



RESPONSIBILITY + ACTION = POWER

CRIME PREVENTION WEEK ~ NOVEMBER 1 - 7, 2014

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

Youth Involvement in Gangs

What is a Gang?

- A visible group of three or more persons that plans and carries out crime for profit, often using severe violence.
- Gang members may identify themselves through a common name, symbols, colours, signs, graffiti, clothing brands and tattoos.
- Gang involvement is extremely dynamic and can range from small street-level groups all the way to large organized crime groups.

Risk Factors:

Traditional risk factors such as poverty, family and school difficulties, drug use and dealing, involvement in violence, disengagement from family, school and community activities and vandalism are prevalent among youth who become gang involved.

Non-traditional risk factors have become apparent in several BC communities. These risk factors can be observed within populations of relatively affluent, culturally diverse, young men and women. Within these groups, choosing to become involved in a gang is seen as improving status, protection, and providing financial rewards.

Gangs in BC:

- In 2011, the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit Integrated Threat Assessment on Organized Crime reported that there are over 120 criminal gangs operating in BC.
- Between 2006 and 2011, 126 gang-related homicides occurred in the Lower Mainland of BC.
- Gang members come from any cultural and economic backgrounds in both rural and urban areas of BC. They are increasingly hybrid across the Province.
- Female gang membership is also increasing, with female gang members tending to be younger than male gang members.
- The reasons for joining a gang are varied. Some youth seek excitement; others are looking for power, prestige, protection, a chance to make money or a sense of belonging.
- Organized Crime Groups in BC have collaborative relationships with Street and Mid-Level gangs to make money through organized crime. Youth involvement in gangs often consists of fluid membership, a lack of organization, where youth come together for a series of criminal events.

Awareness is the first step to preventing a gang problem from developing in your community.



RESPONSIBILITY + ACTION = POWER

CRIME PREVENTION WEEK ~ NOVEMBER 1 - 7, 2014

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility



How you can help:

As a service provider you can support prevention programs

- **Primary prevention** focuses on the entire child and youth population at risk. The emphasis is on building awareness and education around prevention of gang involvement.
- **Secondary prevention** targets individuals and groups identified as being at greater risk of becoming gang members. The emphasis is on targeting social problems and individual risk factors and promoting protective factors.
- **Tertiary prevention** targets gang members directly to hold youth accountable and provide supportive exit strategies.

As a parent you can:

- Spend quality time with your child; encourage open and honest communication with your child, and talk to your child about healthy relationships and the consequences of gang involvement.

As a community member you can:

- Build positive, open, trusting relationships with the youth in our life; support and become involved in positive youth development programs; engage children or youth in your life who seem disconnected or in trouble; and educate yourself on how to help at risk children and youth.

Effective anti-gang efforts begin with partnerships between parents, schools, law enforcement, religious institutions, community organizations, businesses and youth.

Protective Factors:

Protective factors can build resiliency so that youth are better equipped to resist getting involved in gang-related activity.

Protective factors for youth are enhanced by:

- Building strong family bonds, completing school, and having a positive peer group.
- Creating and sustaining a positive social environment that surrounds the youth – this can be done with the support of community, family and service organizations.

Where to get help:

Preventing Youth Involvement in Gang

~ BC Ministry of Justice

www.pssq.gov.bc.ca/crimeprevention/gangs/index.htm

Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit BC

~ *Understanding Youth Gangs: A Parent Resource*

www.cfseu.bc.ca/en/end-gang-life

Acting Together – Community University Research

Alliance (AT-CURA) ~ a strength-based project aimed at preventing youth gang involvement with an aim to identify protective factors that will prevent youth from being vulnerable to gang involvement.

www.acttogether.ca

GangPrevention.ca ~ a one stop shop for information regarding gang prevention in BC.

www.gangprevention.ca



www.bccpa.org

Supported by:



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada



Ministry of
Justice

