



GANG AWARENESS

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WHAT IS A STREET GANG?

A gang is an ongoing organization, association or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, that:

- Has a common name or common identifying signs or symbols.
- Has one of it's primary activities as the commission of one or more criminal offenses
- Includes members who individually or collectively engage or have engaged in a pattern of criminal activity

Gangs are typically involved in crimes such as: narcotics, trafficking, drive-by shootings, murder, burglaries, aggravated battery, sexual assault, intimidation, auto thefts, robberies, thefts and weapons violations.

WHEN DID GANGS START?

Gangs have existed for generations, primarily as ethnic protection groups. In the last 30-40 years some gangs have started to evolve into violent narcotics trafficking operations. These gangs are becoming the "Domestic Terrorists" as they intimidate the citizens of the communities in which they operate. They damage the lives of individuals and families through the violence created by their criminal street gang activity.

WHERE DO THE GANGS EXIST?

Gangs are now in existence in nearly all communities across the nation. Some areas are affected more than others, but it is clear that gangs are a phenomena that are growing at an alarming rate. It is seriously impairing the quality of life today in our communities and our country.

Major cities are the typical problem areas, but smaller communities are now experiencing "Big City" type crime. With the mobility of the gang members today, they can affect and do affect nearly every community.

WHO JOINS A GANG?

Typically 11-24 years olds. However, some are born into a family deeply involved in gangs.

Typically males. However, females are commonly active associates of the gang to which a boyfriend, a friend or family member may belong. They may also form a female branch of the male gang.

All races. Gangs are not necessarily divided by race, as many gangs mix races regardless of the gang name.

Socio/Economic Status. Typically, gangs attract individuals of the lower socio-economic class from the inner city or older neighborhoods. However, middle and upper class youth can be involved as well.

Education level. Typically individuals involved in gangs tend to disregard education. However, some do complete high school and even attend college. Often they obtain a G.E.D. as a means to satisfy court imposed sentencing requirements and to possibly obtain early release benefits.

WHY DOES A PERSON JOIN A GANG?

A person can join a gang for a variety of reasons. Typically, we see the following reasons:

- Life is stressful at home
- Limited English speaking homes
- Ineffective parenting
- Low motivation
- Behavior or discipline problems
- Negative police involvement
- Poor internalizations skills
- Seeking adventure or excitement
- Sense of power
- Low or nonexistent expectations from parents
- Other family members involved in gangs
- Low educational or occupational expectations
- Lack of parental involvement
- Abuse or neglect
- Permissive truancy attitudes
- Low self esteem
- Drug abuse
- Peer pressure
- Protections and security
- Profit
- Glamorization by the media

Young people look to a gang to meet the needs that are not satisfied at home, in school or in other areas of their life. The gangs are very skilled at identifying and meeting those needs, as many of them joined the gang for the same reasons. Although the attention a young person receives from the gang is a prescription for trouble, the youth perceives it as better than none at all. The gang can often have a stronger influence than the gang member's biological family.

TYPES OF GANGS

There are several types of gangs that exist, which include:

- Street Gangs
- Motorcycle Gangs
- Hate Gangs (*Supremacists and Separatists*)
- Militant Gangs (*Racial, Ethnic, & Political*)
- Drug Trafficking Gangs (*Cartels & Posses*)

The Street Gangs are divided into two major groups. These two groups are known as the "Peoples Nation" and the "Folks Nation." The two groups are made up of several smaller gangs, which are aligned into one of the two nations. The "Peoples" and "Folks" are rivals of each other. This creates an alliance of the gangs within each nation against the gangs within the opposite nation.

GANG STRUCTURE

Gangs are typically operated by individuals who are incarcerated in the prison system. These individuals mastermind the overall operations of the gangs and pass orders on to the gang members on the street through person-to-person visits, phone conversations and letters. The individuals in prison also outline the codes of conduct, philosophies, by-laws, rules, violations and the gang constitutions. These become the "handbook" of the gangs. Breaking the "rules" can result in fines, beatings, ejections from the gang, and even death.

