

# Stop Gun Violence: Step 4: Listen To And Share Stories

## Step 4: Listen to and Share Stories

Lift Every Voice Stop Gun Violence Minicourse  
Denver, CO Stop Gun Violence Minicourse Step 1:  
Connect to the Problem: Gun Violence Black Lives Matter,  
DC Stop Gun Violence Minicourse Step 2: Compare  
and Evaluate Case Studies Boulder, Colorado  
Stop Gun Violence Minicourse Step 3: Analyze the Data  
Atlanta, Georgia Stop Gun Violence Minicourse  
Step 4: Listen to and Share Stories Sandy Hook, CT  
Stop Gun Violence Minicourse Step 5: Read Proposals  
and Listen to Speeches Charleston, SC Stop  
Gun Violence Minicourse Step 6: Develop, Present, and  
Advocate for Your Proposal El Paso, TX Stop  
Gun Violence Minicourse Step 7: Discuss and Debate the  
Proposals Parkland, FL Stop Gun Violence  
Minicourse Step 8: Lift Your Voice: Cast Your Votes  
You can click on any of the slides above to go to that Step.

### 4.1. Introduction to Step 4: Listen to and Share Stories

In Step 4, the objective is to further deepen our understanding of the impact of the gun violence crisis by listening to the stories of victims, survivors, and frontline workers. In Step 2, you explored six case studies. Now, in

Step 4, our goal here is to understand the stories of the people in these case studies with a focus on the values that have helped them cope with and hopefully overcome these experiences.

We first introduce you to the eight *Lift Every Voice* Democratic Values (You may already know these if you have taken the Democratic Values Minicourse.) Having reviewed these values, we're asking you to think about which values were most important to the people in these stories and then you can share a gun violence related story of your own. It can be about something you or someone you know has experienced, or it can be a moving story you have heard or read. Again think about the value(s) embedded in your story and tell us why that value(s) was important to you.

## **4.2. Step 4 Questions**

**What can we learn from listening to the stories of victims, survivors, and frontline workers?**

**What values were most important to the people in these stories:**

**What is your story of gun violence—a story of your own experience or a story you have heard or reading about that has influenced you?**

**What values are most important to you?**

## 4.3. Step 4 Democratic and Academic Competencies

### Listen to Gun Violence Stories, Share Your Stories



- Listen to stories about gun violence.
- Share your own story about gun violence.

### Apply Democratic Values



- Learn about democratic values: love, freedom, equality, justice, truth, care for nature, peace, and democracy.
- Analyze what values were most important to the persons in the gun violence case studies.

## Express Your Point of View of Gun Violence



- Express your own thoughts and feelings about gun violence.
- Explain which democratic values are most important to you.

## 4.4. Introduction to Democratic Values

In this Step 4.2, we introduce you the *Lift Every Voice* Democratic Values. If you have already studied them in the Democratic Values Minicourse, you can skip over this Step.

Just below is a slider that briefly presents the eight values and then after that there is a Sway that explains them in more depth. In Step 4.3, you will try to identify what values have been most important to helping people cope with and overcome this pandemic.

## 4.5. Listen to The Stories

Take some time to find a quiet space and then listen to these stories. Some are very, very sad. Some are very uplifting. Some get to the meaning of our lives on this shared planet. After listening to these stories, you can share your own stories if you wish. They could be about your own experience or they could be about persons you've heard about or they could be your response to one of the stories in this collection below. For now, just listen and empathize.

### My Experience of Gun Violence in Boston



BOSTON – JANUARY 22, 1993: A grief-stricken mourner is helped from the Blessed Sacrament Church in Jamaica Plain yesterday as pallbearers remove the casket of Axel Reyes, 16, following his funeral. The English High freshman was fatally shot last week during a fight on the MBTA's Orange Line. (Photo by David L. Ryan/The Boston Globe via Getty Images)

This was my next door neighbor. This was the reason I started getting involved in ways to prevent gun violence.

[Click here](#) to hear my story about this event.



## **The Beginning of *Voices of Love and Freedom***

This is a picture of me in the early 1990s coaching teachers how to use the program I was developing back then called “Voices of Love and Freedom”. It sought to help students to tell their stories of love and freedom as a way to prevent youth violence.

### **Case Study #1: The Columbine Shooting: Stories (April 20, 1999)**

### **Case Study #2: Chicago Police Shooting of Laquan McDonald: Stories (Oct. 20, 2014)**

### **Case Study #3: Parkland School Shooting: Stories (Feb. 14, 2018)**

### **Case Study #4: Highland Ranch STEM High**

## **School: Stories (May 7, 2019)**

## **Case Study #5: Capitol Insurrection: Stories (Jan 6, 2021)**

## **Case Study #6: Atlanta Spa Shootings: Stories (March 21, 2021)**

# **4.6. Gun Violence Related Trauma and Storytelling**

## **Starting with Storytelling**

As you can tell from listening to my story above, I started “Voices of Love and Freedom” as a way to help students to tell the stories of their experiences with all types of youth violence, including gun violence.

Sharing stories of youth violence is one way to express our thoughts and feeling about those events and to gain understanding and insight into what happened. Listening to others share similar stories also helps to put your own experience into perspective and provides a way to learn different ways of coping with grief and trauma.

Hopefully, through sharing stories, we can gain the knowledge and insight needed to not only cope with violence in our own lives but also to begin to take control of our lives and advocate ways to solve these types of social problems.

## **Extending to Speeches**

Over the years, we have learned that it’s important to not only learn to tell and share stories but also to learn how to use our voices to deliver speeches advocating ways to solve major social issues.

So there is a spectrum to learning to use our voices that extends from storytelling, to role playing, to negotiating, to compromising, to explaining, and to persuading.



## Many Types of Stories and Response

In this Step 3, we are asking you to share many different types of stories, including:

- stories of being a victim of gun violence
- stories where you were a witness of gun violence
- stories where you have heard about gun violence but did not witness it
- your responses to stories you have seen on TV or read about in the paper
- your responses to the stories you will read about and listen to below

## Only Share What You Are Comfortable Sharing

Above all, only share what you are comfortable sharing.

**Add hotline numbers.**

## 4.7. What Values Are Most Important to the Persons in These Stories?

After listening to these stories, what value(s) are most important to these persons? Share your thoughts and reasons in your Stop Gun Violence Portfolio.

[Click here to go to Stop Gun Violence Forum: Topic 2; Most Important Values?](#)

## 4.8. Share Your Own Story

After you have listened to the stories and thought about what values inspired these people, share a story of yours. It could be a story about you or someone you know, or it could be a



story that you heard about that inspired you. Be sure to explain the value(s) that are embedded in your story. Be sure to respond to the stories of the other students.

## **4.9. Next Steps**

In this Step, the objective is to develop empathy and understanding for the people directly and indirectly affected by gun violence. These stories tell us the real impact and personal costs of gun violence. They also tell us about the values that have these person survive or cope with the crisis. Keep these stories in mind as you begin to develop your own ideas about how to stop gun violence.

What values are going to guide your proposal?

How do you propose to address the situation of the people you have been listening to in this step?

The next step is to listen to speeches and proposals of persons who are advocating ways to stop gun violence.

After listening to and reading a broad set of proposals, then you will have the opportunity to develop, write down, and present your own proposal. 4

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