

# Shooting in Tucson: Curbing future incidents

By **Melissa Sullebarger**  
Staff Writer

On Jan. 8, Jared Laughner, a student from Prima College in Tucson, Arizona fired into a crowd, killing seven of those gathered to see Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, and injuring at least 20 others.

Were these the actions of a determined political extremist, or a disturbed young man who needed help? As the knowledge about Laughner grows, it seems less and less likely that he was working toward any particular political goal; in fact if one watches the videos on his Youtube channel and reads his blog posts, it becomes clear that this man needed help, and somehow slipped between the cracks.

The question this incident has brought up in college campuses across the nation is one pertaining to the mental health policies in place at said colleges. Is there any way to identify an individual in this situation before it goes too far?

College health professionals can assist those students who approach them, those who know that they need help, but there are many others as this situation shows, who do not step forward to ask for the help they may benefit from. But whether or not they can be helped is unclear, as no college could ever institute a policy of reporting any student that seems "strange," and forcing them to speak to a healthcare professional.

Sophomore psychology major Michelle

Svendsen believes the responsibility lies in the hands of the people closest to an individual to prevent situations like these from happening. "It's not the college's fault, his friends and family could have seen the signs," Svendsen said, "If a college did screening for every student, people would refuse, or it's easy to lie through things like that. Only a few people go to our depression screenings every year, no one would be willing to go through with a mental health screening if it were put in place."

Many, however, disagree with Svendsen, and this shooting is causing some Colleges and Universities to host discussion and consider new policies for dealing with such problems.

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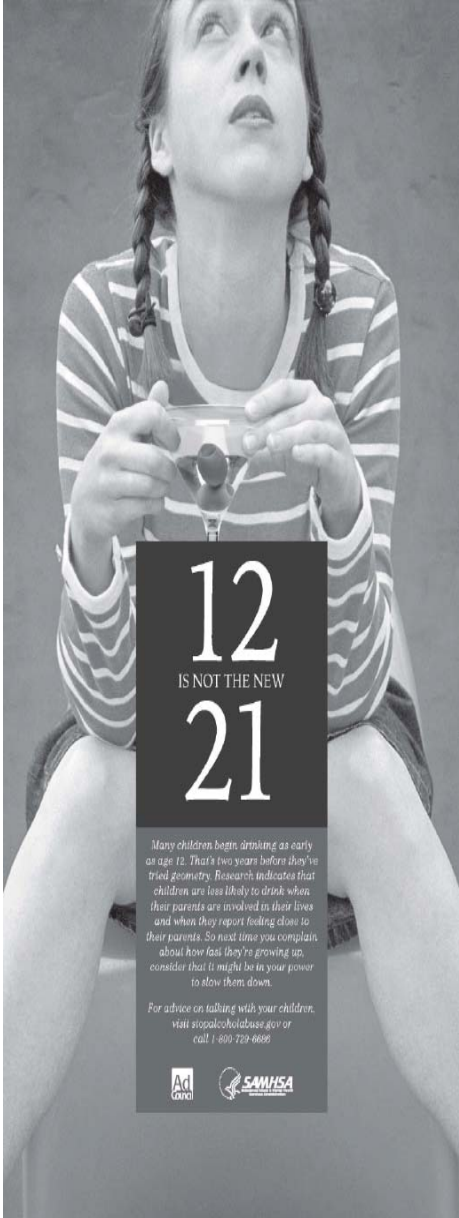
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