

# Is The Mental Health Crisis In Part Triggering Mass Shootings? We Level Up Clinicians Examine Mental Health's Impact

*What is the connection between Mental Health Disorders Like PTSD plus Anxiety, and Mass Shootings?*

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- Is the Mental Health Crisis Triggering Mass Shootings?

The death toll of mass shootings has risen sharply, particularly in the last decade. In the 1970s, mass shootings claimed eight lives per year. From 2010 to 2019, the average was 51 deaths per year. Mass shootings are often blamed on mental health issues in public discourse. But the research shows the role of mental illness in mass shootings is complicated, not clear-cut.

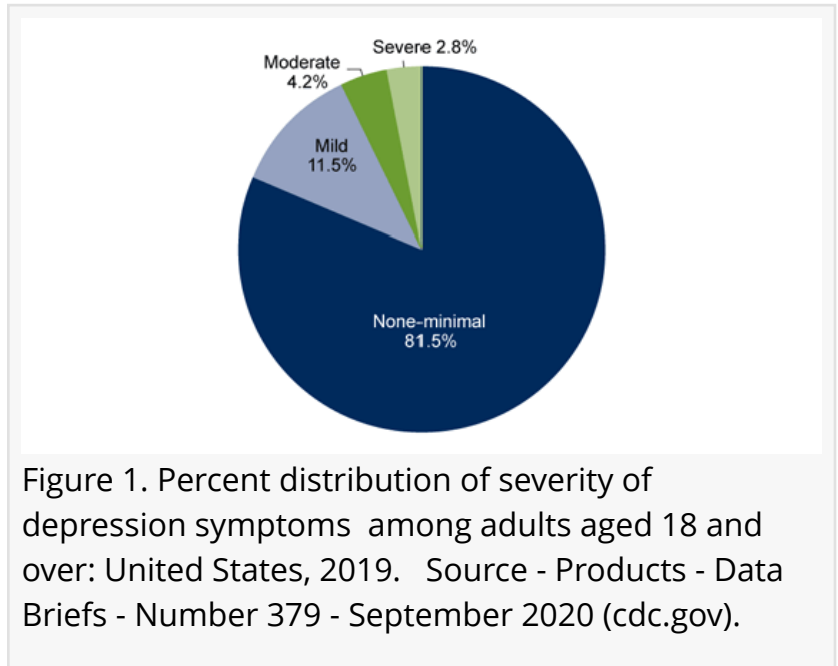


Figure 1. Percent distribution of severity of depression symptoms among adults aged 18 and over: United States, 2019. Source - Products - Data Briefs - Number 379 - September 2020 (cdc.gov).

“

It is a good idea to try meeting with a mental health professional at least once. The sooner you get help, the sooner you will feel better.”

*Alexandra Krotkevich, CEO of the We Level Up Treatment Centers*

Of all mass shooters in The Violence Project database, 30% were suicidal prior to the shooting. An additional 39% were suicidal during the shooting. In terms of past trauma, 31% of persons who perpetrated mass shootings were found to have experiences of severe childhood trauma, and over 80% were in crisis.

Mental health issues were common among those who engaged in mass shootings, with psychosis playing a minor role in nearly one-third of the cases but a primary part 10% of the time. Suicidality was found to be a strong predictor of the perpetration of mass shootings.

In the U.S., popular and political discourse frequently focuses on the causal impact of mental illness in the aftermath of mass shootings. Evidence strongly suggests that mass shooters are often mentally ill and socially marginalized. Enhanced psychiatric attention may well prevent particular crimes. Mass shootings often shed light on the need for more investment in mental health support networks or improved state laws and procedures regarding gun access.

At the same time, reports of the problems with mental health and mass shootings have plagued the news for the last few weeks. Even counselors with advanced training can become overwhelmed by the intensity of these tragic events. Although people are resilient and often bounce back after difficult times, these events nearly constantly interrupt everyone's sense of order and safety.

Millions of people have been directly and indirectly affected by disasters and mass violence, yet the vast majority recover from any stress reactions they experience. However, at the same time, some survivors will develop psychological disorders such as major depression, generalized anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### The Mental Health Consequences of Mass Shootings

The amount and nature of exposure to the event are highly linked to the risk of future mental health problems, such that injury and life threats, as well as proximity to the violence, are most predictive of the likelihood of distress,



Engaging in unhealthy ways to cope with depression will only exacerbate your condition.

