



Dear Colleagues:

Today, our nation has begun learning about yet another mass shooting, this time at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, where 19 children and two adults were shot dead by an 18-year-old high school student.

In the days, weeks, months and years to come, professional counselors working in schools and communities will be called upon to help those who were impacted by what our country has witnessed all too many times. These victims were innocent children whose life potential will never be realized. They are gone. And, sadly, we know that the impact on those who were part of their life orbit will also face challenges.

While we expect to hear a renewed debate about the access that people have to guns in our country, there also needs to be discussion, discernment and action focused on societal issues that set the stage for these tragic events. Racism, classism, oppression and the lack of mental health resources are just some pieces of a puzzle that has now led to more than 200 mass shootings in the United States since the start of 2022, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

"I'm tired of the rhetoric passed on by political figures who won't stand up against this violence," ACA President S. Kent Butler said following the news of the shooting. "I sent my child to school today happy about her excitement to go. Now I'm anxious about sending her tomorrow. We are all forever affected by this madness."

As an association comprising 58,000 professional counselors, we know that the platitudes of "our hearts and prayers are with you" ring hollow to those who were looking forward to summer vacation, but now must bury their elementary school-age children. Compassion for others and spiritual strength are shared with the best of intentions, however, we also encourage communities and public policy officials to find the internal fortitude that supports and implements what is needed to prevent, rather than always respond to, events that have lifelong and tragic impact.

ACA provides resources to educate counselors and stay vigilant during these horrific times on our website [Gun Violence Trauma Resources](#). Resources for counselors and the public to help address all the ripple effects that trauma has on our collective well-being when violence like this occurs can be found at [Resources for Counselors and Clients](#).

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