

## SCHOOL VIOLENCE

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### 1. Warning Signs:

- 1 in 12 high schoolers are threatened or injured with a weapon each year
- if you are between the ages of 12 and 24, you face the highest risk of being the victim of violence
- statistics show that by the early 1990's the incidence of violence reached unparalleled levels in American society
- there is no single explanation for the overall rise in youth violence, many factors cause violent behaviors
- the more these factors are present in a adolescent's life, the more likely they are to commit an act of violence

### 2. Reasons For Violence:

- What causes someone to punch, kick, stab or fire a gun at someone else or even him/herself?
- There is never a simple answer to that question, but often people commit violence because of one or more of the following:
  - ✓ **Expression:** Some people use violence to release feelings of anger or frustration. They think there are no answers to their problems and turn to violence to express their out of control emotions
  - ✓ **Manipulation:** Violence is used as a way to control others or get something they want – Retaliation. Violence is used to retaliate against those who have hurt them or someone they care about
  - ✓ **Violence is a Learned Behavior:** Like all learned behaviors, it can be changed, but it isn't easy. Since there is no single cause of violence, there is no one simple solution. The best you can do is learn to recognize the warning signs of violence and to get help when you see them in your friends, yourself or other families
- Factors that contribute to violent behaviors include:
  - a) Peer pressure
  - b) Need for attention or respect
  - c) Feelings of low self-worth
  - d) Early childhood abuse or neglect
  - e) Witnessing violence at home, in the community or in the media
  - f) Easy access to weapons

### **Recognizing Violence Warning Signs in Others:**

- Often people who act violently have trouble controlling their feelings
- These adolescents may have been hurt by others, some think that making people fear them through violence or threats of violence will solve their problems or earn them respect
  
- If you see these immediate warning signs, violence is a serious possibility:
  - a) Loss of temper on a daily basis
  - b) Frequent physical fighting
  - c) Significant vandalism or property damage
  - d) Increase in use of drugs or alcohol
  - e) Increase in risk-taking behaviors
  - f) Detailed plans to commit acts of violence
  - g) Announcing threats or plans for hurting others
  - h) Enjoying hurting animals
  - i) Carrying weapons
  
- If you notice the following signs over a period of time, the potential for violence exists:
  - a) A history of violence or aggressive behaviors
  - b) Serious drug or alcohol use
  - c) Gang membership or strong desire to be in a gang
  - d) Access to or fascination with weapons, especially guns
  - e) Threatening others regularly
  - f) Trouble controlling feelings like anger
  - g) Withdrawal from friends and usual activities
  - h) Feeling rejected or alone
  - i) Having been a victim of bullying
  - j) Poor school performance
  - k) History of discipline problems or frequent run-ins with authority
  - l) Feeling constantly disrespected
  - m) Failing to acknowledge the feelings or rights of others