**EVERYONE  
DESERVES  
ACCESS TO  
MENTAL  
HEALTH  
CARE**



National Suicide Prevention Week #StopSuicide

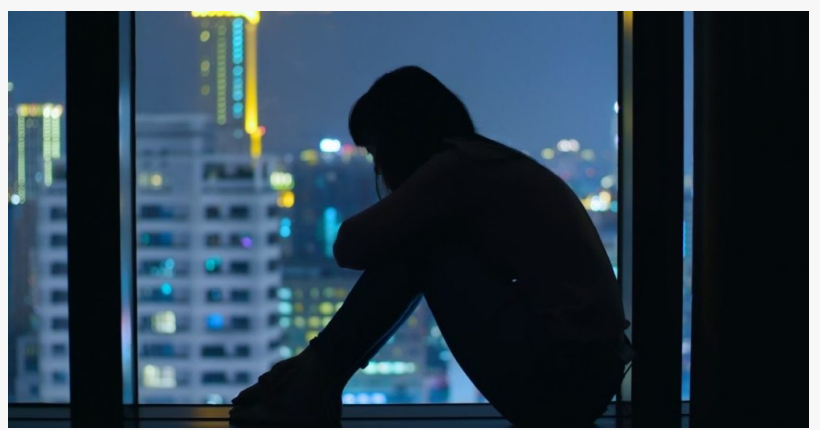
**1 in 5** adults  
experience  
mental illness.



According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, about one in five adults in the United States experience mental illness each year.

difficulty functioning, and potential psychological impairment, even up to 10 years after the event.

Those directly encountering the event will feel a more lasting impact, followed by those in close contact with immediate survivors. For example, in one review of literature, in the first year after a disaster, the prevalence of PTSD ranged between 30% and 40% among direct victims. In contrast, between 10% and 20% of rescue workers and 5 to 10% of the general population were similarly impacted.



Depression is never easy for anyone and we must lessen the stigma about it to save someone's life.

Specific to mass shootings, below are all have been found to increase the risk for PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorders following the mental health consequences of mass shootings:

Guilt and resentment

Insecurity

Anxiety sensitivity

Beliefs that events are random and uncontrollable

Pre-existing lack of social support

Contemplating and avoidant coping styles

Punitive attitudes toward crime

### Dealing with Trauma After a Mass Shooting

People can experience a wide range of emotions before and after a disaster or traumatic event such as mass shootings. There's no right or wrong way to feel. However, it's important to find healthy ways to cope when these events happen. Below are the tips shared by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration that can be applied to cope with mental health and mass shootings.

Eating a healthy diet, avoiding the use of drugs and alcohol, and getting regular exercise can reduce stress and anxiety. Activities as simple as taking a walk, stretching, and deep breathing can help relieve stress.

1. Limit consumption of news. The endless replay of news stories about a traumatic event can increase stress and anxiety and make some people relive the event over and over. Lessen the amount of news you watch and/or listen to, and immerse yourself in relaxing activities to help you heal.

2. Get enough “good” sleep. Some people have problems falling asleep after a traumatic event or wake up throughout the night. If having trouble sleeping, only go to bed when ready to sleep, avoid using cell phones or laptops, and avoid drinking caffeine at least one hour before bed.
3. Establish and maintain a routine. Try to eat meals at regular times and get on a sleep schedule to ensure a sufficient amount of rest. Include a positive activity in the schedule, something to look forward to each day or week. Schedule exercise as well, if possible.
4. Avoid making major life decisions. Switching jobs or careers can already be stressful and even harder to adjust to directly after a traumatic event.
5. Understand there will be changes. Disasters such as mass shootings can destroy homes, schools, and places of business and worship and disrupt the lives of people in affected areas for a long time. Sometimes, people lose loved ones or experience physical and mental injuries that may last a lifetime. Some people may also experience a temporary or permanent loss of employment. For children, attending a new or temporary school may result in being separated from peers, or after-school activities may be disrupted.

#### Anxiety About Mass Shootings

During the impact phase, affected individuals and communities experience a sense of threat, shock, fear, helplessness or powerlessness, guilt, and anxiety. Some people react disorganizedly, which may occur temporarily or extend into the post-disaster period. This may manifest in people standing in harm’s way or wandering aimlessly, seemingly out of touch with their surroundings. Contrarily, others may be energized and activated to help others and respond in a focused, efficient manner.

After days and weeks following mass violence in which there is a reckoning with what has occurred, people are initiating to assess the damage to homes and communities. A full range of adverse emotional, mental, social, and physical reactions may occur, but they may not predict long-term outcomes. Reactions may include:

Numbness

Denial or shock

Confusion

Feeling stunned or overwhelmed

Anxiety

Grief reactions to loss

Flashbacks and nightmares

Anger

Despair

Sadness

Hopelessness

## Mass Shooting Anxiety

Those who are most at risk for developing mental health problems such as anxiety disorders and PTSD following mass shootings are the people who were closest to the event. When someone experiences traumatic events like mass violence or knew any of the victims, they may be at higher risk for more severe or longer-lasting distress or trouble functioning. If feeling distressed or incapable of functioning well, consider seeking help. Talking to someone else can also be especially helpful.

There is no definitive timeline for recovering from an event as intense and potentially traumatic as a mass shooting. Depending on how close one was to the occurrence, it may take a long time to feel better.