The gangs follow a similar hierarchy, but different gangs have different names for specific "ranks." Members can achieve "status" based on their function within the gang. Gang structure may include some of the following:

- Leaders(s)
- Council or Board
- Chiefs of Staff
- Local Leaders/Shot Callers
- Local Staff Officers
- Hardcore Members
- Regular Members
- Future Members/Associates
- Supporters

Hardcore Gang Members can be defined as persons who function on a daily basis for the gang. The gang provides for the person and the person lives and dies for the gang. Hardcore members become more dedicated as they climb the rank structure and gain power and status.

Regular Members are persons who are part of the gang, but their lives do not revolve around the gang. They may only function or associate with the gang on a less than daily basis and are normally not entrusted with a major role. They have been initiated into the gang and tend to obey the hardcore gang members.

Future Members/Associates are persons who may be trying to join a gang but may not have been officially adopted yet. It can also be person(s) who "hang out" with the gang and may be involved in some of the activities. A dedicated associate can sometimes be deeply involved in a gang's activities. They may act like or claim to be an actual member. Their age may range from 11 to 13.

Supporters are persons who sympathize with the gang and perform acts, which directly and indirectly support its functions and activities. They are youth that are getting close to the age where they are deciding to join a gang.

Although many of the gang constitutions will appear to denounce criminal activity and violence, the gangs are involved in all types of crime, such as:

- Narcotics Trafficking
- Violent Crime
- Robberies
- Gun Trafficking
- Thefts
- Arson

IDENTIFIERS

The nations have identifiers, which “represent” their alliance. These identifiers are used to identify one’s gang affiliation to other people. The common identifiers for the nations are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Peoples | Folks |
| ■ Left side of body | ■ Right side of body |
| ■ 5 point Star | ■ 6 point Star |
| ■ “All is Well” | ■ “All is One” |
| ■ Red & Black | ■ Blue & Black |
| ■ Pitchfork down | ■ Pitchfork up |

Each individual gang will have its own common identifiers to show membership to a specific gang. These specific gang identifiers will commonly incorporate the use of the nation identifiers within.

Identifiers can include many things from which a specific gang can be recognized, such as:

- Hand signs
- Slogans
- Initials
- Sportswear (colors, symbols, names)
- Numbers (coded for position of letters in the alphabet)
- Symbols
- Colors or combinations of colors

These identifiers can be found in graffiti, clothing, jewelry, tattoos, manner of dress and hairstyles. Identifiers for a gang are what a nation’s flag is to its soldiers.

Identifiers are used to “represent” a specific gang or nation. When displayed right side up, they show respect. When displayed upside down, backwards, crossed out or split, they show disrespect.

Disrespecting (aka: “dissing”) a gang’s identifiers is considered a challenge for confrontation to the gang. Graffiti is often the first indicator of a gang presence. It serves as an excellent intelligence tool. Contact the police department to have it photographed, interpreted and documented. Then it should be removed as soon as possible.

Graffiti is typically seen in areas that have an active gang presence. Graffiti is like a billboard for the gangs. They use it to advertise their presence, gang identity and affiliations. They also use it to claim turf, disrespect rival gangs, issue challenges, take credit for an act or to threaten police.

Graffiti can show the “street status” within the gang world. It can be used to mark the area, or neighborhood of specific gang, or to deface the neighborhood of a rival gang. Some of this graffiti will be done by extremely talented “artists.”

Gang graffiti should not be confused with “tagger” graffiti. Tagger graffiti is typically done by individuals attempting to show off their “artistic” talents or for the thrill of the crime. The typical difference between the two is that gang graffiti will “represent” a specific gang or nation, and tagger graffiti will not.

Identifying with or imitating a gang’s identifiers can be extremely dangerous. Individuals have been attacked for misrepresenting, representing a rival gang or for responding to a “challenge” improperly. Youths should be advised NOT to imitate or disrespect a gang’s identifiers, and if challenged, NOT to make ANY hand gestures and to deny any gang affiliation. It is important to avoid confrontation with gang members.

