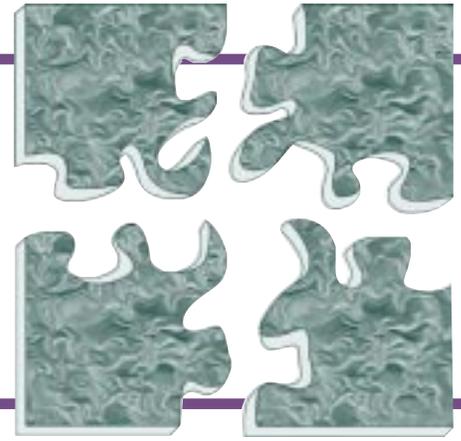


BEST PRACTICE BRIEFS



PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

THE PUBLIC HEALTH
APPROACH – 1

COMPONENTS OF THE
VIOLENT ACT – 2

THE WEAPON – 2

- Interventions – 3

THE ENVIRONMENT

- Physical – 3
- Cultural – 3
 - Media – 4
 - Southern Culture – 4
 - The Unprotecting Community – 4
 - Disconnections – 4
 - Unprotecting School – 5
- Trigger Events – 5
- School Interventions – 6

THE INDIVIDUALS

- The Perpetrator – 6
 - Conditions and Experiences – 6
 - Triggering Conditions – 7
 - Modal Points – 7
- The Victims – 8
- Interventions – 8



OUTREACH
PARTNERSHIPS

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

A FRAMEWORK FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE BY YOUTH

This BRIEF, second in a series on youth violence and violence by youth, provides a framework for thinking about prevention. It serves as an introduction to the next two BRIEFS on the Boston experience and on youth development.

INEVITABLE?

Is Violence by Youth “Something That Just Happens”—a result of “bad” kids? Under this conceptualization, the issue of school shootings by youth has been treated reactively, through measures to intercept or respond to the immediate episode. Actions are characterized by control (e.g., metal detectors at school entrances and random locker searches) and by affixing blame. Ejecting the culprit from school (zero tolerance policies) is likely to shift violence from one setting into another. Responding through the criminal justice system after violence has occurred removes the perpetrator but seems to have minimal effect as a deterrent to other violence by youth.¹



OR PREVENTABLE?

Is Violence by Youth Preventable Behavior if we understand antecedents and context? Under this conceptualization, the issue of school shootings by youth is treated proactively, using a public health approach to understand the phenomenon and to take appropriate measures.

The public health approach begins by assessing the circumstances under which the behavior occurs and then systematically modifying these circumstances. This approach has been used in controlling biological phenomena (e.g., communicable diseases), as well as social phenomena (e.g., accidents and injuries).

Our view of car accidents as “random events” has been changed by analysis of

¹ M. Tonry & J. Petersilla, (Eds.), (1999), *Prisons*, Chicago, IL.; University of Chicago Press, Vol. 26, p. 5 of Crime and Justice: A Review of Research, sponsored by National Institute of Justice. www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/184478.pdf.



surrounding circumstances and conditions. As a result, we now seek to reduce automobile accident injuries and deaths by

- *modifying the agent or object causing injury through car design*
- *changing the environment through road design and other traffic safety measures*
- *protecting the potential victim through use of safety belts, air bags, and children's car seats*
- *changing the skill level of the potential perpetrator through driver education*

The public health approach that accomplished this has four components:

- **a surveillance system** that systematically collects and analyzes information
- **identification of risk factors and conditions** related to the agent or object, the environment, and the individuals involved
- **development of interventions** for modifying risk factors and conditions
- **rigorous evaluation** of interventions

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has begun this process by funding youth violence surveillance systems in seven states to document the circumstances and conditions surrounding injury from firearms. Analysis of these data will facilitate the development of effective prevention strategies.

THE TIPPING POINT. One author has suggested that social phenomena, including violence by youth, have the same characteristics as an “epidemic.”² In this formulation, social phenomena, just like viral or bacterial infections, are “contagious” and have peaks and valleys. Understanding the rules governing epidemics might enable us to craft a more effective approach to the containment and prevention of violence by youth. Three factors have been postulated: The Power of Context, the Law of the Few, and The Stickiness Factor. The last two factors will be explored in the next **BRIEF**; the first—The Power of Context—is outlined here and its relevance for the development and prevention of violence by youth discussed in the next section.

