Psychology of Violence and Intimidation

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

• Introduce the reader to the statistical and research data on violent crime.
• Assess the psychological effects of violent media and violent video games on aggressive behavior.
• Discuss threat assessment and school violence.
• Examine the research and clinical data on criminal homicide, including multiple murder and serial killers.
• Review the psychological factors involved in workplace violence.
• Review the demographic and psychological aspects involved in hate and bias crimes.
• Review the psychological trauma and potential violence of being stalked.
• Cover some of the key aspects of bullying.

Violence both terrifies and fascinates us. Although we are concerned about perceived increases in violent crime rates and fearful of becoming victims of violence, we also support images and depictions of violent activity in the entertainment media and often demand such details in the news media. Interestingly, violence is somewhat difficult to define, precisely because it has so many meanings and conjures up such a broad spectrum of images (G. Newman, 1979). Moreover, it occurs in many situations and under a wide variety of conditions, and there are numerous explanations for why it occurs.

Violence is commonly defined as physical force exerted for the purpose of inflicting injury, pain, discomfort, or abuse on a person or persons or for the purpose of damaging or destroying property. Such physical force, however, may be condoned by society. We allow police to use reasonable force against an individual resisting arrest, a football player to tackle his opponent, a soldier to kill his or her enemy, and crime victims to protect themselves from serious bodily harm. It is the violence committed without justification that we are concerned with in this chapter, specifically criminal violence.
It should be noted that violence and aggression are not interchangeable terms. Whereas violence involves physical force, aggression may or may not involve such force. Aggression can be defined as behavior perpetrated or attempted with the intention of harming another individual (or group of individuals) physically or psychologically. A protester who blocks someone's entry into a business that allegedly discriminates against a racial or ethnic group is performing an aggressive act, not a violent act. Even though we may agree with the protester's action as a matter of principle, it is still aggressive. Likewise, refusing to speak to someone who has insulted you in the past is an aggressive act, not a violent act. It would qualify as what psychologists call “passive aggression.” Thus, all violent behavior is aggressive, but not all aggressive behavior is violent. Although the concept of aggression has been studied extensively by psychologists, we are concerned primarily in this chapter with the subset that is violent behavior. Nevertheless, nonviolent aggression will also have its place, particularly when we discuss crimes of intimidation.

Two increasingly interconnected streams of research on violence have emerged in recent years. One research stream has examined the many characteristics and demographics of the individual violent offender; the other has examined the immediate contexts and environments in which violence most often occurs (Hawkins, 2003). Studies focusing in the former have examined the social, psychological, and biological factors in interpersonal offending. Studies on the latter tradition have examined family, peer, local community, and neighborhood effects in varying levels of violence. Each area of research has recognized the importance of the other. That is, researchers acknowledge that both individual factors and environmental influences must be taken into account in their efforts to understand violence. Research has shown, for example, that the relationships among racial/ethnic composition; feelings of anger, resentment, and frustration; and homicide rates are contingent—at least in part—on the level of economic deprivation, joblessness, drug use, and number of gangs within a given community (C. C. Johnson & Chanhatasilpa, 2003).

Forensic psychologists frequently encounter violence—as well as aggression in general—sometimes even on a daily basis. Their clients may threaten to harm others. They may be asked to assess the risk of violence in a given individual. They may themselves be placed at risk of violence. In a court setting, they may be asked to testify about the effects of violence on a victim of a crime or a plaintiff in a civil suit. Therefore, an understanding of the prevalence, causes, and effects of violence is critical for forensic psychologists.

We will begin this chapter with data on violent crime, including information on gender and race/ethnic differences. This will be followed by a discussion of theoretical perspectives on violence offered by research psychologists. Efforts to prevent violence from occurring are covered in a section on threat assessment, which is different from the risk assessment enterprise discussed in previous chapters. Closely related to threat assessment is the topic of school violence, of intense interest to mental health practitioners as well as the public in general. We will then focus on the specific violent crimes of homicide and workplace violence. The chapter ends with a discussion of crimes of intimidation, which represent a form of aggression that may or may not result in violence but produce fear in the victims.

**UCR Data on Violent Crime**

In the Uniform Crime Reports, as discussed in the previous chapter, the four violent crimes are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Together, reports of these crimes comprise the violent crime rate provided annually to the public (see Figure 8.1 for trends in violent crime). In addition, arrest data on the above crimes as well as simple assault are also provided. According to the UCR (FBI, 2013a), aggravated assault accounted for the largest share of violent crimes known to police (approximately 76%) in 2012, and murder accounted for the smallest share (approximately 2%) (see Figure 8.2). Personal weapons, such as hands, fists, and feet, were used in 5.3% of the homicides committed in 2012; firearms in 69.4%; and knives or cutting instruments in 12.5% of the incidents. Other dangerous weapons were used in the remaining 12.9% of the offenses.

Gun deaths in the United States are a disturbing reality that remains unaddressed by meaningful legislation on gun safety and control. Every year, approximately 31,000 deaths occur, and there are 78,000 nonfatal injuries attributed to guns (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013). Although not all of the deaths are the result of criminal offenses—some are accidental deaths or shootings, suicides or attempted suicides, or...
instances of self-defense—the vast majority represent criminal activity. We should note that firearms-related homicides declined 39% between 1993 and 2011, and nonfatalfirearm crimes declined 69% during the same period (Planty & Truman, 2013). However, the majority of these declines occurred between 1993 and 2002. The number of firearm homicides increased between 1999 and 2006. According to a recent government report, although the number of firearms crimes has declined over time, the percentage of all violence involving a firearm has not changed substantively. In 1993, an estimated 9% of all violence was committed with a firearm; in 2011, the figure was 8% (Planty & Truman, 2013). Handguns account for the greatest majority of both fatal and nonfatal incidents—70% of all homicides and just under 10% of all nonfatal violent crime.

Clearly, firearms-related crime remains a huge problem in the United States. In 2014, an APA task force on the prediction and prevention of gun violence issued a number of policy statements based on the available scientific literature on gun violence (see Focus 8.1).

In 2012, an estimated 47% of the violent crimes and 19% of property crimes were cleared by arrest or some other means. During that same year, the clearance (or solved) rate for murder was 62%. The clearance rates for aggravated assault, forcible rape, and robbery were 56%, 40%, and 28%, respectively.

The geography of violence is largely distributed across two primary locations—the home and the street. Additional locations—e.g., schools, bars, places of work—comprise smaller percentages of violence. Until recently, much of the emphasis on stopping violent crimes has been directed at the more visible street crimes and less at violence within the home. Street crimes are far more likely to come to the attention of police and thus more likely to be represented in official statistics. However, women and children are more likely to be harmed by violence in their homes and by people they know than by strangers on the street. Thus, both researchers and law enforcement officials have given increasing attention to studying, preventing, and responding to this category of violent crime. Workplace and school violence also are drawing more attention, as we discuss later in this chapter.

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**Figure 8.1** Five-Year Trend in Violent Crime

![Five-Year Trend in Violent Crime](image)

*Source: FBI (2013a).*
Gender, Race, and Ethnic Differences in Criminal Violence

UCR data consistently indicate that males account for 87 to 90% of total arrests for violent crimes in any given year. Males account for about 90% of the annual arrests for murder (FBI, 2013a). This 9:1 ratio is characteristic of other countries as well. Arrest rates for aggravated assault are slightly different, with 80% male and 20% female. Although women's violent crime rate increased faster than the men's rate for a brief period in the mid-1990s, women continue to be far underrepresented in the violent crime statistics. The two dominant explanations for the gender discrepancies in violent offending are (1) socialization factors (the fact that women are less likely than men to be encouraged to be violent) and (2) biological factors (with some researchers linking the male hormone testosterone to aggression).

FOCUS 8.1. EXPERT REPORT ON GUN VIOLENCE

In December 2013, the APA released a policy report on gun violence, prepared by a panel of experts including clinicians; professors of psychology, public health, pediatrics, and public policy; and representatives from private and public foundations. The complete report is available at http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/gun-violence-prevention.aspx.

*Source:* FBI (2013a).
Women also are said to have less opportunity to commit the violent street crimes that come to the attention of police. Thus, some theorists have suggested that violence perpetrated by women may go undetected and unreported because it is more likely to occur in the privacy of the home. Even if this were so, it would be unlikely to narrow the gender gap in violent offending because much male violence in the home also goes undetected and unreported. Specifically with respect to violence associated with guns, though the vast majority of boys and men do not perpetrate it, approximately 90% that occurs is perpetrated by males. As noted in the APA panel report highlighted above, males are often encouraged to adhere to stereotypical masculinity, which includes risk taking, use of aggression, and toughness.

Although gender differences in violent offending have garnered some interest, it is racial and ethnic differences that have produced the most commentary. Race differences in crime and violence remain emotionally and politically charged, divisive topics in the United States and in many other societies around the world (Hawkins, 2003). National surveys conducted in the United States, for example, suggest that a majority of white respondents believe blacks and Latinos are more prone (innately and culturally) to violence than whites or Asians (Bobo & Kluegel, 1997; Unnever & Cullen, 2012). These beliefs demonstrate the continual existence of racial stereotypes as misguided explanations of criminal violence in this country.

Following are some high points and recommendations of the report, adapted from its summary:

- No single profile can reliably predict who will use a gun in a violent act.
- Prevention is most effective at the community level, when the community is engaged in collective problem solving.
- Males in particular face gendered expectations that emphasize self-sufficiency, toughness, and violence. Knowledge of developmental psychologists must be used to change these expectations.
- Training police in crisis intervention and training community members in mental health first aid has shown success; more such community programs should be considered.
- Public health messaging campaigns on safe gun storage are needed.
- Depressed individuals or those with severe mental illness are more likely to commit suicide with a gun than to commit homicide with a gun.
- Most mentally ill individuals are not dangerous, but for those at risk for violence, mental health treatment can often prevent gun violence; at present, access to mental health services in the United States is woefully inadequate.
- Firearms prohibitions for high-risk groups have been shown to reduce violence. High-risk groups include domestic violence offenders, persons convicted of violent misdemeanor crimes, and those with mental illness who have been adjudicated as being a threat to themselves or others.
- Threat assessment teams in schools, the workplace, and government agencies are a crucial component in preventing violence and intervening to assist a person posing a threat of violence or self-harm.
- Additional policies to reduce gun violence include licensing of handgun purchases, background-check requirements for all gun sales, and close oversight of retail gun sellers.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What would you add to the above list? Is any important context or policy missing?
2. Comment on the above points from the perspective of (a) a mental health professional, (b) a law enforcement officer, (c) a person who says he owns guns primarily for sport, and (d) a person who says she owns a gun primarily for protection.
Official crime data can be partly blamed for perpetrating these stereotypes. According to these data, African Americans in the United States are involved in criminal homicide and other forms of violence at a rate that far exceeds their numbers in the general population. For example, although African Americans make up about 13.5% of the U.S. population, they accounted for more than 39% of all arrests for violent crimes in 2012 (FBI, 2013a). These figures reflect social inequalities such as lack of employment and educational opportunities, racial oppression in its many forms, discriminatory treatment at the hands of the criminal justice system, and law enforcement practices in geographical areas where many African Americans reside. It is extremely important to emphasize that race or ethnic differences in violent crime are not due to genetic or biological factors, such as racial differences in innate aggressive traits. As we shall see shortly, researchers have explored and sometimes uncovered links between biology and aggression, but these links are not racially or ethnically related.

Latinos are now the largest ethnic minority group in the United States. The Latino population in the United States more than doubled between 1980 and 2000 and is likely to continue increasing. U.S. Census 2010 estimates projected 9 births for every 1 death among Latinos, whereas for whites, the ratio was 1:1. The estimated Latino population, representing 15.5% of the U.S. population, currently exceeds slightly the African American population (Cruz, 2010).

Preliminary data suggest that the Latino violence rate falls significantly below the rates found for economically deprived African Americans and Caucasians (Martinez, 2002; Reidel, 2003). Martinez attributes these findings partly to the fact that Latinos generally have high rates of labor force participation—despite being traditionally characterized as the working poor—and have close and highly supportive ties to the local community and family. Although there are many influences that play a role, this labor-relationship pattern probably reduces violent crime involvement and criminal activity in general. However, Shihadeh and Barranco (2010) assert that it is a mistake to characterize Latino communities as one undifferentiated group, as previous research has done. They point out that some Latino communities have changed in recent years and consequently are more likely to show higher rates of violent crime. For example, years ago Latino migrants were more likely to settle in large Latino communities where they were protected by a shell of common culture and language. Today, Latino migrants are more likely to venture into new, less established communities that are more isolated from their culture and language. This recent shift in migration patterns may lead to higher rates of crime and violence among some sectors of the Latino population. Still, much more research needs to be undertaken before meaningful conclusions about the relationship between violence and Latino ethnicity can be advanced.

Interestingly, research findings from industrialized nations across the globe do not lend themselves to simple explanations for the different rates of violence among groups, cultures, or subcultures. “Group differences in rates of crime and violence observed in those areas of the world do not appear to be easily explained by traditional notions of minority versus majority, white versus nonwhite, and possibly economically disadvantaged versus advantaged” (Hawkins, 2003, p. xxiii).

Furthermore, we must be careful not to focus exclusively on any one racial or ethnic group, to the exclusion of others. Although great attention has been paid to the street crimes of African American males, the research microscope has ignored other groups. Researchers do not generally focus on whites as a separate group, despite the fact that violence among whites occurs regularly. Researchers do filter out other racial and ethnic groups, however. There is an indication, for example, that intimate partner and family violence may be far more prevalent among Asian Americans than among other ethnic groups. In the National Violence Against Women Survey, 25% of Asian women indicated they had been physically or sexually assaulted by family members or intimates (M. Lee, 2002). Overall, many puzzles remain in any attempts to explain the ethnic and racial distribution of violence and its changes over time (Hawkins, 2003). In addressing that distribution, participation of whites should not be ignored.

In addition, more research needs to be conducted across a variety of settings and environments. Using simple categories such as black, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Middle Eastern, and white does not truly capture the multiethnic mixture characteristics of communities across the nation. Cultures and subcultures are complex and psychologically rich, and meaningful research investigations on ethnic/minority differences in violence require a deep appreciation of this complexity.
Practicing forensic psychologists must become highly knowledgeable about the beliefs, attitudes, values, traditions, and expected behaviors of each ethnic or racial group or subculture with which they interact if they are to be effective and helpful to offenders and their victims. Ethnocentrism, or viewing others strictly through one's own cultural perspectives, often encourages people—including mental health professionals—to form stereotypes and biases that limit their ability to assess and treat those from diverse backgrounds (Feindler, Rathus, & Silver, 2003).

**Theoretical Perspectives on Violence**

Criminal violence can be classified along several continuums. For example, one continuum can represent the amount of planning involved in the act. At one pole, the act is highly calculated and planned (cold-blooded), but at the other pole, the act can be characterized as highly impulsive and emotionally driven behavior with virtually no planning (e.g., crimes of passion). In psychological literature, violence may represent different forms of aggression, ranging from instrumental to reactive, with equal elements of both occurring at the middle sections of the continuum. Instrumental violence “occurs when the injury of an individual is secondary to the acquisition of some other external goal” (Woodworth & Porter, 2002, p. 437). The external goal may be money, status, security, or material goods. Reactive violence—also called expressive violence—refers to physical violence precipitated by a hostile and angry reaction to a perceived threat or dangerous situation. Reactive violence, therefore, “is often the impulsive and unthoughtful response to a provocation, real or imagined” (APA, 1996, p. 8). An angry person who “flies off the handle” and shoots a friend over a petty argument represents an obvious example. More often than not, the aggressor—once the emotions calm down—cannot believe what he or she did or understand how he or she could lose control to that level. In many cases, though, it is difficult to clearly differentiate whether the violence is instrumental or reactive—it often appears to include some mixture of both instrumental and reactive factors. Consequently, violent actions often fall in the middle ranges of the instrumental–reactive continuum, similar to what is found in the normal curve.