RISKS INVOLVED

The youth, parents, and community in general should be informed of the risks inherent to being involved in a gang or gang activity.

The threat of violence exists not only for the person involved, but others around them including friends, family and neighbors. Gang violence often strikes innocent victims with or around the intended target.

The risk of a criminal record, jail, loss of opportunity and perhaps even loss of life are often a result of gang involvement.

PREVENTION EFFORTS

Parents must have the following in mind:

- Interest
- Involvement
- Investigation

Interest

- Parents should show an active interest in their children’s lives
- School grades, goals, activities, sports
- Hobbies & youth’s interests
- Friends (know who they are)

Involvement

- Parents need to be actively involved in their children’s lives. Give them responsibilities at home. Get them involved in after-school sports, recreation, clubs or church activities
- Family activities (show unity and a sense of belonging)
- Give encouragement, praise and reward
- Attention (spend time with the youth)
- Love (show your love for the child; it is an important part of life for everyone)
- Trust (should be earned by the youth and respected by the parents)
- Family values and morals (teach and demonstrate responsibility, common decency and a sense of community)

Investigate

- Parents should be the “Family Detectives.” This should not be done as a means to “spy” on the child but to protect the child and family from negative outside influences.
- Who are their friends?
- Why do they want to wear certain clothes, colors or jewelry?
- What is in the child’s room? The child should have privacy, but the parent should maintain control. At minimum, an occasional inspection should be done. The child can be present and the parent should explain the purpose. This is done for the protection of the child and family from outside negative influences.
- To what music does the youth listen?
- What are the lyrics saying and teaching? Look at the title and cover.
- Where is the youth “hanging out” and with whom? How are child’s school grades? Any drastic changes?
- Listen to the language the youth speaks? Do you approve? Is it just slang or gang talk?
- Watch your child’s actions. Does the child imitate gang members?

WHAT CAN FAMILY MEMBERS DO TO HELP?

- Support and encourage kids to stay out of gangs
- Inform parents of at risk behaviors of relatives
- Share intelligence information with Police

Please contact the
Chaska Police Department Gang Unit
 if you suspect someone in our community
 is involved with gang activities.

WE ENCOURAGE YOUR CALL!
(952) 448-4200

INFORMATION DIRECTORY

CHASKA POLICE ASSISTANCE

Emergency	911
Police Service	952-361-1231
Records/Investigation/Administration	952-448-4200
Chaska Police Tip Line	952-227-2479
District 112 Student Tip Line	952-227-7448

OTHER ASSISTANCE

Crime Stoppers	651-45-CRIME or 1-800-442-7463
Carver County Mental Health Program	952-442-4437
(Emergency Social Services)	(after hours 651-291-4680)
Carver County Social Services	952-361-1600
Carver County Community Health Services	952-361-1329
Sexual Assault Victims	952-448-5425
Statewide Referral Service (24 hrs)	1-800-247-0390
Employment & Training	952-361-1711
First Call for Help	612-335-5000 or 651-291-0211
Suicide Prevention	612-347-2222
Narcotics Anonymous	952-939-3939
Alcoholics Anonymous	952-922-0880
Alanon/Alateen	952-920-3961
Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities Area	651-789-2400
CAP Agency	952-496-2125
Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA)	952-448-7715
Bridging, Inc	952-888-1105
La Oportunidad, Inc / Jovenes Unidos (Youth United) Program	612-872-6165
Boys & Girls Club of the Twin Cities	651-774-5654
Tree House Youth Outreach	952-368-2813
Tough Love (For parents of troubled teenagers)	952-953-1219
Youth Care (Sponsors activities that give youth opportunities to make multicultural friendships and achieve personal growth)	612-338-1233
Centro www.centro.org (Provides educational, employment, health care & crisis intervention services)	612-874-1412
Clues www.clues.org (Latino social & behavioral health services provider)	612-746-3500 or 651-379-4200

CITY OF CHASKA CURFEW

16-17 year olds – Midnight ■ 15 & under – 10 p.m.
 7 Days a Week