

GUNS AND VIOLENCE RESOURCE

According to recent data published in the **New England Journal of Medicine**, firearm-related injuries have surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of death for children and teenagers.

Every community suffers from increased gun violence, and New Freedom Programs has been developing **resources that can assist you in addressing it**. The two (2) new gun violence resources provides 70+discussion starters and other key elements for use with individual youth or small groups.

The brief (single-page) **Discussion Elements** provide the stimulus for short thinking - or writing - activities on issues relating to **temptations, risks, and consequences** of guns and violence. They present scenarios with discussion questions that cover a range of topics such as:

- ◆ taking guns to school
- ◆ trying to gain respect or status with a gun
- ◆ effects of guns and violence in an emergency room
- ◆ carrying a BB or other fake gun that looks realistic
- ◆ guns and social media
- ◆ carrying a gun for safety or protection

Additional Key Elements address topics such as how to avoid people who put you at risk for guns and violence, and exploring peers and their influences.

This flexible resource is also shaped for use by **mentors, street outreach, law enforcement, probation, parole, after-school, summer, and community programs**. The resources can be used to enhance programming that you are already providing, to guide one-on-one sessions, or to form the basis for a group focusing on gun violence. They are appropriate for **prevention**, and **intervention** with youth who are at risk in their schools or communities, as well as with youth who are engaged in delinquent activity or gangs.

Each of the two resources is priced at **\$395** per licensYX'gjh. Both can be purchased for a total of \$750.

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

The Guns and Violence discussion scenarios and worksheets provide the opportunity for youth to examine their thinking on a range of issues relating to guns and violence. They also provide the opportunity for the counselor to help them identify their greatest risks, and then guide them in ways to reduce their exposure to those elements.

There are two purposes to this resource:

- Reduce their risk of death, injury, or victimization. Sadly, firearms deaths are now the #1 cause of death for children and teens in this country.

There are two parts to this: (1) intentional and (2) unintentional firearm violence victimization (being shot, shot at, or threatened).

- Reduce their risk of being the user or perpetrator. Young people are at risk for making bad, reckless, or careless decisions.

There are also two parts to this: (1) intentional, and (2) unintentional violence perpetration: (shooting someone, threatening someone with a firearm, firing the weapon to intimidate).

Scenarios are written or shaped to address the most critical risk factors for gun-related violence for children or youth (source: US Department of Justice - OJJDP):

- 1 Exposure to violence
- 2 Engagement with delinquent or high risk peers and friends
- 3 Access to guns (availability)
- 4 Prior victimization This can be direct victimization or indirect exposure, such as witnessing or hearing about a victimization.

You can use this resource flexibly with classes and groups or with individuals. It consists of two sets of scenarios (over 60 in all) and a collection of staff support resources (including diagnostic worksheets) that target the highest risk factors.

Each scenario includes one or more questions that can serve as a basic starting point for individual or group discussion. Participants respond to the key element of the activity, expressing what **THEY** think about the issue or issues. This provides the teacher or leader with an opportunity to help them explore their thinking, and what outcomes or harmful consequences their thinking might lead to.

**SAMPLES OF PREVENTION RESOURCE
FOR HIGH RISK YOUTH**

SAMPLE

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

Curiosity

“I knew I shouldn’t touch that gun, but something inside me was making me want to pick it up, check it out, hold it. I just couldn’t resist! And, the thing is, I knew it was a dumb idea. I knew I’d get in trouble if they caught me.”

“It’s crazy. I picked it up, checked the chamber. Put it down, picked up the magazine. Put that down. Picked up the gun again. I kept looking over at the door to be sure nobody was coming in.”

“I knew I wasn’t supposed to be doing that. Finally, I put it back on the table and covered it, so I wouldn’t have to look at it. It was so tempting.”

Where could a natural curiosity about guns go too far?

What’s the line you wouldn’t cross?

If you were curious about guns, and willing to learn about gun safety and use, what are some good places or programs?

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

Fear

Oliver is scared, every day. He is afraid all the time. At school, in his neighborhood, on his own block, even in his own house. He is so sick of always being afraid. Nobody should have to live like this. Lately he has been thinking that he might try to get a gun. He thinks he might feel safer with a gun. For example, he thinks he'd feel safer when walks past the older guys that hang out on the block or the bullies in school.

If he does get a gun, how do you think this will work out?

He thinks he might feel safer when he gets a gun. But will he really be safer? Why or why not?

If he gets a gun, he will probably want to show it to his friends. How could that work out badly for him?

If he gets caught with a gun in school, how could that work out badly for him?

Who could he talk to about this? Who could help him make safer - and better - choices?

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

Kevin's find

Yesterday Kevin showed up at his friend Jamie's house and said, "Lets go to your room, I've got something you've got to see!" When they got there, Kevin shut the door and opened his backpack. He pulled out a sweater that was kind of balled up, and when he unwrapped it, there was a handgun! It looked pretty new, and was some kind of Glock.

"I found it in some bushes by the creek in the park," he said.