An interesting question emerges when we examine these two polar opposites on the violence continuum in reference to the criminal psychopaths discussed in Chapter 7: Are they more likely to commit instrumental or reactive forms of violence? Recall that psychopaths demonstrate a lack of empathy or remorse and have shallow emotions in general. However, they are also impulsive and highly reactive to provocative situations. Woodworth and Porter (2002) have initiated some research into this area by studying both psychopathic and non-psychopathic offenders who committed homicide. According to these researchers, psychopaths tend to engage in the more instrumental, goal-driven (e.g., to obtain money or drugs) homicides, whereas non-psychopathic offenders engage in predominately reactive, spontaneous violence (e.g., in the context of a heated argument). Psychopaths who murdered were primarily motivated to advance their own cause and exhibited little empathy or concern for their victims. Woodworth and Porter were surprised, though, at the overall level of instrumental violence characterizing all homicides, whether committed by psychopaths or non-psychopaths. The majority of the offenders did not simply “snap” and kill their victims in an uncontrollable emotional rage. The researchers suggest that future study should examine whether the results might generalize to other types of criminal violence, offenders, and subcultures.

**The Causes of Violence**

The causes of violence are multiple. The psychological literature usually divides these causes into four highly overlapping categories: (1) biological, (2) socialization, (3) cognitive, and (4) situational factors. It is important to stress that they are overlapping, because contemporary research increasingly takes a developmental perspective, as indicated in Chapter 7. Moreover, scholars from different perspectives, even from different disciplines, collaborate to study violence and other social problems. (See Perspective in which Dr. Jennifer Wareham discusses the importance of this collaboration.)
Biological Factors

The biological factors refer to the wide array of neurological, physiological, or chemical influences on aggression and violence. Recent advances in the neurosciences have revealed that biological factors, interacting with the social environment, may have some significant influences on child development. The exact nature of these influences remains largely unknown. Child development researchers have found links between aggression and brain damage resulting from a variety of environmental factors. These include toxic materials found in the environment (e.g., lead paint), traumatic head injury (e.g., as the result of child abuse or accident), dietary deficiencies (especially prenatal), alcohol and drug ingestion by the mother during critical fetal-development stages, and birth trauma. The best approach, of course, is to prevent these from occurring in the first place. Once the deficits do occur, attempts to remove or remedy the biological cause may include active biological treatment in the form of medication. However, equally important, a supportive and competent social environment has been found to neutralize or reduce the effects that these biological factors exert on any propensity toward violence.

Socialization Factors

Socialization factors refer to those processes through which a person learns patterns of thinking, behavior, and feeling from his or her early life experiences (APA, 1996). More specifically, according to the APA, “Scientists use the term socialization to describe the process by which a child learns the ‘scripts’ for specific social behavior, along with the rules, attitudes, values, and norms that guide interactions with others” (p. 3). Furthermore, children can learn as much from observing significant or admired others in their environment as from their own experiences. Considerable research indicates that aggressive, antisocial, and violent behaviors are often learned from significant others (including TV, movie, or fictional characters) and are held in reserve for response to specific social situations. This is a good argument for limiting young children’s exposure to violent media images, a topic that will be addressed shortly.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE . . .

Peer Collaboration in Graduate School and Beyond

Jennifer Wareham, PhD

One of the best pieces of advice I can offer college students, particularly those desiring to pursue a career in academics, is to foster relationships with those who complement you. While in graduate school, I was fortunate enough to establish a working relationship and rewarding friendship with a fellow student in my cohort. I had just finished my master’s degree and was in the first year of the doctoral program in criminology at the University of South Florida. Throughout college, up to that point, I was the introverted, loner type. I avoided study groups and involvement with my peers. My grades were consistently high, and I felt this validated my decision to remain independent from my graduate cohort. But that changed when my advisors suggested that I collaborate with a fellow student as I progressed through the doctoral program.

Perhaps suggest is an understatement. As a graduate student, it is generally a very good idea to follow the advice of your graduate advisors and mentors. Their advice is based on experience and knowledge.
that students tend to lack. Two of my mentors, who served as the cochairs on my master’s thesis, conspired to initiate a plan for my academic success, despite my resistance. One day, one of these professors asked me to meet her in her office to discuss my education. When we met, she advised me to team up with a classmate, Denise Paquette Boots, to study for the upcoming comprehensive exams (comps). I told my professor that I did not need assistance preparing for the comps and preferred to work alone, but she urged me to reconsider. My other mentor also supported the idea, so with some resistance, I agreed to study for my comps with Denise. I assumed I would just be able to offer lip service and eventually they would forget about forcing me to work with a peer, after which I would be free to continue my education independently—as I always had.

My mentors did not forget. Unexpectedly, they proved to be a united front on this issue. They advised me to schedule regular meetings with one of them and Denise to prepare for the comps. Such meetings are typical for doctoral students preparing to take major exams. Over the next couple of years, we met to discuss criminological theories, research, and scientific methodology. Denise and I also met outside of the department to pull research literature and discuss what we were reading. As you might anticipate, we became good friends as well as academic colleagues. We discussed research ideas and conducted our own research—in addition to what we were working on for departmental projects and our dissertations. Reflecting back, I acknowledge that our meetings helped me to successfully complete the comprehensive exams and better prepared me for academe.

After the comprehensive exams, I asked my mentors why they insisted on matching Denise and me as study partners. They indicated that we complemented each other. Since both of us had completed the master’s program together, our professors knew our strengths and weaknesses. They also saw potential in the two of us and were grooming us for a future in teaching and research. They had hatched a plan to improve our chances of success not just in graduate school, but also in the field. Collaboration with peers is beneficial, and it is very common in academe. Graduate school is intense and rigorous. It helps to have a colleague or friend who can relate to your situation and offer constructive support when you are faced with challenges, such as dealing with a difficult course or even a problem in your life outside of the academic realm. After graduate school, social networks and collaboration become especially valuable. While it is important to demonstrate that you are capable of independent work, the quality of work can substantially improve with collaboration. Each of us has our own unique experiences, life events, and learning styles that contribute to developing ideas and strengthening a study. Often, collaborations with others can lead to the production of works that are more comprehensive and richer in quality than they would have been without it.

When engaging in collaboration, it is important to work with peers who complement your abilities. Ideally, I would recommend that you work with fellow students who are stronger than you in one area (e.g., statistics) while you are stronger in another (e.g., abstract theory). This way you both bring something greater to the relationship. I have found it is best to work with someone who possesses the same abilities and qualities (e.g., intellect, values, research agenda, etc.). If the differential is too great between two people, it may place too much pressure on the relationship for it to survive in the long term. I have been very fortunate to find an academic counterpart who complements my work scholastically. Together, Denise and I have continued to collaborate and publish studies testing social learning mechanisms among domestic batterers, using data that we collected in graduate school, and studies examining the influence of mental health problems on delinquency among youth, using the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) data. I have been especially fortunate that this relationship has resulted

(Continued)
Cognitive Factors

Cognitive factors refer to the ideas, beliefs, and patterns of thinking that emerge as a result of interactions with the world during a person’s lifetime. Research has revealed that violent individuals have different ways of processing and interpreting that information. “They tend to perceive hostility in others when there is no hostility” (APA, 1996, p. 5). As you may recall from Chapter 7, this notable tendency is referred to as hostile attribution bias. Violent people are also less efficient at thinking of nonviolent ways to solve social conflicts and disagreements. They also tend to be more accepting of violence in general. Some young males—especially members of violent peer groups or gangs—have adopted the belief that it is acceptable to react to every perceived or imagined sign of disrespect with aggression. Simply put, aggressive children and adolescents have more antisocial, violent beliefs than their nonaggressive peers (Shahinfar, Kupersmidt, & Matza, 2001).

Situational Factors

Situational factors refer to the characteristics of the environment, such as stress or aggression in others, that encourage or engender violent behavior. As pointed out by many researchers, “Often we seek the causes of violence in the person and ignore the contributing effects of the situation” (APA, 1996, p. 6). Almost any aversive situation—such as excessive heat, continuous loud noise, or crowded living conditions—can provoke aggression and violence in those persons submitted to such conditions. Neighborhoods, schools, family, and peers can all be conducive to the development of violent behavior. The presence of weapons increases the chances that the conflict will occur in the first place and that it will have lethal consequences once it does (see Focus 8.2 dealing with Stand Your Ground laws).

It is also clear that children who grow up in deprived environments where poverty, frustration, and hopelessness are prevalent are at much greater risk for later involvement in violence than other children. Childhood aggression can

FOCUS 8.2. “STAND YOUR GROUND” LAWS: DO THEY ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE VIOLENCE?

In the early 21st century, several high-profile incidents in the news focused public attention on laws allowing people to use force, including deadly force, in the face of a perceived threat of bodily harm. Known collectively as “stand your ground” laws, they differ from traditional self-defense laws—some call them expanded self-defense. We discuss these differences below. First, here are illustrations:

Michael Dunn opened fire into a car full of teenagers, all black, after they refused to turn down loud music. Seventeen-year-old Jordan Davis, sitting in the back seat, was killed. Dunn claimed that they aimed a weapon at
him, but no gun was ever found. He continued to fire his shotgun as the teenagers drove away. Dunn who is white, was convicted of the attempted murder of Davis’s friends and the reckless discharge of a weapon, but the jury could not reach a verdict in the death of Jordan Davis.

Curtis Reeves Jr., a 71-year-old retired police officer, had an argument in a movie theater with a man who was texting. Reeves complained about the texting, the man stood and threw popcorn—and possibly a cell phone—at him, and Reeves took out a gun and killed him. His lawyer says the state’s “stand your ground” law gave him the freedom to use deadly force under these circumstances.

Another black teenager, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, was followed by George Zimmerman after purchasing a soda and a box of candy at a neighborhood store. Zimmerman, a Neighborhood Watch volunteer, reported Martin as suspicious but was told by police dispatchers not to follow him. He did, a scuffle ensued, and Trayvon Martin, who was unarmed, was shot to death. Zimmerman claimed self-defense and was acquitted by a six-member jury. The state’s stand your ground law received extensive coverage in the media prior to and during the trial.

Self-defense is a recognized justification for killing another person, but stand your ground laws go beyond the traditional law of self-defense. Self-defense laws allow (a) a reasonable person, (b) being somewhere he or she has a right to be, (c) perceiving him- or herself in immediate danger of grave bodily harm, (d) to use force against an aggressor. However, self-defense laws often say the force used may not be disproportionate to the threat. They also generally expect that one will flee if one can do so. The exception in many states is the so-called “castle doctrine,” which states there is no obligation to retreat if one is in one’s own home, office, or similar location. The state of Florida—where the above three incidents occurred—passed the nation’s first stand your ground law in 2005. Approximately 15 other states now have similar laws. As the name implies, what they have in common is that they carry no responsibility to flee. They also allow disproportionate force to be used. A person text messaging threw something at an armed man; the armed man shot the text messenger to death. The case is expected to go to trial in early 2015. At that time a judge or jury will have to decide whether the defendant—who was released on bail in July 2014—was justified in doing so.

Critics of stand your ground laws argue, among other things, that they encourage violence and lead to the death of innocent people. In addition, they promote an armed society by encouraging people to purchase and carry weapons, and gun violence in our society is already too high. Critics also point out the many stand your ground laws give considerable discretion to investigating officers; if an individual invokes his right to stand his ground, it is possible that charges will not be brought against him. Supporters of the laws say, again among things, that they discourage additional violence because potential aggressors never know when someone else is carrying a weapon and is ready to use it. Some also say the traditional law of self-defense does not go far enough, because fleeing the scene is unrealistic. However, it is important to stress that the traditional law of self-defense requires a duty to flee only if one is able to do so.

Race is mentioned in two of the above cases because there is considerable speculation, as well as anecdotal accounts, that stand your ground laws are used disproportionately to absolve white defendants who killed black victims. Though we may suspect that race is a significant factor related to stand your ground laws, more research is needed before this statement can be made with confidence.

Questions for Discussion

1. If the law already recognizes self-defense and defense of others as a justification for harming another individual, why is a stand your ground law needed?

2. Compare and contrast the stand your ground laws of any three states.

3. Under traditional self-defense law, one is not expected to try to flee if in one’s own home. In some states, this includes one’s office or place of business. Where should the line be drawn? What about in the home of a friend? At school? In one’s car?
predict adult violence in some individuals. Research has discovered that approximately 10% of highly aggressive children grow up to account for 50 to 60% of the majority of violent crimes (Bartol & Bartol, 2011). During their childhood, these individuals exhibit aggression, disobedience, and disruptions at home and in school; are disliked and avoided by peers; are neglected by parents and teachers; and are likely to fail in school, eventually dropping out. Unsupervised and susceptible to the pernicious influence of other delinquent youth, they grow up to be antisocial, aggressive, and sometimes violent young adults. They are likely to become involved in abusive spousal relationships, and they often abuse their own children. But most children growing up under these conditions do not follow this destructive path, and the example of such children has provided valuable insights into how to design prevention programs.

Despite the complexity and multitude of causes, human violence is ultimately a learned behavior. Because it is learned, it can be unlearned or altered, or conditions can be changed so that it is not learned in the first place. Furthermore, violence is a behavior that is acquired early in life—in many cases, very early. Consequently, prevention of violence should likewise begin very early in life.

**The Effects of Violent Media**

Over the past 40 years, a significant amount of research literature has strongly supported the observation that media violence viewing is one factor contributing to the development of aggression and violence (Bushman & Huesmann, 2012; Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003). The majority of the research has focused on the effects of watching dramatic violence on TV and film. A wide variety of research projects have continually arrived at the same fundamental conclusion: Exposure to dramatic violence on TV and in the movies is related to violent behavior. In addition to the hundreds of research findings, three major national studies have concluded that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the most significant causes of violence in society (APA, 2003c). They include the Surgeon General’s Commission Report (Surgeon General’s Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, 1972), the National Institute of Mental Health’s (1982) 10-year follow-up study on “Television and Behavior,” and the American Psychological Association’s Task Force on Television in Society (1992). According to the APA (2003c), these reports indicate that viewing a steady diet of violence on the screen has the following negative effects:

- It increases the viewer’s fear of becoming a victim, with a corresponding increase in self-protective behaviors and increased distrust of others.
- It desensitizes the viewer to violence. That is, viewers often become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others.
- It encourages some individuals to become more involved in violent actions.
- It demonstrates how desired goods and services can be obtained through the use of aggression and violence.
- Sexual violence in X- and R-rated films has been shown to increase sexual aggression in some males.

