about it all and collapse inwards. On the other hand, you are shown so much violence that you don't have to care about (video games, movies, TV) that it becomes rote and you begin to feel numb. In either case the result is the same: your ability to feel and synthesize violence is not only limited but, in some circumstances, completely broken down.

Reflection Questions:
- How do you think about violence?
- What violent situations have you experienced? How do you think about those experiences? How did you deal with them?
- Do you think you are desensitized to violence?
- Have you ever experienced empathy fatigue?

How do we deal with desensitization?

Desensitization is a difficult thing to fight, mostly because we are so surrounded by violence that we are, even as children, used to it. The Journal of Interpersonal Violence says, "Children exposed to multiple sources of violence may become desensitized, increasing the possibility of them imitating the aggressive behaviors they watch and considering such behavior as normal." However, this does not *have* to be the norm.

The opposite of desensitization is not avoidance, removing ourselves from all violence both simulated and real. If we do that, we close ourselves off to the possibility of healthy empathy. Especially when it comes to parenting teens, we cannot protect them from violence as a whole. Even if you were to take away all violent video games, movies, and TV, and forbid them from engaging with articles and news reports pertaining to violence, they would still be exposed to violence and violent material at friends' houses, school, and in the world at large. Not to say that discernment isn't important in choosing what media our teens see, including limiting the kinds of movies, TV, and video games you bring into your home, but it's important to remember that we can't protect our children from everything. Nowhere is this more evident than in teens' experiences and responses to the threat of personal violence. Everytownresearch.com says this about gun violence and teens:

Annually, more than 3,500 children and teens (ages 0 to 19) are shot and killed,