



17 February 2018

NARST STATEMENT on School and Community Gun Violence

NARST is a worldwide organization of professionals committed to the improvement of science teaching and learning through research.

Valentine's Day is a special day in which we celebrate our love, gratitude, and appreciation to all who have touched our lives. Sadly, on Valentine's Day 14 February 2018 this celebration was violated at 2:21 pm EST, just minutes before school dismissal, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County, Florida (USA). During the next 7 minutes yet another deadly and senseless mass shooting occurred.

We express our condolences to the families and friends who lost loved ones and to the survivors whose lives are forever changed. We join the Broward County community in expressing shock and grief for violent attacks against students, teachers, school staff, and the associated impact such violence has upon local communities. Since the incident at Columbine High School in 1999, the US has experienced 50 mass murders or attempted mass murders at schools, in which 141 people have been killed. On average there is a school related (K-12 public/private schools, colleges/universities, and school buses) shooting that occurs at least once a week in the US. The gun-violence epidemic spreading throughout the US is affecting our society profoundly.

The time has come for political leaders to take concrete actions to reduce the gun violence afflicting US schools, colleges and universities, communities, and society. Why is it that active-shooter drills have become a fabric of the educational experiences of children and youth? Why is it that any child should leave home for school in the morning and have to wonder if s/he will return home safely? Why has our culture normalized such events? Students, families, and communities should not have to experience the pain and suffering that such violence bestows.

Politicians, educators, policy makers, researchers, community leaders, and citizens must unite in efforts explicitly designed to eliminate violence - in particular, gun violence - in schools, colleges and universities, and communities. We must be united and committed in our efforts to ensure all students have access to safe environments in which to live and learn. Now is not the time for silence on this issue; now is the time for leadership and action to ensure all young people have the opportunity to fulfill their lifelong dreams and aspirations.

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