

Episode 185-- Fighting Back Responding to Mass Shootings li...

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SPEAKERS

Steve Albrecht, Robert Schentrup, JJ Janflone, Kelly Sampson, Nancy Kislin



JJ Janflone 00:08

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JJ Janflone 00:37

Everybody, welcome back to another episode of Red, Blue and Brady. I'm JJ.



Kelly Sampson 00:42

And I'm Kelly.



JJ Janflone 00:43

And unfortunately, we are bringing you an extended episode today to talk about, well, the horrors that continue to unfold in the news across the US.



Kelly Sampson 00:54

Yeah, and in the past several weeks, not only have we seen and suffered a mass shooting in Buffalo, New York, at a grocery store, and a church in California, and most recently a elementary school in Texas. But also, we know that beyond these headlines, there's also been

people who have died by suicide, people who have died by unintentional shootings and people who have died in the every day. Gun violence leaves an indelible mark on the families and those lost behind may not come to the fore in the headlines.



JJ Janflone 01:30

When things like this happen, Kelly and I and I think anyone who identifies as a gun violence prevention advocate, we get tons of questions about what it is that people can do either to have better conversations about this topic, or what can they you know, get out and do in this moment to help solve this terrible problem. And so to talk about some things that folks can do and how to have these hard conversations, we are fortunate enough to be joined by three phenomenal humans. Robert Schentrup, our Team Enough Organizing Manager here at Brady, Nancy Kislin, who's been on the podcast before, who is a expert in everything from lockdown drills to talking with children about hard things, and Dr. Steve Albrecht, a prolific author and expert in workplace and school safety.



Nancy Kislin 02:16

I'm Nancy Kislin. I am a child and adolescent psychotherapist and author of Lockdown: Talking to Your Kids about School Violence.



Robert Schentrup 02:29

Yeah, hi there. My name is Robert Schentrup. I am the Team Enough Organizing Manager here at Brady and I come to this work as a survivor of the Parkland shooting. My sister Carmen Schentrup was one of the 17 victims killed within the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting. And it is in her memory that I have been working to prevent gun violence for over the past four years. And recently, within the last couple of months, I've decided to come on to Brady to help run our Team Enough program, which is focused on activating young people from the ages of 13 to 25, around taking action to prevent gun violence.



Steve Albrecht 03:06

Thanks. I'm Steve Albrecht. I'm a longtime California resident. I worked in San Diego for the PDE for 15 years. My claim to fame if I have one is I wrote the first book on workplace violence in the United States, a book called Ticking Bombs. So I've been working for this, in this arena for 30 years now. I belong to a group called ATAP, the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals. Our primary function is workplace violence, school violence prevention, domestic violence in the workplace, domestic violence as a as an issue, anational issue. And also stalking and terrorism. This group has been around for almost 30 years. It was really founded by by Los Angeles Police Department in response to some stalking cases, national stalking cases that happened to celebrities. And they took the same model, which is really cross jurisdictional with psychologists, psychiatrists, prosecutors, human resources, people, all mental health clinicians, cops, security people, probation, parole, and they bring us together, and we have about 20-3500 members around the United States. So we're, you know, I'm looking at all the things that you're seeing in your work, and just how, you know, absolutely miserable and frustrated we are

that our work does not stop these guys. And also, from my personal perspective, you know, I'm kind of at a tipping point. I'm almost 60 years old, and I've been doing this for a long time. And, and, you know, I had this conversation with JJ I think that after the Las Vegas incident happened, I came to the conclusion that a current course and speed our current model, we cannot stop these people. And the Las Vegas situation was so dire. And also in comparison, the one that happened yesterday that it just gives me pause about the work that I've been doing for all this time with my colleagues and threat assessment, threat management, and how difficult it is for us to do what everybody is asking us to do all the time, which is predict the future. And I look at these perpetrators and I say what are the common factors? And JJ, you and I talked about this, this leakage where they somehow leak out or tell people through social media or other things what they plan on doing or what they may do, can we not capitalize on that? And so that's that's kind of where I am today.