It is important to distinguish between short-term and long-term effects of media on aggressive behavior and violence. Long-term effects occur as a result of learning and storing violent and aggressive material in the cognitive system that eventually “crystallizes” and is difficult to change as the child gets older. Young children are especially open to new learning, and these experiences often have a greater impact during the early developmental years than learning events that occur during adulthood. Moreover,

In recent theorizing, long-term relations have been ascribed mainly to acquisition through observational learning of three social-cognitive structures: schemas about a hostile world, scripts for social problem solving that focus on aggression, and normative beliefs that aggression is acceptable. (Huesmann et al., 2003, p. 201)

**Observational learning** refers to the very strong tendency of human beings to imitate any significant or admired person or model they observe. Children are especially prone to doing this. Consequently, observation of specific aggressive behaviors around them increases children’s likelihood of behaving exactly that way. Over time and with frequent exposure to aggressive behavior, children develop beliefs (schemas) that the world is basically a hostile place, that aggression is an acceptable social behavior, and that the best way to solve conflicts and to get things is to be aggressive.
Huesmann and his colleagues (2003) found strong long-term effects of media violence observed in early childhood that carried over into adulthood:

Overall, these results suggest that both males and females from all social strata and all levels of initial aggressiveness are placed at increased risk for the development of adult aggressive and violent behavior when they view a high and steady diet of violent TV shows in early childhood. (p. 218)

Media violence encourages, stimulates, and reinforces aggressive behavior. Furthermore, aggressive children tend to enjoy aggressive media. Huesmann et al. (2003) suggest that “aggressive children feel happier and more justified if they believe they are not alone in their aggression, and view media violence to make them feel happier because it convinces them that they are not alone” (p. 202). The authors also posit that media violence appears to have short-term effects on adults, but the real long-term effects seem to occur only with children. The effects are not only found in children who are already violence-prone, but also in almost all children.

In addition, the Huesmann et al. (2003) study found that violent films and TV programs that have the most deleterious effects on children are not always the ones that adults and critics perceive as most violent. What type of scene is the most deleterious to children? “It is one in which the child identifies with the perpetrator of the violence, the child perceives the scene as telling about life like it is, and the perpetrator is rewarded for the violence” (p. 218). In other words, violent media that portray an admired perpetrator as successful through the use of violence appear to have a greater impact on the child’s observational learning of aggression and violence over the long haul. The researchers suggest that the easiest way to reduce the effects of media violence on children is to restrict children’s exposure to such violence. The persons in the best position to do this, particularly with young children, are parents or caretakers.

**Violent Video and Electronic Games**

Virtually everyone reading this textbook has likely played video games, some perhaps for hours at a time (see Photo 8.1). Many of you have played violent video games. Has that made you more violent? Has it desensitized you to the effects of violence? Has it caused you serious psychological harm? Some predicted that the U.S. Supreme Court would address this last question, when it announced its decision in *Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association* (2011). The case involved a California law passed in 2005 banning the sale of violent video games to children under 18 and imposing a $1,000 fine on any retailer caught doing so. The games in question were those that depicted killing, maiming, dismembering, or sexually assaulting the image of a human. However, the California Supreme Court struck down the law in 2009, stating there was no conclusive evidence that these games seriously harmed children. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed, noting that research on the effects of exposure to such violence was equivocal. The Court supported the First Amendment right of the Entertainment Merchants Association to distribute their products and refused to allow a fine on retailers who sold them.

*Photo 8.1* Two children captivated by a video game. Research indicates that long-term exposure to video games in which violence is displayed is harmful, primarily to children who are otherwise predisposed to violence (such as by witnessing violence in the home).

Source: © Ryan McVay/Thinkstock.
The effect of violent video games on violence became a serious topic for study after a series of school shootings that occurred during the late 1990s. The shooters in these cases were often students who habitually played violent video games. For example, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the Columbine (Colorado) High School students who murdered 13 persons and wounded 23 before killing themselves, were fascinated with the bloody video game Doom, one of the earliest and most successful of all violent video games. "Harris created a customized version of Doom with two shooters, extra weapons, unlimited ammunition, and victims could not fight back—features that are eerily similar to aspects of the actual shootings" (C. A. Anderson & Bushman, 2001, p. 353).

Research also suggests that violent video games increase or encourage aggressive behavior not only in children but also in young adults, both males and females (C. A. Anderson & Bushman, 2001). A meta-analysis by C. A. Anderson et al. (2010) provides the strongest evidence to date of harmful effects. Nevertheless, this research is not unequivocal; that is, some studies challenge these conclusions. Some researchers criticize earlier research relating to violence in the media—including video games—on methodological grounds and say its results are inconclusive (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2008; Savage & Yancey, 2008).

According to C. A. Anderson and colleagues (2001, 2010), though, exposure to violent video games increases aggression-related thoughts and feelings and decreases prosocial behavior. Even so, the long-term effect of heavy exposure to violent video games over the course of a person’s life remains unknown at this time. The APA did not file an amicus curiae brief in the California case cited above, which is noteworthy considering its interest in other cases involving social policies.

The overwhelming majority of people who play video games today, including violent games, do not commit acts of violence. Nevertheless, the games could have a desensitizing effect on some individuals. In addition, they may have a particularly negative effect on individuals who are already violence-prone (e.g., as a result of witnessing violence in their homes). This leads us to topics that are of great interest to forensic psychologists today, specifically, threat assessment and school and workplace violence.

**Threat Assessment**

“A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. A threat can be spoken, written, or symbolic—for example, motioning with one’s hands as though shooting at another person” (O’Toole, 2000, p. 6). Threat assessment is concerned with predicting future violence or other undesirable actions targeted at specific individuals or institutions after an expressed threat has been communicated (Bartol & Bartol, 2013). Forensic psychologists engaged in threat assessment work, however, often add that their focus is more on preventing violence than on predicting it. According to Dewey Cornell (cited in A. Miller, 2014, p. 40), “We don’t intervene because we predict someone is dangerous, we want to intervene because they’re troubled or there’s conflict or people are worried about them.”

Put another way, threat assessment aims to interrupt people on a pathway to commit violence (Meloy, cited in A. Miller, 2014). Recall also that the APA (2013a) panel on gun violence highlighted the fact that threat assessments in schools, the workplace, and government agencies were crucial to preventing violence in those environments.

Not everyone who poses a threat actually makes a threat. In other words, some shooters have not made direct threats, but reviewing their history after a tragedy, investigators could see many red flags (A. Miller, 2014). Caution is needed, however, because what are identified as red flags (e.g., reacting violently to minor disturbances and owning and using guns)—can be seen in the backgrounds of many individuals who never display violent behavior. Many gun owners would be outraged at the suggestion that they pose a threat because they own and use a gun. Rather, a combination of factors taken together lead the threat assessor to conclude that the individual poses a threat. However, we cannot assume that those who truly pose a threat are also likely to perpetrate violence. Nevertheless, researchers and clinicians who specialize in threat assessment recommend that attention be given to those who pose a threat whenever possible (A. Miller, 2014). The strategies for intervention are discussed below.

Threat assessment is a process to determine the credibility and seriousness of a threat and the likelihood that it will be carried out. It involves three basic functions: identify, assess, and manage (see Table 8.1). Similar to the risk assessment instruments discussed in earlier chapters, forensic psychologists have devised instruments that can be used for assessing the likelihood that a threat will be carried out. Little research is available on the extent to which these
instruments are used, however. There is also a professional group, the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals, and a number of publications (e.g., J. R. Meloy & Hoffmann, 2013) that provide guidance to forensic psychologists and other mental health professionals conducting threat assessments. In addition, a new APA journal, the *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, was launched in 2014.

Because an enormous amount of research in recent years has concentrated on school shootings, we will discuss in the next section what is known about threat assessment as it pertains to that context. Workplace violence is also a prominent issue demanding threat assessment procedures, and that will be covered later in the chapter.

**School Shootings**

The term *school shooting* most often refers to those violent incidents occurring within the school building or on the school grounds. Some believe (Daniels & Bradley, 2011) that the definition should include one or more fatalities that happen “in school, on school property, at school sponsored activities, or to a member of the school community on his or her commute to or from school” (p. 3). Recent data on violent deaths in schools (e.g., the School-Associated Violent Deaths Surveillance Study [SAVD]) also include these broader contexts. Thus, administrators, teachers, and other staff members are included along with students, and suicides as well as homicides are tabulated. The SAVD is a study developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and has been collecting data since 1992. All data from 1999 to the present are considered “preliminary” (Planty & Truman, 2013), so statistics should be cited with caution. It is believed, on the basis of the data that are available, that homicides of youth at school comprise just over 1% of the total homicides in the United States in any given year (Planty & Truman, 2013). However, in these statistics, “at school” includes not only on school property and while attending school, but also on the way to or from school and while attending or traveling to or from a school-sponsored event.

For our purposes, we will restrict our discussion to those lethal attacks that take place within the school building or immediately outside the building—and it is unknown precisely how many of these have occurred. The great majority of these shootings have been carried out by one or more students against others. The horrific massacre of 20 first graders and 6 school staff members at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012—which is not yet reflected in most statistics—is an exception, because it was carried out by a 20-year-old who lived in the community. Other exceptions are shootings of a staff member by another adult who gained entrance into the school. For our purposes, the latter examples better qualify as workplace violence, a topic to be discussed later in the chapter.
In recent years, some writers (e.g., Langman, 2013; Madfis & Levin, 2013) have preferred the term school rampage shootings, defined as involving “attacks on multiple parties, selected almost at random” (K. Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta, & Roth, 2004, pp. 14–15). However, as noted by Böckler, Seeger, Sitzer, & Heitmeyer (2013), the term rampage suggests an impulsive, random act. School shootings are usually carefully planned by the perpetrator, sometimes over a period of months or even years. In addition, the shooter often develops a “hit list” or a plan to kill a specific group of students, such as athletes (Daniels et al., 2007; Daniels & Page, 2013).

Another problem with the terms school shooting or rampage shooting is the word shooting. Although a vast majority of school violence in the United States involves a gun, not all does. Böckler et al. (2013) also observe that outside the United States, there are many cases where, because of the extensive restrictions on firearms, perpetrators resort to other weapons such as explosives, swords, knives, or axes: The United States is not immune to such attacks, however. In April 2014, a 16-year-old Pennsylvania student stabbed 20 students and a security guard before being restrained. “Even if such incidents are not ‘shootings’ in the literal sense, they exhibit clear similarities in perpetrator profile, contextual factors, developments in the lead-up to the attack, and modus operandi” (p. 6). Consequently, we agree with Böckler et al. that these non-firearm incidents should be included under the rubric school shootings. Therefore, in this section, we will continue to use the term school shootings to describe serious violence involving a lethal weapon within the school and immediate school grounds.

Research has discovered that school shootings are a rapidly growing phenomenon in modern Western societies over the past two decades. In addition, more school shootings have occurred in the United States during that time frame than in all other countries combined (Böckler et al., 2013). Statistically, though, school shootings are rare, accounting for a very small percentage of youth deaths (Daniels & Page, 2013). However, the psychological impact of a school shooting is widespread and long-lasting within the local community and, to some extent, across the nation as a whole (Ardis, 2004; Daniels & Bradley, 2011; Larkin, 2007; M. L. Sullivan & Guerette, 2003). The school shootings at Columbine High School in 1999 and Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012 had an impact far beyond the communities in which they occurred. As posited by O’Toole (2013), “While these lethal school shootings are rare, when they occur they are devastating, life-changing events, and always leave people shaking their heads” (p. 173) (see Photo 8.2).

**Terrorism and School Violence**

There is indication, as well, that terrorist attacks on schools have increased in both frequency and lethality in various parts of the world in recent years (E. Bradford & Wilson, 2013). Although, to date, terrorist armed attacks on schools have not yet occurred in the United States, the threat of this type of attack in the future should not be dismissed (E. Bradford & Wilson, 2013). For example, Bradford and Wilson note that in 2004, the U.S. military discovered a computer disc in an Al-Qaeda safe house that contained information on many schools located in six different American states. The information contained photos and floor plans of the schools, and a Department of Education report on how school administrators should prepare and respond to a crisis such as a terrorist attack.

Photo 8.2  Tragedies such as the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012 have nationwide impact. Here, people participate in a march in remembrance of Newtown victims and in favor of gun control.

Source: © Slowking4.
E. Bradford and Wilson (2013) identify a number of reasons why terrorists find schools an attractive target. One reason is that schools and other educational institutions are “soft targets.” “A soft target is a relatively unguarded site where people congregate, normally in large numbers, thus offering the potential for mass casualties” (E. Bradford & Wilson, 2013, p. 127). (In recent years, shopping malls have also become appealing soft targets.) A second reason schools are targeted by terrorists is because attacks on schools and schoolchildren evoke a strong emotional response across a wide spectrum of society. In addition, such attacks attract extensive media coverage, providing the intended publicity sought by many terrorists groups.

**Types of School Threats**

According to the FBI (O'Toole, 2000), school threats may be divided into four types: (1) direct, (2) indirect, (3) veiled, and (4) conditional. A *direct* threat specifies a target and is delivered in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner. For example, a caller—sometimes a student, sometimes someone from outside—might say, “I placed a bomb in the school cafeteria, and it will go off at noon today.” An *indirect* threat is more vague and ambiguous. The specific motivation, the intention, and the target are unclear and open to speculation: “If I wanted to, I could kill many at the school at any time.” This is the type of threat that has most frequently been made.

A *veiled* threat strongly implies but does not explicitly threaten violence. For example, a student might receive an anonymous note in his locker that reads, “We would be better off without you around anymore.” The message clearly hints at a potential violent act but leaves the seriousness and meaning of the note for the threatened victim to interpret. A *conditional* threat is most often seen in extortion cases. It often warns that a violent act will occur unless certain demands or terms are met, such as what occurred during the Washington, D.C., sniper killings in the fall of 2002. The message was this: “If you don’t pay us 10 million dollars, none of your children will be safe.”

When school children themselves become aware of a threat, they do not necessarily report it to school authorities. This occurs even when they themselves are personally threatened. A recent study indicated that only about one fourth of high school students who received a personal threat told anyone in authority (Nekvasil & Cornell, 2012). A major task of threat assessment teams is to encourage everyone in the school to report any suspicious behavior or threats.

**The Safe School Initiative (SSI) Report**

In June 1999, following the attack at Columbine High School, the U.S. Secret Service in collaboration with the Department of Education began conducting a study of school shootings and other school-based attacks between the years 1974 and 2000 (Borum et al., 1999; Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Mozeleski, 2002). The study, called the Safe School Initiative (SSI), examined 37 school shooting incidents involving 41 student shooters. The study involved extensive review of police records, school records, court documents, and other source material, including interviews with 10 school shooters. The goal of the project was to examine thoroughly the thinking, planning, communications, and behaviors engaged in by students who carried out school attacks. In addition, the perceived rash of school violence has thrust mental health professionals and school psychologists into the role of assisting school districts and the local communities in the development of prevention and treatment programs directed at juvenile violence (G. D. Evans & Rey, 2001). It also has initiated considerable applied research by forensic psychologists and other mental health professionals across the country.

In the Safe School Initiative report, researchers concluded that those involved in school shootings did not “just snap”; they planned their attacks ahead of time (Vossekuil et al., 2002). According to the report, the findings of which are summarized in Focus 8.3, for more than half of the school shooters, the motive was revenge. In many cases, long-standing bullying or harassment played a key role in the decision to attack. However, there are many other motives or reasons for school violence and for making the threats that may precede them.