- **The Power of Context.** Epidemics occur within an environmental context—they are triggered by changes in exposure resulting from such factors as disruption in habitat, lack of sanitation, overcrowding, dispersal through transportation. With respect to social behavior, people can be extremely sensitive to environmental clues. *The Power of Context* suggests that epidemics of violence can be “tipped” or reversed by small changes in the

physical or cultural environment.

UNDERSTANDING COMPONENTS OF THE VIOLENT ACT

This section explores what is known about the components of violence,³ together with a listing of relevant interventions. The components of any violent act are:

- the agent or object that inflicts the violence—the weapon or force employed
- the environment in which the violence occurs—the context and the triggering event
- the individuals involved—the perpetrator and the victims

THE AGENT OF VIOLENCE: THE WEAPON

The extent of the injury inflicted by a violent act depends on the force employed. Aggression among youth may have resulted in minor physical injury in the past when fists were the primary weapon. Today, with the easy availability of lethal guns, the same level of aggression is much more likely to result in major injury or death.

The availability of guns may even precipitate violence. Guns can be found in 4 of every 10 American households. The presence of unlocked or loaded firearms in the home is associated with a higher risk of

- unintentional shooting deaths and injuries of children
- intentional homicide
- suicide

A firearm in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a family member or friend than to be used in self-defense.⁴ Moreover, it is estimated that there are 2.4 to 7.5 nonfatal injuries for every fatal one.⁵

² M. Gladwell, (2000), *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, New York: Little, Brown and Co.

³ See F.M. Ochberg, (February 1980), On Preventing Aggression and Violence, *The Police Chief Magazine*, International Association of Chiefs of Police.

⁴ A.L. Kellermann & D.T. Reay, (1986), Protection or Peril? An Analysis of Firearm-related Deaths in the House, *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 314, pp. 1557-1560.

⁵ J.L. Annett, J.A. Mercy, D.R. Gibson, & G.W. Ryan, (1995), National Estimates of Nonfatal Firearm-related Injuries: Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 273, pp. 1749-1754. Also, D.R. Rice, E.J. MacKenzie & Associates, (1989), *Cost of Injury in the United States: A Report to Congress*, San Francisco: University of California, Institute for Health and Aging, and Baltimore: John Hopkins University, Injury Prevention Center.

The perception that firearms are easily accessible also encourages more young people to carry weapons. Adolescents who believe that other students are carrying weapons in school are two to three times more likely to experience fear at school, avoid school, and—out of fear for their own safety—bring a weapon to school themselves.⁶

Youth committing violence in schools have had access to guns—in their homes, or through purchases directly or using willing intermediaries.

INTERVENTIONS DIRECTED AT GUNS

These interventions are intended to reduce the possibility that lethal force will be used. They are designed to

- **keep guns or other weapons out of schools** through
 - controlled access to school buildings, random locker searches, police presence in schools
 - zero tolerance laws, specifying punitive actions and expulsion for weapons in schools or other evidence of aggressive intent



- **reduce the availability of, or access to, guns** through
 - gun control laws, including
 - licensing and registration of all guns
 - background checks for purchase from dealer or private seller
 - waiting periods for purchase
 - prohibition of sales to minors
 - prohibition of sale of assault weapons or handguns
 - destruction rather than sale of guns discarded by police departments
- **promote safe use of guns** through
 - modifying the design of guns to limit use to the owner
 - requiring safe storage (kept locked or unloaded)
 - holding adults liable when children with

access to firearms use them to cause death or injury

- requiring gun safety training

Except for school actions, there is no consistent pattern across the country in the use of any of these measures. If guns are not available in their homes, adolescents seem to have little difficulty in obtaining them in the community.

THE VIOLENCE-PROMOTING ENVIRONMENT

Because human beings have a built-in tendency to attribute events to personality and character, the contribution of the environment is often overlooked. However, behavior is often more a function of the social context in which people find themselves than of individual “character.”⁸

Two components comprise the violence-promoting environment:

- **the physical, cultural, and social context** in which young people live
 - The physical, cultural, and social environment—the context in which young people live—can either promote or discourage violence.
- **the immediate external events and circumstances** that trigger violence

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment plays a role in crime. Public areas that are well-lighted and open to surveillance deter crime and violence. Streets and buildings that communicate disorder and lack of control through the presence of trash, vandalism, graffiti, and minor infractions of civil behavior encourage further disruptive behavior and violence.