JJ Janflone 05:06

I think that's so important that you bring that up, Steve, the sort of emotional response that folks have in the wake of these shootings. And I'd love to ask all of you, and I'm including Kelly, you in this. You know, what? What are your initial thoughts when the news first started to come in? You know, from California, from New York, and most recently from Texas?



Nancy Kislin 05:26

I think part of my brain just races, you know, maybe it's my training as a Crisis Therapist, but it's like, oh my god, like, now what am I supposed to do? What do I need to do, and it just starts, I share that with you all, because that's my way that I've learned to strategize and manage through the world because of my own trauma as a child. And I fortunately enough, do not have what we call the big T's, a big trauma. But we all have our little Ts. And the way I learned to navigate the little T's that happened in my childhood, was, I'm always ready to launch. I have a plan of action, my mind can well at record speed, it feels like, of how can I take care of everyone. And sometimes that's really wonderful. But a lot of times that can be very taxing and exhausting. And I think, because of my own experience, I really became fascinated with trauma work, and how I could learn more to help more people. So when I saw that it was children, again, I think for a little while, there took a good couple of hours till I even allowed myself to feel the enormity of what's happening again.



Kelly Sampson 06:49

I think this feeling that it's left me with is desperation. Honestly, to just stop and really do something to make a change, because it's just so unacceptable. And as you said, with Buffalo, you have a vulnerable population of predominantly at that point and the time of day that people were at the grocery stores, a lot of people who are retired, a lot of people who are older, who lived their lives under systemic racism. And to be killed simply in the act of going to the grocery store, is, among other things, I think so insulting to the dignity of people. And that really got to me, but I kind of had to put that aside and do work. And I actually was on vacation over the last week, and I was visiting with family. And so I kind of had an opportunity to like, go be with family and not stew in that feeling and kind of get a little bit of an equilibrium back, only for what happened at the elementary school to kind of knock me back. And so if it feels

like the reserves that I had, and I know that this isn't unique to me, it feels like something that people all over the country are going through, they're just down. And so I think the feeling that comes to mind, for me is just desperation. Like, are we, if we're not able to protect, you know, people who have lived their lives, and now should be enjoying their golden years. And if we're not able to protect children, who should be you know, playing with their friends, they should be playing tag, they should be celebrating their birthdays, they should be doing all those things. And if we're not able to protect them, then like, what are we doing? And so that's kind of, I think where I've landed is just like this feeling of I don't know what the word I guess, yeah, just desperate, like, I'm just desperate for something to be different, because this is stupid, for lack of a better term. It's just, it's just, it's just stupid. Like this is not something that, you know, we should have as a regular feature of our society. And it is.

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Nancy Kislin 08:52

When you say desperate, are you meaning hopeless? Is there a sense of hopelessness in that?

K

Kelly Sampson 08:59

Um, I don't know if that, I think urgency is more the term of just like, it's an emergency, we need to do something. And I think that's why it feels desperate, because with a lot of other, there are things where you can quickly you know, get something done and a lot of other parts of life, like if you're hungry, you can get a snack, or I should say, I'm privileged enough that if I'm hungry, I can feed myself. And with this, there's sort of this, I don't want it to take time I don't want it to be to be a process, I just want it to be different. So I think that's where I'm at.

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Steve Albrecht 09:33

You know, it's crushing to me from a lot of levels. One is, besides the obvious loss of life, is this the sense that this perpetrator, and I do believe in the no notoriety piece that you probably, you probably all discussed before. I do believe in that. This perpetrator has changed the dynamics in this little town for the next 15 years. On the anniversary of this event, and you know, Robert, you know from your involvement and your event that anniversary comes back around again and re-victimizes everybody all over again, not that it's not useful to have memorialization. But this perpetrator, and I believe in my heart that they know they're doing this thing, they know they're creating this legacy of pain for a long time. I find that disturbing. And I find the usual sort of media's focus on the search for motive. And in my work, I and I, my colleagues believe this as well. Motive is a secondary issue for us, stopping the perpetrator is the primary one. That's why we're all doing the work that we're doing. The motive is a broken heart, the motive is I was bullied in school. The motive is terrorism. The motive is fanatical religious beliefs. The motive is you fired me, I can't fix motive, but I can interrupt the opportunity. And I think where we struggle is these targets are so difficult to protect unless we make a national change in how we do it. And the parallel I always hear about is the Israeli model, which is an armed cop or an armed soldier or an armed security guard in front of every school in Israel. Well, we have 90 something thousand schools in United States, is that feasible or possible? How do we vet all those people that are doing these things and I, I hear the folks that say, you know, I want to get my gun and stand in front of the school, I get all that emotionality. But it's not that easy, as you all know. So I struggle with the idea that, you know,

