

BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY

STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE

Research has shown that the vast majority of people who are violent do not suffer from mental illnesses, and that mental illness is responsible for a very small proportion of violence.

Studies indicate that some symptoms of psychiatric illness, such as paranoid ideas and command hallucinations, rather than the diagnosis itself, appear to increase the risk of violent behaviour.

However, appropriate psychiatric treatment has been shown to reduce the risk of violence, so when people are treated they are no more likely to be violent than the general public.

“The violence issue among individuals with schizophrenia is a treatment issue, nothing more nor less.”

— E. Fuller Torrey

References

Friedman, Richard A. “Violence and Mental Illness—How Strong is the Link?” *New England Journal of Medicine* November (2006) <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/355/20/2064>

Mullen, Paul E. “Schizophrenia and violence: from correlations to preventive strategies.” *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* 12: 239-248 (2006) The Royal College of Psychiatrists <http://apt.rcpsych.org/misc/terms.shtml>

National Mental Health Association Position Statement, Violence in America: A Community Mental Health Response – *Voices Vs. Violence*. MHA Program Series, Vol. 1, National Health Association (1995) <http://www.healthieryou.com/vvmi.html>

Torrey, E. Fuller. “Violence and schizophrenia.” *Schizophrenia Research* Vol. 88, Issue 1-3, Pages 3-4 (2006) <http://www.psychlaws.org/GeneralResources/110006SchizophreniaResearch.htm>