

# **Why So Many Mass Shootings? What Men and Boys Really Need that They Don't Receive**

By Dr. Michael Obsatz – June 2022

There is a hole in the heart for many young men and boys these days. Some are hurting so badly that they become depressed. Others become violent and take out their anger, pain, and self-hatred on others through mass shootings.

Unfortunately, some boys are abandoned, shamed, bullied, and ostracized. Some come from dysfunctional families. Others have never been taught how to love themselves, and feel connected. The world can be a hostile and confusing place sometimes. Internalized shame can lead to violent outcomes. Suicide and suicide attempts are increasing among boys and young men.

It is important to grow up knowing one's authentic self. But how does a boy do that when he is continuously told what he is supposed to do and be? He is also encouraged to believe that his validation as a man has to come from outside, from other men, and from women.

This co-dependent message creates inner emptiness which boys attempt to fill through activities, addictions, and macho posturing. Excessive playing of videogames consumes much of the time of many young men and boys.

There are dozens of books written about raising healthy boys. Michael Gurian, Terrence Real, Herb Goldberg, Samuel Osherson, Robert Bly, and many others have written books on this topic. How many parents and educators have read them and taking them seriously?

There is a lack of love, affection, and guidance for many boys and men. Here are some questions which need answers for boys and men to be able to love themselves, create a supportive network, have a sense of meaning and purpose and navigate a complex and puzzling world:

Who am I?

What do I love to do?

What skills and passions do I have?

How do I communicate my needs and feelings?

How do I choose who to trust?

How do I deal with all of the anger, rage, and violence in the world?

How can I make a living?

How do I take good care of my body?

What does spirituality mean to me?

How do I incorporate spirituality into my life?

How do I avoid toxic people and situations?

How do I leave abusive people?

What is my role in bringing more love and peace into the world?

How do I care for and respect the earth's resources?

What can I learn from elders?

How do I learn to cope with change, and let go of the need to control when it is necessary?

How do I develop resilience?

How do I forgive those who hurt me?

How do I achieve some inner peace?

How do I support others in finding their way?

How do I learn to appreciate what I have?

How do I develop the flexibility to cope with the changes in life?

How do I learn to take care of myself?

How can I love myself, be proud and also humble?

How much of material wealth is enough for me?

We need understanding, mature, helpful adults who can support boys in their growth into healthy and mature manhood. This learning can take place in families, communities, and spiritual settings. Unless this happens, we will continue to see this cycle of violence and suffering in the world.