how much of this is a copycat from other things, how much of this kid's decision making was, I want to, I want to create a negative legacy, the most powerful way that I can refer the next decade or so it's, it's heartbreaking.

R

Robert Schentrup 11:27

For me, as a survivor, especially as a survivor of gun violence, from an incident of violence that was a school shooting, yesterday, had a larger impact on me than other types of incidents that I frequently come in contact with. But it took me a while to really feel that impact. I, for a number of hours, all I really felt was just an overwhelming feeling of numbness, really to it all. And the familiar cynicism that is often floating around in my brain was creeping back up. Then, so I initially didn't really feel a whole lot anything other than exasperation. And the fact that this is currently completely inevitable, right? That is not a question of if it's a question of when, and that it doesn't have to be this way. It is not this way, in every other industrialized country. If it ever did happen in another industrialized country, they did something swiftly and immediately to take action, and that I knew that would not happen. And so that exasperation for me, last night really turned into anger. Anger, that, it seems like no matter what happens, how heinous, how terrible, that there is a subset of politicians that will continue to refuse to do anything. And so it is an exasperation at the fact that it, it feels like, I understand a problem. And I recognize a problem that other people just don't think exists. And it is an exasperation, and feeling like, you are starting to lose it. Because why are you the only one that thinks this is a problem? Right? Why don't other people seem to be acting with urgency? Why don't other people seem to be taking it seriously when you know that it is. And so when Kelly talks about desperation, that is something that I absolutely connect with. Desperation for everyone to see and feel this loss in the way that I do. And to have it connect with them and the way that it connected with me, but there's a push to fucking do something. And a desperation that the fact that it just can't seem to happen. However, in this work, I know that it can happen, right? We have seen 1000s, hundreds of 1000s of millions of people take action, after incidents of gun violence. And it is heartening to see folks become animated, become angry, understand that I am not alone in those feelings. But a lot of people feel that way. And for me, watching the statement from Coach Steve Kerr that has really been making the rounds on social media was something that I deeply connected with. That exasperation, that frustration, that anger, that desperation that we could all feel from Coach Kerr really resonated with the emotions that I felt. Then so, you know, I think it's easy, you know, in the aftermath of events like the school shooting that happened to Texas yesterday, to become very cynical to say, you know, this, nothing is going to change. But we know the solutions to the epidemic of gun violence. Every other industrialized country does not have this problem. We are unique in having 45,000 people killed every single year due to guns. And there is something that we can do to change it. It's just all about having the political willpower to make it into tangible law. And so that is, you know, really what I'm thinking about right now, which is how can we make this time different? And how can we make something happen?



JJ Janflone 15:15

And I think the thing for me is that a lot of times these like "not solutions" get proposed and push more like, oh, if there's more door locks, or if there's more security guards, or, you know, if we just do more lockdown drills. And it puts the placement on teens, and I and I wonder, even

like, Nancy, you would know better than anyone like what sort of pressure this puts even on kids?

N

Nancy Kislin 15:37

I don't know, Steve, if you talk about that, but I don't know enough to speak like an expert about what happened in Texas yesterday. But there was a guard there with a gun. So what the dialogue that I was hearing today as well, he was ungunned, is that the correct phrase they're using? And that stopped me in my tracks to think, oh, my gosh, now we're talking about more powerful guns are needed now in front of schools with children? Aren't we missing the point? Isn't this ridiculous?

