

# Safe Youth, Safe Communities

Presented by  
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July 12, 2010

# Discussion Topics

- How to help your child avoid becoming involved in gang-related activities and grow up safe, healthy, and hopeful
- How to access resources in your community that can support you, your children and your neighbourhoods

# What is a Youth Gang?

- “A self-informed group of youths and/or adults interacting with each other who engage in a range of criminal behaviour. It may be loosely or well organized with established rules of conduct.”

Ottawa Police Service

# Top 5 Reasons Youth Join Gangs

1. A sense of belonging
2. Protection from violence
3. Poverty/access to money
4. Lack of school engagement
5. Lack of parental supervision

“Now is the Time to Act: Youth Gang Prevention in Ottawa”  
Michael Chettleburgh 2008

# Reasons Youth Don't Join Gangs

- Have positive relationships with parents, siblings, friends and community members (a sense of belonging)
- Have a commitment to school
- Have opportunities to develop interests in sports, recreation, music and the arts
- Have opportunities to build skills, gain a sense of accomplishment
- Have hope, feel a sense of control over their lives

Crime Prevention Ottawa and Ottawa Youth Gang Prevention Initiative  
Mike Justinich 2008

May 2009

# Children Aged 6 to 12

- Growing intellectually
- Growing physically
- Growing emotionally
- Growing socially
- Growing spiritually



# Risk Factors

- Aggressive, unable to control his or her anger
- Not paying attention, impulsive
- Having difficulties academically in school
- Lacking empathy (doesn't consider or care about other people's feelings)
- Getting into fights regularly
- Having problems making friends or is hanging out with a troubled group of friends

Modified from "What are the Roots of Violence and the Relevance to Gang Intervention?"

By Alan Leschied, PhD., C.Psych. October 2008 and The SMU PALS Program

# What is resiliency?

Resiliency is the ability to prevent, lessen, or overcome the damaging effects of difficult circumstances



# Resilient Children have...



**A Strong Sense  
of Belonging  
in their families,  
schools, and  
communities**

# Resilient Children feel...

**Safe  
at home  
and in their  
communities**



# Resilient Children have...

**A  
Sense  
of  
Hope**



# Resilient Children enjoy...

**Going  
to  
School**



# Resilient Children have...



**A  
Caring  
Adult  
in their  
Lives**

# What Can We Do?

## At Home

- Spend quality time with your children
- Listen to your children
- Get to know your child's interests and values
- Explain the reasons behind your rules so that your child learns right from wrong
- Be a good role model for your child
- Encourage caring, considerate, and empathetic behaviour between your children

# What Can We Do?

## At Home

- Teach your children how to cope with peer pressure
- Help your children develop good conflict resolution skills
- Demand to know child's whereabouts at all times

# What Can We Do?

## At School

- Get to know your children's teachers ***before*** there are any problems
- Get your child involved in school activities like organized sports, the school choir, plays....
- Join the Parent Teacher Association
- Volunteer at the school or on field trips



# What Can We Do?

## In the Community

- Join the Tenant's Association and/or other community, religious or cultural groups
- Help organize community-building events in your neighbourhood
- Report criminal activity to the police

# Signs that a youth may be involved in gang activity...

- Suddenly performs poorly in school
- Suddenly argumentative with parents and teachers
- Changes circle of friends and desires too much privacy
- Shows signs of tobacco, alcohol or drug use
- Has had negative interactions with police
- Makes impulsive, excessive purchases
- Has large sums of money from an unexplained source
- Engages in vandalism or delinquent behaviour
- Carries a weapon or conceals personal items

Ottawa Police Service

# Curfews

- A person **under 16** cannot be in a public place or a place of public entertainment between **12 midnight and 6 am** unless accompanied by an adult who is responsible for that child (section 75(5))
- Possibility of Parent being charged with a **Provincial Offence** (maximum \$1,000 fine) if a youth is found breaching the curfew

Parenting Challenging Teens  
Ottawa Police Service 2008

# Parental Responsibility Act

- **Parents** can be held **liable** for property loss, destruction or damage caused by their children (under 18) **unless** it was **not intentional** or the parent exercised **reasonable supervision** of the child and made **reasonable efforts** to prevent the damage from occurring

Parenting Challenging Teens  
Ottawa Police Service 2008

# Reporting to the Police: “Make the Right Call!”

- 9-1-1 Life-threatening Emergency or Crime in Progress
- **613-230-6211** Other Emergencies
- **613-236-1222, ext. 7300** To report a theft, property damage, missing person or stolen vehicle.
- **613-236-1222** Community Police Centres and all other enquiries
- OPS Youth Intervention & Diversion Section: **236-1222 ext. 5355** or **236-1222 ext. 5342** for the Program Coordinator
- **613 233-TIPS (8477)** Crime Stoppers

# Community Resources

**We can work together!**

**Here is information on the agencies and programs in your community that can help you raise resilient children**

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and Resource Centres of Ottawa  
Funded by Crime Prevention Ottawa