Similarly, school buildings that are overcrowded and poorly designed contribute to violence by reducing the capacity of students to avoid confrontations and the capacity of staff to monitor.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The context of the cultural and social environment is as relevant as the physical environment in promoting violence. The context can condone violence, making it acceptable behavior, and can reduce the social controls that keep violence in check.

⁶ S.L. Martin, et al., (1996), Response of African-American Adolescents in North Carolina to Gun Carrying by School Mates, *Journal of School Health*, Vol. 66(1).

⁷ Gun buy-back programs have not been found to be effective.

⁸ This human tendency is known as the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE). See Gladwell, p. 160, quoting R.E. Nisbett & L. Ross, (1991), *The Person and the Situation*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

MEDIA. Americans are said to have an ambivalent relationship with violence. Although most Americans abhor violence, it is in fact woven into the fabric of the culture.⁹

- Violence is pervasive in films, television, music, and video games.
- Violence is condoned in sports.
- Guns and war toys are marketed to very young children.
- Internet sites promote intolerance and violence and provide access to violence-prone affinity groups.

Children can be flooded with violent images through television, movies, music, and video games; they can seek out violent and hate-mongering sites on the Internet. Through all of these media, they are receiving pervasive messages about using violence as a solution to problems. More than messages, they are receiving step-by-step modeling in how to act violently in the world.

- The average child spends more than three hours a day watching television. It has been estimated that by the age of 18, most children will have viewed 200,000 acts of violence on television.¹⁰ This exposure has been linked to a desensitization to violence and a sense that the world is dangerous. Over the long-term this exposures increases aggression and antisocial behavior.¹¹
- Point-and-shoot video and arcade games, using human figures as targets, desensitize children and teach accuracy, mimicking Army training without the counterbalancing and controlling discipline.¹²

THE SOUTHERN CULTURE. Characteristically, homicide rates have been higher in southern states where history and religious traditions encourage retaliation as a response to perceived insult. The migration of populations with southern traditions to the north has been one factor in the increased homicide rates in northern cities.¹³

THE UNPROTECTING COMMUNITY. Children and youth resort to violence when they perceive that adults cannot protect them. In schools in which bullying is overlooked and in neighborhoods where children witness domestic violence and street violence, children perceive violent responses as a matter of self-protection.

One study of young men (ages 16 to 24) with histories of involvement in violence found that for these young men, acts of violence served to achieve and maintain their status as “tough”—a reputation that conferred social power and protected them against victimization. The young men alternated between “decent” and “street” codes of behavior depending on the situation, with many “decent” youths

adopting a tough demeanor and perhaps acting out violently in order to navigate a hostile and dangerous environment. In their context, they perceived violence as adaptive, not irrational.¹⁴

DISCONNECTION. In the second half of the twentieth century, changing cultural patterns have had unintended consequences, engendering multiple disconnections of youth from adults:

- absent support of extended families as young families have moved from rural areas to cities, from the eastern part of the country to the west
- absent family and community supervision for children and adolescents as women have moved into the workforce
- absent fathers to provide role models and boundaries as out-of-wedlock births and divorce became more acceptable and widespread
- absent role models as African American middle class families moved from the inner cities to the suburbs¹⁵



The resulting disconnection between adolescents and adults has consequences for the development of protective assets by youth and for the availability of adults as resources in times of crisis.

⁹American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, (1993), *Violence and Youth: Psychology's Response: Summary Report*, Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

¹⁰A.C. Huston, E. Donnerstein, H. Fairchild, et al., (1992), *Small World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

¹¹B.J. Bushman & L.R. Huesmann, (2001), Effects of Televised Violence on Aggression, In D.G. Singer & J.L. Singer, (Eds.), *Handbook of Children and the Media*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 227-254.

¹²D. Grossman & P. Siddle, (1999), Combat, In L. Kurtz, (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict*, San Diego: Academic Press.

¹³J. Garbarino, (1999), *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*, New York: The Free Press.