S

Steve Albrecht 16:15

I think the parallel that you draw there, Nancy is I'm reminded of one of my clients said can you do school violence or workplace violence, school violence training for the school district and, and so we were talking and they said, here's a photograph of the little Kevlar blankets we use for the preschoolers in the kindergarten, I was crushed. I was like, we do what? We give, we give five year olds little Kevlar blankets to hide behind. I mean, you know, I'm almost 60 years old. And to think that this stuff did not exist when I was in high school. I mean, the concept just did not exist when I was in high school. And I go, where did we flip a switch? Was it Columbine? Where do we flip the switch in this country where this became an acceptable issue? And I have to put some of it onto social media, which, which some of these perpetrators lionize each other. And they rally around what these these people have done and their negative work is somehow honored. It's like, you know, like white supremacists and Hitler, why did they? Why do they continue to lionize these perpetrators that have done these things? And so, I mean, we're talking about such and you all know this, it's such a deep dive into family dynamics and how people were raised and what their, what their exposure is to, you know, guns and what their exposure is to using violence as a problem solving tool. And I read, you know, as much of the Washington Post piece about this kid's life, and it sounds pretty disturbing. But I mean, you know, I didn't have the best childhood either. And I know lots of other people who were bullied that didn't do what this kid did. And so I'm baffled.

R

Robert Schentrup 17:41

Really thinking about my own background, obviously, there's a lot of details that have come out since then, about the shooters background and what led him to take the life of my sister and 17 others. And that particular incident, you know, there was a myriad of ways in which, there was a cascade, well, there's basically a cascading failure, part of which was the easy access to a gun, that led to the shooter wanting to take violence and then having the means in which to act violently. And so that's the really big thing that sets America apart from other countries, is that there are folks who suffer from mental illness in every other country, there are folks who have racist and hateful ideologies in every other country. But it is only in America, that we give them such easy access to a tool, like a firearm that can be then used to take these violent ideas, and to take it out and to kill others, right. If we remove the firearm from the equation and remove the easy access to a firearm from the equation, this situation looks a lot different, right? It stays in the chat rooms, and it doesn't go into our schools, it doesn't go into our communities. And so

that is the one really important thing to remember when we're having this conversation is that these incidents don't kill others without easy access to a way in which to do that. And, Steve, I know that you have, in your work, mentioned that there are many, many different things that you can look at and try to understand the Threat Assessment portfolio, but it is not possible to catch every single person.

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Steve Albrecht 19:22

So Robert, your critics would say look at Japan and China where we've had workplace and school violence incidents involving knives that have you know, killed dozens. People armed with swords and whatnot and then look at I'm not arguing with you. I'm saying this is the devil's advocate perspective, which is look at Europe where they use cars, and they run over people as we do here, unfortunately, as well. So I take your point on the easy access. It disturbs me that an 18 year old kid, his first thought on his birthday is to go by two firearms. I mean, my first thought when I was 18, is wow! I'm 18 let's you know, let me see if I can sneak a beer past my parents and have some birthday cake. But this kid's first thought was, I'm gonna go buy two, you know, assault weapons on his birthday. What's the plan from that point forward? It's, there's a fracture. And we all know this. I mean, there's a fracture in how these kids are raised, where their solution to violence that they have seen is to commit their own violence. And so, you know, that's the part that I'm struggling with. I looked at this kid's background, and I know lots of other kids that had horrible backgrounds that grew up to be pretty good adults.



JJ Janflone 20:28

Well, and I'll just say, as someone who has taught overseas, yes, there there are attacks actually, you know, yes, outside the US, there are knife attacks. And there are, you know, folks that people cars and things of that nature, and like that's awful, right, but you don't see mass stabbings where four or more people are stabbed every single day. And yet you do see mass shootings in the US practically every day, where four or more people are injured. And so I think we just have to acknowledge that, right? That guns are incredibly lethal, guns are incredibly dangerous. And we allow people incredibly lax access to them here in the US. And that has an impact. And I also wonder what all of y'all think about this, but I, one of the things that makes me sort of angry in the wake of these these attacks, is I feel like the onus or the burden gets switched on to survivors and victims or potential survivors and victims, right? That you have the burden as a student or a teacher, or a person going to a grocery store to protect yourself, as opposed to you as a person shouldn't need protection from gun violence. So there's just that that burden switch. And I wonder if you feel that that's present too?