Threats are made for a variety of reasons. A threat may be a warning signal, a reaction to fear of punishment or some other anxiety, or a demand for attention. It may be intended to taunt; to intimidate; to assert power or control; to punish; to manipulate or coerce; to frighten; to terrorize; to compel someone to do something; to strike back for an injury, injustice or
Most school shooters in the United States had easy access to guns. In nearly two thirds of the incidents, school shooters obtained guns from their own home or the home of a relative. The shooter responsible for the Newtown school tragedy had access to many weapons, including one recently purchased for him by his mother, whom he killed in their home before setting out for Sandy Hook Elementary School. Guns may be easy to obtain for many youth, but when other “red flags” are in evidence—threats, changes in behavior, or increasing despondency—making them inaccessible should be a priority. With respect to school shooters, the SSI report suggests that additional efforts to acquire, prepare, or use a weapon may signal an attacker’s progression from thought to action.

After the attack at Columbine High School in 1999, some mental health professionals were intent on developing a psychological profile of the typical school shooter (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010; J. McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). However, according to the SSI report, there is no accurate or useful profile of “the school shooter” or threatener. Furthermore, researchers who prepared the report found that the personalities and social characteristics of the shooters varied considerably. They came from a variety of social backgrounds and varied in age from 11 to 21 years. Family situations ranged from intact families to foster homes. Academic performance ranged from excellent to failing. Although mental illness is often believed to be at the root of school shootings (and mass murders in general), most school shooters were not diagnosed with any mental disorder, and a majority had no history of drug or alcohol abuse. However, more than three fourths of school shooters did threaten to kill themselves, made suicidal gestures, or tried to kill themselves before their attacks.

Statistics do show that school shootings are committed predominately by male adolescents at secondary schools (Böckler et al., 2013). Studies also suggest that most school shooters are average or above average academically (Vossekuil et al., 2002). Ultimately, it must be emphasized that school shootings are the result of numerous interacting risk factors; there appears to be no one single cause (Böckler et al., 2013). According to Böckler et al., risk factors include the following:

1. Factors that influence the socialization of children and adolescents, such as the family and the culture. For example, lack of parental supervision and dysfunctional family relationships, or a family atmosphere that resorts to violence to solve problems, represent risk factors that may result in violence at school.

2. The school atmosphere, policies, and culture. For instance, a school environment that allows bullying and rejection by peers, or tolerates or ignores disrespectful behavior—these represent common risk factors in school shootings. Vossekuil et al. (2002) discovered that 75% of school shooters felt persecuted by peers at school.

3. Individual factors, such as personality traits, genetic makeup, and mental health. For example, depression or uncontrollable rage may be contributing factors.

Prevention of School Shootings and Other Violence

Of the three categories of risk factors, addressing the school-related factors may represent the best preventive efforts. Effective anti-bullying programs, crisis planning, training for crises, and school–community collaboration are all measures that are likely to mitigate school shootings (Daniels & Page, 2013). Rules and expectations should be clearly articulated, and consequences for disrespectful behavior and other misbehavior should be consistently and fairly meted out (Daniels & Page, 2013). Recall that only about 25% of students who report being threatened by others report these threats to someone in authority. Attempting to break the student code of silence by educating students about the difference between snitching and helping to save lives of others appears to be a helpful strategy.

In an important study, Daniels and Bradley (2011) examined the culture of schools where shootings occurred compared to the culture of schools where a planned shooting was successfully averted because authorities were attuned to signs of danger or alerted by students. Four common themes emerged. In those schools where a shooting occurred, there was considerable evidence of (1) an inflexible culture, (2) inequitable discipline, (3) tolerance for disrespectful
behavior, and (4) a code of silence. The *inflexible culture* created, among certain students, a sense of not belonging. *Inequitable discipline* occurs when staff members and teachers apply school rules differently to different groups. Concerning *tolerance for disrespectful behavior*, Daniels and Page (2013) write,

> If a school permits, or is perceived to permit, disrespectful behavior, such as bullying, racism, and overt rudeness, the students bearing the brunt of such actions may feel they have no one to turn to, especially if they are aware that the school’s policies are very lenient. (p. 413)

The code of silence develops when students are resistant to reporting threats because of fear of repercussions or lack of an adequate or clearly defined reporting system.

Daniels and Bradley conclude that developing and maintaining a school culture of dignity and respect will go a long way toward eliminating the code of silence. Although this is important information, we should not assume that the school culture is at fault whenever a school shooting occurs. Preventive efforts are crucial, but they may be no match for one or more students who are intent upon harming others.

### FOCUS 8.3. SUMMARY OF SECRET SERVICE SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVE (SSI) REPORT

**What we know about school shooters:**

- Attackers talk about their plans to others, usually through e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, or face-to-face conversations. Prior to most incidents, the attacker told someone about his idea or plan. In more than three fourths of incidents, the attacker told a friend, classmate, or sibling about his idea for a possible attack before taking action. This communication about violent intentions is often referred to by threat investigators as **leakage**.
- Attackers make plans. Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely impulsive. In almost all incidents, the attacker developed the idea to harm the target before the attack.
- There is no stereotype or profile. There is no accurate or useful profile of the "school shooter." The personality and social characteristics of the shooters vary substantially.
- Attackers had easy access to guns. Most attackers had used guns previously and had access to guns. In nearly two thirds of incidents, the attackers obtained guns used in the attack from their own home or that of a relative.
- School staff are often first responders. Most shooting incidents were not resolved by law enforcement intervention. More than half of the attacks ended before law enforcement responded to the scene. In these cases, faculty or fellow students stopped the attacker. (This finding has led to calls for more school resource officers [SROs], typically police officers assigned to every school.)
- Attackers are encouraged by others. In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity. In almost half of the cases, friends or fellow students influenced or encouraged the attacker to act.
- Bullying can be a factor. In a number of cases, bullying played a key role in the decision to act. A number of attackers had experienced bullying and harassment that were long-standing and severe.
- Warning signs are common. Almost every attacker engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that seriously concerned at least one adult, and in many cases, several adults.

*Source: Adapted from U.S. Secret Service (2002).*
We now turn to discussing violence in another context, the work environment. Workplace violence (which includes school violence as the school pertains to the education professionals, paraprofessionals, and staff) has increased in recent years, possibly for reasons discussed below.

**Workplace Violence**

**Workplace violence** is a complex phenomenon, encompassing a wide assortment of threatening and injurious behaviors that occur within one's place of employment. Workplace violence is somewhat of a misnomer because it refers not only to the more physically violent incidents, but also to the subtle behavior that threatens violence, such as coercion, intimidation, outright threats, and harassment. In the public mind, workplace violence usually means a worker killing his or her coworkers or supervisors. However, the data reveal that the assailants of most serious workplace violence come from outside the workplace (Piquero, Piquero, Craig, & Clipper, 2013).

From 2000 to 2012, over half of the workplace homicides occurred within three occupations: sales and related occupations (especially fast-food restaurants and beverage stores), protective service occupations (especially law enforcement officers), and transportation occupations (especially ground-passenger transportation services) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Shootings account for 80% of all workplace homicides (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Coworkers or former coworkers were the assailants in 12% of all shootings. Robbers were assailants in 40% of the shootings. Figure 8.3 depicts gun-related workplace homicides by industry in 2010.

**Figure 8.3** Workplace Homicides Due to Shootings, by Industry, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and hospitality</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services, except public administration</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial activities</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or not reported</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homicide is the leading cause of death for women in the workplace, and it appears to be increasing (Tiesman, Gurka, Konda, Coben, & Amandus, 2012). Although 39% of women killed in the workplace were killed during criminal events such as robbery, theft, or other criminal activity, those killed by intimate partners were a close second at 33%. Women in protective service occupations usually have the highest overall homicide victimization rates, but women in health care (especially nursing), production (e.g., food services, factory work), and office/administration have the highest proportion of homicide victimization associated with intimate partner violence. Over half of the homicides committed by intimate partners occurred in parking lots and public buildings associated with the workplace.

As noted above, schools are the workplace for many adults, and neither schools nor colleges and universities are immune from workplace violence. In February 2010, a 42-year-old college professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville opened fire on her colleagues during a biology department meeting, killing three and wounding three.

Other examples of workplace violence in academe have included graduate students who shot professors on their dissertation committees and teachers killed by former boyfriends in the parking lot of the school. In 2009, a laboratory technician at Yale University was charged with the on-campus murder of graduate student Annie M. Le shortly before her scheduled wedding day. As noted earlier, psychologist Kathleen Faughey was bludgeoned and stabbed to death in her office in 2008. In 2013, twelve people were killed at a shooting at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., and many other victims were sent to emergency rooms. Note that we are making a distinction between these work-related incidents and the school violence directed specifically at students, which was discussed previously.

Obviously, most workplace violence does not end in death. Robbery, aggravated assaults, and sexual assaults are the most common violent crimes that occur in the workplace (Harrell, 2011). One third of victims of workplace violence between 1993 and 1999 reported that they believed the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime. Although retail workers tend to be the most frequent victims of homicide, other occupational groups are at greater risk of violence in general because of the nature of their job. Police officers are victims of the highest rate of workplace violence, followed by correctional officers, taxi drivers, private security guards, and bartenders. In the 1980s, the phrase “going postal” became part of the national lexicon after a series of workplace shootings by distressed postal workers. In actuality, postal workers were no more likely to commit workplace violence than other occupational groups, but the convergence of several crimes among this group led to the misconception.

Physical workplace violence has been classified into four major types on the basis of the assailant’s relationship to the workplace (California Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 1995; Gregorie, 2000; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002). In the first type, the assailant does not have a legitimate relationship to the workplace or to the victim. He or she usually enters the workplace to commit a criminal action, such as a robbery or theft. Robbery is the principal motive for most workplace homicide, accounting for 85% of workplace deaths (Gregorie & Wallace, 2000). The second type of assailant is the recipient of some service provided by the workplace or victim and may be either a current or former client, patient, or customer. Most often, this individual is unhappy with the product or service he or she received from the agency or company. In August 2010, an individual entered the headquarters of the Discovery Channel in Maryland and took several people hostage. Although this could have ended in violence toward the hostages, the man—who had previously expressed dissatisfaction with the media outlet—was himself shot by police. The third type of assailant has an employment-related involvement with the workplace, as a current or former employee, supervisor, or manager. This assailant is often referred to as a “disgruntled employee” who enters the workplace to punish or get back at some individual or the agency or company in general. According to Gregorie and Wallace, disgruntled employees account for approximately 10% of workplace homicides. The fourth type has an indirect involvement with the workplace because of a relationship with an employee, such as a current or former spouse or partner.

One thing is clear concerning the survivors of workplace violence. Workplace violence “can lead to many adverse outcomes including [those related to] personal safety concerns, job insecurity, fear, lowered job performance, job satisfaction, affective commitment, intent to turnover, psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, depression, physical well-being, interpersonal deviance, and organizational deviance” (Piquero et al., 2013, p. 390). Forensic psychologists sometimes are asked to assess victims of workplace violence in civil suits against present or former employers, in which the victims allege that the employers were negligent in protecting them from harm. Psychologists and other mental health professionals also can play an instrumental role in helping employees recover from these stressful
incidents. This is especially important when it comes to employees who witness a coworker or supervisor being killed or brutalized. Mental health professionals also play critical roles in the prevention of workplace violence when it comes to violence between employees and supervisors. The threat assessments discussed earlier in the chapter become crucial when there is concern that a particular employee may pose a danger to the workplace. The National Standards Institute endorsed threat assessment teams in workplaces in 2011 (A. Miller, 2014). Stress management interventions have been shown to be highly effective in addressing coworker dissatisfactions and other stress-related issues (Limm et al., 2011).

Few systematic studies have examined the predictors or causes of workplace violence. Most of the work to date has focused on either (a) describing the assailant or (b) identifying the job characteristics that increase the risk for violence (LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002). Considerably more research is needed to identify the causes and implement preventive measures in the workplace. Nevertheless, many places of employment have been sensitized to this issue and have increased their levels of security in response to fear and uneasiness among employees.

This may be due, at least partly, to the dramatic increase in workplace violence litigation (Kaufer & Mattman, 2002). According to Kaufer and Mattman, the legal action and civil lawsuits at this point in time concentrate on four major areas: (1) negligent hiring (failure to screen employees properly), (2) negligent retention (failure to terminate unsuitable and threatening employees), (3) negligent supervision (failure to monitor performance), and (4) inadequate security.

Consequently, legal and regulatory obligations for employers to provide safe and secure work environments are bound to increase, and mandatory prevention and training programs are likely to be commonplace across all private and public organizations in the near future. As should be apparent, forensic psychologists increasingly are called on to conduct threat assessments, or to assess the risk of violence in an individual about whom fellow workers or supervisors are concerned. Perhaps more importantly, however, psychologists working within employment settings should be attuned to the culture of the workplace and play a critical role in facilitating an environment that promotes cooperation and mutual respect among and between employees and supervisory personnel.

We have thus far discussed only violence and threats of violence in the workplace, but we must emphasize that other workplace issues also merit careful attention. Discrimination—be it on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or religion—remains an area of major concern. One particular form of discrimination is sexual harassment, which we covered in Chapter 6. In fiscal year 2008, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received 13,869 charges of sexual harassment (U.S. EEOC, 2009). Sixteen percent of those charges were filed by men. Moreover, even though there has been a leveling off of filings with the EEOC over the past 10 years, the data underscore the fact that sexual harassment is still quite common in the workplace. One recent study (Fineran & Gruber, 2009) found that more than half of teenage girls experience some form of sexual harassment at their place of work. It is a distressing behavior that explicitly or implicitly affects an individual’s employment; unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance; and creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. In addition, a number of investigations have substantiated a link between PTSD and depression, and sexual harassment (Fineran & Gruber, 2009). More pertinent to our discussion here, harassing behavior may lead to stalking, which may in turn lead to violence.

Likewise, racial and ethnic discrimination in the workplace also may lead to violence. In addition, discrimination in all of its contexts has similarities to bias crimes and to crimes of intimidation, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

In the next section, we direct our attention to the most serious violent act, the taking of human life. Although homicide was illustrated in much of the previous material, we will now discuss its overall prevalence as well as its specific forms.

**Criminal Homicide**

Homicide is the killing of one person by another. Criminal homicide is the causing of the death of another person without legal justification or excuse. Under certain conditions, the killing of another person can be justified (such as in self-defense) or excused (such as if the perpetrator was legally insane).

The criminal law recognizes two major levels of criminal homicide: murder and manslaughter. Murder is the term reserved for the “unlawful killing of one human by another with malice aforethought, either expressed or implied” (H. C. Black, 1990, p. 1019). Manslaughter usually refers to an unintended killing that results from unjustifiable conduct that places others at risk (Morawetz, 2002). The individual who aimlessly fires a loaded weapon and ends up killing someone, even if he or she did not “intend” to, is still responsible for that person’s death. However, manslaughter also
may include an \textit{intended} killing “for which there is mitigation, acts that are provoked by the victim, or that result[s] from temporary and understandable circumstances that compromise the actor's normal responsibility” (Morawetz, 2002, p. 398). For example, a father who comes upon a car accident, discovers that his daughter has been killed, and chokes to death the inebriated driver of the car that hit her would likely be charged with nonnegligent manslaughter, not murder. Most states have additional gradations in their homicide statutes, depending on the level of seriousness. First-degree murder, for instance, is usually considered a capital offense, punishable by death or life in prison.