¹⁴Summary of a presentation by Jeffrey Fagan, Ph.D., Center for Violence Research and Prevention, In U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, (January 1998), *Adolescent Violence: A View From the Street: Research Preview*, Washington, D.C.

¹⁵There is a tipping point for increased social pathology when stable families constitute less than 6% in a neighborhood. J. Crane, (1989), The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out and Teenage Childbearing, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 95(5), pp. 1226-1259.

THE UNPROTECTING SCHOOL. Middle and high school are periods when adolescents sort and resort themselves by interest, capacity, affiliations, and cliques. This is also the developmental period when they explore various modes of social behavior and interpersonal relationships. The conditions that lead to tragic events occur in schools that permit exclusion and homophobia, in schools that overlook teasing, verbal and physical bullying, or incitements to violence. It is an indictment when even a small percentage of children feel unsafe in school (see **BRIEF** No. 21).

Population growth and consolidation of school districts have created larger aggregations of students in middle and high schools, so that students in some communities have to contend with numbers in the thousands. This has had two consequences:

- Students are less likely to be known to and connected with school staff; student behavior and personal difficulties are more likely to go unnoticed.¹⁶
- Large numbers of students make a high level of participation in one or more school-based activities that build assets¹⁷ impossible to accomplish, unlike the small school where everyone has an opportunity and the necessity to be involved.

TRIGGER EVENTS

Against these contextual patterns, three types of triggering events can be identified:

- media coverage leading to copy cat crimes
- opportunity
- the immediate impetus to violence

MEDIA COVERAGE. Television and newspaper coverage, giving attention and publicity to youth perpetrators, may act as a triggering event, leading to copy cat crimes.

OPPORTUNITY. Children are most likely to experience or perpetrate violence in the community during the hours immediately after school, in part because of a lack of adult supervision. The incidence of violent youth crimes peaks in the hours after school.¹⁸ The lack of supervised activities also enables troubled youth to plan in-school violence.

In one study in three Washington, D.C. neighborhoods with a high level of violence by youth, three of every four boys spent the after-school hours unsupervised at least once each week; half never had any adult supervision after school.¹⁹

IMMEDIATE IMPETUS. Violence between youth can be triggered by apparently trivial events. The immediate impetus to violence can be

- **Conflicts or confrontations** that are similar to those that result in less serious altercations. Such triggering events may be initiated, or egged on, by peers.

Violence that is sanctioned and encouraged within the peer group but not by society as a whole is often found among youth who lack strong connections to their families, neighborhoods, and communities.

One study of young men (ages 16 to 24) with histories of involvement in violence identified a number of different triggering events, including:

- ongoing feuds between individuals over perceived insults or disrespect
 - disputes over girlfriends and dating violence
 - pre-emptive or strategic violence (i.e., “I’m going to get him before he gets me.”)
 - neighborhood and ethnic conflicts, often over “turf”²⁰
- **Actions by peers, teachers, parents that are perceived as the last straw in shame and humiliation,** including
 - “fed up” with being teased and picked on by classmates
 - perception of hostile acts by teachers
 - expectations for performance from parents

Violence becomes a means of redressing the balance.

¹⁶ J. Garbarino, (1995), *Raising Children in a Socially Toxic Environment*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

¹⁷ Asset building activities are those opportunities that enable children to acquire connections with adults and skills that promote the internal and external assets that the Search Institute has identified to be correlated with the absence of risky behaviors. See **BEST PRACTICE BRIEF** No. 2.

¹⁸ H.N. Snyder & M. Sickmund, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington, D.C.

¹⁹ M.R. Chaiken, (March 2000), *Violent Neighborhoods, Violent Kids*, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Washington, D.C.

²⁰ Jeffrey Fagan.

SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS THAT REDUCE VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

- Organizing the middle and high school into smaller operational units²¹
- Changes in school environment
 - promoting respect and tolerance
 - anti-bullying measures
- Teaching students specific skills and encouraging practice in
 - anger management
 - empathy
 - problem solving and decision making
 - negotiation and conflict resolution
- Sensitivity of school staff to indicators of potential violence—rumors, tips, atypical behavior, and evidence of disturbance in compositions—and intervention
- In-school and after school programming that promotes development of assets through opportunity for connections and skill-building

THE POWER OF CONTEXT in reducing anti-social behavior is illustrated by the Moving to Opportunity Project that provided subsidies to enable low-income families to move from housing projects. Over ten years residents of housing projects were randomly assigned to non-poverty neighborhoods or to higher rent housing. A second comparison group received no subsidy. Results:

- In Boston, rates of behavior problems among boys in the experimental group were significantly lower.
- In Baltimore researchers found a sizeable and statistically significant lower proportion of adolescents who were arrested for violent offenses.