K

Kelly Sampson 21:49

One of the first legal internships I ever had was actually in Australia, with Indigenous Australians. And it was really interesting, because not to get existential. I know, different people have different ideas about the nature of humans. But if you take the idea that humans have a potential for violence, regardless, that's not necessarily what we're trying to change. What we're trying to do is make it less deadly, less fatal, and give people an opportunity. And that's something I saw there where they have violence in Australia, but it doesn't look, the way that it looks here. You see people having a lot more opportunities to survive, a lot more

opportunities to get out of situations that are violent or resorting to things like fistfights, which aren't ideal, or knives, which aren't ideal, but at least, you know, it allows someone to escape in a way that things don't happen here.

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Steve Albrecht 22:36

I feel for the school administrators because Columbine, for me was this the national switch, you know, flip of the switch, as I said, and this stuff didn't happen when I graduated high school in 80 and this stuff didn't happen. We didn't talk about school shootings. And Columbine really put a lot of the onus of run hide fight and Alice and lockdown and shelter in place onto teachers and onto administrators. And so that became the fear of liability and the fear of litigation and the fear of not "doing enough", we switched over to this model, we're going to do lockdown drills all the time. And these kids, you know, it's ubiquitous, they sort of tramp into the school and go, oh, here comes another one. And they do it and they go half as you know, half heartedly through these drills, because the adults tell them to do that. Where did that become okay in our society that we have lockdown drills for active shooters? And it's just like, it's just part of the thing now. And so there's a thing that happens in our culture where people just go, eh what are you gonna do? That's just the way of the world that's where we are now with school shootings. And, and that's where we are with mass shootings. It's that stuff just happens. And we've spent our entire careers trying to figure out why and how to stop that stuff. But, but it's almost like a resignation that it's inevitable.

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Kelly Sampson 23:43

I just wanted to chime in to JJ's question about burden. I'm taking host privilege because one place that I see the burden coming through, and everything that everyone said this whole recording when we think about Buffalo, and Texas, and all the other shootings that come in, is, if you're a person going to the grocery store, most likely you're preoccupied about, okay, I'd eat the yellow onion, and I need to get, you know, this type of fish. And those are things that you're thinking about. And if you're going to school, you might be preoccupied on where you're going to sit in class or if you're going to trade something for lunch, or if you're a teacher making sure of the lesson plan, right? And no matter where you're talking about a grocery store or a stadium or a school, like if the people in power, the people that we've elected, we've given power, because part of what a government is supposed to be for is to ensure domestic tranquility and a well ordered society to keep us safe. And if we've elected people and they've decided that what they want to do with their power is basically kowtow to corporate gun lobby interest or not protect people. And I think that's part of where the burden is coming from that I see is that over and over again, I think we have a statistic 90% of Americans, for example, want expanded background checks. That's not the end all be all, we know, there's going to be a lot more things that need to happen, whether it's purposed, or whether it's, you know, making sure that we're regulating a source of weapons themselves. But that's one example of a place where all Americans have said, this is something that I want to do to protect myself, I'm gonna use my vote to elect politicians, and they're supposed to represent me. And this is my view, I want expanded background checks. And the people that we elect to do that basically say, I don't care what you want. And so this is a really ramble way of saying it. But I think part of where the urgency comes from this moment is so many times when there's a social issue, the thing that we tell Americans who are of age to vote is your responsibility, your burden, if you want social change is to go out and vote. And so we've been doing that. And in response, what we

seem to be getting back from our politicians is, your responsibility isn't just to go out and vote, it's to bring tactical gear to the grocery store. It's to give your child a Kevlar blanket, it's to make sure that when you go to the movies, you're thinking about how close you are to an exit. And I think that that's part of where some of the anger is. And some of the urgency is, is we're doing all that we can do. Do we really want to make six year olds, you know, have that burden rather than the, you know, 60 year old congressman who has power to actually be able to use his platform in a less traumatic way than a child, hey, hiding in a closet, to do something to protect people. And I think that that's a big part of this conversation. To your point about burdens and burden shifting.

