committing suicide and access to a gun further increases that chance, what kinds of action could be taken to prevent a suicide?
3. Beth McGinty mentions a few sources that report on positive news and distilled information and research related to mental health: Psychiatric News, Mental Health America (MHA), and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). When you hear about mental illness mentioned in instances of gun violence, how often do you turn to research and news sources like these? Why?
4. Beth McGinty mentions two ways that faith communities can help reduce the stigmatization of mental illness and mental health challenges: 1) develop mental health support groups and have people from those groups share their experiences (as they are comfortable) with the congregation, and 2) help connect people who have mental illness with treatment options. Would your congregation be able to pursue either of these options? Why or why not?

