

NATIONAL INDEX FINDS WE ARE HURTING EACH OTHER LESS-- BUT HURTING OURSELVES MORE

North Manchester, IN --- December 10, 2004 - The National Index of Violence and Harm (NIVAH) reveals although we are hurting each other less, we are hurting ourselves more. While "Interpersonal" street crime continued to drop (though at a slower pace than before) "Intrapersonal" self-inflicted harm, such as drug deaths and suicide, has increased. We are also hurting each other less through societal "structural" forces that affect quality of life, as well as through societal "institutions" such as government, corporations, and family. The chart below presents these categories and the nineteen indicators of violence and harm in the U.S. that fall within them.

NIVAH researcher Heidi Gross concludes "While it is encouraging to see the general decline of interpersonal crime, we as a society need to examine why more Americans are dying from acts of self-harm. A climate which drives people to self-destructive behavior is something we need to all work together to change."

Manchester College researchers have been gathering NIVAH data yearly from 1995-2002. As the chart again indicates, the index is divided into two broad categories of violence and harm. The Personal Index includes (a) interpersonal, e.g., homicide, battery, and robbery; and (b) intra-personal, e.g., suicide or deaths by substance abuse. The Societal Index includes harm caused by (a) government, e.g., death by police intervention; (b) corporations, for instance air pollution; and (c) families, such as child abuse. It also includes harm resulting from the structuring of society, for instance poverty or discrimination.

Besides examining overall trends, it is important to look at specific variables within the index which caused some of the overall change. For example, drug deaths increased to 26,018 in 2002, compared to 21,683 deaths in 2001. While not as dramatic, the rate of suicides and self-inflicted injuries increased by 2.3% in 2002.

While harm to oneself increased in 2002, data drawn from the FBI crime index (homicide, sexual offenses, battery, robbery, and reckless behavior) showed mixed results with two of these increasing, two decreasing, and one staying the same. Overall, these violent crimes dropped slightly in 2002.

In contrast to the small drop in interpersonal violence, the Societal Index dropped sharply, with particular indicators leading the way. Domestic violence decreased from 48.8 incidences per 100,000 population in 2001, to 47.6 in 2002. There was also a large decrease in high school drop-out rate in 2002, moving from 4.7 per 100,000 students in 2001 to just 3.3 in 2002. Roughly 40,000 fewer students dropped out of grades 10 through 12 in 2002. A third significant decrease was in harm resulting from law enforcement, led by a drop in cases of abuse and misconduct—down from 97 in 2001 to 59 in 2002.

A large drop in hate crimes was observed in 2002. In 2001 a surge in hate crimes occurred (12,020 compared to 9,924 in 2000), fueled mainly by post-9/11 anti-Muslim crimes. This rise was, indeed, a spike as 2002 hate-crime levels dropped to the lowest level (9,222) seen since 1995.

Research team member Dr. Bradley Yoder notes, “I am most impressed with the finding that societal harm has decreased overall—and to a rather large degree- with a drop in negative effects from all three societal institutions. As opposed to the more familiar and dramatic street crime, this harm is just as destructive and is far more pervasive in our society. Such a drop is encouraging, though it does not extend to all societal measures we examined and many people are still adversely affected by structural and institutional forces.”

The most prominent example of worsening societal measures regards “social negligence,” which continues to climb at record levels. Though the high school drop-out rate did decrease significantly, the other social negligence indicators again rose, some dramatically: (a) lack of health insurance; from 14.6 to 15.2% of the population, with over 43,000,000 uninsured in 2002; (b) hunger (according to the USDA over 12,000,000 households experienced food insecurity, and (c) homelessness (in 2001 requests for emergency shelter rose 13% from 2000, while in 2002 the increase was 17% from 2001). Homelessness and hunger have been on an upward swing for most years since 1995.

As lead researcher Dr. Neil Wollman asserts, “Unless new forces come into play, the overall picture cannot be expected to improve in the foreseeable future—in fact, hunger, homelessness, and lack of health insurance worsened again in 2003. Certainly no one is anticipating a decrease in these human needs, while at the same time improved state budgets are still not generally strong and the national deficit has led to further cutting of federal domestic spending. Given the basic nature of these long unfulfilled needs – and the fact that a number of other countries see fit to provide in these areas – we may need to look more closely at ourselves and our self image of being a compassionate people.”

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The chart below outlines all index variables and basic figures. Annual values are indexed relative to the baseline of 100% in 1995. Thus an index of 102.0 indicates a two percent increase from 1995, while an index of 98.0 indicates a two percent decrease; go to <http://www.manchester.edu/links/violenceindex/> for details on methodology, variable definitions, background, and further statistics. Analysis of NIVAH statistics was conducted by mathematician Dr. James Brumbaugh-Smith.

IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE PERIODIC UPDATES ON THE NATIONAL INDEX OF VIOLENCE AND HARM, WRITE NJWOLLMAN@MANCHESTER.EDU, WITH “SEND NIVAH UPDATES” IN THE SUBJECT LINE.