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Nancy Kislin 26:47

I think that is so well said. And that ties in to JJ, your question, in terms of what are the kids saying, and what are kids feeling? And the children and the teams that I get to work with, they look at you all, me, us, we're failing them. We're failing this generation, and not to take away Steve, the your life's work, but it's still not enough. Like why, why then do I still have to hide in the classroom and be terrified to go to the bathroom. This year, I started working with a group of teens, because I really wanted to do a couple things that I'm passionate about. But one is that call to action to to motivate these kids to do something. And in that I get the privilege of sitting with 15 high school kids every week or two. And some of the stories that they shared with me, even though I have already had this, you know, unbelievable list of stories. With one story I can share with you right now is this young lady is now a sophomore in high school. It happened when she was in seventh grade. And she went into unbelievable detail about the day where she was when there was a lockdown. She knew it wasn't a typical lockdown drill. She was in gym class, there were a lot of kids in the one gym class, they, they were told to lock down but because it was the gymnasium, there was nowhere to hide. And all of a sudden one of the teachers was getting really nervous and instructed somehow they were instructed to start breaking up the wooden chairs, to use the legs and parts of the seats and back as weapons. And she had they had the mining lab and she said she happened to be closest to the exit door. And this little seventh grade boy walks up to her with a broken leg from a chair. I can say this without crying and said here, you better take this leg because you're closer to the door and you're going to need it. And then it turned out that there were some situation outside and they needed the school to be in lockdown. But the fact that she told the story how many years later in our safe space, and was crying and these other kids, boys and girls, were crying. It just brought home how many incidences there are. I'm sure she's not unique. I'm sure there's millions of stories, various versions of kids being scared in school. And it comes back to where we started today is all of this could be so different if we just had all the things that we all agree on.

K

Kelly Sampson 29:52

One of the things that we see come up and I know Nancy, this comes up in your work, is the way that gun violence itself can be a detriment to mental health and the ways that being around gun violence, being a victim of gun violence, being in fear of gun violence can actually have a detrimental effect on mental health, even without bullets. And so, a question, starting with Nancy, but then opening up to everyone is, given that we live in this country where there's so much gun violence, whether it's sorts of shootings that we talked about earlier, or suicide, or an unintentional shootings, what are some things that we can do to talk to some of the children

in our lives or survivors in our lives? Or even advocates who are children and survivors? What are some of the things that that we can share to talk about? And starting with you, Nancy because this is a lot of what you do, but then obviously, opening up to Robert and Steve, and your experiences as well.

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Nancy Kislin 30:49

Thanks, Kelly. Part of your question, and I don't pretend to have all the answers. I just know sort of how I navigate through these conversations. And one is to even have any part of the dialogue we all are having, I feel so privileged to be part of this conversation. Because I find so many people are so concerned, and are like, I don't want to go there. If we talk. It's like the big taboo, don't talk about gun violence. It doesn't happen in our bubble, you know, might happen over there across the street, but it doesn't, doesn't happen over here. And even so, I sort of have my talking points, and I start with how are you doing? Right? How are you doing? Parent, teacher, grandparent caregiver, and start and create that space. Even if it's only five minutes or two minutes. And check in with self; how's my self care doing? How do I feel about this creating space for that, so that before you hopefully engage and enter into this space with the child? Is you're not up here, right? You're not, "Oh my god, I can't believe this. I'm so afraid you're gonna die in school." Like, we've all heard parents, kids have said to me that my mom says that every morning, I hope you don't die today in school. And not the best, not the most helpful thing. So kind of do that self check. And then how can you have that conversation? And you're probably not going to have the whole conversation just like most parents, hopefully don't have their sex talk with their kids all in one day. Like, okay, we talked about it, it's 10 minutes, I told them about sex. You know, we're done talking about that. No, this is the world we live in. This is the world that the children are being raised in. And it's sad. But how do you have those what I call secret conversations. Secret conversations, because you need to show up, you need to be present, you need to put your phone down, make eye contact, we can guide them through, you know how to have open ended conversations, and listen, and ask questions. Because when I interviewed, I interviewed hundreds of kids and their parents for my research, the kids have so much to say. So, you know, the community right down the street for me, they were in lockdown today, for it seems like an hour and a half. So when we all jump off, I already have calls in where I want to interview parents and kids, I want to get that fresh reaction. And not just for my own research, but because I think if I can help train more parents to have that conversation with their kids right now, the chance of those kids being traumatized. Hopefully it goes down. But the last point is, how do we create a space for kids to feel hopeful? And I believe one of the most fundamental ways we all heal and we all know this because of who we are and work we do, is we have to have what's her call to action? So if a parent, my girls, who are still in the house, and I'll still do it with them tonight is this is really upsetting. And we'll share and we'll talk. And then what are you going to do about it? That was one of the biggest lines I used all the time.



