

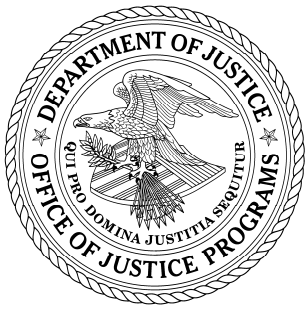
Gang Joining and Implications for Prevention

Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools
National Conference

August 4, 2009

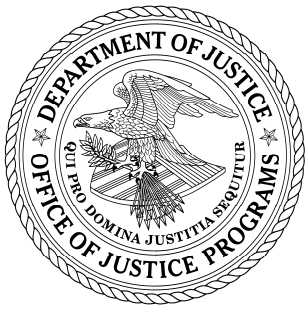
Phelan A. Wyrick, Ph.D.

SOURCE: [http://www.osdfsnationalconference.com/Presentations/111.%20Gang%20Joining%20\(Wyrick\).pdf](http://www.osdfsnationalconference.com/Presentations/111.%20Gang%20Joining%20(Wyrick).pdf)



People Are “Pushed” and “Pulled” Into Gangs

- “Pushes” are the negative conditions in the environment that make a gang-free, crime-free life seem unattractive or inaccessible.
- “Pulls” are the aspects of gang involvement that young people perceive as positive or attractive.



Forces that “Push” People Toward Gangs

Community Risk Factors

Individual
Risk Factors

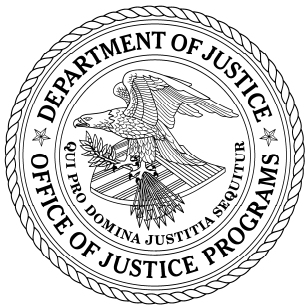
School
Risk Factors

A gray starburst shape with a white outline, containing the text "Community Gang Problems".

Community Gang
Problems

Peer Risk Factors

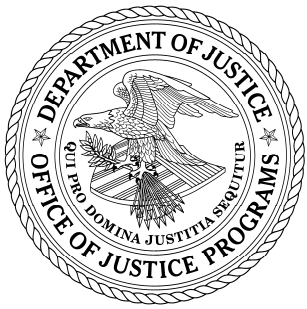
Family Risk Factors



Community Risk Factors



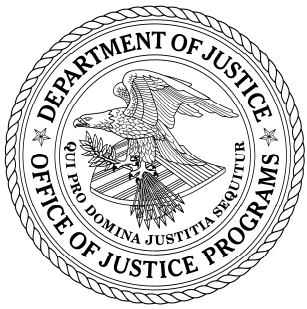
- Residence in a disadvantaged or disorganized community
- Availability/ perceived access to drugs
- Feeling unsafe in the neighborhood
- Low neighborhood attachment
- High crime neighborhood
- Availability of firearms
- Neighborhood youth in trouble



School Risk Factors

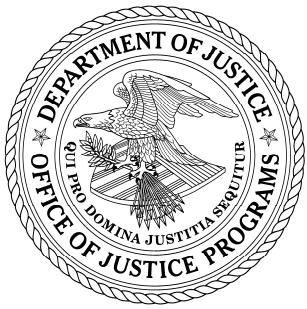


- Low achievement in elementary school
- Frequent truancy, suspensions, expulsions
- Low academic aspirations
- Poor schools attitude and performance
- Low school attachment or commitment
- Low attachment to teachers
- Low parent college expectations for child
- Poorly functioning schools
- Identified as learning disabled



Family Risk Factors

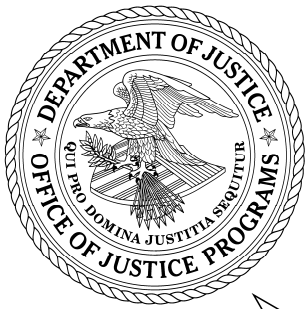
- Broken home/changes in caregiver
- Family poverty and financial stress
- Family history of problem behavior/criminal involvement
- Sibling antisocial behavior/gang involvement
- Child maltreatment, abuse or neglect
- Low parent education level
- Parental pro-violence attitudes
- Poor parental supervision & control
- Having a young mother
- Low attachment to child



