



NAMI News

NAMI Statement On Mass Shootings In Texas And Ohio

8/5/2019

NAMI, the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**, is deeply saddened by the tragic events that occurred over the weekend in Texas and Ohio. These mass shootings are far too common and impact every corner of our nation. Every time we experience a tragedy like this, people with mental illness are drawn into the conversation. The truth is that the vast majority of violence is not perpetrated by people with mental illness. Statements to the contrary only serve to perpetuate stigma and distract from the real issues.

NAMI sees gun violence as a national public health crisis that impacts everyone.

"In the U.S., it is easier to get a gun than it is to get mental health care," states Angela Kimball, acting CEO. **"We need to flip the script. It should be easy—not hard—for people to get the mental health care they need."**

Mental health conditions are common around the globe, yet no other country comes close to the number of mass shootings our country experiences. As a nation, we need to address this disturbing fact. We implore and advocate for commonsense approaches to ending gun violence. For example, we support gun violence prevention restraining orders or "Red Flag" laws that don't target people with mental health conditions, but that allow for the removal of guns from any person who poses a real, evidence-based risk of violence to themselves or others.

At the same time, we cannot forget that mass shootings result in profound trauma that increases the need for mental health care. One in five American adults experience a mental illness, but only 43% of them accessed care in the last year. There is a severe shortage of mental health professionals - more than 60 percent of all counties in the United States do not even have a single psychiatrist. People with mental health needs, including survivors, their friends and families, and first responders, are experiencing long waits for care, if they can get it at all. It's time for Congress and the Administration to act and make access to mental health care a national priority for everyone.

We all want an end to these horrific acts of violence. To achieve this, we need to find meaningful solutions to protect our communities from senseless violence and lasting trauma. We owe it to future generations to end this cycle for everyone, because the status quo is literally killing us.

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