

Expulsion without available services is counterproductive

by **Lauren Sanders**
Opinion Editor



The principle that education comes above all other pursuits is imbued in adolescent minds starting when they're five years old. Teachers and parents constantly stress the importance of learning and taking advantage of educational opportunities. So why do many schools expel students without offering educational services, depriving them of these valuable opportunities? Are students with troubled family lives or unusual tendencies any less deserving of the treasured tool that is education than your typical sheltered, demure child of suburbia?

Far too many schools across the U.S. expel students and do not offer them services to help continue their schooling or rehabilitate their behavior post-expulsion, often causing the students to go without education for an extended period of time and, more likely than not, become more invested in whatever activity it was that caused the expulsion. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights condones expulsion without services as an acceptable punishment for students who violate certain codes of conduct. Granted, adolescents deserving of expulsion are generally volatile and unsafe for high school campuses, but they should be sent to a reformative environment as opposed to simply being shut out of any opportunity for academic and social redemption.

In a sense, expulsion without services is a copout; it pays no mind to any issues a student may be facing which caused them to commit the act that got them removed from their school. A student who deals illegal substances on campus may be surrounded by drug-abusing family members, but instead of looking into this possibility, many schools will hurry to expel this student, leading them back to their home where

their family could not care less about appealing to alleviate the expulsion. Then what? This student has no access to education, no access to redemption, no second chance. This student is now at home every day of the week, and chances are high that supervision is close to nothing. This student's substance problem will only grow, pushing the student farther and farther away from their ever-important education. But does their school lend any attention to this? Hardly – the school casts the student to the periphery of their liability zone, and it now means nothing to the administration whether or not this student spirals into an uneducated, unsafe, unmonitored abyss. By doing this, said administration takes no responsibility for a student of theirs gone awry, and no responsibility for that student's well-being and success. That student is simply not their problem anymore.

While this is thought not to be the case in our particular area, many, if not most, families in the US cannot afford to pay for a private education; so, the assumption by schools who expel students that they will just continue their education elsewhere is simply unrealistic and elitist. Existing socioeconomic boundaries may be a cause of students' expulsion-worthy behavior, so perpetuating these barriers by essentially only giving wealthy families another chance at education will only worsen these issues our society faces already.

The solution I suggest is not to eradicate expulsion, or to lessen the grounds on which students may be expelled; rather, I advocate for a requirement of schools to provide educational services post-expulsion. This could



S. Sullivan

include rehabilitation, correctional facilities, or simply independent study plans for the banished student to get back on his or her feet.

It is true that many schools do offer assistance and educational services after a student is expelled, yet the hundreds of students each year who are evicted from their schools beg that we stop sweeping them under the rug. In Colorado alone, over half of expelled students are denied educational services from their school. This cannot be acceptable in a world where education is so treasured. As a society, we must not be willing to write off these children as unworthy of our time and expenditures, rather, we must treat them with respect and offer them an opportunity for redemption.

Expulsion without services is counterproductive, elitist, and, frankly, extremely inconsiderate. It models an attitude of abandonment instead of fostering growth – I do not think I am alone in declaring that this is the antithesis of what we should be teaching our children.

(Sources: Colorado Department of Education, Supportive School Discipline, Wisconsin Journal Sentinel)

Avoiding attacked cities is detrimental to their economies

by **Jessica Blough**
Center Editor



At the beginning of this year, my family made plans to visit Brussels, Belgium, during the summer break. Brussels holds a special place in my heart; it was my home for one and a half years, and a great deal of my maturation took place on Belgian avenues. The day after we bought our plane tickets, a series of terrorist-planted

bombs went off in the Belgian airport and at a metro station, killing over thirty people. Regardless, when school ends and summer comes around, I will get on a plane and travel to Brussels.

In the wake of the European terrorist attacks – first on Paris in November, then on Brussels in March – the most popular reaction from my peers seemed to be support. Hashtags like #jesuisparis and reposted artwork filled up my Instagram feed. The second most common response, the one that really only came out



courtesy twitter

when I had face-to-face conversations, was fear. This fear applied not only to the acts themselves, but also to the beautiful, vibrant cities that fell victim to the attacks. When my friends talk about Belgium now, they no longer mention chocolate and waffles. Instead, their focus is on ISIS and bombings. Several people I know have categorized Belgium as dangerous, especially for travel.

Terrorist attacks are meant to do exactly what they sound like they are meant to do: create fear. If that fear causes you to change your behavior in a negative way, including limiting your experiences or removing your support from an area, you are allowing terrorism to triumph. Terrorism targets not only the residents of an area, but also the area's culture and economy. According to BBC, 40 percent of Brussels hotel bookings were canceled the



courtesy wikipedia

week of the attacks. Seven percent of economic activity in France is related to tourism, centered in Paris, and Brussels has a thriving tourism market – a loss in tourism is an attack on millions of employees.

