

From guns in school and date rape to gang violence and bullying, today's teens are subject to an alarming number of potentially violent encounters.

VIOLENCE

Violence, in its various forms (homicide, suicide and trauma) is a leading cause of death for children, adolescents and young adults.

A growing body of research indicates that the media is having an impact on young people's behavior and brain development.

TV

More than 1,000 studies have been performed on the effects of violence in TV and movies. The majority of these studies conclude that children who watch significant amounts of TV and movie violence are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior, attitudes and values.

SURVEY SAYS:

- 61% of all TV programs contain some violence
- 43% of violent scenes on TV contain humor
- 75% of violent scenes on TV depicted no immediate punishment

Video Games

Studies show that when children and young adults play violent video games, their aggressive behavior increases. Parents are far less likely to monitor the video games their children play than the TV programs they watch.

Games with an M (Mature, 17+ rating for violence and/or sexual content) are often marketed to a younger audience and many stores do not enforce the age rating system. In one study, 73% of 4th grade boys say that the majority of their favorite video games are violent.

2001's Top-Selling Video Games

- 89% contained violence
- 49% contained serious violence
- 40% contained comic violence
- 41% of the games required violent game play to advance
- 17% of the games had violence as the primary focus

By age 18, the average child will witness 40,000 murders and 200,000 acts of violence on television.

What You Can Do

- Monitor and limit the TV, movies and video games your kids watch and play.
- Talk about nonviolent ways to resolve conflict.
- Encourage your teen to take a stand against violence.
- Discuss the painful consequences violent behavior has on everyone.
- Set the example. Show your children how to treat others with respect.
- Restrict any and all access to weapons such as guns and knives.
- Pay attention to the kind of friends your teen hangs out with.
- Take any mention of bullying seriously and encourage dialog with your teen.

A WORD ABOUT BULLYING

Bullying is a common, disturbing problem that, when left unchecked, can escalate into horrific acts of violence. While schools are scrambling to address this issue, it's the home environment that plays a major role in the behavior's development. Teens who come from homes where parents provide little emotional support for their children, fail to monitor their activities, or have little involvement in their lives, are at greater risk for engaging in bullying behavior. As is true with all of the risk behaviors mentioned in this publication, parent-teen connectedness plays a vital role in protecting the health and safety of their own children, and of all young people in our community.