Studies discussed in National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2000). From Neurons to Neighborhoods. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, pp. 334-335.

THE INDIVIDUALS

THE PERPETRATOR

Much of the literature on violence by youth has focused on the characteristics of the perpetrator. There is a built-in tendency in our thinking to attribute events to per-

sonality and character rather than to context.²²

Multiple risk factors generally characterize youth that kill. A Chicago study found that youth with the following risk factors are twice as likely to commit murder:

- has history of being abused
- comes from a family with a history of criminal violence
- belongs to a gang
- abuses alcohol or drugs

Odds were three times as high if, in addition, the youth

- has a neurological problem that impairs thinking and feeling
- has difficulties in school
- had a prior arrest
- uses a weapon²³

There are two stereotypes of young males who commit violence—the inner city gang member and the suburban misfit. While there are generally clear differences characteristic of the differing milieus—e.g., in deprivation, family history of criminal violence, school performance—there are in fact many commonalities in life histories, as outlined in the material that follows.

CONDITIONS AND EXPERIENCES. During infancy and childhood, certain conditions and experiences foster homicidal behavior. They include:

- **Birth injury, including pre-term birth, or subsequent head injuries from accidents or abuse.** The resulting brain pathology is implicated in otherwise inexplicable explosions of assault. This factor contributing to violent behavior, however, is relatively rare.²⁴
- **Disruption of normal social-emotional development.**
 - **Underlying characteristics in an infant and young child**—difficult temperament, irritable, hyperactive, sensory integration deficits, etc. The difficulties in accommodating appropriately to these behaviors may result in rejection by parents.

²¹ See R. Felner & A.M. Adan, (1988), The School Transitional Environment Project: An Ecological Intervention and Evaluation, In R.H. Price, et al., (Eds.), *14 Ounces of Prevention: A Casebook for Practitioners*, Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, pp. 111-122.

²² R.E. Nisbet & L. Ross.

²³ R. Zager, J. Arbbt, R. Sylvies & K.G. Busch, (1991), Homicidal Adolescents: Replication, *Psychological Reports*, Vol. 67(3), pp. 1235-1242.

²⁴ F. M. Ochberg

Put October 15 and 16 on your calendar

- **Absent mother**—inability to interact with the young child, separations resulting from life circumstances, abandonment. The depressed, psychologically unavailable mother creates children who lack empathy, have difficulty relating to others, and have not learned emotional control.
- **Absent father**—disconnection, divorce, incarceration resulting in the loss of emotional support, role modeling, limit setting, and protection from noxious influences. Absence is perceived by the child as abandonment and rejection.
- **Abusive parent or other adult**—punitive discipline, coupled with emotional abuse/neglect and witnessing of domestic violence. For children with these experiences there can be changes in brain structure that impair the ability to control behavior and to learn.²⁵
- **Neglectful passive parent**—leaves the adolescent without guidance or oversight, to seek emotional connections elsewhere, often with anti-social peers. Non-observant parents are unaware of an adolescent's activities or cache of guns.
- **Weak or inconsistent parenting**—lack of boundaries and conflicting messages enables the child to override parental objections or to achieve objectives through aversive means.

Youth experiencing these circumstances over a substantial period of time develop a reservoir of humiliation, shame, anger that fuels feelings of rage and depression. These feelings can be expressed in animal abuse, an attraction to anti-social cults, and violent behavior against peers.

