

Media Relations

December 5, 2013

UNH Experts Available to Discuss School Violence and Safety Issues

DURHAM, N.H. – University of New Hampshire faculty experts on school violence and safety issues are available to discuss security responses to school violence and what teachers, police and parents can do to help prevent school violence. Saturday, Dec. 14, 2013, is the one-year anniversary of the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.

Security Responses to Violence in Our Schools

Todd DeMitchell, professor of education and justice studies

todd.demitchell@unh.edu

603-862-5043

Columbine and Sandy Hook are two names that need no further description for us to know that we are talking about a school massacre. Historically, we have considered schools to be among the safest places in our society. But our confidence level in that notion has been shaken by the episodes we've seen during recent years. As a result of the violence that has occurred and the concern of more violence, schools have been provoked to respond with greater security and safety measures than ever before. Schools have long had discipline policies for scuffles and disruptions, but now they have implemented security policies, like cockpits in airplanes, in an attempt to harden the school site and protect those within from breaches to the schoolhouse gate. DeMitchell can discuss school responses to violence and how policies to protect against violence from the outside impact the school environment inside.

DeMitchell completed his post-doctorate at Harvard University in school law and policy, and has published five books on school law and labor relations in education plus more than 150 book chapters, law review articles, peer reviewed journal articles, professional education articles, and case and policy commentaries. Prior to joining the faculty at UNH, he spent 18 years as a teacher, principal, and superintendent in the California public schools.

Interventions: What Educators, Counselors, Law Enforcement, and Parents Can Do

Ellen Cohn, professor of psychology and coordinator of the UNH Justice Studies Program

ellen.cohn@unh.edu

603-862-3197 (Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday)

603-862-5186 (Tuesday and Friday)

While it is impossible to predict if or when a violent incident will affect the lives of children and adolescents, whether it is in a school setting or a public place, there are preventative actions that educators, counselors, law enforcement professionals, and parents can take that will help them identify potentially violent youth before a violent situation occurs, as well as interventions that will help children or youth who may become victims of a violent incident. Cohn can discuss prevention and intervention from both points of view—for youth who may become violent and for youth who may become victims of violence.

As a social psychologist, Cohn has done extensive research on how people develop attitudes toward the law and decide to engage in rule-violating behavior. Currently she is working on a National Science Foundation-funded New Hampshire Youth Study, a seven-year longitudinal study of adolescents and the predictors of

delinquency. She has written extensively on issues related to violence and legal socialization.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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Media Contact: [Lori Wright](#) | 603-862-0574 | UNH Media Relations | [@unhnews](#) | [@unhsocialsci](#)

UNH Experts available for comment:

- [Todd DeMitchell](#)

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