Transcript

00:00:00 Zenga

On October 24th, a man entered central visual and performing Arts school with a gun. CVPA shares a building with another school, collegiate School of Medicine and Bioscience, where I go.Two people were killed and several others were injured.After this incident, the students and faculty at CVPA and CSMB were deeply changed, not just those that were killed or injured physically, but mentally. Mental health declined. We fell behind on our classwork. But these impacts radiated farther than just the school community. In this project I talked to several friends who were there with me during the shooting and another friend who is not a part of the school. I wanted to examine the long-term impacts of shootings that are often overlooked has become clear that this experience. What has become clear is that this experience has rocked more than just the approximately 600 people in the schools that day but many, many more.

00:00:43 Zenga

Can you tell me your name and one fun fact about yourself?

00:00:47 Ella

Ok, yes, my name is Ella and I’m from Montana, not Missouri.

00:00:56 Zenga

OK. So today, we're going to be talking about the shooting and I just wanted to talk about like the impacts of the shooting, emotionally, physically, I don’t know, anything you want to tell me about that. So what do you think were the biggest impacts on either CSMB students as a whole, CVPA students, the community, yourself?

00:01:21 Ella

Well, I mean, we could go to the extreme, OK, which is like, literally, people died. People were, like, so injured that like. Dancers cannot dance.

00:01:35 Zenga

Yeah, I think one of the more crushing things is like people's passions being eradicated, whether from physical injuries or just like mental illness afterwards.

00:01:46 Ella

Our school building kind of was like torn apart. It wasn't our school. Like it was, but it wasn't.

00:01:58 Zenga

Yeah I think that also like the guilt from that is a big part of the impact that it's had on CSMB. And just like the realization that, yes, this was very, very scary, this was very, very terrifying and traumatizing. We also weren’t even the school there was being targeted.

00:02:15 Ella

We didn't even have, like, the worst impacts like. Like none of us were injured, like none of like, our side of the building wasn't harmed. Yes, Alix, like, died on our side. And like we did know, Coach K, the teacher who died was like our cross country coach like.

00:02:33 Zenga

Right.

00:02:34 Ella

Because we have, because we have so much overlap. Think that's a thing, one of the things that drives me crazy is that people don't realize the overlap. Like I think that you I totally agree that like there's a lot of like, guilt for like. Oh, we were just there, and now we're, like, taking that upon us like it's not. But like, I think there's also, like, there's a point where we have to recognize that, like, actually, we were really involved in this. Like, this was like. Like, not really, but like not really involved. We were involved in this like there was overlap like, again, like Coach K was our cross country coach like a bunch of our friends like were on the cross country team, we interact, I've interacted with her before. Like all of our, just in general like our schools like share multiple rooms share already share a space but like we share the cafeteria, we share the perch. We share our gyms, we share and then like, we share like clubs like as much as we are 2 separate schools, we also like, all of our like athletics teams, which are like a big deal for us except, but like all of our basketball teams, our track and cross country teams, our even our speech and debate team was we were starting to get cvpa kids that they left. Like I mean, one of our coaches was one of the is the English, one of the English teachers.Yeah, I think there's like, yeah.

00:04:21 Zenga

Would you say that one of the impacts from the shooting is just like a separation like you, said that, some of the speech and debate kids from CVPA left.

00:04:29 Ella

Yeah, like the two schools, like kind of like torn apart, you know. I mean, yeah. I think like. Yeah, like there's kind of been like, there's been some disconnect in like areas. There's been some connection in others. But like I feel like mainly it's just been disconnect like like I feel like hmm. We lost Club members, we've put up a wall between the two schoo. Like, literally, there's been a lot of disagreements about, like whether or not like we actually get to say, ohh we survive this school shooting like or like whether or not like it didn't really affect us or like I think it's really also interesting to look at the administrative like administration and their like different responses because like, I don't know. There's been like, it's just like very interesting to look at that. Like see how each teacher like cause I've I mean, like Miss Fisher, the English teacher that's on our speech and debate team like has had a very different experience than like Ms. Johnston.

00:05:48 Zenga

So because collegiate and CVPA share a school building, I think that we are very unique in the sense that we have a joint campus. How do you think that that has changed the outcome and the response to the school shooting?

