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School Shootings Aren't Caused By The Type Of Student That The Media Tells You About

By Ruth Wells

Teachers, principals and counselors: As most of you are aware, some of the recent school

shootings were apparently committed by students who were not known for their acting-out behaviors, but instead for their relatively quiet withdrawal and depression. We have gotten quite a few calls asking for explanations. Youth professionals are often more accustomed to preventing and addressing violence from acting-out youth, and may feel less prepared to prevent or address violence from other types of youth.

Here are some of the questions we have been receiving at our office and in our workshop:

Question: Why are some depressed, withdrawn kids becoming suddenly violent?

Answer: Perhaps some of these kids are like pressure cookers that build up so much steam that they literally explode. Many professionals are used to seeing serious youth depression that includes withdrawal, lethargy, reduced verbiage, reduced activity levels, self-harm and/or threats of self-harm, and comments reflecting hopelessness and despair. But, some depressed youngsters may explode out of that "acting-in" into serious acting-out.

Question: Our staff has had a lot of training on preventing and managing violence by acting-out students such as conduct disorders. Is there much difference working with students who normally act in?

Answer: Yes, it is almost a completely different process. Perhaps the two most compelling difference are these: First, there may be fewer overt cues to help you spot the acting-in student before the violence occurs. Second, the way you work with the two sets of students should be completely different. So, no, you can't just extrapolate your training on conduct disordered youth, for example, to depressed students. Question: How does my school or agency know if we are prepared as best as possible to avoid serious violence from acting-in students?

Answer: Your staff should be able to identify at least three types of students who may be at highest risk of extreme violence, and how they must work differently with each type. There is no substitute for

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gaining a more sophisticated understanding of your different populations and also learning which tools to use with each type of youth.

Question: Some states are now considering laws that will mandate how schools discipline bullies. Will that be a big help?

Answer: Not necessarily. Your depressed student doesn't always blow up over one single problem like being harassed by peers. A better solution might be to educate youth professionals to understand how the peer harassment affects the vulnerable youngster, but also teach all about that student, not just this one element. It is unlikely that there is a quick and simple fix to the serious and complex emotional problems that developed over the entire child's lifetime. The better solution would be to ensure that all youth professionals have a complete and sophisticated understanding of their different types of kids. Professional development classes like ours' are designed to efficiently do that. There may not be any easy shortcuts or bypasses to updating staff skills.

Question: So stopping bullying is not the whole answer to stopping serious violence by acting— in students?

Answer: That is correct. While it is a definite help, remember that it doesn't always take a "big thing" to set these kids off. Sometimes, the triggering event can be as simple as "that girl didn't look at me." Unfortunately, "the straw that broke the camel's back" phenomenon can often occur.

Question: Can you list at least a few key do's and don't's on preventing violence with depressed youth?

Answer: This list is absolutely no substitute for a thorough understanding.

Some DON'Ts:

Don't add to their burdens; Don't permit them to face unnecessary problems like endless peer harassment; Don't ignore the often quiet signs of major depression (many are noted above); Don't pressure them; Don't forget about them— the quiet ones so often go unnoticed.

Some DO's:

Do involve them in talking out problems to avoid building up problems; Do involve them in exercise; Do have them evaluated for anti-depressant medication; Do teach them coping and social skills (including peer interaction skills); Do build a strong bond; and, in the words of one depressed youth, Do "make it safe, make it okay."

Want more information on depressed youth and violence? This isn't a topic that is widely covered— especially if you are seeking practical tools, not just theory. The fastest, most thorough solution we know about is our Breakthrough Strategies Workshop (live or on tape). It is a very thorough resource that puts you in the depressed child's world, and gives you specific do's and don't's. It would hopefully reduce the "guess work" and guide you through your interactions with this student. Visit

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<http://www.youthchg.com/live.html>

for more info.

Get much more information on this topic at

<http://www.youthchg.com>

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.) Sign up for her free Problem–Kid

Problem–Solver magazine at the site and see hundreds more of her innovative methods. Ruth is the author of dozens of books and provides workshops and training.

Does Back To School Mean Back To Work For Your Teen?

By Annette Yen

It is back to school time and for most teens that means hitting the books and more for the next ten months. Get ready for homework, tests, sports, debate club, student council, after school meetings and everything else that life as a high school student brings.

And, since these busy high school years lead toward college, and college expenses are going up, up and up, this also means that your teen will need to start exploring and looking for some type of work to support their current activities as well as sock away for the increasing college expenses.

Are your teens looking for jobs or will they be among those who use their time, talents, brain power and abilities to start their own business instead? Why in the world would any teen want to do that? After all, isn't it easier just to fill out a job application and go work at the local movie theater or pizza joint?

Let's explore just some of the fabulous benefits of choosing to start your own business as a teen rather than take on an hourly job this school year.

**** It's Flexible –** With the demanding schedule that an involved high school student has, it is often extremely inconvenient to work around a typical teenage hourly job. Why not turn the tables and start a home business where your teen along with you determines which hours he can or cannot work so it fits into the sports, homework and other activities schedules.

**** It's Fun –** By starting his own business, your teen can work at something he would really enjoy instead of flipping greasy burgers or scooping popcorn.

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** He can take it with him – If your teen starts a successful business during his high school years, he will be able to take that business with him into his college years and beyond.

** It's educational – When your teen creates a business plan from scratch and he works it to a success point he will have learned more than most people do in a lifetime. And he can add that to the college applications too. They will love it!

** The Money is nice! – When your teen owns a business of his own, he determines his pay, not someone else or the state. He will be paid much better than any hourly job out there!

So take some time before school gets into full swing and get your teen started on his own business! You and he will have fun, learn tons and make more money... and still have time for homework and having fun with his friends!

Annette Yen is a work at home mom with two fabulous business assistants – her daughters! Find out tips on how you can get your teens started in their own business at her site:

<http://www.showkidsthemoney.com>



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