

# What you need to know about violent behavior

The World Health Organization defines violence as: **The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.**

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 these emotions.

Sometimes it is used as a way to control others or get something they want. It is also used to retaliate against those who have hurt them or someone they care about.

It's normal to feel angry or frustrated when you've been let down or betrayed, but anger and frustration don't justify violent action. Anger is a strong emotion that can be difficult to keep in check, but the right response is to always stay cool. Anger is part of life, but you can free yourself from the cycle of violence by learning to talk about your feelings.

# Does violence affect me?

- Each day 160,000 children in the United States stay home from school for fear of being bullied.
- One in 12 high schoolers is threatened or injured with a weapon each year.
- About 1 in 4 women is likely to be abused by a partner in her lifetime.
- Children who experience child abuse & neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, and 30% more likely to commit violent crime.
- Over 25,000 young people have died as a result of urban street violence over the past 20 years.
- Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults.



# What should I look for?

**Research on violence has increased our understanding of factors that make some people at a higher risk for committing acts of violence. Risk factors increase the likelihood that someone will become violent, but are not direct causes of violence.**

- Loss of temper on a regular basis
- Unable to control behavior
- Feeling constantly disrespected
- Failing to acknowledge the feelings or rights of others
- Increased emotional distress and agitation
- Feeling that violence is an acceptable solution
- Thinking a person needs to be tough to get respect
- Expression of violence in writings & drawings
- Increase in use of drugs or alcohol
- Making and/or announcing detailed plans for hurting others
- Enjoying hurting animals
- Knowing peers affiliated with gangs
- History of early aggressive behavior
- Antisocial beliefs and attitudes
- Carrying a weapon
- Frequent physical fighting

# Standing Up to violence

**One way to escape being a victim is to change your outlook from one of helplessness to one of confidence. Each time you practice an assertive response, fearful and helpless thoughts are replaced by strong and confident ones.**

- Take a deep breath and let the air out slowly
- Sit or stand tall, with your head up
- Keep your hands at your sides rather than on your hips or across your chest
- Have a relaxed and purposeful facial expression, not angry or laughing
- Maintain eye contact
- Speak with a calm voice, loud enough to be heard clearly
- Use non-provocative words and avoid name-calling or making threats
- Avoid finger pointing or other threatening gestures
- Reply briefly and directly

Approach violence as an issue involving all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Question your own attitudes. View yourself and others as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers. When you think someone is a victim of violence, reach out.

**Don't look the other way!**

*The information has been provided as a  
community service by:*

The Glendon Association

Violence and Suicide Prevention Alliance

Additional Resources:

**The Melissa Institute for Violence  
Prevention and Treatment**  
[www.melissainstitute.org](http://www.melissainstitute.org)

**Violence Prevention Program**  
[www.hsph.harvard.edu/php/VPP/  
vpp.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/php/VPP/vpp.html)

**Partnership Against Violence Network**  
[www.pavnet.org](http://www.pavnet.org)

**National Youth Violence Prevention**  
[www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)

**National Child  
Abuse Hotline**  
1-800-4-A-CHILD  
(1-800-422-4453)

**National Sexual  
Assault Hotline**  
1-800-656-HOPE)  
(1-800-656-4673)

**Bullying Hotline**  
1-800-246-7743  
(PRIDE)

**National  
Domestic  
Violence Hotline**  
1-800-799-SAFE



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## Dealing with your anger

### **Learn to talk about your feelings:**

If you're afraid to talk or if you can't find the right words to describe what you're going through, find a trusted friend or family member to help you one-on-one.

### **Express yourself calmly:**

Express criticism, disappointment, anger or displeasure without losing your temper or fighting. Ask yourself if your response is safe and reasonable.

### **Listen to others:**

Listen carefully and respond without getting upset when someone gives you negative feedback. Ask yourself if you can really see the other person's point of view.

### **Negotiate:**

Work out your problems with someone else by looking at alternative solutions and compromises.

### **Stop! Consider the consequences. Think before you act.**



## Preventing Violence

Violence is a learned behavior. Like all learned behaviors, it can be changed. This isn't easy as there is no simple single solution. The best you can do is learn to recognize the warning signs and get help when you see them in your friends or yourself.

### **When you recognize warning signs in someone else, there are things you can do:**

#### **Ask direct questions:**

Direct questions should be asked regarding the individual's history of violent behavior, current thinking, current feelings and plans regarding violence.

#### **Remove the person from the situation:**

Without putting yourself in danger, remove the person from the situation that's setting him/her off.

#### **Ask for help:**

Tell an experienced professional or someone you trust such as a family member, teacher, or counselor about your concerns and ask for help. Most importantly: **don't do it alone.**

#### **Be safe:**

Don't spend time alone with people who show warning signs.

## Understanding & Preventing Violence



### **Together We Can Make a Difference**

**What is violence? How do you know if someone is at risk? What can you do if you or someone you know may be in trouble? The information in this brochure can help you avoid a potentially unsafe situation.**

#### **The Glendon Association**

Violence & Suicide Prevention Alliance

Santa Barbara, California

800.663.5281

[www.glendon.org](http://www.glendon.org)