

Weapons violations

Offense: Illegal gun possession, possession in violation of probation, aggravated crime charges due to possession of weapon at the time of the crime

Prevalence of guns

According to the National Institute of Justice, an organization that interviewed students in large urban high schools and juveniles who were wards in detention facilities in four states, including California:

- As many as one in eight students carry a weapon to school
- Weapons are easily obtained, and inexpensive
- In addition to carrying for protection, 63% of wards had committed crimes with guns
- 40 percent had obtained a gun specifically for use in a crime

Male, black-on-black gun violence is the most prevalent form of gun violence, but guns are a factor in every form of violence, from domestic disputes, to reactive bully victims in suburban school settings, to planned gang attacks.

Reasons for high rates of gun use in USA

The very high rates of gun use in the US are alternately attributed to:

- Easy access, allowing impulsive, as well as planned use
- Normalization of gun violence in the media, including first person, video games
- They're a short cut to power, especially for those outside societal power structures
- Historical association of the right to bear arms with constitutional freedoms

Possession not always a crime

Possession of a gun, even by a juvenile in most states, is not a crime in itself. Thus Ripple Effects approach in the tutorial on weapons is to stress safety, impulse control, constructive problem solving, and positive methods of youth empowerment. The true story under the topic "weapons" is a powerful reminder to youth of the results of underestimating the dangers of guns.

Goals of intervention

Youth will:

- Understand the dangers inherent in guns and other weapons
- Develop skills for resolving conflict non-violently
- Know how to control impulses
- Distinguish between passive, assertive and aggressive behavior
- Identify internal sources of personal power

A suggested scope and sequence

SKILL TRAINING TOPICS

Knowing yourself

Learning style
Strengths
Power

Problem solving

Identifying problem
Brainstorming
Evaluating alternatives

Safety

Impulse control

Stopping reactions
Predicting consequences

Assertiveness

Voice
Eyes
Message
Body

CHALLENGE TOPICS

Weapons Threats

Aggression
Death
Disrespected
Disputes
Gangs
Recklessness
Staring
Violence

