

Session Two  
Chapters Two and Three in The Violence Project  
October 23, 2022

Chapter Two

1. 1,200 people have been killed by mass shooters in the U.S. since 1966. A person is 10 times more likely to die by guns in the U.S. than in any other similar high-income country. Why do you think this is (not what the book says)? (120 guns for every 100 citizens). What does the book identify as some of the reasons?
2. The following is not an easy question and might have a variety of answers. One reason that is often given, even by Christians is that they own guns to protect themselves and their families. How do you understand the need to protect oneself/family by means of guns and the place of God's promise of protection? (Mt. 26: 52. "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.")
3. The authors spoke of "deaths of despair." How do you understand such deaths? (The authors define "deaths of despair" when people fail to find meaning in life.)
4. Murder and violence tend to be higher in nations with the largest income inequality. Reactions?
5. What is "aggrieved entitlement?"
6. *"Mass shooters very often see themselves as the victims; they feel some great injustice has been done to them. Retired senior FBI profiler Mary Ellen O'Toole describes mass shooters as "wound" or "injustice collectors," people who stew in their anger. They never forget, never forgive, and never let go, nursing resentment over real or perceived injustices until, eventually, they strike back."* Reactions
7. Any reactions to historian Randolph Roth's writing in the *Washington Post* in 2017:  
*When we lose faith in our government and political leaders, when we lack a sense of kinship with others, when we feel we just can't get a fair shake, it affects the confidence with which we go about our lives. Small disagreements, indignities, and disappointments that we might otherwise brush off may enrage us-generating hostile, defensive and predatory emotions-and in some cases give way to violence."*
8. If "deaths of despair" are associated with a failure to find meaning in life, where does God fit into this? (What does *eternal life* mean?)

## Chapter 3. Trauma

1. What is trauma?
2. *“Adversity does not predestine children to poor outcomes, but research shows it can become biologically embedded during sensitive periods of development, meaning that without appropriate intervention, it can lead to lifelong physical and mental health problems.”*
3. What are ACE’s?
4. What is “toxic stress?”
5. *“For many mass shooters, an unpredictable and chaotic upbringing is the first step on their pathway to violence.”*
6. The authors wrote, *“A child who has been abused; who is shy and detached, or impulsive and unable to read other’s cues; who elicits certain behaviors and treatment from peers and adults; who has endured trauma-such a child may be trouble making friends because he drives other children away. He may try the patience of adults. How do we as teachers, parents, doctors, (CHRISTIANS) and neighbors step in to help these children. How do we identify kids going through trauma and is it possible to intervene to prevent the negative lifelong impact.” REACTIONS*
7. The Harvard Center for Developing Child says, *“The single most common factor for children who are resilient in the face of trauma is a stable, committed relationship with a supportive adult in their lives.”* This definitely involves listening: “mentoring is an opportunity for mentors to grow ears and for mentee to grow mouths.”
8. Other Resources:
  - Safely screening for trauma at a doctor’s office or in school is the first step.
  - SEEK: Safe Environment for Every Kid train doctors and nurses
  - Trauma Informed Practitioners
  - SEL: Social and Emotional Learning train kids
9. BCES (Benevolent Childhood Experiences asks: When you were growing up, during the first eighteen years of life...
  - a. Did you have at least one caregiver with whom you felt safe?
  - b. Did you have at least one good friend?
  - c. Did you have beliefs that gave you comfort?
  - d. Did you like school?

- e. Did you have at least one teacher who cared about you?
- f. Did you have good neighbors?
- g. Was there an adult (not a parent/caregiver or the person from the first question) who could provide you with support or advice?
- h. Did you have opportunities to have a good time?
- i. Did you like yourself or feel comfortable with yourself?
- j. Did you have a predictable home routine, such as regular meals and a regular bedtime?

10. How can the church provide BCES to both adults and youth?