



Statement in Response to Gun Violence
March 2018

In response to the recent events of gun violence in Florida and other areas of the country, the members of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) division of the American Counseling Association, make this statement and call to action.

We call to action a plan to protect all individuals at risk from wanton violence by restricting access to weapons by those individuals who have been deemed to be a threat to themselves and to society. As a society we cannot achieve the goals of social justice without developing a safe environment for everyone, which includes laws that protect people from gun violence. The gun violence epidemic that afflicts our nation calls for a **stand** against corporations and institutions that promote indiscriminate access to weapons.

The American culture's infatuation with guns reflects a phenomenon that is reinforced through violent entertainment whose content promotes values that deny social justice and disregard for human life while glamourizing the perpetrators. The indiscriminate access to these products often reaches the minds of vulnerable members of society who are then socialized to believe that violence, hatred, and discrimination are lawful means to redress their grievances.

The CSJ Advocacy Competencies advise action with and on behalf of clients, students, and communities at both micro and macro levels. CSJ suggests the following action ideas:

1. Create a document that includes data regarding mental health issues, access to guns, and gun violence outcomes/likelihood.
2. Share this document via social media.
3. Tweet President Trump, the NRA, and other pro-gun organizations to express your concern regarding access to guns, mental health, and community safety.
4. Create a template for contacting local leadership that addresses gun safety and mental health as social justice issues.
5. Work with mental health professionals, schools, and other community members and encourage them to write leadership using the template.
6. Develop localized task forces to educate communities about violence and mental health, encouraging the use of counseling services and other programs to decrease violence.