TRIGGERING CONDITIONS. Immediate conditions and characteristics increase the possibility of violence:

- **Perpetrators are often depressed**, dealing with internal pain through action, often violent. Violent behavior against others may be seen as a way of accomplishing self-destruction—suicide.
- **Perpetrators often use alcohol and other substances** that reduce inhibitions and surface feelings of frustration, jealousy, and rage out of proportion to the situation, resulting in explosions of affect.²⁶

- **Perpetrators lack interpersonal and social skills, learned through early interactions with caring adults.** The inability to navigate social interaction and the misperception of positive social cues promote the sense of rejection. Overreaction to negative cues triggers a violent response.
- **Perpetrators lack problem-solving skills, including the ability to identify alternative course of action and their consequences.**

MODAL POINTS FOR ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR. Two developmental time periods are predictive of subsequent violent behavior:

- **Preschool and early elementary children** who are overactive, disruptive, oppositional, unable to get along with peers, impulsive and risk-seeking. (One indication of the size of this group is the finding by a community mental health center in Wayne County, Michigan, that 5.6 percent of boys and 1.3 percent of girls have been or are at risk of being expelled from child care and early childhood settings.²⁷) Continuing to age 8, conduct-disordered behavior is predictive of adult aggression.²⁸
- **Adolescents** who display serious delinquent behavior at 15 or 16 years of age, peaking at ages 16 to 17. Mild to severe anti-social behavior, generally peer-driven, is characteristic of adolescents: more than 60 percent engage in some combination of aggressive acts: vandalism, drug abuse, arson.²⁹ Adolescents in general have limited ability to project the consequences of their actions and to make moral judgments. For those whose life experiences have inculcated a fight or flight response, changes in brain chemistry can overwhelm the brain's capacity for reasoning and control. In a context that promotes violence as a solution and makes guns readily available, these modes of thinking can be a recipe for disaster.

²⁵ B.D. Perry, (1997), 'Incubated in Terror: Neurodevelopmental Factors in the 'Cycle of Violence,' In J Osofsky, (Ed.), *Children, Youth and Violence: The Search for Solutions*, New York: Guilford Press, pp. 124-148.

²⁶ F. M. Ochberg.

²⁷ Survey by The Guidance Center, Southgate, Michigan, 1999.

²⁸ L.D. Eron, J.H. Gentry, P. Schlegel, (Eds.), (1994), *Reason to Hope: A Psychosocial Perspective on Violence and Youth*, American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

²⁹ D. Elliott, (March 1994), *Youth Violence: An Overview*, Boulder, CO: University of Colorado, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

However, approximately 80 percent of youths displaying risky behavior during adolescence will have sufficient assets from their families, schools, and community to stop by age 21.³⁰ The 20 percent (12 percent of all adolescents) who will go on to adult criminality are those whose lives are devoid of the adult connections, opportunities, and life skills that build competence and resiliency.

THE VICTIMS

The victims of violence by youth are seen as innocent bystanders—and often they are. However, in some instances, the victims share characteristics with the perpetrator. They are gang or clique members. They are bullies committing verbal aggression against classmates. They are depressed provocateurs.

INTERVENTIONS

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (a national organization of police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, crime survivors, and leaders of police officer organizations and funded by major foundations) recommends “Four Steps to Dramatically Reduce School and Youth Violence”:³¹

- Improve deficient parenting and prevent child abuse and neglect by offering high-risk parents **in-home parenting-coaching** and by making sure child protective, foster care, and adoption services have policies and enough well-trained staff to protect and heal abused and neglected children.
- See **BEST PRACTICE BRIEFS** Nos. 17, 18, 19, and 20 for a discussion of the characteristics of *Effective Home Visiting*.
- Assure all babies and preschool children access to the **quality educational child care** programs proven to cut crime.
 - Help **schools identify troubled and disruptive children at an early age** and provide children and their parents with the counseling and training that can help kids get back on track.
 - Assure that all school-age children and teens have access to **after-school, weekend, and summer youth development programs** to shut down the “Prime Time for Juvenile Crime.”

BEST PRACTICE BRIEF No. 24 will discuss *Youth Development*. See also No. 2 for the *assets strength-based approach to programming*.

Similarly, the Michigan Collaborative for Juvenile Justice Reform (2000) has presented an action plan that includes prenatal care, parenting education, quality child care, conflict resolution, and student assistance programs in schools.³²

Deceptively simple, each of these recommendations holds within it complex issues of effective models and implementation. Given the framework presented in this **BRIEF**, it is clear that to be most effective, these interventions must attend to **connections with adults, opportunity** to learn values and skills (**content**), and **reinforcement** of these values and skills in the everyday **environment** of the school and the community.