00:06:05 Ella

Right, ok, I think that for one, again, there's been that isolation of like, OK, we now because of this in response we have to do this. Which I think is like I feel like it kind of ignores statistics. Statistically, once you have a school shooting, you are significantly less likely to ever have one again in the future. And I think like like we've obviously kind of upped our security game like we've done that. But I think part of that goal was to like, of security was to separate the two schools so that it's less of a shared campus. But I feel like we can't do that. I feel like that should not be the goal. I feel like part of it, too, is that we were trying to separate the two schools because, because again one got the brunt of the force, or the brunt of it and one got nothing, in a in a way. But I think that like I feel like that to just ignore that to to to deny that and to separate that, it's just like so. It feels kind of messed up and like frustrating that like Iwant to be able to grieve as well. I want to be able to grieve with these people. I want to be able to do that, but because like we are in such a unique situation it's just been more and more separation and like. Like for a really long time like we just like did not use the auditorium, we used the gym which is like or, yeah, the auditorium. Like the theater, OK. Couldn't remember what it's called UM. So I think, yeah, like that has really like affected like just the schools in general. And I feel like it's also like there's been a lot of denial from like outer perspectives, of like ohh you're the school that was where the shooting took place is CVPA, it's not our school. Like, there's so much misunderstanding of what actually kind of happened. And actually it was like if you read like, all of the articles, there's like the, the general like misconception, I guess that like yeah, we're on the same campus, but we don't share the same building and it's like no, actually we share the same building, we share the same clubs. Our field is the same, we again we share like main rooms. I feel like that's also important like if it was like OK, we shared like 2 classrooms that were like oh yeah, we use this for like this and this, but it's not that. No, we share our lunch room. We share our gyms, we share like big spaces where like and community spaces at that. So I think that like just that general response like and then the more that like we've kind of reflected upon that the more the response has been, we just have to separate us and I feel like that's like, totally messed up.

00:09:37 Zenga

Yeah, I think that there's also, I don't know, there's that level of guilt. But also the level of, but I'm still sad and I still need to grieve, and I still need to process these emotions, but I'm not allowing myself myself to because I don't believe that I was really like suffering or I don't believe that like this really occurred to me or something like that. I mean, that's one other detrimental thing. OK. My final question for you, ending on a positive note. How do you think that this experience has, like, allowed you to grow as a person?

00:10:17 Ella

Ok, well, I think it got me back in therapy. Which I probably needed to be in way before. Like I think while my mental health did take a turn for the worse, like in the winter afterwards, I think that like even if it hadn't like. I still would have been super depressed. So I think that like the the fact that like I feel like in the worst way it was a push to actually get me to like to where like I need to be. Yeah, there has been like that growth and I think that like there's been a lot of like trying to learn to have like grace with yourself and be like, Oh no, like I forgot that like we were in a school shooting. Yes, the school shooting has like long lasting mental and traumatic like effects and like whatever. But it goes. It's not just purely mental. It's also like an education can't be mental, but like it is like.

00:11:32 Zenga

Yeah, I know.

00:11:35 Zenga

OK, tell me your name and one fun fact about yourself.

00:11:38 Cozette

My name is Cozette Mothershead and I have a little kitten.

00:11:46 Zenga

That’s a good fun fact. OK. So we're going to talk about the shooting and I just want to ask you a couple of questions about that. My first question is what do you think the biggest impact was either on you or the school community of the shooting. I mean.

00:12:03 Cozette

So this impact was probably people dying, yeah, but I don't know. I feel like the year in general, feel like everyone that was involved in that has had it affect them like outside of that one event, you know, right it stays with you.

00:12:30 Zenga

How do you think the school environment has changed since the shooting?

00:12:38 Cozette

Well I mean, there was a lot of time off from school when we were in virtual and that's for sure shifted the school environment. But now that we're back, I don't know. I feel like it's just, I mean, there's definitely more guards. There’s definitely more things like that, but I really don't know what. I feel like the fear and stuff that I have it like random moments, like really like weirdly like randomly. It's kind of unconnected from, like the school environment, like I feel like, you know, the people around me, I don't feel unsafe around them. I'm not like, Oh my God, only whenever I'm alone, there's something where I'm like, ahh.

00:13:24 Zenga

Is there anything that you think that you learned from this experience, or did it teach you anything?Open your eyes to anything?

00:13:32 Cozette

Probably just how random it is. I mean, you know in all honesty I never thought it would have happened, you know, it's just like that type of thing where it doesn't feel real, until it literally happens to you. And I feel like from that is kind of, I don't know. I don't know if it's really a good thing, but kind of like how you have to really express your love for people, for sure, is what I kind of feel like is, I think with the people dying in the shooting is like I didn't know either of them. And in a way, it feels like I shouldn't be as affected by it as I was because I didn't know anyone that was harmed, and I wasn’t harmed. But I feel like a big part of it was just how random it was like, it could have been somebody that I knew it could have been me who died, like it could have been anybody. And I know that my parents and everyone around me was so freaking worried, like during that time. And I feel like. It really make me feel like, oh, there's so many people that care about me and there's some people that I care about, like in my life that I wouldn't want that to happen to. So yeah.