The UCR includes both murder and nonnegligent manslaughter under the term \textit{criminal homicide} for reporting purposes. According to the UCR, approximately 14,827 persons were victims of murder or nonnegligent manslaughter in 2012 (FBI, 2013a). The murder rate in the United States during that year was 5.4 murders for every 100,000 inhabitants. The murder rate as reported in the UCR is based solely on police investigations as opposed to the determination of a court, medical examiner, coroner, jury, or other judicial body. In other words, the UCR provides data on the criminal homicides known to police and—if solved—on the persons arrested. Recall also that the UCR does not tell us, for instance, whether the 9,859 persons arrested and charged in 2008 were convicted. Also not included in the UCR murder statistics are deaths police believe were caused by negligence, suicide, accidents, or justifiable homicide.

During 2008, UCR-contributing agencies submitted supplemental information concerning 16,277 homicides. The Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) collects data on the age, sex, and race of both the victim and the offender; the type of weapon used; the relationship of the victim to the offender; and circumstances surrounding the incident. The circumstances are listed in Table 11.1 in Chapter 11. The relationship of the victim to the offender will also be reported in Chapter 11, which deals with violent victimology.

Criminal homicide, like sexual assault, is a heterogeneous phenomenon associated with different contexts, motivations, and types of offenders (Woodworth & Porter, 2002). Consequently, any attempt to make broad generalizations about people who commit criminal homicide—particularly murder—is risky. Nevertheless, researchers have drawn tentative conclusions about the types of individuals who commit this ultimate violent act. For example, most murders are single-incident offenses involving only one victim—and murderers generally do not commit another murder, even after release from prison. The “typical murder” is committed either during the course of committing another offense—most often a robbery—or is perpetrated against an intimate or an acquaintance. The typical murder also is committed during early adulthood, between the ages of 18 and 25 (see Table 8.2).

\textbf{Table 8.2} Age Distribution of Murder Offenders, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total (all ages)</td>
<td>14,581*</td>
<td>9,425</td>
<td>1,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 22</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>2,558</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 to 12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 to 16</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 to 19</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>1,172</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24</td>
<td>2,553</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>1,597</td>
<td>1,409</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34</td>
<td>1,166</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source:} FBI (2013a).

* A total of 4,058 cases were listed as unknown regarding gender.
An unknown number of murderers kill themselves after they have committed their crimes—typically very shortly thereafter and in the same location. The clinical characteristics of homicide-suicide are similar across the globe. Perpetrators of homicide-suicide are mostly men (95% in the United States), and the homicide victims are usually women (85% in the United States) (Hillbrand, 2001). In a majority of cases, the offender and victim(s) are relatives. Most cases involve one killer and one victim (90%) (Hillbrand, 2001). Despair, hopelessness, and depression are common among perpetrators of murder-suicides. In fact, the clinical or psychological characteristics are more typical of suicide than homicide. For example, there is not a lifelong pattern of impulsivity or violence.

A distinct form of homicide-suicide involves politically motivated terrorists who commit acts such as suicide bombings. In such incidents, a single terrorist may strap himself or herself with explosives that are later detonated at targeted locations. As in the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, these may be perpetrated by individuals acting in small groups. Individuals who commit homicide-suicide, whether politically motivated or not, seldom utter threats or give warnings of the impending killings.

Forensic psychologists are most likely to be called on to consult regarding the atypical murder. A psychologist may be asked for a profile of a serial killer or to assess the risk that he will strike again within a given locality. Although this may be difficult to comprehend, a family mass murderer may be eligible for parole, and a clinician may be asked to assess his risk of future violence if released. Consequently, in the following sections, we devote more coverage to these atypical crimes. The topic of single or typical murders is revisited in Chapters 10 and 11, where we discuss the effects of violent crime on victims.

**Multiple Murder**

Multiple murder (also called multicide) is usually divided into three somewhat overlapping major-offender patterns based on the timing of the act. **Serial murder** usually refers to incidents in which an individual (or individuals) separately kills a number of people (usually a minimum of three) over time. The time interval—sometimes referred to as the “cooling-off period”—may be days or weeks but more likely months or even years. **Spree murder** normally refers to the killing of three or more individuals without a cooling-off period, usually at two or three different locations. The designation spree murder is problematic, however, because some of these killings share characteristics of mass murders, while other seem more like serial murders. Neither law enforcement nor psychological researchers have found this to be a helpful designation, either for crime control or for research purposes. Compared with serial and mass murderers, spree murderers have received very little research attention and will not be discussed in detail below.

**Mass murder** involves the killing of three or more persons at a single location with no cooling-off period between the killings. The FBI identifies two types: classic and family. The school shootings discussed above; the mall shootings of recent years; the Navy Yard shooting in 2013; the Virginia Tech tragedy of 2007; the Aurora, Colorado, movie theater shootings in 2012; and the 2014 stabbings and shootings in Isla Vista, California (to be described more below), are all examples of classic mass murder. In a family mass murder—which is by far the more common of the two—at least three family members are killed by another immediate family member or relative. Very often, the perpetrator kills himself or herself. Both classic and family mass murders, but particularly the latter, are also often examples of homicide-suicides. In the classic mass murder, it is more likely that the perpetrator—if not alive—has been shot by police at the scene.

What the public knows about multiple murder is largely based on misinformation and myth. The more sensational aspects of serial murder, for example, associate it with sexual sadists who prey on strangers to satisfy sexual fantasies. Movies or shows with multiple-murder themes, especially serial killings, almost invariably portray these killers with sexual, cruel, and often bizarre characteristics.

Researchers and scholars do not seem immune to the alluring features of multiple murder either. Fox and Levin (1998) have observed that the scholarly accounts are too often based on media sources or unstructured interviews with convicted offenders: “Indeed, the ratio of scholarly books to research articles is unusually high, reflecting an abundance of speculation and a paucity of hard data” (pp. 409–410). It is with this caveat in mind that we review the following information.
What little empirical research on multiple murder has been conducted has occurred within the past 20 years, largely in response to high-profile multiple-homicide incidents, such as those perpetrated by serial offenders David Berkowitz (“Son of Sam”), Theodore Bundy, Robert Yates, John Wayne Gacy, Donald Harvey, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Gary Ridgway. Ridgway, known as the “Green River Killer,” pleaded guilty in November 2003 to the murders of 48 women, more than any other serial killer in U.S. history to date. In the past, researchers and criminologists assumed that multiple murderers were basically similar to single-victim offenders and therefore did not require special study. Later research, however, revealed that multiple murder does involve motivations, victims, demographics, and psychological features that differentiate much of it from the more ordinary single-victim homicide.

The considerable variation in the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive features of multiple murderers has prompted some researchers (R. M. Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; R. M. Holmes & Holmes, 1998; Ressler, Burgess, & Douglas, 1988) to develop typologies, or classification systems, that allow some appreciation of the complexity of the crime. We will cover one of these typologies later in the chapter.

Although multiple murders receive considerable media attention because of their drama and sensational qualities, they are statistically rare occurrences. The frequent onslaught of violence and multiple murder in the entertainment media eventually develops the impression that these incidents are much more frequent than they actually are. When multiple murders do occur, news media depict repetitious, graphic, and dramatic accounts of the violence. The normal cognitive reaction of people watching is to store the vivid details and then have these details ready at the “top of their mind” for future reference. The result of this process is the public’s tendency to conclude that violence and multiple murders are dramatically increasing when they really are not. Mass and serial murders seem to be on the increase in the United States because accounts in the media are readily available. However, a careful review of the data simply does not lend support to this perspective. Even if statistics sometimes indicate that serial murders have increased, this apparent increase may be due to better communication and computer systems between state and federal law enforcement agencies over the past 20 years. For example, the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP) (see Focus 8.4) is designed to communicate with and help the nation’s law enforcement agencies to investigate, identify, track, apprehend, and prosecute violent serial offenders.

**FOCUS 8.4. VICAP: SHARING DATA TO SOLVE VIOLENT CRIME**

ViCAP—the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program—is an FBI-sponsored data information center for crimes of violence, particularly murder. Law enforcement officials across the United States are able to enter information on solved cases into the database, as well as request the FBI’s assistance in solving particularly difficult cases. The cases examined by ViCAP include the following:

- Solved or unsolved homicides or attempts, especially those that (1) involve an abduction; (2) are apparently random, motiveless, or sexually oriented; or (3) are known or suspected to be part of a series;
- Missing persons, in which the circumstances indicate a strong possibility of foul play and the victim is still missing; and
- Unidentified dead bodies, in which the manner of death is known or is suspected to be homicide.

As cases are entered into the database, they are compared continually against all other cases to detect signature aspects of homicide—such as a note left at the scene—and similar patterns (e.g., victim’s age, season of the year). If ViCAP analysts detect similar patterns, as they would in the case of serial murder, the law enforcement agencies involved are notified. ViCAP can then assist agencies in coordinating an investigation, such as obtaining search warrants and conducting laboratory tests.

*Source:* FBI (2010).
Serial Killers

Despite the extensive commentary and media interest, there has been surprisingly little empirical research on serial murder. Most of the scientific research is limited to archival research or case studies. *Archival research* is seeking out and analyzing evidence from past records, such as police records, newspaper stories, diaries, historical notes in private collections, or other documents pertaining to serial murders. A *case study* is an extensive examination of the background, behavior, and crimes of one particular serial killer. “The literature on serial murder is largely the product of broad-based descriptive study of large numbers of cases of serial killers or the result of individual case studies” (Skrapec, 2001, p. 46).

Consequently, most of the following information will be descriptive in nature, and the identification of motives will be largely based on self-reports provided by the killers themselves. Self-reports, although informative, are not the most objective measures available. They only provide information pertaining to what offenders want to reveal.

Before we discuss serial killers, though, it is important to keep in mind a very useful statement noted by Candice Skrapec from the work of Kluckhohn and Murray (1953, p. 53). To paraphrase, every human is, in certain respects, (a) like all other humans, (b) like some other humans, and (c) like no other human. That is, there are many characteristics of serial killers that are common to everyone, there are some identifiable commonalities among serial killers, and then there are a few significant differences.

What does a serial killer look like? Physically, serial killers can be placed on a continuum, with Theodore Bundy, the handsome, charming, intelligent law student who brutally killed dozens of women in the Pacific Northwest, at one pole, and Arthur Shawcross, the dour, rumpled, aging serial killer of primarily prostitutes in the Rochester, New York, area at the other pole. Some television buffs may want to add the fictional Dexter Morgan of *Dexter* fame. An innocuous-looking, mild-mannered blood-spatter analyst, Morgan carried out revenge killings of people who had escaped the justice system. Many of his victims were themselves serial killers.

There is no single identifiable serial killer type based on physical appearance, social class, or personality attributes. Research suggests that most serial killers are males, but there are exceptions, such as Aileen Wuornos, convicted of killing six men, who was executed by lethal injection in 2002.

Serial killers have many of the same personality traits or behavioral features as the general public. However, the one trait that appears to separate them from the norm is their exceptional interpersonal skill in their presentation of self (Fox & Levin, 2003). Their ability to charm and “fool” others often elevates them beyond suspicion and makes them difficult to apprehend. This may explain why victims allow serial killers into their homes or go willingly with them on dates or other engagements. In reference to this issue, Joseph Fisher (1997) describes a serial killer who held two communities in constant fear for several months. He writes,

> Perhaps most unsettling for the community was the behavior of the victims; some of whom were reported to have gone willingly with their killer even though they may have known what lay ahead. This blind trust and the killer’s exploitation of that trust seemed to have an eerie, supernatural quality. (pp. xiii–xiv)

It is a mistake to assume that serial murderers are seriously mentally disordered in the clinical sense of that term. Some are, but most are not. Although their thought patterns may be considered extremely aberrant when it comes to sensitivity and concern for other human beings, a vast majority of serial killers fail to qualify as psychotic or “crazy” in the traditional diagnostic categories of mental disorders. Serial killers have developed versions of the world characterized by values, beliefs, perceptions, and general cognitive processes that facilitate repetitive murder, often in a brutal, demeaning, and cold-blooded manner. They are prone to committing murders that draw interest and send spine-chilling fear into the community, and their motives appear incomprehensible to the general public. The motives of many serial killers seem to be based on psychological rewards of control, domination, media attention, and excitement rather than material gain. But the labels “sick,” “crazy,” or “psychotic” explain little and offer little hope in the quest for understanding the processes in the development of this behavior.

Unlike the typical single-victim murderer who commits the homicide in early adulthood, serial murderers generally begin their careers of repetitive homicide at a relatively late age, usually in their late twenties or early thirties. Jenkins
(1988) concludes that most begin their killings between the ages of 24 and 40, and R. M. Holmes and Holmes (1998) report that most known serial killers are between the ages of 25 and 35. The National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) reports (Morton & Hilts, 2010) that the average age of serial killers at the time of their first murder is 27.51 years and at their last murder is 32.11 years. The age of their victims, on the other hand, varies widely, ranging from infants to the very old. Arthur Shawcross, for example, murdered at least 11 adults, but his first two victims were children.

Although some serial killers have extensive police records, the records mainly reflect a series of petty thefts, embezzlements, and forgeries rather than a history of violence (Jenkins, 1988). Single-victim homicides often involve family, intimates, or acquaintances, whereas serial murder most often involves strangers, especially if the offender is male. Female serial murderers present a different story, however, because they most often murder those with whom they share a relationship such as husbands, intimates, and acquaintances, including individuals who are in their care.

An examination of the victim selection of known male serial murderers will reveal that they prefer victims offering easy access and transience. Often the victim's disappearance is not reported to police. For example, victims are often prostitutes, runaways, young male drifters, and itinerant farm workers whose family and friends may not immediately realize that they are missing. With experience, improving skills, and a need for greater challenge, serial killers often move to more difficult victims, such as university or college students, children, the elderly, or the solitary poor. Very rarely do serial murderers break in and terrorize, torture, and kill strangers in their homes.

The geographic location preferred by serial killers most often tends to be a specific one. For some unknown reason, serial murderers seldom kill victims in the communities where they (the murderers) were born. They do, however, often select victims near their current residence or place of work. Hickey (1997) estimates, for example, that 14% of serial killers use their homes or workplaces as the preferred location, whereas another 52% commit their murder in the same general location or area, such as the same neighborhood or city. This tendency suggests that geographical profiling may be an invaluable aid in the identification of serial murderers. However, this still leaves more than 30% of offenders who apparently commit crime across a much wider geographical area.

As noted above, serial killers are primarily males, and they often have a preference for one gender over the other. Jeffrey Dahmer, for instance, murdered at least 17 young males in Wisconsin and Ohio during the early 1990s. Dahmer drugged, strangled, dismembered, and—in some cases—consumed the flesh of his victims. John Wayne Gacy sexually assaulted and killed at least 33 boys in Illinois during the 1970s. He buried most of his victims in the dirt basement of his house. Robert Yates, on the other hand, murdered at least 17 prostitutes and homeless women in the state of Washington during the 1990s. Gary Ridgway targeted women in the Seattle area during the 1980s and 1990s, mainly runaways and prostitutes.

