

Noted child psychiatrist Harold Koplewicz, MD, speaks out on the Parkland shooting

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Harold S. Koplewicz, MD, Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology* and President of the Child Mind Institute has spoken out on the Parkland shooting and the urgent need to make mental health a priority for research and action. "The national response to the tragic Parkland shooting is unfolding in a different way than those that came before. The news is focusing less on the troubled hopes, dreams, and fantasies of a killer. This takes momentum away from the cycle of violence and focuses energy where it should be: with victims, with survivors, with problem solvers. The focus is on teens around the country calling for action, and it is remarkable.

"In this atmosphere, we must not forget about mental [health](#). I can see the phrase turning into a cop-out or a dirty word in the fight over [gun policy](#). We can't let that happen. Families come in different shapes and sizes, but all of them find that when it comes to [mental health](#) disorders, they are flying blind. We need to provide information, support, and treatment so parents, caregivers, and guardians of troubled young people know what to do before their children hurt themselves or others.

"Families and communities should understand that social isolation can be self-perpetuating and is very harmful for kids with emotional problems. Schools need to be better attuned to the mental and behavioral health of their communities and better equipped to voice those concerns before a student drops out or gets expelled.

"And what everyone needs to know is that people with psychiatric disorders are no more likely to be violent than the general population. And the most important risk factor for violence, whether it's to oneself or to others, is the presence of firearms."

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Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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