

Definition of Youth Violence (adapted from the WHO's World Report on Violence and Health, 2002)

Youth violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person, group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation in which the perpetrator or victim is between 10 and 29 years of age.

People at Risk for Victimization and Risk factors Associated with Perpetrating Youth Violence:

Individual Risk Factors: History of violent victimization, attention deficits, hyperactivity or learning disorders, history of early aggressive behavior, involvement with drugs, alcohol or tobacco, low IQ, poor behavioral control, deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities, high emotional distress, history of treatment for emotional problems, anti-social beliefs and attitudes, exposure to violence and conflict in the family

Family Risk Factors: Authoritarian childrearing attitudes, harsh, lax or inconsistent disciplinary practices, low parental involvement, low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers, low parental education and income, parental substance abuse or criminality, poor family functioning, poor monitoring and supervision of children

Peer/Social Risk Factors: Association with delinquent peers, involvement in gangs, social rejection by peers, lack of involvement in conventional activities, poor academic performance, low commitment to school and school failure

Community Risk Factors: Diminished economic opportunities, high concentrations of poor residents, high level of transients, high level of family disruption, low levels of community participation, socially disorganized neighborhoods

Prevention Strategies Shown Effective (WHO. Preventing Violence: A guide to implementing the recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health 2004)

- Parent and Family Based Programs improve family relations. Parents receive training on child development. They also learn skills for talking with their children and solving problems in nonviolent ways
- Social Development Strategies teach children how to handle tough situations
- Mentoring programs pair an adult with a young person. The adult serves as a positive role model and helps guide the young person's behavior.
- Changes to the physical and social environment to address the social and economic cause of violence
- Teach skills such as Problem Solving, Stress Management, Assertiveness, Anger Control, Impulse Control (APA Commission on Violence and Youth 2009)

Examples of Information to Communicate

To Policymakers: (a) homicide is a leading cause of death among youth worldwide, (b) viable and evidence-based prevention strategies exist, (c) communities benefit from reducing youth violence. It reduces fear, lowers health and criminal justice costs, and improves social capital, property values and the economic viability of neighborhoods.

To Parents: (a) exhibit caring relationships, (b) hold high expectations, (c) involve young people in supervised meaningful activities

To Youth At Risk: (a) there are alternatives to using violent behavior to resolving conflict, (b) one can stand up for oneself without having to hurt other people, and (c) carrying guns is more likely to lead to one's own death than someone else's