A serial murderer may choose his victims because they hold profound meaning for him in terms of his life experiences (Skrapec, 2001). Interviews and descriptions of serial killers suggest that one of the dominant motives for their behavior is the power and control over another person's life that the crime offers them. "For these killers, murder is a form of expressive, rather than instrumental, violence" (Fox & Levin, 1998, p. 415). In keeping with the control theme, serial killers, unlike typical murderers, usually do not use a firearm to murder their victims. Although they may use a firearm to intimidate and control their victims, serial killers prefer a method of killing that provides the maximum amount of control and dominance. Choking, stabbing, and other methods of delayed death are ways the killer can maintain the life-or-death mastery over the helpless victims.

Serial killers also tend to be inspired by detailed and elaborate fantasies rich with themes of dominance (Fox & Levin, 2003; Skrapec, 1996). Prentky et al. (1989), for instance, found that 86% of the 25 serial killers they studied had violent fantasies on a regular basis, compared with only 23% of the 17 single-victim murderers. However, it should be mentioned that a majority (58%) of the serial killers in their sample had above-average intelligence compared to only 29% of the single-victim murderers. Therefore, the two groups were not completely matched in all important factors. In reference to this difference, Prentky et al. state, “While intelligence seems to have little bearing on the quality or content of the fantasy, it does influence how well fantasy is translated into behavior (i.e., how organized the crime is) and how successfully the offender eludes apprehension” (p. 888). The researchers further state that “fantasy, as it is defined in this study, is an elaborated set of cognitions (or thoughts) characterized by
preoccupation (or rehearsal), anchored in emotion, and originating in daydreams” (p. 889). Furthermore, the more
the fantasy is rehearsed in the mind of the potential killer, the stronger the association between the fantasy content
and the actual behavior becomes, eventually lowering the restraints that normally would inhibit acting out the
fantasy itself. Eventually, the individual will actually act on the fantasy. At this point, Prentky et al. suggest, the
serial killer engages in a series of progressively more accurate “trial runs” in an attempt to enact the fantasy as it is
imagined. In other words, the killer will continue to try to improve on his cognitive script through trial and error.
Because the trial runs cannot ever quite match the fantasy entirely, the need to restage the fantasy with a new victim
is always there. As Fox and Levin (1998) note, “The killer’s crime can increase in severity as he constantly updates
his fantasy in a never-ending spiral of image and action” (p. 417).

Many serial killers augment their fantasies with hard-core pornography, which often contains themes of violence,
dominance, and bondage (Fox & Levin, 1998, 2003). In the past, police investigators often uncovered extensive librar-
ies of films and tapes that portrayed acts of rape and murder. Today, they would likely also uncover pornographic sites
on the person’s computer and other electronic equipment. It is not clear, however, whether the violent pornography
engenders thoughts of violence or whether violence-prone individuals prefer violent pornography. The answer may lie
in some combination of both.

Many serial killers also collect memorabilia of their victims, such as items of clothing, audiotapes or photographs
of the murder, and—in rare cases—body parts. Called trophies, these “souvenirs” vividly remind the killer of the incident,
enhancing his fantasies even further.

Serial Killer Typologies

In contemporary psychology, the term typology refers to a particular system for classifying personality or behavior
patterns. Usually, the typology is used to classify a wide assortment of behaviors into a more manageable set of brief
descriptions. There are many problems with typologies, however, such as considerable overlap between categories.
Rarely is one classification independent and separate from the others. In addition, some individuals can qualify for two
or more classifications at once. For example, if the typology is based primarily on motive, the offender may demon-
strate a combination of motives for the crime. Moreover, placing individuals into various categories is based on the
questionable assumption that behavior is consistent across both time and place. Still, typologies are useful in highlight-
ing the complexity of human behavior and the variety of motives and scripts.

Several typologies of serial killers have been proposed in recent years (L. Miller, 2014), but we will concentrate
only on the R. M. Holmes and DeBurger (1985, 1988) and R. M. Holmes and Holmes (1998) scheme for illustrative
purposes. Holmes and DeBurger classify serial killers into a typology based on motive. The typology outlines four
types: (1) visionary, (2) mission-oriented, (3) hedonistic, and (4) power/control. The visionary type is driven by delu-
sions or hallucinations that compel him to kill a particular group of individuals. According to R. M. Holmes and
DeBurger (1988), this type of serial killer is psychotic—which is atypical because serial killers are not usually mentally
disordered—and suffers from a severe break with reality. He or she is probably the most difficult to understand for
investigators and the public alike. The crime scene is chaotic and has an abundance of physical evidence, often including
fingerprints and even the murder weapon (R. M. Holmes & Holmes, 1998).

When the visionary type does kill, it will usually be well within his comfort zone (near his residence, place of
recreation, or workplace). Therefore, geographical profiling would seem to be a very useful tool in the detection of this
offender. Unlike most serial killers, however, the visionary murderer has no ideal victim type (IVT). That is, there are
rarely any common physical (hair color, sex, age, or race), occupational, or personality traits that connect the victims.
In addition, the murder is usually spontaneous and characterized by very little planning, and the victim is simply in
the wrong place at the wrong time.

The mission-oriented type believes that there is a particular group of people who are considered undesirable and
who must be destroyed or eliminated. The undesirables may be prostitutes; gays, lesbians, and transgender individuals;
“street people”; or members of a particular religious, racial, or ethnic minority group. Unlike the visionary type, this
serial killer is not psychotic or otherwise mentally ill.
The hedonistic type strives for pleasure and thrills, and, in the killer's mind, people are simply objects to use for one's own enjoyment. According to R. M. Holmes and Holmes (1998), hedonistic killers may be divided into three subtypes based on the primary motive for the murder: lust, thrill, and comfort. The lust serial killer's primary motive is sex, even if the victim is already dead (an activity called necrophilia): "He kills for sex; it is a propelling element in the motivation to kill and in the enjoyment he receives from his activities" (p. 93). Furthermore, "The killer kills in ways that reflect both the fantasy and the manner in which the fantasy is to be satisfied" (p. 93). The lust killer, according to Holmes and Holmes, is always seeking the IVT that is sexually appealing to him. Ted Bundy, for example, reported that the way a woman walked and talked was an important factor in his victim selection.

The thrill killer is primarily motivated to induce pain or a terrified reaction from the victim. The pain and terror engendered, in combination with the process of the murder itself, are highly stimulating and exciting for the killer. Usually, the killer has no relationship with his victim, although he may have followed her for some time. Similar to the lust killer, the thrill murderer selects victims based on certain physical characteristics that feed into his fantasies.

The motive for the creature comfort killer is to acquire activities (business interests) or objects (money) that provide a comfortable and luxurious lifestyle. The killer's victims presumably stand in the way of achieving this. "The comfort killer's main objective is to enjoy life and to be sufficiently in control of immediate circumstances so that 'the good life' can be attained" (R. M. Holmes & Holmes, 1998, p. 119). Moreover, "overt, blatant displays of fatal aggression are not characteristics of this type; most comfort-oriented murderers tend to kill quietly if the situation permits" (p. 119). For the comfort killer, the act of murder is incidental to the pursuit of material gain and a comfortable lifestyle. Presumably, comfort killers dispose of their victims when they have identified a potential new "mark." In many ways, comfort killers resemble the behavioral characteristics of a criminal psychopath. Some writers (e.g., S. T. Holmes, Hickey, & Holmes, 1991) have pointed out that female serial killers often fall into this category.

The power-control killer obtains satisfaction from the absolute life-or-death control he has over the victim. Sexual components may or may not be present, but the primary motive is the extreme power and dominance over the helpless victim. These killers also tend to seek specific victims who appear especially vulnerable and easy to victimize.

Mass Murder

Compared to serial murder, relatively little research has been done on mass murders. Perhaps this is because mass murder, although horrible and troubling, is not as intriguing, mysterious, or frightening as serial murder. It is, of course, devastating to all who experience it, either directly or indirectly. We have only to mention such recent events as the mass killings in Newtown, the Aurora theater shooting, the Navy Shipyard incident, the killings at Fort Hood on two separate occasions, stabbings and gun deaths near the University of California Santa Barbara campus, and Virginia Tech to recall the horror of those occurrences.

Mass murder usually happens suddenly and unpredictably—rarely is there any sequel. A long-term search for the perpetrator is not necessary. It is often open who the offender is, although the motives are sometimes unclear. The offender often dies at the scene, either by his own hand or at the hands of police. It has been suggested that mass murderers often commit "suicide by cop," placing themselves directly and deliberately in the line of fire, rather than allowing themselves to be captured. In fact, it is commonly assumed that suicide is a primary motive of many mass murderers. However, Grant Duwe (2000), on the basis of his examination of 495 mass killings over a 21-year time period, concluded that only 21% of mass murderers committed suicide, another 2% attempted suicide, and 3% were fatally shot by the police. It appears that family mass murders are the type most likely to result in the perpetrator taking his or her own life.

Some earlier FBI investigators (J. E. Douglas, Ressler, Burgess, & Hartman, 1986) have found it useful to divide mass murder into two major types mentioned previously: classic and family. Due to the many global examples of mass murder publicized in recent years, a third category—terrorist mass murder—should probably be added. Although the United States encountered these primarily in the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in which 168 people were killed, as well as in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in which 3,047 people were killed, other countries such as Syria, Ireland, Iraq, and Afghanistan have encountered terrorist mass murder on a regular basis.
The motives of mass murderers are highly variable. “The motivations for mass murder can range from revenge to hatred, from loyalty to greed; and the victims can be selected individually, as members of a particular category or group, or on a random basis” (Fox & Levin, 1998, p. 430). However, according to Fox and Levin, a majority of mass murderers are driven by revenge, and their victims are apparently chosen because of what they have done or what they represent. When targeting of victims belonging to specific groups occurs, the crimes may also qualify as hate crimes, which will be discussed below.

Mass murderers are frequently described as frustrated, angry people who feel helpless about their lives. They are usually between the ages of 25 and 45 (average age at time of murder is approximately 30), and they are generally convinced there is little chance that things will get better for them. They have often suffered some tragic or serious loss, such as losing a job or being abandoned by a spouse or partner. Their personal lives have been failures by their standards, but they often blame others for this. In May 2014, a 22-year-old stabbed to death his two roommates and a third young man who was visiting. He then drove his BMW through Isla Vista, California, a town heavily populated with college students, shooting at random while pursued by police. He ultimately killed 3 more people and wounded 13 others before shooting himself in the head. The killer had apparently posted frequent online messages expressing his hatred of women. He also posted a chilling “manifesto” on YouTube, detailing his frustrations and railing against women who did not pay attention to him. He vowed to punish them and the fraternity men they chose over him.

Mass murderers are often socially isolated and withdrawn people who lack a strong social network of friends or supporters. Compared with serial murderers, they are more likely to be mentally disordered in the clinical sense. The Virginia Tech shooter; the Newtown shooter; the alleged shooter of patrons in a theater in Aurora, Colorado, and the above-mentioned 22-year-old in California all had had contact with mental health professionals. Their isolation was probably due to some combination of their emotional problems, an active dislike of people, and their own inadequate social and interpersonal skills. Attacking several or many others at one time provides these lonely, angry people a chance to get even, to dominate others, to take control, and to gain recognition.

Another example of a classic mass murder is the Virginia Tech massacre in April 2007, where 32 people were killed and 25 others wounded on the campus of Virginia Polytechnical University in Blacksburg. The perpetrator, a 23-year-old senior, was described by those who knew him as a lonely, troubled, isolated, bullied, and peer-rejected individual who was extremely angry about the way he was treated by the world outside his immediate family. Some of his professors found his creative writing papers unusually violent and frightening. On the Virginia Tech campus, he was seen by students as quiet, strange, and basically noncommunicative. He had come into contact with law enforcement on several occasions for stalking female students. Two of the incidents resulted in verbal warnings from campus police.

Mass murderers often take a very active interest in guns. Unlike serial murder, about two thirds of the mass killings (both classic and family) involved the use of guns, usually semiautomatic firearms with high magazine capacities (Duwe, 2000). In other words, they prefer weapons that make it easier to kill many people quickly. It is not unusual for an arsenal of weapons to be found in the homes or vehicles of mass murderers.

In the following chapter, we will discuss research and theory related to other crimes of violence, specifically sexual offenses, and in Chapter 10 we will focus on family violence. For the present, we review information about crimes that may not involve direct violence—although they often do—but are serious by nature of the fear they engender.

**Hate or Bias Crimes**

Hate crimes—also called bias crimes—are criminal offenses motivated by an offender’s bias against a group to which the victim either belongs or is believed to belong. Neither hatred nor prejudice alone is sufficient to constitute a hate crime. There must be an underlying criminal offense—for example, an assault, vandalism, arson, or murder—that is motivated by the hatred or prejudice. It is not a crime to hate; however, demonstrated hatred against the victim of a crime based on prejudice can enhance the sentence given the perpetrator if convicted.

The groupings—or protected categories—most commonly identified in bias crime laws are race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. (See Focus 8.5 for illustrations of incidents that qualify as hate
crimes.) It is important to note that these are inclusive categories; that is, bias crime statutes protect all members of all races (not just blacks or whites) and persons of all sexual orientations (not just gays and lesbians). In addition, statutes in some states also provide penalties for bias crimes against certain age groups (e.g., the elderly) or members of the military.

The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 requires the FBI to collect data and provide information on the nature and prevalence of violent attacks, intimidation, arson, or property damage directed at persons or groups because of bias against their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. In September 1994, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act amended the Hate Crime Statistics Act to include physical and mental disabilities in the data collection. Gender—commonly covered in hate crime statutes in many states—is not one of the specified categories. However, gender is now covered as a result of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first passed in 1994 and reauthorized in 2000 and 2013.

Also in 1994, Congress passed the Hate Crime Sentencing Enhancement Act, which provides for longer sentences for such crimes. In 1996, due to dramatic increases in the burning of places of worship (especially African American churches located in the southeastern sections of the United States), the Church Arson Prevention Act was signed into law. The Hate Crime Prevention Act of 1999 prohibits persons from interfering with an individual’s civil or constitutional rights, such as voting or employment, by violence or threat of violence due to his or her race, color, religion, or national origin. In October 2009, Congress passed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in response to the brutal murders of both men because of sexual orientation and race, respectively. Despite these laws, crimes against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals remain frequent and tend to be the most violent of all hate crimes (Cramer et al., 2013).

FOCUS 8.5. HATE CRIME EXAMPLES

The following are only a few illustrations of bias-related incidents reported in the media over the past few years. Although criminal activity is indicated in each, the perpetrators were not necessarily charged with committing bias crimes.