JJ Janflone 34:19

Well, and acknowledging that this harms a whole community. It's unfortunately like, it's not just the people who are shot, right? It's everyone who works at that school or at the grocery store. Like it's everyone in that community. And it's first responders too, right. Like people who

entered into that school; EMTs, doctors who treated them later. Like this is, I can't imagine what it's like to see that sort of, you know, absolute, I mean, I'll call it what it is like absolute carnage.

S

Steve Albrecht 34:45

For some of them it's going to be career ending, it will be career ending. So I've talked to people that were at Sandy Hook, I mean, the lead paramedic for the Columbine response killed himself. So I mean, these are these are career ending situations. For people where you stand in a crime scene, where there are 14 little dead kids or 19, or whatever the the number is in any of these scenes. And when you go where adults are and cell phones are pinging, on these people's dead bodies, because families are looking for them and are calling and calling and calling where they are, those are career ending responses for law enforcement, paramedics, coroners. You know, we had the biggest mass shooting in the history of the United States was in 1984, in San Diego. A mass murder at the McDonald's that killed 26 people. And there were coroners and cops and paramedics and people that retired out of that incident. I don't think it's unusual to see the same thing at Columbine, same thing that happened in Parkland, same thing that happened in this case yesterday, where people say that this is no longer a career I can do as a first responder.

N

Nancy Kislin 35:47

So how do we help people not get knocked about this topic? And I kinda think of my top, my top five or six tips. And one is educate yourself. Now more than ever, if I was in front of a room, and I could see all the parents and grandparents out there, I want you to find out what are the policies in your school? What are the laws in your state? If parents haven't been, because I know lots of times parents are volunteering, lunch library, something like that. Talk, sit with your kids, you're driving, carpool, ask a question like, hey, has there been a lockdown drill recently? Ask those questions. Keep yourself under control, ask the open ended question and then be silent. Hearing those stories, I hope that empowers parents to oh my goodness, you know, from the mouths of babes. The third thing, I guess I would say is go to a school board meeting, right. Find out who is making these decisions? Have they hired an expert like Steve, or is it a local volunteer who decided he's an expert on school violence and is making decisions? Again, educate educate educate, and the only way we can make this change happen is by parents and caregivers being educated to what's actually happening to children.

S

Steve Albrecht 37:21

I used to do robbery prevention training for a large convenience store chain in California. And what we said was, if you have a robbery, you have a duty to care for the employees that were there. If there were vendors that were there. And guess what if there were customers that were there as well, we provide psychological services, debriefing services to anybody. And Kelly to your point, it's sort of a concentric circle of victimhood. It starts with a person that was robbed, or shot, and goes outward to the to the community. And so if you're in that convenience store, and you were getting a cup of coffee, and you witnessed what happened, you're just as eligible for a counseling process as the person who was at the point of a gun. I don't think a lot of organizations in the private sector think about that. But I'm a huge component, having done

several Masti briefings and demobilization and defusing for people. I think, at school districts, I mean, that's the first thing they have to do is once the energy and the pain and the tears have died down, they gotta go back and say we have a long term obligation to mental health care to our community, parents, teachers, community, members, cops, whoever happens to be.