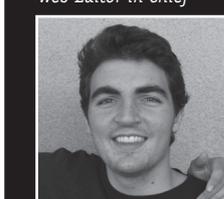
Brussels and Paris are not cities sentenced to terrorism, for the same reasons that New York City is not doomed to live in the shadow of the Sept. 11 attacks. In New York, the city has united and rebuilt since the attacks, developing an even more vibrant culture. Brussels and Paris need to be rebuilt through economic support from Americans, as opposed to fearful removal. Fear of these cities only increases the

fear of terrorists. This article is not intended to undermine the severity of the attacks. Instead, it is a call to look forward and refuse to listen to the "bad guys," focusing on the vibrancy of the past and the brightness of the future.

(Sources: BBC, Tourism Promotion Council)

Comedy shouldn't be curbed

by **Cole Potter**
Web Editor-in-Chief



Before I begin this article, I feel I must make something clear: Lark Breen is completely correct in writing her piece in opposition to this. Suicide is never a happy or silly idea, and any joke containing it as the punchline is liable to offend. Therefore, I won't defend the ability to make light of suicide. Instead I will explain why society should have the ability to joke about any of its ailments. Saying, "I want to kill myself," isn't funny, but it is an expression of emotion which everyone should be entitled to.

Seeing as this particular "joke" isn't particularly funny, but could still be considered kidding around, I want to expand the topic of this article to include the role of potentially offensive or personal material in comedy as a whole. Countless professional comedians have spoken on this subject. Jerry Seinfeld and Ricky Gervais have both made famous defenses of the ability and necessity to joke about anything and everything. Gervais is known for his belief that it is the intent of a joke and not the effect that it causes among its audience that determines its moral value. I want to agree with him here; it is impossible for an individual to filter himself relentlessly for fear of offending others, when society's collective experiences are so varied that potentially anything could be offensive to



courtesy flickr

any one person. But this is an unrealistic, and somewhat self-indemnifying way of viewing the effect that one's jokes may have. Rather, I think any joke can be made, and indeed should be made, as long as one knows his audience.

Honestly, more comedians should hold this view, as it's in their careers' best interests to tell a big joke only in a setting in which it gets a big laugh. However, I feel that this approach to joke-telling, and the discussion of controversial opinions in general, should be utilized by everybody. Although the intent of your statement may be completely benign, to mention wanting to kill yourself could be potentially offensive to someone whose personal history you may not know of. For this reason, one should feel free to remark on any topic they desire, but should be aware of the impact their statement may make.

If you want to make an offensive joke with friends, go ahead. They will likely laugh along, and dispense of your remark as ultimately meaningless. On the other hand, controversial humor when discussed in the vicinity of strangers is potentially harmful, and should be avoided if one wishes to uphold their public perception. This idea is in keeping with common

sense, but that fact can be forgotten when it is tied up with the complex, nuanced experiences and emotional responses any of us may have had with any number of polarizing issues. My final contention is this: if you are aware of the potential impact your joke may have, and aware of the persona you wish to uphold, then say whatever you darn well please.

Do not joke about suicide

by **Lark Breen**
Culture Editor



(Trigger warning: this article contains material on suicide and depression.)

Passing through halls, sitting at desks, and talking with friends, I frequently hear variations of the phrase, "This is so hard, I'm going to kill myself." Taking grueling physics tests and completing tortuous English projects is not only difficult, but can also severely affect a person's mood. However, by saying things like "kill me now," we allow the concept of suicide to become acceptable on a theoretical basis and potentially trigger people who have experienced the repercussions of suicide. Students who do not actually desire to end their lives should not accentuate their struggles by claiming to have suicidal thoughts because such comments perpetuate the normalcy of suicide in an unhealthy and harmful way.

I became hypersensitive to the phrase, "I wish I was dead" when a friend of mine died under circumstances that appeared to indicate that he had killed himself. Every time that I heard someone jokingly say, "kill me," or "I'd rather die than take that test," I unrealistically felt that my friend's death was a joke to my peers. Although everyone reacts differently to these tragic situations, many people have

painful, real experiences that make unwanted reappearances when someone mentions wanting to die. Therefore, unintentional suicidal comments are insensitive and could be harmful to the people who hear them.

In my experience, after about a month, I stopped caring about whether my friends said, "that made me want to die." The fact that we can accept that our friends say they want to kill themselves is even more harmful to society as a whole. We should be filled with sickened shock when a classmate acts out shooting himself in order to show boredom or frustration. At its base such an action is morbid, and our acceptance indicates that we are too accustomed to suicide to understand its severity.

Additionally, actions and phrases that flippantly suggest suicide detract from our ability to empathize with those who are actually depressed or suicidal. Students who suffer through a 45 minute in-class essay do not understand the pain of a person who struggles to get out of bed due to a crushing lack of hope. Everyone feels sadness, helplessness, and dread, but not everyone suffers from clinical depression. It is unfair to those individuals to make comments that use suicide to emphasize the difficulty of a temporary situation.

There is no reason to state that death is better than taking a test or presenting a project. You can just as effectively complain, "I wish that test had never happened," and avoid triggering classmates and contributing to society's acceptance of suicide.

That test made me want to kill myself.

L. Sanders