- Seven teens were implicated in the stabbing death of an Ecuadorian immigrant as he was walking near a train station. The person who actually did the stabbing received a 25-year sentence for manslaughter as a hate crime. Prosecutors said the group of teens went to the area “in search of Hispanics.”
- A cabdriver in New York City was stabbed and robbed after being asked whether he was Muslim. The day after the incident, the driver commented, “Until yesterday, I felt safe here.”
- Vandals spray-painted anti-Muslim and racial epithets on the wall of a mosque, shortly before Eid, the celebratory time marking the end of Ramadan, a time of prayer and fasting. Three men in their early twenties were arrested. Residents of the small community in which this occurred were outraged, saying that the diverse community has lived peacefully without such expressions of hatred.
- A gay pastor and his partner were attacked and robbed at gunpoint in a park by six male teens. The teens first asked them if they were gay.
- A former grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan shot to death three people—a grandfather and his grandson walking near a synagogue, and a resident of a senior citizen complex housing primarily Jewish individuals. As the shooter was led away by police, he shouted “Heil Hitler!”
- A 17-year-old Mexican immigrant on his way home from work as a busboy was beaten and robbed by three young men who shouted anti-Mexican epithets. This happened despite a heavy police presence in the area and was apparently the 11th time in a 3-month period that a hate crime task force had investigated such incidents.
Based on national statistics, hate crimes appear to account for a relatively small percentage of all criminal violence. However, documenting hate or bias crimes is difficult because the intentions of the offender are not always obvious or clear-cut. In addition, it is an enormous challenge to estimate accurately the prevalence of hate crimes because of varying statutes and methods of data collection across jurisdictions. Consequently, law enforcement agencies record hate crimes only when the investigation reveals facts sufficient to conclude that the offender's actions were bias motivated. Evidence most often used to support the existence of bias includes oral comments, written statements, or gestures made by the offender at the time of the incident, or drawings or graffiti left at the crime scene (Strom, 2001). In addition, there is tremendous state-to-state variation in the degree to which law enforcement officers are trained and encouraged to recognize and record hate crimes. In 2012, a total of 5,796 hate crime incidents were reported (FBI, 2013b). This figure represents a slight decrease from 2011.

Available data indicate that a majority of hate crimes are motivated by racial bias (48.3%), followed by sexual orientation bias (19.6%), religious bias (19%), ethnic/national origin bias (11.5%), and disability bias (1.6%) (FBI, 2013b). Only about 44% of hate crimes are reported to law enforcement (Office of Justice Programs, 2011), and sexual orientation hate crimes are the least likely to be reported by the victim. Religious-bias crimes usually target Jews (Cheng, Ickes, & Kenworthy, 2013). Anti-Islamic hate crimes escalated rapidly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, but have been decreasing since that time (Cheng et al., 2013). Anti-religion hate crimes are more likely to occur against property, whereas anti-racial and anti-sexual orientation hate crimes are more likely to occur against people and tend to be more severe, suggesting that different motives are involved in the crimes (Cheng et al., 2013).

Examples of a disability bias include biases against a person with AIDS, a mental disorder, or intellectual disability. Hate crimes on college campuses demonstrate a broad spectrum of criminal conduct, ranging from threats to sexual assaults to bombings. They occur at virtually every type of college or university and in every part of the country and are a significant problem on many campuses (Stotzer, 2010; Wessler & Moss, 2001).

Approximately two thirds of hate crimes are directed at individuals, whereas the remaining targets are businesses, religious institutions, or other institutions and organizations. More than 4 out of 5 violent hate crimes reported in the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) involve the victimization of a single individual within a single incidence (FBI, 2013b; Strom, 2001). The majority of persons (three fourths) suspected of committing hate crimes are white males. NIBRS data indicate that more than a third of persons arrested for hate crimes are younger than 18, and more than half are younger than age 25 at the time of arrest. Younger persons (younger than age 18) are more likely to be arrested for property-related offenses, such as vandalism, whereas older persons are more likely to be arrested for violent hate crime.

Hate crime violence appears to have its roots in an individual’s learned prejudice against particular social groups. This learned prejudice, combined with fear, can escalate into violence when a member of the prejudicial group believes his or her lifestyle is under attack. Interestingly, two thirds of those arrested for hate crimes reside in the locality in which the crime occurred (Strom, 2001).

Stalking: The Crime of Intimidation

Stalking is defined as “a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated physical or visual proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written, or implied threats sufficient to cause fear in a reasonable person” (Tjaden, 1997, p. 2). The term refers to

repeated and often escalating unwanted intrusions and communications, including loitering nearby, following or surveying a person’s home, making multiple telephone calls or other forms of unwanted direct and indirect communications, spreading gossip, destroying personal property, harassing acquaintances or family members, sending threatening or sexually suggestive “gifts” or letters, and aggressive and violent acts. (K. M. Abrams & Robinson, 2002, p. 468)

Stalking is as old as the history of human relationships, and yet it has only been within the past two decades that the behavior has been recognized as unlawful (Beatty, Hickey, & Sigmon, 2002). The release of films such as Fatal...
Attraction (Paramount Pictures, released 1987), Sleeping With the Enemy (20th Century Fox, released 1991), and Cape Fear (Universal Studios, released 1991) contributed to increasing salience about this problem in the minds of the public. Increased coverage by the news media of the stalking of celebrities (e.g., David Letterman, Rebecca Schaeffer) also led to stalking becoming a household term at the end of the 20th century. Today, attention has been directed to cyberstalking and a related phenomenon, cyberbullying.

Whether in person, over cell phones, or online, stalking is an extremely frightening, emotionally distressful, and depressing crime of intimidation. Not surprisingly, clinicians have discovered that the longer the duration of the stalking—regardless of whether the behaviors are intrusive, violent, or some combination of both—the greater the potential damage to the victim (McEwan, Mullen, & Purcell, 2007). Anti-stalking laws exist in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. Although most states define stalking in their statutes as the willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person, some include such activities as lying-in-wait, surveillance, nonconsensual communication, telephone harassment, and vandalism (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998a). Some states require that at least two stalking incidents occur before the conduct is considered criminal. With the rapid development of technology, the laws in some states have now added cyberstalking to their list of prohibited behaviors.

One of the most comprehensive studies on stalking was conducted by the Center for Policy Research and published in a monograph titled Stalking in America: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998b). The project, cosponsored by the National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was a nationally representative phone survey of 8,000 women and 8,000 men, 18 years or older. The survey was conducted between November 1995 and May 1996 and provides empirical data on the prevalence, characteristics, and consequences of stalking during that time period.

The survey found that 8% of women and 2% of men reported that they had been stalked at some point in their lives (Tjaden, 1997). In most instances, the stalking lasted less than 1 year, but some individuals were stalked for more than 5 years. According to the research reported by Mullen, Pathé, and Purcell (2001), however, repeated unwanted communications and imposed contacts that go on for more than 2 weeks are highly likely to last for months or even years. In one recent, extensive survey (National Crime Victimization Survey), 11% of the victims of stalking said they had been stalked for 5 years or more (Baum, Catalano, Rand, & Rose, 2009).

Researchers believe that the motives of most stalkers are to control, intimidate, or frighten their victims. The fears and emotional distress generated by stalking behavior are many and varied. About 1 in 5 victims feared bodily harm to themselves and 1 in 6 feared for the safety of a child or other family member (Baum et al., 2009). About 1 in 20 feared being killed by the stalker.

In the study referenced above (Baum et al., 2009), the stalker was male 87% of the time, and the victim was female 80% of the time. Eighty percent of the stalkers are believed to be white, at least 50% are between the ages of 18 and 35, and many earn above-average incomes. In most stalking incidents, the victims (particularly women) knew their stalker. Approximately half of the female victims were stalked by current or former marital or cohabiting partners, and a majority of these women (80%) had been physically assaulted by that partner either during the relationship, during the stalking episode, or both. In about a third of the cases, the stalkers vandalized the victim’s property, and about 10% of the time, the stalker killed or threatened to kill the victim’s pet. Only 7% of the victims thought their stalkers were mentally disordered, psychotic, crazy, or abusers of alcohol or drugs.

Another comprehensive study of stalking was cosponsored by the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (B. S. Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). The project involved a phone survey of 4,446 female students at 223 colleges and universities, conducted from February to May 1997. The primary screening question used to measure stalking was the following: “Since school began in fall 1996, has anyone—from a stranger to an ex-boyfriend—repeatedly followed you, watched you, phoned, written, e-mailed, or communicated with you in other ways that seemed obsessive and made you afraid or concerned for your safety?”

The key findings of the study were the following:

- Thirteen percent of the college women had been stalked since the school year began.
- Of the victims, 80.3% knew or had seen their stalker before.
• Stalking incidents lasted on average about 2 months.
• Thirty percent of the women reported being injured emotionally and psychologically from being stalked.
• In 10.3% of incidents, the victim reported that the stalker forced or attempted sexual contact.
• Overall, 83.1% of stalking incidents were not reported to police or campus law enforcement.

It should also be noted that some mental health professionals who deal regularly with persons having mental or emotional difficulties have become the victims of stalking by their clients (Gentile, Asamen, Harmell, & Weathers, 2002). According to Gentile et al., the stalkers of mental health professionals may be either single or divorced at the time of the stalking. The majority of these clients (62%) were diagnosed as having a mood disorder. In another survey, about 2 out of 3 university counselors had experienced some type of harassing behavior or stalking behavior from a current or former client (Romans, Hays, & White, 1996).

In an effort to better understand stalkers, some researchers have proposed typologies, or classification systems. One of the first systematic studies on stalkers was done by Zona, Sharma, and Lane (1993) in their work with the Los Angeles Police Department’s Threat Management Unit. These researchers developed a classification system that focused on individuals who stalked entertainment celebrities and divided stalkers into three behavioral clusters: (1) erotomanic, (2) love obsessional, and (3) simple obsessional (categories that will be defined shortly). A few years later, researchers shifted their focus from “star stalkers” to men who stalked their ex-partners (Emerson, Ferris, & Gardner, 1998; Kurt, 1995). Star stalkers were assumed to be predominately mentally disordered persons who were driven by delusions in their pursuit of their favorite celebrity, whereas ex-partner stalkers were seen as asserting their power over women through violence and intimidation (Mullen et al., 2007).

Mohandie, Meloy, Green-McGowan, and Williams (2006) studied a large sample of 1,005 male and female stalkers. They concluded that they could be grouped into four categories based on their relationship to the victim: (1) the Intimate stalker, who pursues a current or former sexual intimate; (2) the Acquaintance stalker, who pursues someone he or she knows but with whom he or she has not ever been sexually intimate; (3) the Public Figure stalker, who pursues a public figure with whom he or she has never had a relationship; and (4) the Private Stranger stalker, who pursues someone he or she has never met but is aware of because the victim is in the stalker’s environment (such as a neighbor or fellow college student). Mohandie et al. found that these groups had different violence rates, with the Intimate stalker being the most likely (74%) to use violence against his or her victim and the Public Figure stalker being the least likely (2%). Using the same data set, M. Meloy, Mohandie, and Green McGowan (2008) and M. Meloy and Mohandie (2008) have published studies focusing only on female stalkers.

Another often-cited stalking typology, one that focuses more on the motives for stalking than on the relationship between the stalker and his or her victim, was outlined by Beatty et al. (2002). It consists of four broad categories, the first three of which are similar to those proposed by Zona et al. (1993): (1) simple obsession stalking, (2) love obsession stalking, (3) erotomania stalking, and (4) vengeance stalking. The term obsession refers to recurrent ideas, thoughts, impulses, or images that a person tries to control or satisfy through various actions. It should be emphasized that this typology has not been validated by empirical research but should serve as a springboard for future research and hypothesis development. The following descriptions of the four stalker categories follow Beatty et al.’s definitions.

Simple obsession stalkers are the most common, accounting for 60% of the stalkers. They represent behavior that is a continuation of a previous pattern of domestic violence and psychological abuse in an intimate relationship. Consequently, the targeted victim is often a former spouse, and the majority of offenders are males. These stalkers appear to be more intelligent and better educated than most other stalkers (J. R. Meloy & Gothard, 1995). The stalking is hypothesized to be prompted by the offender’s feelings of low self-esteem and helplessness. Apparently, the offender increases his own self-esteem by demeaning and demoralizing his former spouse or partner and may take drastic steps if he perceives the victim is trying to remove herself from the controlling situation. Simple obsession is the category of stalking that is most likely to result in murder. It is very similar to the Intimate stalker described by Mohandie et al. (2006).

Love obsesion stalkers and their victims tend to be casual acquaintances, such as neighbors or coworkers, but such stalking may also involve complete strangers, such as a celebrity. The primary motivation of these stalkers is to establish a personal relationship with the targeted victim. Like simple obsession stalkers, these individuals may have
very low self-esteem and may be haunted by feelings of helplessness and depression. Presumably, these stalkers believe that by associating with persons who display exceptional qualities and high status, they can correspondingly raise their own levels of self-esteem and worthiness. Often, the love obsession stalker is so desperate to develop a relationship with the victim that he or she is willing to accept a negative or destructive relationship, sometimes resorting to violence in an effort to win the attention of the unwilling victim. A classic example of this type of stalker is John Hinckley, who was convinced he could win the love of actress Jodi Foster by shooting President Ronald Reagan.

Erotomania stalkers are considered highly delusional, and the offender is often plagued by serious mental disorders, most often schizophrenia. Erotomania stalkers believe that the relationship with their victim already exists, in contrast to the simple and love obsession stalkers. Erotomania stalkers are usually less dangerous to the victims, but their irrationality is troubling and unpredictable to the victims. The woman who stalked talk show host David Letterman for nearly 10 years illustrates this type of stalker. She apparently believed throughout that time that she was Letterman's wife and the mother of his child. She was discovered on his New Canaan, Connecticut, property on many occasions; was arrested driving his car; and sent him flowers and candy. Eventually, the troubled woman committed suicide by kneeling in front of a speeding train in Colorado.

Vengeance stalkers are quite different from the other three types because they do not seek a personal relationship with their targeted victims. Instead, these stalkers try to elicit a particular response—such as fear, or change of behavior such as moving to another area—from their victims. Vengeance is their prime motivation. An illustration of this kind of stalker is when an employee who is fired from his job begins to stalk and harass the supervisor who he believes is responsible for the firing, in hopes of ruining the supervisor's life.

When Does Stalking Usually Stop?

What terminates stalking? Some stalkers stop pursuing their current victim when they find a new “love” interest. About 18% of the victims in the Center for Policy Research Survey (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998b) indicated that the stalking stopped when stalkers entered into a relationship with a new person. Law enforcement interventions also seem to help. Fifteen percent of victims said the stalking ceased when their stalkers received a warning from the police. Interestingly, more formal interventions such as arrest, conviction, or restraining orders do not appear to be very effective—perhaps serving to antagonize the stalker. When it comes to persistent, frightening stalking that creates risks to personal safety, the survey suggests that the most effective method to stop it may be for the victim to relocate as far away from the offender as possible, providing no information of the person's whereabouts to the stalker or to individuals who might communicate that information. Victims of stalking should not be expected to bear the burden of such an impractical approach, however.

Predictions of Violence in Stalking Cases

Many stalking victims want to know the likelihood that they will become the victim of a violent act (Rosenfeld & Harmon, 2002). According to Rosenfeld and Harmon, “Determining which stalkers represent a significant risk of violence, and differentiating those individuals from the remaining offenders who may pose less risk of physical harm, has clear and significant implications for victims, clinicians, and the legal system” (p. 685). Recall that Mohandie et al. (2006) found that intimate stalkers had the highest rate of violence in their four groups.

In an effort to identify features that may differentiate violent stalkers from nonviolent stalkers, Rosenfeld and Harmon (2002) analyzed 204 stalking and harassment cases referred for court-ordered mental health evaluations in New York City. Results supported the findings of previous researchers (e.g., Palarea, Zona, Lane, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999) who found that former spouses or intimates of stalkers were most at risk.