Violence by youth dramatizes the wastage of young lives. Coming to grips with this ultimate failure in what is presumed to be a civilized society could generate a more holistic and comprehensive approach to the social-emotional development of infants, children, and youth. For, it is clear, effective interventions to reduce violence by youth are the same interventions that have been developed and promoted to accomplish such social goals as stable families, social-emotional readiness for school, and school success.

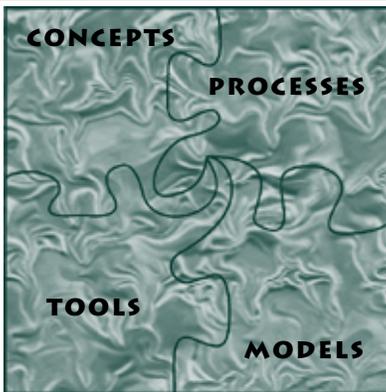
The next two **BRIEFS** will consider community and youth development approaches to reducing violence by youth.



³⁰ D. Elliott.

³¹ See Web site www.fightcrime.org. Recommendations have been rearranged according to age chronology.

³² The Michigan Collaborative for Juvenile Justice Reform, (2000), *10 Point Action Plan for Crime Control*, Lansing, MI. Available from Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency, 1115 South Pennsylvania Avenue, Lansing, MI 48912.



BEST PRACTICE BRIEFS are a product of **OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS @ Michigan State University**, connecting university resources to the community. **BRIEFS** are reviewed by participating faculty, **OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS** staff, and an Advisory Group of potential users. Responsibility is assumed by Betty Tableman, Editor, at 517-432-7138, or e-mail: tableman@msu.edu. **BEST PRACTICE BRIEFS** may be copied and may be quoted with citation of the source. Copyright © 2001 Board of Trustees of Michigan State University.

Write **OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS**, Michigan State University, Room 6, Kellogg Center, East Lansing 48824 Or Call 517-432-2500 for Brochures on Training or Information on Printed Copies of Past Issues.

COMING—No. 23

A Community Approach to the Prevention of Violence by Youth

REFERENCES

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, Commission on Violence and Youth. (1993). *Youth and Violence: Psychology's Response. Volume I: Summary Report*. Washington, D.C.

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS. 2000 P. Street NW. Suite 240. Washington, D.C. 20036. Tel: 202-776-0027. Website: www.fightcrime.org.

GARBARINO, JAMES. (1999). *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*. New York: The Free Press.

HAWKINS, J.D., HERRENKOHL, T.L., et. al. (2000). *Predictors of Youth Violence*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, Office of Safe Schools. Website: www.michigansafeschools.org.

MICHIGAN PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE. (1997). *Gun Violence Prevention: Policy Recommendations Report*. East Lansing, MI.

SORENSEN, PATRICIA. (2001). *Youth Violence Prevention: Moving on Many Fronts*. A Budget Watch Report. Lansing, MI: Michigan's Children.

WALKER, NANCY (Ed.). (2001). *Promising Approaches for Reducing Youth Violence*. Michigan Family Impact Seminars. Briefing Report No 2001-1. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, Institute for Children, Youth and Families.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This **BEST PRACTICE BRIEF** was developed by BETTY TABLEMAN and PATRICIA SORENSON with review and contributions from Michigan State University faculty and engagement specialists MARGUERITE BARRATT, Institute for Children, Youth and Families; BOB BROWN, Outreach Partnerships; DAVID KNAGGS, School of Social Work and Outreach Partnerships; CHRISTOPHER MAXWELL, School of Criminal Justice; JOHN MELCHER, Center for Urban Affairs; CELESTE STURDEVANT REED, Outreach Partnerships and Institute for Children, Youth and Families; NANCY WALKER, Institute for Children, Youth and Families; and from BETH ARNOVITZ, Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency; DEANNA DEPREE, Ottawa County Model Life Services; and DEBORAH STRONG, Children's Trust Fund.

Come to the Third Annual Conference on Assets Development

From Seeds to Roots: Growing a Strong Community Asset Culture

October 15 and 16, 2001, East Lansing



For More Information

E-mail: DMSdiane@concentric.net

