



# Deadly Lessons:: Understanding Lethal School Violence

*National Research Council, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Committee on Law and Justice, Youth and Families Board on Children*

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The shooting at Columbine High School riveted national attention on violence in the nation's schools. This dramatic example signaled an implicit and growing fear that these events would continue to occur and even escalate in scale and severity.

How do we make sense of the tragedy of a school shooting or even draw objective conclusions from these incidents? **Deadly Lessons** is the outcome of the National Research Council's unique effort to glean lessons from six case studies of lethal student violence. These are powerful stories of parents and teachers and troubled youths, presenting the tragic complexity of the young shooter's social and personal circumstances in rich detail.

The cases point to possible causes of violence and suggest where interventions may be most effective. Readers will come away with a better understanding of the potential threat, how violence might be prevented, and how healing might be promoted in affected communities.

For each case study, **Deadly Lessons** relates events leading up to the violence, provides quotes from personal interviews about the incident, and explores the impact on the community. The case studies center on:

- Two separate incidents in East New York in which three students were killed and a teacher was seriously wounded.
- A shooting on the south side of Chicago in which one youth was killed and two wounded.
- A shooting into a prayer group at a Kentucky high school in which three students were killed.
- The killing of four students and a teacher and the wounding of 10 others at an Arkansas middle school.
- The shooting of a popular science teacher by a teenager in Edinboro, Pennsylvania.
- A suspected copycat of Columbine in which six students were wounded in Georgia

For everyone who puzzles over these terrible incidents, **Deadly Lessons** offers a fresh perspective on the most fundamental of questions: Why?

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