

GANG INFORMATION PACKAGE



A Presentation of Michigan Neighborhood Partnership,
Dennis Talbert, President e-mail: talbert@mnnpartnership.org phone: 313-361-4530

TYPICAL PRE-GANG BEHAVIOR

Identification or affiliation with gangs usually does not happen overnight. Pre-gang behavior usually begins at the elementary school age.

Children join gangs for a variety of reasons. Although there are no positive ways to predict who will join a gang and who will not, some indications that a youth is headed toward gang membership are:

- Poor progress or achievement in school
- Truancy from school
- Lack of hobbies or something to do with leisure time Frequent negative contact with police
- Draws gang insignias
- Problems at home
- Puts tattoos on himself
- Residence in a neighborhood or "dressing down" in gang attire Wants to dress in traditional gang clothes

While the above items are characteristic of gang involvement, some youth who join or associate with gangs do not dress in the traditional gang clothes and do not exhibit conspicuous behavior that indicates gang involvement. Parents must be aware of the behavior and activities of their children. Continual monitoring of behavior and communication interaction between parents and youth is imperative as a means to prevent gang membership.

WHAT IS CAUSING OUR YOUTH'S INVOLVEMENT IN GANGS?

People join gangs to fill a void in their lives. They find in gangs what they find at home, school, or in the community. Their strongest incentive comes from wanting to belong. This is often referred to as the "HERD INSTINCT." All human beings appear to have it.

Other causes listed in the 1988 publication by the National School Safety Center "GANGS IN SCHOOLS" are the following:

1. Protection or Security from the "BULLIES" and "GANG VIOLENCE" which occurs in schools and neighborhoods where they live.
2. Identity and Status to achieve acceptance and build self image among his peers. Gangs are ego supporting systems; they are viewed by our youth as launching pads to becoming big shots.
3. Activity and Excitement the need to find relief from boredom; gangs supply action, things to do.
4. Companionship the need for closeness and a sense of belonging to have approval and recognition; gangs provide the sense of brotherhood, family, and fellowship not found at home or elsewhere.
5. Economics the opportunity to earn income in areas where jobs are scarce or low-paying. Gangs make money through illegal activity such as; thefts, robbery, DRUGS, etc...

ARE THERE CERTAIN TYPES OF YOUTH WHO JOIN GANGS?

Those youth who have trouble getting along in school or with parents or who find difficulty in conforming to society's norms tend to hook up with gangs. Certain socioeconomic conditions create a large "underclass or subculture" who live in areas marked by a high incidence of crime, unemployment, poverty, congested living, hopelessness, broken homes, loose family ties, and boredom are youth who are at risk of becoming involved in gangs.

HOW DO GANGS RECRUIT MEMBERS?

Sweet-talk and Muscle. Youth are often confronted by gang members in their neighborhoods, or in school, and asked to join the gang. A Chicago Public School survey showed that 41% of students were contacted and asked to join gangs. Our youth have been told about all the good things that happen when they join, such as how they earn money, make friends, go to parties, and belonging to a close "family". Frequently they just pester the youth into joining. Another extreme gang intimidation is the threat of bodily harm or being beaten up.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A GANG MEMBER?

- A. The subject himself admits to being a gang member. (In this case, it is important to get his moniker and length of time in the gang.)
- B. A co-subject implicates his homeboys, especially giving monikers for everyone. (I've gotten (7) monikers for (7) gang members on a FI situation without anyone admitting to any gang affiliation.)
- C. Tattoos with gang names, slogans or insignias.
- D. A red or blue bandanna is a black gang member's national flag.
- E. Red or blue shoelaces are a nice indicator which will at least call for an explanation from the subject.
- F. Articles of clothing that is conspicuously blue or red, such as belts, ball caps, jackets or curlers.
- G. Look for graffiti on clothing, especially on shoes, and legs or arm casts.
- H. Look for anything in the subject's possession with graffiti such as papers in wallets or on school books.
- I. Check your resources for prior gang activity on the part of the subject.

NOTE: At least three of the above elements should be present before a person is labeled a gang member.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GANGS

BLACK GANGS

1. Sometimes Territorial
2. Very Mobile
3. Very Little Regard for Innocent Victims
4. Not Loyal I Will Switch Gangs
5. Drugs: Crack, Cocaine

HISPANIC GANGS

1. Territorial
2. Not Mobile / Will Not Leave Home Neighborhood
3. Respectful In Their Own Neighborhood / Will Carry Vendettas Mental State Is Gang First and Me Second
4. Loyal / Long Standing Gang Members
5. Drugs: PCP, Heroin, Crack

WHITE GANGS

1. Non-Territorial
2. Very Mobile
3. Little Regard for Innocent Victims
4. Loyal
5. Drug: Various Types / Sometimes Called "Stoner"

WHAT TYPES OF GANGS ARE IN THE COMMUNITY

Social or Neighborhood Gangs are a group of persons who band together because they find their goal and social life can be achieved more easily as a group. These may be groups that are Cliques in Neighborhoods, Schools, or other defined area that the group has in common. They may be Claimers or Wannabe's which are actually Fringe Elements hanging out with Gangs that deny actual membership. They are as much a member as the dedicated or hard core member. These groups cause minor problems in the community and are often recruited into the large gang. As a rule they remain outside the hard core group members.

