

<http://www.troubledteen101.com/articles49.html>

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), in recent years an average of fifteen teens were killed every day, usually with firearms, and 750,000 teens are treated in emergency rooms for violence-related injuries each year. A recent CDC study of teens found that 33 percent had been in a physical fight in the last year and 17 percent reported that they had taken a weapon to school in the previous 30 days.

Teen homicide is the leading cause of death among African-American teens, and far more victims are male than female, but all teens can be at risk. Some factors that increase the chances that a teen will be a victim of violence or homicide are:

- * Involvement in gangs or fighting
- * Low parental involvement
- * Discipline that is inconsistent, lax, or too harsh
- * Use of drugs or alcohol by teen or parents
- * A history of violence in the home
- * Emotional problems/lack of self-control
- * Injuring animals or people
- * Lack of involvement in positive extracurricular activities
- * Exposure to media violence
- * Lack of economic opportunities in community/low income
- * Poor performance in school, especially due to learning disorders

These risk factors are not what causes teen homicide, but they often put teens in situations where they are more likely to be victims or offenders. Teen homicide often can be prevented, and parental involvement is an important key. Some things that parents can do to protect their teens from violence, or from becoming a victim or perpetrator of teen homicide, include:

- * Talk to your teen, and listen • show caring and concern
- * Know where they go, what they do, and who they're with • most teen homicides take place in unsupervised activities outside of school
- * Include teens in family activities, and be home during at least one of these times: when your teen wakes up, when he or she comes home from school, at dinner time, or when your teen goes to bed

- * Be consistent and firm • but not harsh • in your discipline
- * Discourage involvement with gangs, including wearing gang-related clothing and making or drawing gang signs • talk to local police to find out more about gangs in your area
- * If applicable, help your teen or other family members get help for drug or alcohol problems
- * Encourage positive activities, such as extracurricular school or church involvement
- * Teach the importance of a good education
- * Monitor and control your teen • s exposure to violence in the media, including television, movies, video games, music, etc.
- * If you own guns, store them unloaded and locked up
- * Get involved in your community and your child • s school
- * Set a good example of non-violent ways to resolve conflicts

If you think your teen is involved in violent or risky behavior, it is important to talk to him or her. Here are some things you can do to help a violent teen:

- * Get him or her counseling from a qualified professional; if there are issues of violence or abuse in your family, get family counseling as well
- * Remove guns and other weapons from your home
- * Limit access to violent media or influences
- * In severe cases or emergencies, contact your local police or take your child to an emergency room for help

Resources: Your local police can give you more information about gangs in your area. Check your phonebook for local mental health services, often including clinics offering free or discounted counseling. The PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) is a good way to get involved at your teen • s school; talk to the school principal for more information, or go to pta.org

This information was compiled by

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