Specifically, intimate stalkers threatened persons and property (including physical violence toward the victim), were more likely to “make good” on their threats by following them with some form of violent behavior, and used more physical approach behaviors in contacting their victims than non-intimate stalkers. These results illustrate the importance of accounting for the presence of an intimate relationship when assessing for violence risk in stalking cases. (Palarea et al., 1999, p. 278)
Violent threats and drug abuse also appear to be significant predictors of stalking violence. Rosenfeld and Harmon (2002) also found that variables such as the stalker’s prior criminal history and previous violent behavior did not emerge as good predictors of violence. This was surprising because Palarea et al. reported that a history of violence was the strongest predictor in their data. McEwan, Mullen, MacKenzie, and Ogloff (2009) also found that stalkers who are rejected ex-intimates, who have a history of violent behavior, and who have made threats, present the greatest risk of violence. The differences between the studies, however, may be due to the fact that Rosenfeld and Harmon (2002) had access to much more information—official records of arrest and convictions as well as stalker self-reports and victim reports—than the Palarea group did. Palarea et al. used data obtained from 223 police files maintained by the LAPD. Consequently, the difference between the two studies might be a function of the quality and quantity of the data collected. Research so far has not indicated that psychiatric history is associated with violence against persons or property. Quite possibly, though, if the stalkers were divided into an empirically based typology, more significant results in this regard might be forthcoming.

Some research suggests that juvenile stalkers may be more dangerous and violent than adults. In an investigation of 299 juvenile stalkers, Purcell, Moller, Flower, and Mullen (2009) found that juveniles participated in higher levels of threats and violence than typically found in adult stalking. Over half of the victims (54%) of juvenile stalkers were physically attacked, some sustaining significant injuries, and another 2% were sexually assaulted resulting in serious injury. These data indicate that juvenile stalkers prefer a more direct means of contact with their victims, mostly via unwanted approaches or unsolicited phone calls, e-mails, or text messages. According to Baum et al. (2009), about 1 in 4 adult victims reported having experienced some form of cyberstalking, such as e-mail (83%) or instant messaging (35%).

**Cyberstalking**

Cyberstalking is analogous to traditional forms of stalking in that it incorporates persistent behaviors that engender apprehension and fear. However, with the advent of new technologies, traditional stalking has taken on entirely new forms through media like e-mail, text messaging, and social networking. It is possible that such incidents may be more common than traditional forms of stalking. This is because the basic apparatus of the Internet facilitates not only anonymity but also contact with an immense field of potential victims. Cell phones and the Internet have provided far-reaching and unregulated opportunities for cyberstalkers to harass unsuspecting victims. In addition, there is a considerable amount of personal information available through the Internet, and cyberstalkers can easily and quickly locate private information about a target.

Unsolicited e-mail is one of the most common forms of harassment, including hate, obscene, or threatening mail. Other forms of harassment include sending the victim computer viruses or high volumes of electronic junk mail (spamming). Electronic stalking can result from an attempt to initiate a relationship, repair a relationship, or threaten and traumatize a person. It is often accompanied by traditional stalking such as threatening phone calls, vandalism of property, threatening mail, and physical attacks (Gregorie, 2000).

**Peer Bullying**

During the past two decades, “peer victimization, and especially bullying, has become recognized as a pervasive and often neglected problem in school around the world” (Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, 2013, p. 138). In one national survey, 28% of adolescents in the United States reported being victims of bullying at school during the past year (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2012). Other studies have found very similar results (Faris & Felmlee, 2011b). In addition, bullying is pervasive in elementary schools, middle school, high school, and the workplace. Bullying, then, is not limited to children and adolescents.

Bullying is a form of peer aggression in which one or more individuals physically, verbally, or psychologically harass a victim who is perceived to be weaker. Examples of physical bullying include hitting, spitting, kicking, punching, pushing, or taking or destroying personal items. Verbal bullying includes name calling, taunting, malicious teasing, and verbal threats. Psychological bullying is spreading destructive or mean rumors and engaging in social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation. Very often, those who bully have been victims of bullying themselves.
Bullying can adversely affect all students in a particular school, even if they are not direct victims (Cornell et al., 2013; Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). More specifically, "Bystanders may have various roles that range from assisting and reinforcing the bully to being frightened and experiencing vicarious victimization" (Cornell et al., 2013, p. 139). Bullying affects the entire climate of the school. Researchers have found that widespread bullying creates a school environment of fear and insecurity, reduces school attendance, and results in poor academic performance and dedication to schoolwork (Glew, Fan, Katon, & Rivara, 2008; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). As a result of chronic bullying, victims often suffer psychological problems, including depression, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts (T. Shaw, Dooley, Cross, Zubrick, & Waters, 2013). Many of these problems may continue into adulthood.

Rather than focusing on the personality traits of those who bully or are bullied, Faris and Felmlee (2011b), in a very important study, investigated the social networks in which bullying takes place. The authors argue that the role of personal deficiencies in bullying is overstated. Rather, it is the role of peer status that often leads to bullying and peer-directed aggression. The results of their study revealed that, “for the vast majority of adolescents, increases in status are, over time, accompanied by increases in aggression toward their peers” (p. 67). Their findings indicate that bullying does not emerge from isolated adolescents who are on the fringes of the school hierarchy, but rather occurs most often among relatively popular young people seeking additional status—in other words, students at the mid levels of status. A very similar finding is reported by Reijntjes and his associates (2013). High amounts of bullying were significantly related to high social status as measured by perceived popularity. Apparently, in some peer circles, aggression and bullying are a way of gaining status among that specific group of adolescents. Interestingly, Faris and Felmlee found that once bullies gained the top status level, their aggression and bullying generally stopped or were greatly reduced.

Adolescents who engage in cyberbullying or other forms of bullying are unlikely to target strangers but often select those peers with whom they previously had close relationships. Both girls and boys engaged in bullying, but in slightly different ways. Girls were less likely to use direct forms (verbal harassment or physical violence) but somewhat more likely to spread rumors and ostracize (Faris & Felmlee, 2011b). Girls, however, were more likely to be victimized.

Studies also show that bullying behaviors are partly maintained by the responses of those peers who witness the bullying (Salmivalli, Voeten, & Poskiparta, 2011). “Bystanders are present for 80% of bully incidents, and therefore can influence the bullying situation by promoting or reducing bullying” (Banks, Blake, & Joslin, 2013, p. 10). Studies continually show that bystanders that defend victims have the greatest likelihood of decreasing bullying. Consequently, research that focuses on the prevention of and intervention in bullying has shifted toward recognizing bullying as a group process (Howard, Landau, & Pryor, 2014). That is, the bully is often reinforced by the peer-group dynamics that occur during the episode. For example, peers spend a majority of the time watching the bullying incident and try not to get involved (O’Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Experts believe that passively watching the behavior sends a message to the bully that the bystanders approve of his or her actions. Only about 17% of peers try to defend the victim (Howard et al., 2014). More importantly, “When peers do intervene, either by actively defending the victim or aggressing against the bully, a majority of these efforts have proven effective” (Howard et al., 2014, p. 266).

Psychologists, particularly school psychologists and other school personnel, can help greatly in reducing peer bullying by educating students that peers are central to occurrence, maintenance, and escalation of that bullying. Howard et al. (2014) warn, however, that bullying-prevention programs cannot be applied without careful consideration of the individual differences among students. Failure to appreciate and address the important differences in how children and adolescents respond to bullying will lead to only partial success in bullying reduction. As noted by Banks et al. (2013), many students may choose not to defend for fear of stigmatization or rejection by peers, whereas others may defend intermittently because the bully is their friend or simply because they assume someone else will speak up first on behalf of the victim. (p. 10)

In addition, most parents discuss how their children should respond to bullying, which also influences whether and how bystanders intervene. Studies reveal that children whose parents tell them not to become involved in the bullying incident are more likely to just watch or even join in the bullying (Banks et al., 2013; T. N. Sullivan et al., 2012; Traube et al., 2007).
The above findings suggest that parents should also be involved in bully-intervention programs. A study conducted by Ttofi and Farrington (2011) confirmed this approach. The researchers discovered that anti-bullying interventions that included the training of parents on how to handle bullying reduced both school bullying and victimization.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Violence, the definition of which indicates that it requires some display of physical force, is essentially atypical human behavior when we compare it with the vast amount of human behavior that is nonviolent. Nonetheless, it remains a fascinating area of study as well as a pervasive aspect of popular culture. In fact, as we saw in this chapter, the increasingly violent images in the media have prompted research studies that in turn have led to calls for limiting the exposure of children—particularly young children—to these images. We saw that aggression, a construct frequently studied by psychologists, does not necessarily result in the physical force that we defined as violence. In addition, society actually condones some forms of violence, which further complicates any attempts to prevent it, predict it, or treat those who display violence or who are its victims.

The chapter focused primarily on criminal violence as it is defined in the law and in crime statistics. The four Part I violent crimes—murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery—together comprise about one third of the total Part 1 crimes committed. Persons arrested for these crimes are predominantly male (87–90%), although the violent crime rate for females began to increase faster than the male rate in the 1990s. Women continue to appear in arrest statistics far less often than men, however, a phenomenon for which a variety of explanations has been proposed. The most common explanations relate to either socialization or biological differences.

Race and ethnic differences in violent crime have received greater attention, and these differences are among the most troubling to researchers and policy makers alike. African Americans, particularly males, continue to make up a disproportionate part of official statistics on violent crime. The chapter emphasized that numerous social factors can explain these differentials and warned against attributing any biological factors to the differences.

We also cautioned against focusing on one racial group to the exclusion of others, noting that researchers are beginning to explore differences among ethnic groups. Psychologists and criminologists as a group often discuss violence as being instrumental, or reactive-expressive, or some combination of both. Studies suggest that the great majority of criminal violence—including homicide—is instrumental. Offenders commit the crime to achieve a particular goal, be it material goods, recognition, or political change. Psychologists and criminologists also have explored biological, social, cognitive, and situational factors as explanations for violent behavior. At present, it appears that a combination of all four categories of factors is the best way to approach the study of violence. However, we emphasize that, although some researchers have found biological links to aggression, any biological predisposition can be attenuated (or lessened) with careful attention to social, cognitive, and situational factors. To use one example, the social environment of a child who is highly aggressive as the result of some brain damage can be modified to make it less likely that that child will display violent behavior.

The chapter covered criminal homicide, the violent crime that is the least frequent but has received considerable research attention. The typical homicide is the single killing committed either in the course of another felony—most often a robbery—or committed against a relative or acquaintance. Young adult males are the most likely perpetrators of these single murders. Atypical murders—particularly those that qualify as multiple murders (serial, spree, and mass murders)—have most fascinated and frightened the public. We discussed in detail both serial and mass murderers because they have received the most research attention.

Serial murderers—so called because of the time interval between their killings—generally begin their murderous behavior at a later age than single murderers. Most are male, but their victims may be male or female—they generally show a preference for one or the other. Although there is no “serial murderer personality” or profile, serial murderers
as a group appear to be persuasive and to delude their victims into thinking that they pose no danger to them. Serial murderers as a group are not mentally disordered in the traditional sense; that is, they do not fit traditional diagnostic categories of mental illness, although some qualify as criminal psychopaths. In some typologies of serial murderers, however, one type does display psychotic behavior.

Mass murderers—who kill three or more individuals during one incident—are generally divided into classic and family types, but a terrorist mass murder type should also be added. Although there are highly publicized illustrations of mass murders in public places, most mass murders seem to be family murders. When the perpetrator is a member of the family, he or she is also likely to commit suicide in conjunction with the incident. Compared with serial murderers, mass murderers are more likely to be isolated, disenchanted, and ineffective individuals whose crime is precipitated by what they perceive as a tragic loss, such as abandonment by a significant other or loss of employment.

Violence in schools and in the workplace has attracted intense media attention. Although school shootings are statistically rare in light of the vast number of schools in the United States, they continue to occur with regularity. Even when only one life is lost, the tragedy touches the entire community. No one profile of a school shooter exists, but researchers have identified some common features as well as “red flags” that may alert school officials. When an individual student is believed to pose a threat, mental health practitioners may be asked to conduct a threat assessment. Workplace violence includes homicides, but the vast majority of workplace violence incidents do not end in death. In fact, most of these incidents are not actually violence but rather threats of violence. Forensic psychologists have critical roles, not only in alerting employers to potentially violent individuals in the workplace, but also in facilitating a working environment that fosters acceptance and cooperation among all employees. However, a substantial portion of workplace violence is committed by outsiders or by former workers or supervisors.

The chapter ended with a discussion of bias crimes, stalking, and bullying. Of these, bias crimes qualify more directly as criminal violence, if the underlying offense is a violent crime—and data indicate that in the majority of cases, it is. The number of bias crimes reported nationwide does not seem overwhelming, but we cautioned that many bias crimes likely go unreported to police. In addition, police agencies vary greatly in the extent to which they enforce bias crime statutes or record bias crimes.

Stalking was sometimes referred to as the crime of the 1990s. Its traditional form—following, sending mail, or telephoning victims—is now supplemented by cyberstalking, which is stalking via electronic communication. Researchers have proposed typologies of stalkers that are similar to the typologies proposed for serial killers and mass murderers. One very recent typology is that proposed by Beatty et al. (2002), who describe simple, love obsession, erotomania, and vengeance stalking. Although not violent in itself, stalking (whether in traditional or online form) engenders fear—sometimes debilitating fear—in its victims. An undetermined percentage of stalkers do ultimately exhibit violent behavior. For the forensic psychologist, this is another illustration of the risk assessment enterprise discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 that is such an essential component of many clinical practices. We discussed recent efforts to distinguish between those stalkers who are likely to be violent and those who will cease their stalking behavior without harming their victims. At present, it appears that victims who are former intimate partners of the stalker are most at risk of being physically harmed. Past violent behavior does not appear to be a strong predictor of violence associated with stalking, but the research is somewhat inconsistent on this point and needs further attention.

Psychologists, particularly those consulting with schools, have been concerned with bullying, including cyberbullying, in recent years, in light of evidence that this is an increasing problem, particularly among children and adolescents. Research suggests a complex interaction between bullying and being bullied; adolescents who bully others were often bullied themselves in their childhoods, so early detection and prevention are crucial aspects to be considered. Bullying also may be used as a means of gaining status among some peers; when the status is achieved, the bullying behavior no longer continues. Recent research on bullying indicates that both peer intervention (encouraging peers to speak out against it) and adequate parental education about bullying represent the most effective means to address this problem.
KEY CONCEPTS

Aggression
Biological factors
Bullying
Cognitive factors
Criminal homicide
Cyberstalking
Erotomania stalkers
Ethnocentrism
Hate Crime Statistics Act
Hate or bias crimes
Hedonistic type
Instrumental violence
Leakage
Love obsession stalkers
Manslaughter
Mass murder
Mission-oriented type
Murder
National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

Observational learning
Power-control killer
Reactive or expressive violence
Safe School Initiative (SSI)
School shootings
Serial murder
Simple obsession stalkers
Situational factors
Socialization factors
Spree murder
Stalking
Threat assessment
Vengeance stalkers
Violence
Violence Against Women Act
Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP)
Visionary type
Workplace violence

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What are the four categories of the causes of violence discussed in the psychological literature?
2. Provide illustrations of gender, race, and ethnic differences in violence.
3. Summarize the negative effects of constant viewing of violence in the media.
4. Distinguish among single murder, serial murder, mass murder, and spree murder.
5. List and define the typologies of serial killers.
6. What are the two major types of mass murder?
7. Why is the term workplace violence somewhat of a misnomer?
8. Describe the four major categories of workplace violence.
9. Define hate or bias crime and tell how the criminal justice system has responded to these crimes.
10. List any five findings from the research on (a) stalking and (b) bullying.