

PARTICIPANT #2 (P2): Yeah, I agree; maybe if the media just would stop reporting these things, maybe the killing would stop.

PARTICIPANT #3 (P3): But the media is really responsible in much larger ways, such as their glorification of violence to teens. I saw a show the other day on television where 15 people were killed in 45 minutes. You can't tell me that this doesn't lead to violence. Kids sit and watch this stuff for hours.

PARTICIPANT #4 (P4): Yeah, but that is the parents' responsibility to make sure they monitor what their kids watch. I don't let my kids watch anything without me knowing what it is.

P2: Yeah, but do you watch your kids 24 hours a day? What happens when they go to someone else's house or to school? You can't be a 24-hour-a-day watchdog.

P4: Well, I know what my kids are doing all of the time.

P2: Oh yeah, what are they doing now while you are here?

7:08 P.M.

FACILITATOR: I think we are getting off topic here. Let's get back directly to the school shootings.

PARTICIPANT #5 (P5): I think the point about violence on television is okay but maybe what we are missing here is the central point. Guns! How do these kids kill? They kill with guns. Why does this society need so many guns? I really get frustrated with our cultural love of killing machines.

PARTICIPANT #6: I don't like your tone. If more people actually had guns, they could use them to shoot these deranged killers. The problem is gun-free zones. Guns are about freedom. I have owned guns for years and I don't kill people. Anyway, people kill people; guns don't kill people. Why not ban rocks? They can be a weapon.

P5: But guns sure do make it a lot easier. Can you imagine somebody throwing rocks at their fellow students and really killing them? Can you imagine Oswald throwing a rock and killing a president? Get real. Also, I know that less than 15% of mass shootings happen in so-called gun free zones, and there's no evidence anyone picked their target on that basis. We have too many guns, not too few.

P6: Yeah, but people will find a way. I tell you that the bigger problem is the justice system. People get away with murder nowadays. The Bill of Rights has become a hiding place for these thugs. What we need is a death sentence for one of these thugs. That will make others think about whether killing is really the cool thing to do.

PARTICIPANT #7 (P7): I agree that guns are not the problem.

P6: Voting for gun control is a violation of the oath our elected officials take to uphold and protect the Constitution. In my heart, I believe that the rifle used to shoot those students and teachers in Newtown was no more responsible for that tragedy than the automobile involved in a drunk driving death. My prayers and heart go out to the families, but when a drunk kills somebody the law goes after the driver of the car; why do they go after the gun when somebody shoots somebody?

P5: There are big differences: the car is not something that is designed to intentionally kill. The NRA and gun manufacturers should be responsible.

P6: Remember, the NRA is the biggest advocate of teaching kids how to handle guns safely.

FACILITATOR (TO P5): What was your point again?

P5: The NRA says it would be terrible to limit guns, to not be able to buy them, to have to wait to buy them, to not be able to have quick access to a loaded gun, to not be able to use automatic weapons when hunting. That's not terrible. Kids at a dance diving under the punch bowl for safety is terrible. A dead father of three, who was there because he was the most giving teacher in the school, is terrible. School kids in body bags is terrible. A Holocaust survivor losing his life saving his students is terrible. I'm tired of the NRA portraying anybody who favors any gun regulations—no matter how reasonable, how narrow, and how carefully cast—as an elitist, anti-American,