Peer Risk Factors

- Association with deviant peers
- Association with aggressive peers

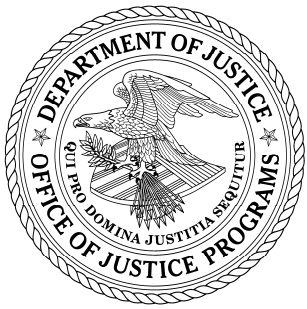




Individual Risk Factors

- Violent victimization
- Early onset of aggression/violence
- Antisocial/delinquent beliefs
- General delinquency involvement
- Aggression/fighting
- Early dating, sexual activity
- Substance use
- Life stressors
- Hyperactive
- Poor refusal skills
- Illegal gun ownership/carrying
- Mental health or conduct problems

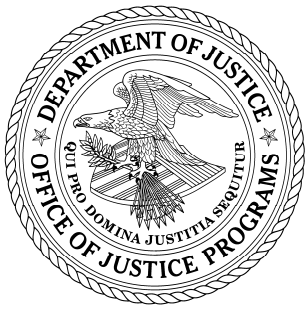




Risk Factors and Gang Membership

Researchers in Seattle studied the odds of joining a gang at ages 13 to 18, relative to the number of risk factors present at ages 10 to 12.

- Those with **2 to 3 risk factors** were **3 times** more likely to join a gang later than those with zero or only 1 risk factor.
- Those with **4 to 6 risk factors** were **5 times** more likely to join a gang.
- Those with **7 or more risk factors** were **13 times** more likely to join a gang.

