

The Impact of School Shooting Incidents

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Introduction

School shooting drills have become a common activity in the United States of America because the children along with the students do not feel safe behind closed doors anymore. The recent school shooting in Florida brought about a surge of discussion about where the country was headed. The mass shootings that have, albeit painfully become frequent, have, perhaps in many people's opinions, made the public numb towards any more information of a similar nature. This information alone that people are moving towards consistent numbness should be enough to rattle the public; however, there is a kind of mocking silence that doesn't bring peace to anyone.

Main Body

If this behavior is thoroughly pondered upon, one may find a psychological concept in this hidden in plain sight. That is, when a tragedy occurs and repeatedly keeps occurring, humans' empathy, and reactivity decreases while they become 'numb' to the problem (Keller, 2018).

This response is certainly not supposed to be mocked because it is only natural for a human being to raise his or her survival instincts after a traumatic experience. In such situations, where people cannot physically remove themselves from the place of the trauma, their brains do the work for them by decreasing their empathy and, indirectly, causing pain (Resnick, 2018).

This phenomenon is termed psychic numbing, where the brain only registers itself and the people surrounding the body as important, which brings about the topic of proximal empathy into question. With the increasing number of shootings, it is also apparent that the public elicits outrage over the incompetence of administrative institutions only when the shooting or any other trauma hits their home. This, too, is the aftermath of the helplessness most people feel after they experience such traumas first-hand.

Therefore, fighting against the repetitive surge towards numbness is difficult and the other way is rather daunting too as it flows against human survival instinct, but the question which arises here is that if the humans would give in to the natural instinct of survival, then who will be there to hold the perpetrators accountable? However, mass shootings have certainly persuaded people to talk about the psychological aspects behind this, which play in a shooter's head before he or she decides to go through with his or her plan (Resnick, 2018).

Apart from the fact that the public seems to be slightly numb as more and more mass shootings

occur, another important factor to consider is the lack of media coverage of such important incidents, so much so that it almost seems as if gun control is no longer a pressing issue in the view of the media (Jeltsen, 2018).

Moreover, the subtle fading of important topics is another factor that has caught experts' attention. The lack of media coverage and the lack of discussion on topics such as these leave the situation open to interpretation for many. Some, while viewing the world through rose-colored lenses might even feel that all is fine and dandy in the world even after such incidents (DeVeaux, 2018).

The fact that in this year only, considering which hasn't been here for many months, there have already been occurrences of 17 school shootings where either someone was injured or worse, even killed, depicts the dire need to control gun use among people and to also create awareness among people on how to act accordingly in such situations (Saeed Ahmed, 2018). Though quite painful and disturbing for the children and parents, it is still an immediate need of current times.

However, the most recent shooting in Parkland, Florida, seems to garner different reactions from the public than what the previous shootings had for the past many years. It seems that the news of the most recent traumatic experience isn't fading out as quickly as the ones' have before, which kindles a spark of hope in people who want to see the public standing together and united against the problem at hand. The outcry after the recent shooting has been tremendous, where media houses are still talking about the country's gun problem, and people are actively rallying on the streets, igniting hope that reforms can be brought about if the public is persistent enough (Keller 2018).

However, with the frequent mass shootings people hear about every day, it is difficult to discern the reason behind such inadequate movement toward gun control. With the current scenario, what would have been imperative would be a large-scale movement for gun control, which would have paved the way for further, more legitimate change, perhaps even in the law. However, the mixed views on gun control, as depicted by the Gallup poll data, have so far hindered any upscale change in the law or constitution (Wozniak, 2017). The poll indicated that the population of Americans who felt that the laws which dealt with the selling and possession of firearms declined from 78% in the year 1990 to 47% in the year 2014. The reason behind such an alarming acceptance of the possession of firearms among the public is the numbing effect that has been mentioned before (Saeed Ahmed, 2018). The effect called 'psychic numbing' takes away all emotion from people when they are excessively exposed to violence and firearms, regardless of whether it is direct or indirect (DeVeaux, 2018).

Given that as human beings we want to detach ourselves as soon as we are met with a traumatic incident, this factor plays an integral role in the so-called 'numbing effect'. As Homo sapiens, people prefer to detach themselves from a particularly unpleasant event and want to replace dispositional attribution with situational attribution depicts the importance it is for people to displace the blame (Lisa M Segarra, 2018). The excess exposure to such incidents also creates vulnerability and hopelessness among the people, and the belief in helplessness strengthens. Since overcoming the fear of being completely helpless itself is very daunting, people, even if they wish to talk about the

problem at hand, aren't able to because of the irrational fear that grips them and because the fear envelops how they structure their argument and hence, their pleas fall on deaf ears (Wozniak, 2017).

As seen before, people have had mixed views about the shootings and on the gun control policies, it is fair to assume that the public was unable to displace the blame on anyone after the shootings. Since terrorism encompasses people who have definite motives, purposes, and plans that are clearly evident to the public eye, it becomes easy for people to blame the terrorists and dispose of any attribution they have made to the situation before. But since shooters aren't necessarily categorized as 'terrorists' nor do they have specific plans that are the spawn of some hidden agenda, it becomes difficult for people to displace blame on them and henceforth possess mixed views about them in general (Keller, 2018).

Furthermore, gun owners feel threatened in way too when the topic of gun control comes into focus because these people share their identity with their firearms, and the continual talk of controlling their rights amplifies their responses in a negative way. Hence, it is seen that the gun owners try to displace the blame on the victims as well at times (Jeltsen, 2018).

However, the recent positive response of the public after the Florida shooting puts forth the hope that this feat can be overcome by breaking the barriers people have created for themselves.

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