## PTSD After Mass Shooting

According to the American Psychological Association, although mass shootings account for only a tiny fraction of the country's gun deaths, they are uniquely disturbing because they happen without warning in the most routine of places: schools, churches, office buildings, and concert venues.

The National Center for PTSD estimates that 28% of people who have witnessed a mass shooting develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and about a third develop acute stress disorder.

## Mental Health Programs

Policymaking at the interface of gun violence prevention and mental illness should be based on epidemiologic data concerning risk to improve the effectiveness, feasibility, and fairness of policy initiatives.

There are also competent and caring professionals available who can effectively treat the most common responses to the issues of mental health and mass shootings, like depression, anxiety, PTSD, and complicated grief. The most effective treatments give you tools to problem-solve, mourn and make sense of what happened, deal with numbness or intense emotions, and foster resilience. "It is a good idea to try meeting with a mental health professional at least once. The sooner you get help, the sooner you will feel better." Said Alexandra Krotkevich, CEO of the We Level Up Treatment Centers

For those in need of more intensive services, research supports trauma-focused psychotherapy for PTSD as an effective treatment following a disaster. Trauma-focused psychotherapy is a broad term that refers to several specific psychotherapies for PTSD. "Trauma-focused" means that the treatment focuses on the memory of the traumatic event and its meaning.

Trauma-focused psychotherapies use different techniques to help people process the issues of mental health and mass shootings or traumatic experiences. For example, some involve visualizing, talking, or thinking about the traumatic memory. Others focus on changing unhelpful

beliefs about the trauma. They usually last about 8-16 sessions.

Because of the unpredictable nature of these types of disasters, it's normal for people to experience emotional distress. Feelings such as overwhelming anxiety, trouble sleeping, and other depression-like symptoms are common responses to incidents of mass violence such as mass shootings. Other signs of emotional distress related to mental health and mass shootings may include:

Feeling numb or like nothing matters

Feeling helpless or hopeless

Worrying a lot of the time; feeling guilty but not sure why

Feeling like the need to keep busy

Excessive smoking, alcoholism, or using drugs (including prescription drug addiction)

Symptoms of PTSD and distress may appear before, during, and after such an event and may manifest in the hours, days, weeks, months, or even years after they occur. These are just a few warning signs. Learn more about the risk factors for PTSD and addiction to incidents of mass violence and other disasters.

Both PTSD and substance abuse have a complex impact on the brain. Therefore, it's crucial to treat both at the same time to undo this damage. For people with PTSD, substance use is not the answer to removing distress. Specialized PTSD treatment and substance abuse programs can help people cope.

About We Level Up Treatment Centers

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We Level Up [mental health treatment center](#) network locations include:

1. We Level Up New Jersey addiction rehabilitation center
2. We Level Up Florida substance abuse treatment center
3. We Level Up [Fort Lauderdale depression center](#)
4. We Level Up [Tamarac mental health rehab center](#)
5. We Level Up Boca Raton alcohol rehab center admissions office
6. We Level Up California rehab center

We Level Up's treatment centers coming soon locations are to include:

7. We Level Up Washington behavioral health center

We Level Up treatment tailors the program to the individual and their individual plan to the program. We begin by evaluating our client's history of cognitive health, drugs, and alcohol-related past. The needs of each patient are detailed and personalized because we aim to deliver complete support for people suffering from drug & alcohol addiction and other mental health

issues. A supportive environment is created accordingly to give patients 24-hour care. Whenever you need someone to talk to about treatment options to suit your situation, call us.

We Level Up is a renowned treatment center that applies evidence-based treatment modalities along with holistic programs to improve client recovery outcomes. Combining traditional elements of SUD treatment, including supervised medical detox recovery coupled with intensive behavioral rehab. Offering cutting-edge advanced therapies, WeLevelUp is an accredited dual diagnosis drug and alcohol addiction and mental health care provider. Fully integrating co-occurring conditions into their programs, they provide a world-class comprehensive continuum of care through each stage of the treatment process. Their top-notch doctors, therapists, and counselors leverage the power of science to help clients succeed in rehab recovery.

If you or a loved one are struggling with substance use or mental health disorders, we stand ready to help. We have treatment campuses across the nation that can deliver a comprehensive range of care. Learn about our medical detox centers, inpatient treatment facilities, and mental health clinics. Speak with a representative without any obligation, ever.

We Level Up provides best-in-class treatment in multiple locations, with amenities and activities designed to reinforce recovery success metrics. Each client receives lifetime alumni support post inpatient treatment along with family resources to help maintain recovery momentum, even once they depart their treatment facilities. Their teams of highly trained professionals are dedicated to each client's success.

WeLevelUp.com is A-rated by the BBB and is a confirmed and verified business.

Sources:

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[5] <https://welevelup.com/medical-detox/> <https://welevelup.com/mental-health-treatment-center/>

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