National Index of Violence and Harm

1996-2002 Summary*

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Corr.	Sig.
Personal Index	96.6	94.7	90.4	86.5	84.7	85.3	86.5	0.874	**
<u>Interpersonal</u>	<u>95.6</u>	<u>93.0</u>	<u>86.9</u>	<u>82.8</u>	<u>80.3</u>	<u>79.9</u>	<u>79.7</u>	<u>-1.000</u>	**
1 Homicide	89.9	82.3	75.8	68.6	68.1	69.3	69.3	-0.802	*
2 Sexual Offenses	99.3	100.3	94.3	91.3	89.3	88.0	90.1	-0.857	**
3 Battery	98.2	98.5	94.2	89.1	86.6	85.6	82.9	-0.976	**
4 Robbery	91.2	83.9	74.4	67.3	66.3	68.1	67.0	-0.881	**
5 Reckless Behavior	99.6	100.0	95.6	97.9	91.2	88.7	89.3	-0.910	**
<u>Intrapersonal</u>	<u>99.0</u>	<u>98.8</u>	<u>99.1</u>	<u>95.6</u>	<u>95.6</u>	<u>98.7</u>	<u>103.5</u>	<u>-0.180</u>	
6 Suicide/Self-Injury	97.6	95.3	94.3	89.4	88.9	91.8	93.9	-0.786	*
7 Deaths from Substance Abuse	100.4	102.4	104.0	101.7	102.2	105.7	113.1	0.810	*
a Smoking	100.5	101.2	101.9	103.2	102.6	102.2	102.4	0.786	*
b Alcohol	97.5	96.2	95.0	94.8	94.7	95.7	95.4	-0.643	
c Other Drugs	103.2	109.7	114.9	107.3	109.4	119.2	141.6	0.810	*
Societal Index	97.4	100.7	99.5	99.6	97.5	100.4	95.4	0.286	
<u>Government</u>	<u>89.3</u>	<u>116.6</u>	<u>119.7</u>	<u>124.4</u>	<u>119.6</u>	<u>129.2</u>	<u>110.8</u>	<u>0.548</u>	
8 Correctional System	94.4	120.5	116.0	143.1	132.9	115.4	117.9	0.452	
a Capital Punishment	79.4	129.1	117.2	167.0	143.2	110.1	117.2	0.407	
b Nonviolent Incarceration	109.5	112.0	114.8	119.3	122.6	120.8	118.6	0.833	*
9 Law Enforcement	84.2	112.8	123.5	105.7	106.3	143.0	103.8	0.429	
a Deaths by Police Intervention	103.2	94.7	104.1	100.6	87.9	104.8	98.4	-0.024	
b Abuse/Misconduct	65.2	130.9	142.9	110.7	124.6	181.2	109.1	0.429	
<u>Corporate</u>	<u>89.4</u>	<u>87.1</u>	<u>88.1</u>	<u>85.2</u>	<u>83.2</u>	<u>83.6</u>	<u>81.1</u>	<u>-0.952</u>	*
10 Air Pollution	83.6	82.8	86.5	81.8	79.3	80.1	78.9	-0.905	**
a People Experiencing Pollution	57.7	62.0	76.7	70.9	68.0	73.8	80.2	0.167	
b Ambient Pollution Level	96.4	92.7	91.5	90.0	86.2	86.1	78.0	-1.000	**
c Pollution Emitted	96.7	93.7	91.3	84.6	83.6	80.5	78.4	-1.000	**
11 Consumers/Employees	95.3	91.4	89.8	88.7	87.1	87.0	83.3	-1.000	**
a Product Injuries	94.5	88.8	93.0	95.3	96.9	102.4	101.7	0.548	
b Occupational Injury/Illness	91.4	87.7	82.7	77.8	75.3	70.4	65.4	-1.000	**
c Occupational Fatalities	100.0	97.7	93.6	92.9	89.3	88.3	82.9	-0.994	**
<u>Family</u>	<u>101.0</u>	<u>100.5</u>	<u>94.3</u>	<u>90.6</u>	<u>88.4</u>	<u>87.8</u>	<u>86.4</u>	<u>-0.929</u>	**
12 Domestic Violence	102.3	107.2	100.4	101.1	93.8	91.3	89.2	-0.714	*
13 Child Abuse/Neglect	99.7	93.7	88.2	80.1	83.0	84.3	83.6	-0.786	*
<u>Structural</u>	<u>101.5</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>98.3</u>	<u>99.1</u>	<u>97.9</u>	<u>100.6</u>	<u>98.0</u>	<u>-0.503</u>	-
14 Social Negligence	99.0	97.7	103.4	105.8	109.8	118.3	123.3	0.905	**
a Lack of Health Insurance	101.3	104.5	105.8	101.1	100.4	103.2	107.7	0.452	
b Hunger	104.3	103.5	115.1	117.4	126.0	143.0	162.0	0.976	**
c Drop-Out Rate	87.9	79.2	82.5	87.3	84.2	87.4	62.0	-0.548	
d Homelessness	102.5	103.5	110.3	117.4	128.8	139.8	161.7	1.000	**
15 Infant Mortality/Life Expectancy	97.4	95.9	95.5	94.9	93.2	91.8	93.0	-0.976	**
a Infant Mortality	96.1	94.7	94.7	93.4	91.4	89.5	92.1	-0.922	**
b Life Expectancy	98.8	97.1	96.3	96.3	95.0	94.2	93.8	-0.994	**
16 Hate Crimes	98.0	95.7	89.6	89.3	89.5	107.2	81.5	-0.476	
17 Employment Discrimination	89.1	92.1	89.6	86.7	88.6	89.8	93.3	-0.143	
18 Poverty Disparity	99.8	98.9	98.4	97.3	96.7	94.6	95.4	-0.976	**
a Class	103.0	105.4	104.6	105.1	105.4	105.9	108.4	0.898	**
b Race	96.3	89.5	90.0	85.9	83.8	79.7	80.6	-0.952	**
c Gender	101.8	101.8	101.5	101.0	100.8	98.1	97.0	-0.635	
d Age	98.3	99.0	97.3	91.6	90.7	87.4	85.7	-0.976	**
19 Gang Membership	125.8	119.8	113.3	120.6	109.6	101.8	101.7	-0.262	

* Denotes a statistically significant trend for the indicators marked: * p<.05 level; ** p<.01 level