R

Robert Schentrup 38:20

So I, I think, you know, how can we stop ourselves from really becoming numb and you know, in other words desensitized to the violence that we hear and see about all the time, especially when nothing changes. I mean, that's hard to do. And all I can really offer is what I personally do. And for me as a survivor of gun violence, right? It's reminding myself of why I'm here, right, who I have lost. But I also make sure that I am working to understand those who we've lost in any instance. Right, who were the children and the teachers that died at the Texas Elementary School, who were the elders that died at the Buffalo tops, grocery store, shooting, who are the people that die every day in our communities, that barely scratched the news. Right, they get buried among the other things that the media decides to focus on. And so letting ourselves sit with their memories, who they were, understanding that this is a life that was taken from us. The grounding ourselves in that and letting ourselves feel the emotion that those people are no longer with us. helps us get that feeling back then. So I would say to a strategy to avoid feeling numb is by letting yourself feel emotions around those that we have lost by intentionally working to understand their stories. And by grounding that within the work that you do.



JJ Janflone 40:02

Well, and then for folks who are sitting here and going, I'm not going to be apathetic, I'm not going to be a bystander in this, I'm going to be a participant, you know, what are some things that they can do today, right now, immediately after listening this to this, to get involved?

R

Robert Schentrup 40:19

So JJ, there are three main things that folks can do to get engaged. And so one of them is around the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. For those who are unfamiliar, like I was, up until very recently, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms is the only federal agency that regulates those who sell guns. And so the Bureau has not had an acting director since 2015. And why that is really bad is because they're not able to spin up any new programs to do anything new, all they're able to do is just keep functioning at the bare minimum level, to keep everything from falling apart, because they have no one directing them on what they should do other than that. And so right now, there is a hearing process to appoint someone to run the ATF. So we need to confirm an ATF director. And in order for that to happen, we need folks to call their senators, because this is something that happens in the Senate, and tell them that they need to confirm a director for the ATF so that we can make sure those who sell firearms are being properly regulated. So that's the first thing. The second thing is that majority leader Schumer in the Senate as well announced that they will be taking votes on the expanded background checks bill that passed the House and that this is something we need all of our senators to vote yes on. We have been asking for this since the mid 90s. It was too late, then it's way too late now. This is something that should have been done decades ago, and yet hasn't. And so it is well past time that this becomes law. And so when you're calling your

senator and saying we need to confirm an ATF director, we also want you to say, hey, we need to make sure that we're passing expanded background checks and making sure that every single gun sale goes through a background check before it's sold to someone. And so the third thing that you can do is educate yourself about a Supreme Court case that's happening right now being heard in front of the court, around concealed carry. And Brady has a Amicus briefing in the case. And we want folks to know that a decision could come any day now. And with the recent ruling around Roe versus Wade, that the court, the draft opinion that was leaked, we are expecting this ruling to be quite bad. And so it's important to make sure that we are talking about this incoming decision, that we are letting folks that we know know that this decision is coming soon. And that we are discussing what it looks like. And so you're gonna say, Robert, this is great. I want to do those three things, where do I find out how to do it. And so how you do that is by going to bradyunited.org. And on our website, you will see a join us form, you put in some quick information, you click and click sign up. And then you will get sent all of this information in an email right after.



JJ Janflone 43:18

Well, and links to all of that will be in the description of this episode, along with resources that Nancy and Steve you both brought up that I think are going to be so helpful to folks who are still kind of reeling, understandably, from what's happened. Thank you all so much for being here and so much for sharing with us today.



JJ Janflone 43:38

I don't think I can give better calls to action than our guests just did. But I do want to make sure that all of our listeners know that they also have a space to share their own feelings and thoughts and to engage with us a little bit you know, we are here for you. Right if you have thoughts or comments or concerns or you just want to have a space to vent, please feel free to contact the podcast we have our text and phone line at 480-744-3452.



Kelly Sampson 44:07

And if you want to get involved with Brady directly, you can text the word Brady 2877877 and get involved today.



JJ Janflone 44:16

Hey want to share with the podcast? Let's just now get in touch with us here at Red, Blue and Brady via phone or text message. Simply call or text us at 480-744-3452 with your thoughts, questions, concerns, ideas, whatever, Kelly and I are standing by.



Kelly Sampson 44:34

Thanks for listening. As always Brady's life saving work in Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible thanks to you. For more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence, please like and subscribe to the

or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence. Please like and subscribe to the podcast. Get in touch with us at Brady united.org or on social @Bradybuzz. Be brave and remember, take action not sides.