Delinquent Gangs are normally comprised of persons who are regular members normally under 18 years of age. They are an identifiable distinct group that is involved in disruptive and illegal behavior. They have more frequent contact with the police; they use graffiti to mark territory, and have a more defined leadership and organizational structure. They are more mobile, and expand into other gang territory.' They prey on less experienced groups and residents of the community.

Non-Traditional Gangs are groups comprised of Hard Core Gang members who derive prestige from the performance of criminal or violent acts. Many of the gangs in this group require the performance of criminal or violent acts to be a member. These persons are in more frequent and serious trouble with the police but have little fear of the law. They are normally hostile, angry, and have a high propensity for violence. They have little respect for normal values. They have leadership, organization, conduct codes and sometimes sophisticated structure. These gangs are the most mobile covering larger territories, crossing city, county, and state boundaries. This is also the gang most likely to be involved deeply in criminal activity. Groups comprised of Hard Core Gang members who derive prestige from the performance of criminal or violent acts. Many of the gangs in this group require the performance of criminal or violent acts to be a member. These persons are in more frequent and serious trouble with the police but have little fear of the law. They are normally hostile, angry, and have a high propensity for violence. They have little respect for normal values. They have leadership, organization, conduct codes and sometimes sophisticated structure. These gangs are the most mobile covering larger territories, crossing city, county, and state boundaries. This is also the gang most likely to be involved deeply in criminal activity (i.e. DRUGS).

GANG ALLIANCES PEOPLE AND FOLK

"People and Folk Nations" were started in the penitentiary system in the 1980's by incarcerated gang members seeking protection by forming coalitions. The alliances are not aligned along traditional racial boundaries.

Since gang identifiers are forbidden by incarcerated are forbidden by incarcerated gang members in the penal system, incarcerated gang members when asked to represent themselves, will simply say, "FOLKS OR PEOPLE".

The Folk Nation had adopted the six pointed star symbol. In the late 1960's, early 1970's formed this nation of gangs in response to the emergence of the Black P Stone Nation which controlled the Englewood area of Chicago. The leader and founder of the Black Gangster Disciple Nation (BGDN) was DAVID 'KING DAVID BARKSDALE' who was seriously shot in an ambush in 1969 resulting in his death in 1974 of kidney failure. The Jewish Star (six pointed) was adopted as the gang symbol along with pitchforks pointing upward.

Members of the Folk Nations will wear all gang identifiers to the right. Earrings in the right ear, a right pant leg rolled up, the strap of overalls dangling to the right side, a cap tilted to the right side. The gang hand sign is thrown to the right side of the body.

The People Nation Gangs, on the other hand, all wear or indicate their gang identifiers to the left.

The People alliance, in most cases, utilizes the five pointed star in their gang graffiti. The five pointed star has its origin with the Black Stone Rangers/Black P Stone Nation, one of the larger black gangs in the Chicago, Illinois area. The alliance term, "High Five, Six Must Die," is in reference to the five pointed star versus the six pointed star of the FOLKS alliance. Commonly used by the PEOPLE alliance are drawings of pitchforks pointed downward, which shows disrespect to the FOLK NATION.

Although the PEOPLE and FOLK alliances are very strong groups and are bitter enemies, there are rivalries within the alliances themselves. A PEOPLE gang faction will normally not align themselves with a FOLKS gang faction for support. THERE HAVE BEEN EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE TO FACILITATE NARCOTIC TRAFFICKING.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

1. Know Children's Friends
2. Know Who Influences Your Child
3. Know What Children Are Doing
4. Occupy Their Time
5. Develop Good Communication Skills
6. Spend Time with Children
7. Do Not Allow Gang Dress
8. Do Not Allow Hanging in the Streets
9. Be Suspicious of Writing Graffiti, Gang Tattoos, etc.
10. Develop Anti-Gang Attitudes At Home
11. Learn About Gangs and Drugs
12. Participate in Your Child's Education
13. Get Involved In Community Affairs
14. Start Early
15. Model the Expected Behavior

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO COMBAT GANGS?

Anti-gang programs are in operation around the country. Those that have been effective seem to include four broad strategies. These are:

- More recreational and leisure-time activities for youngsters.
- A crack-down and tougher law enforcement against activities in the community.
- Increase parental supervision of children, their activities, and their friends.

On a more personal level, parents can combat gangs by improving their parenting skills and taking more seriously their responsibility for their children. The best way to keep their children out of gangs is by:

- Taking a deeper interest in their children and what they do.
- Knowing the company their child keeps; make sure he or she hangs around with the right crowd.
- Monitoring their child's whereabouts; know where he or she is at all times.
 - Involving their kids in church activities, school activities, and recreational activities; keep them busy!
 - Modeling good behavior for their children; if you truly love them, you should behave as you want them to behave.
 - Spending time with their children; include them in their life and do things with them.
 - Being on the watch for signs of gang recruitment or membership of their children; if such signs are present, intervene quickly; seek help and advice from their church, school administrators, or police officials.