00:14:58 Zenga

I think that also contributes to like the fear factor, like the randomness thing is like, well, it could happen anywhere. Yeah, but yeah, definitely appreciating like being alive and having connections with other people, yeah.

00:15:15 Zenga

Can you tell me your name and one fun fact about yourself?

00:15:18 Sam

Yeah, hi, so I'm Sam and one fun fact about me is that I passed a super super fancy test, which means that I am basically biliterate, so that's pretty cool.

00:15:30 Zenga

Very fancy, very cool. OK. So today we're going to be talking about the shooting and kind of its impacts on you as someone who wasn't there but had friends and knew people who were in the building at the time. So my first question is, how did you find out about what was happening at the school that day?

00:15:50 Sam

So it was the end of first period, beginning of second period and I was sitting next to my friend and they were like, really sad, and I was kind of asking, like, “hey”, like, “what's up?” And they were like, there's a shooting at my neighbor’s school. And I didn't press any further I was like “oh my gosh, I'm here if you get anything” and I don't know, I guess, like this is awful to admit, but my first thought was kind of like that sucks for your neighbor, but I'm glad it's not anyone I know. You know, like that's horrible but it's it just isn't because it happens so often like that sort of desensitized like gratitude is just I'm not proud of it but that was my first thought.

00:16:34 Zenga

That makes sense

00:16:36 Sam

And I didn’t want to press him any further, right? I didn't want to like talk about it, if he was, you know down about it. So that's when I looked it up and saw that it was at CVPA where you guys share a building and like my heart sank. Yeah. So I I kind of just started like like just like just a sense of dread, just kind of washed over me. I started breathing pretty heavily like hyperventilating ish. I don't know. I just kind of took my phone just like walked out the room.

00:17:08 Zenga

So you mentioned that you were had that like sinking feeling of dread, I mean like what was your biggest fear?

00:17:21 Sam

I mean obviously like losing any of you guys, but it wasn't so much specifically like any individual of you?It was more like the fact that it was happening like my biggest fear was already happening, if that makes sense.

00:17:35 Zenga

Like just by it happening, like having any of us in danger.

00:17:40 Sam

Right. Yeah, that was almost more scary to me than anything. I guess that that was the fear. And it wasn't even just like, you know, you know, the four of you is are the ones I'm closest to. But I just my head start just racing with like all of the people who I know through debate or old school or church or whatever. Like I don't know. I know a lot of you guys just through random ways and it was just like MSA, you know, like, just spiraling just dozens of names. Just like going through my mouth I mean head I guess. And it was like, I don't know, it's just there are so, so many people that I just cared about who were in danger and it was really scary.

00:18:15 Zenga

What do you think your biggest like takeaways from this experience have been like after obviously this, like really traumatic event like, is there anything that you think that you learned or something that changed about you?

00:18:31 Sam

Take away is that it's not just about the actual deaths themselves like sure, none of the people that I knew were injured, physically were shot but the it's it's a community breaking, like it it's like you never, really heal from it. Right? So it's, I think that's also kind of what I've learned. It's not just a matter of just like like what you think matters. The thing that you think would be the most like.

00:19:08 Zenga

Impactful? Or like heart wrenching?

00:19:10 Sam

Heart wrenching, you'd think that you'd only really fee like that if it was someone you knew but it it's not like that at all. Like it it, the implications reach so, so far and are like lifelong. I guess that's kind of couple takeaways.

00:19:33 Zenga

Yeah, I think they definitely like dealing with the fallout afterwards and then having to deal with the fact that even if I was there and it was really scary for me I will never have that experience of being shot or I guess not now ever have that experience of being shot or knowing someone who was injured or killed like I didn't know either of the people who were killed and I didn't know any of the people who were injured and Despite that fact, like it's still, it’s heartbreaking. And you just gotta cry about it sometimes.

00:20:11 Sam

It definitely has helped me sort of put a face to like the whole movement of, like, gun violence and stuff like knowing someone who knowing so many people who are affected it's made me a lot more just unable to accept things not changing.

00:20:36 Zenga

Through this project, it has become clear how incredibly heart wrenching the reality of shootings in America are, and also how much impact they really have, not just on those in the building at the time. This event, however, has taught people things. It has compelled people to take action. It has taught people how to better connect with the people they love. Ultimately, through all of the trauma and hard times it has created, it has brought us greater connection.