Jamie took it and looked it over. "I bet my cousin would give you \$50 bucks for it, maybe \$100?"

What sorts of things could go wrong here?

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SAMPLE

At this point, what is the best way for them to handle this going forward?

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

The rules just changed

Juan is 12, and just starting to spend a lot of time with a group of older kids on his block. He's figured out a few of the things that they are doing. And he knows that some of the things are illegal or dangerous. Still, what they're doing looks exciting, and he has nothing else going on.

Today, however, things changed. One of the older guys said, "Look, Juan, you want to hang with us? You've got to show us what you can do. Like, are you man enough to carry a gun for us?"

What could go wrong here?

Let's say you knew someone like Juan. He's basically a good kid, and has not been in trouble before. If you were his friend, what sorts of things could you say to help him make some good choices?

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What are some good things you could do with him?

**SAMPLES OF INTERVENTION RESOURCE
FOR HIGH RISK YOUTH**

SAMPLE

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

ex-cs24

Back to the old

Luis got to go back home from detention last week. So far he's staying out of trouble. But today he ran into some of his old friends. They're up to the same things they were doing when Luis was hanging out with them - drinking, girls, smoking weed, stealing stuff, vandalizing property, and selling cocaine. Now that Luis is back, they expect him to be back to the same things.

In the last few weeks, though, problems with another group have gotten a lot more serious. It's not just about territory and disrespect, though that's clearly a part of it. Some threats and some physical stuff. And the guys are now carrying guns.

Luis wants to be loyal to his friends. But he definitely doesn't want to go back to detention.

Where does he draw the line between what he will do and what he won't do?

<i>What he will do</i>	<i>What he will not do</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••

How does his past record figure here? What would a gun charge do, given his past?

Maybe he decides to make some changes. If so, he may have to step away from some of the time he spent with his old friends. What can he say (or do) here?

He may have to avoid some of them. And he may have to avoid some of the old places and the old situations where they used to hang out. Where could he go that would be better or safer?

What could he be doing at the most high-risk times (like evenings or weekends)?

Who could help him?

SAMPLE

Since he's been in trouble, he probably has a probation officer. How could someone like that help him at this point if he wants things to work out better?

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

It's now a bigger deal

"It's messed up. My cousin is the kind of guy who always has a gun on him. It's about who he is. And the people he's with, some of them do it too.

My cousin - he's 15 - has been doing a lot of stupid stuff lately. And last week he stole a really nice bike. One of those that costs several hundred bucks. Anyway, he just grabbed it in front of the convenience store and took off. The guy who owned it came out and saw him going away and called the cops.

It was probably less than 5 minutes later that they caught him. Just being stupid. The thing is, they got him - at first - for the bike stealing. That was big enough since it was an expensive one. But then they searched him and found his gun.

This kicked it up to a big deal. There was no way they were going to let this go easy for him - not with the gun."

How do you evaluate his decision making so far?

Looking back, what do you think was his first mistake?

Where else did he make some bad decisions?

How do you think this situation is going to work out for him?

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

Power

It's easy to feel a bit more powerful when you are holding a weapon. Even just carrying one. We all know how it feels. From the time we're big enough to pick up a gun, most of us will feel the same way. There's a time when we are kids when we may even be testing out how that sense of power feels around other people. The first times we carry. And maybe when we first carry the gun secretly. Some kids think that the only way to achieve a sense of power and control of the situation is through guns. That may be the most important reason they want a firearm.

How about you? How does this make you feel?

How could this put you at risk going forward?

There's also something when people experiment with showing a little power over others when they are holding a weapon. People give them a little distance. Maybe it's fear. Or just not trusting what they might decide to do. And then going forward, carrying all the time. Especially if people know it.

How have you seen other people do this? In the long run, how could this work out badly for them?

How about you? How could this put you at risk going forward?

What can go wrong when these choices lead to carrying guns on the street, or in places where something could be set off?

There can be another problem, though if the **wrong people** are carrying. There are some people who just should never be around guns.

What sorts of people does this describe?

These kinds of people should definitely not be carrying them on the street or in school. When you think about them, why are they so dangerous?

SAMPLE

GUNS AND VIOLENCE

We've got to get a body back

Things were building between these two crews for a while now. It started with just words. Somebody said something at the mall. Somebody said something more at a game. Some threats were made at school. The thing is, these groups aren't beefing over drugs or money or anything. And it wouldn't have become a big deal without the guns.

But it's gone past that. Last week one of the guys got killed, and it's blown up. One of the guys just showed me this Glock 19 - the semi-automatic. He said they didn't even hesitate before grabbing their guns: "We've got to get a body back."

How do you think this is going to work out?

How is this likely to end?

At what point does this become a problem for the other people in the neighborhood (or the school)?

Revenge and retribution (getting even and getting back) are a part of gang life

How do these things work out badly when most of the guys have guns?

When you are around people who do dumb or risky things, how could that work out badly for you? If you are a bystander, how could that get you hurt?

If you know you are with someone who is likely to do something stupid or risky, what are some of your better choices?

How are things even more risky if someone in your family is involved in this?