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## Youth Violence

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What is youth violence? The World Health Organization, (World Health Organization [WHO], n.d.) defines youth violence as homicide and non-fatal attacks perpetrated by or against a person aged 10-29 years of age. The period from 10-29 years includes the late adolescent and early adult stages of highly elevated risk for all forms of violence, and the period from 10-14 years, which, at least for being a victim of homicide, is one of the lowest risk periods across the entire life span. Gangs, young people on the streets, or in schools, can perpetrate youth violence. Involvement in physical fights, bullying and weapon carrying are also important risk behaviors for youth violence.

According to the Surgeon General's report, (US Surgeon General, 2001) youth violence stems from a complex interaction of their environment at particular times in their lives. Serious violence is part of a lifestyle that includes drugs, guns, precocious sex, and other risky behaviors. Youths involved in serious violence often commit many other types of crimes and exhibit other problem behaviors, presenting a serious challenge to intervention efforts and society.

"Every day, approximately 7 youths are murdered in US. Murder is the second leading cause of death for this age group," (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center [NYVPRC], 2007). To add to this, in 1998, there were 2,570 homicides among youth aged 10-19. Education is of the essence; however, young people still need the constant support of responsible and caring adults. Violence prevention programs have made a significant contribution in reducing youth violence; however, it takes a whole community to put an end to violence. According to HAY, (Helping America's Youth [HAY], n.d.). "No 'one-size-fits-all' program will work everywhere." Youth violence is very serious, and while no one is immune from the sword of violent behavior, a firm community effort can stimulate its residents to become proactive in addressing this and similar issues.