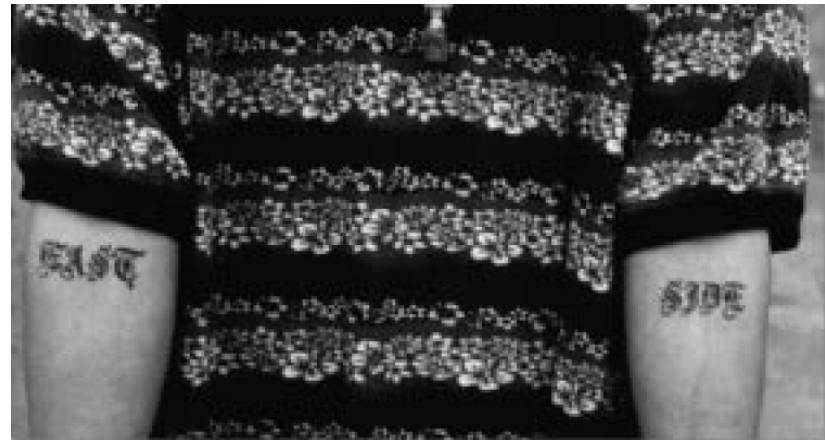


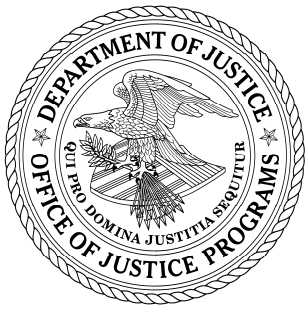
To Understand “Pulls,” Ask Young People



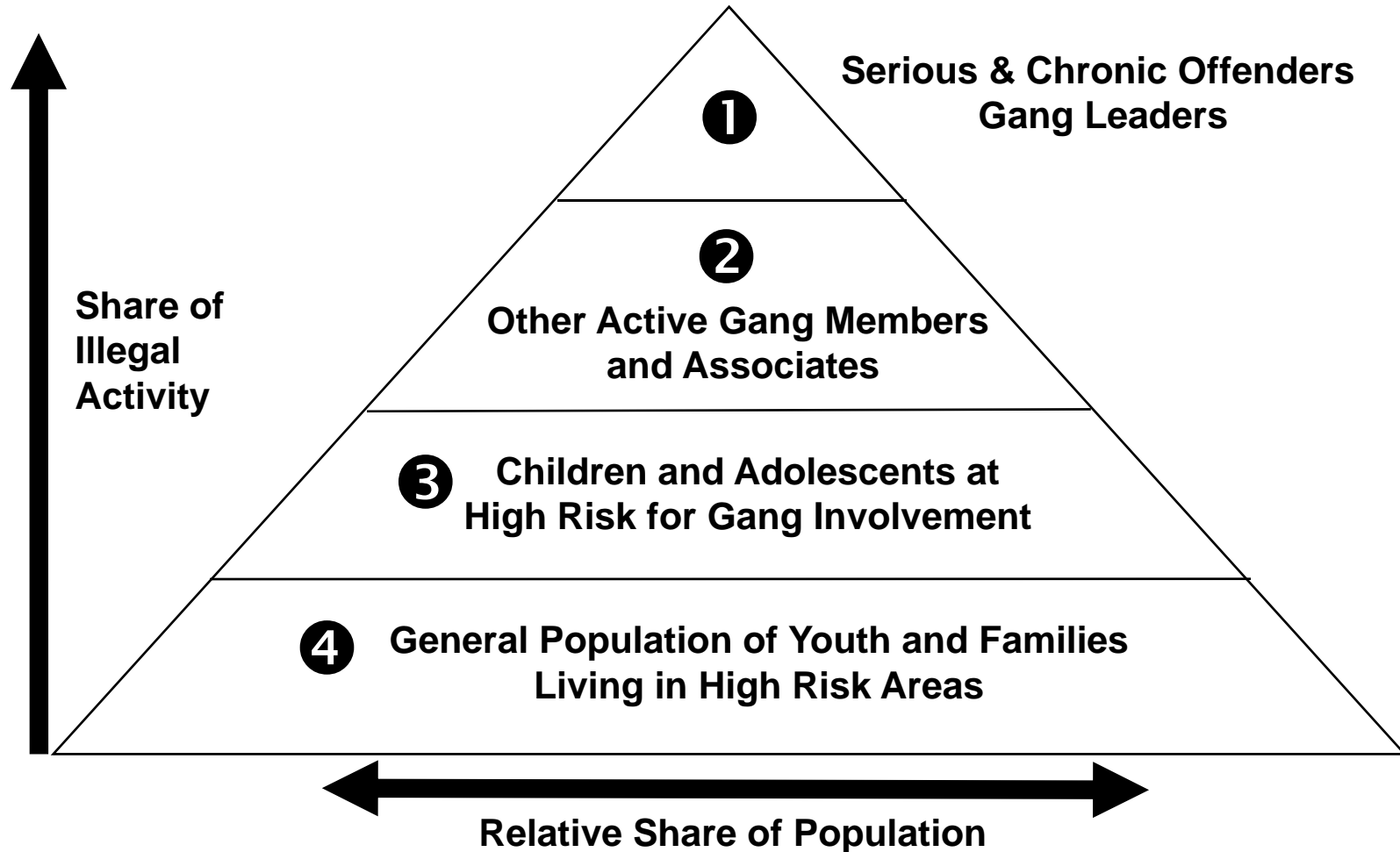
Why do young people say they join gangs?

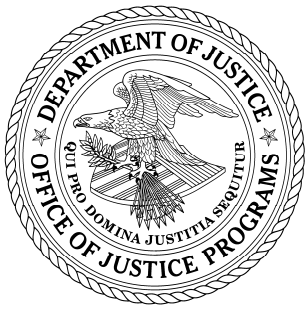
- Status/Identity
- Fun/excitement
- Peer group/“family”
- Protection/strength
- Money





Gangs in the Community





Focusing Anti-Gang Strategies

