Toward an Understanding of Youth Gang Involvement
Implications for Schools

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Abstract
This chapter provides an overview of research findings about youth gangs and young gang members, with a discussion of implications of this knowledge for school violence and school safety. This review of gangs and gang member characteristics, risk factors for gang joining, and desistance from the gang debunks common misperceptions. Attention is given to factors of particular import in the school context, such as school-related risk factors for gang involvement, the role of gangs/gang members in violence and victimization, and other implications for school safety, including zero tolerance policies and the role of the Internet.

Overview
Approximately 6% of public school students are gang involved (Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, & Freng, 2010; Peterson, in press), approximately 20% of students age 12–18 report the presence of gangs in or around their schools, and 20% of public school administrators report some gang activity at their schools in the past year (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2009). Because of their disproportionate involvement in delinquency, gangs contribute to negative school climate and victimization. It is therefore important that school personnel understand youth gang involvement to better address the issues faced by at-risk or gang-involved youths. This chapter debunks some myths about young gang members and provides schools with prevention and intervention guidance, as well as approaches to avoid, by drawing from research on risk factors for gang joining and reasons for desistance from gangs.

Gang Member Characteristics
The stereotypical image of a youth gang member in the United States is a young, minority, inner-city male. Data from multiple sources, however, reveal that youth gangs and their members are found not just in inner-city areas, but in large and small urban, suburban, and rural communities
throughout the United States (Esbensen & Peterson Lynskey, 2001; National Youth Gang Center [NYGC], 2007). The picture of who is a gang member, however, varies by data source.

Law enforcement agency surveys estimate that Blacks (nearly 50%) and Hispanics (approximately 35%) comprise the greatest proportion of gang members, while Whites and other races each make up 10% or less (NYGC, 2007). By contrast, youths’ self-report surveys indicate that although Black and Hispanic youths are still over-represented given their proportions in the general youth population, White youths make up a larger proportion of gang members than shown in law enforcement data. In an 11-city study of youth in public middle schools, for example, Whites comprised 25% of the gang member sample (Esbensen & Winfree, 1998). Additionally, cross-site comparisons reveal that, contrary to many media portrayals and public perceptions, gang members are not solely inner-city, minority males; rather, they reflect the demographic make-up of the communities in which they live (Esbensen & Peterson Lynskey, 2001). These authors found that in Kansas City, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia, for example, the majority of gang members were African American; in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Phoenix, Arizona, Hispanics made up the largest proportion of gang members; but in Will County, Illinois, and Pocatello, Idaho, the majority of gang members were White.

Similar disparities across data sources are seen in regard to the sex composition of gang members. In law enforcement data, females are less than 10% of gang members (NYGC, 2007), but studies using youths’ self-reports reveal females’ prevalence in gangs from 20% to nearly 50% (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Esbensen & Peterson Lynskey, 2001; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith, & Tobin, 2003). Further, girls are not just girlfriends or associates; many are core members and have decision-making roles within the gang (Miller, 2001; Peterson, Miller, & Esbensen, 2001). As with race/ethnicity, the proportion of gang members that is female varies by location. In the 11-city study reported above, for example, females made up 25% of gang members in Philadelphia, but over 40% of gang members in six other study sites: Las Cruces, Orlando, Phoenix, Pocatello, Torrance, and Will County (Esbensen & Peterson Lynskey, 2001). The inconsistencies across data sources do not mean that one source of information is correct and others are invalid; they simply offer different parts of the same picture, with law enforcement data capturing older males and self-report surveys (particularly those that are school-based) capturing younger, more diverse samples.

**Risk Factors for Gang Joining**

Understanding the factors that lead youths to gangs can guide schools’ and communities’ prevention and intervention efforts. Research over the past 15 years has identified a number of risk factors associated with youths’ gang involvement. These factors fall into five general domains: community, individual, family, peer, and school. Studies have also shown that the harmful effects of these factors are cumulative and exponential; the greater the number of factors within and across domains, the greater the risk of gang involvement, with dramatic increases in odds as factors accumulate (Esbensen et al., 2010; Thornberry et al., 2003).

In the community domain, a number of studies have shown that social disorganization characterized by poverty, unemployment, the absence of meaningful jobs, and presence of crime, firearms, and drugs contributes to gang formation and gang-joining (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001; Hill, Howell, Hawkins, & Battin-Pearson, 1999; Howell, 2008; Maxson, Whitlock, & Klein, 1998; Vigil, 1988). Importantly, the majority of youth who live in disorganized communities do not join gangs. Factors from the other risk domains can therefore help to explain why some youth join gangs, whereas others who experience the same community conditions do not.

Most risk factor research has been conducted on the individual, peer, and family domains. The individual domain includes youths’ constitutional characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors.
Various studies have found that engaging in prior problem behaviors and delinquency, having low involvement in conventional activities (e.g., school or community athletics, scouts, religious activities), and holding non-conventional attitudes puts youths at greater risk for gang involvement (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Esbensen et al., 2010; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001; Hill et al., 1999; Maxson et al., 1998). Also consistently supported is an individual’s experience of “negative life events,” such as serious illnesses, suspensions from school, or loss of or disruption in important affective relationships (Klein & Maxson, 2006).

Research within the family domain has produced inconsistent results, but some studies have noted the role of poor parental management practices or skills (e.g., inconsistent and/or harsh discipline, permissiveness, poor supervision) in engendering gang affiliation (Esbensen, Huizinga, & Weiher, 1993; Hill et al., 1999; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Maxson et al., 1998). It is thought that the more proximal risk factors for gang joining come from the peer and school domains, which begin to figure more prominently in early adolescence (the peak age of gang-joining), while the role of the family becomes relatively less important.

The role of peers has been well-established in the literature as one of the strongest predictors of an adolescent’s own delinquency (Howell, 2008). Simply associating with delinquent peers and having few associations with prosocial peers leads youth to gang membership (Battin, Hill, Abbott, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1998). Further, affective ties or commitment to deviant peers are strongly and consistently linked with youth gang involvement (Esbensen et al., 1993, 2010; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Maxson et al., 1998; Thornberry et al., 2003).

As with family risk factors, findings about the role of school factors are also mixed. There is evidence, however, supporting the influence of some school variables on youth gang joining. Youths, especially girls, who experience academic failure or poor school performance, are suspended or expelled from school, exhibit a lack of commitment or low bonding to school, or drop out of school before age 15 are more likely to join a gang than their counterparts (Bjerregaard & Smith, 1993; Esbensen & Deschenes, 1998; Hill et al., 1999; Howell, 2008; Maxson et al., 1998). Similarly, negative school climate and perceptions of school disorder/crime have been linked to gang membership in some studies (Esbensen et al., 2010; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001).

Despite some inconsistencies, the risk factor research to date suggests that if some risk can be alleviated, particularly the accumulation of risk, youths may avoid gang involvement. Examples of potential steps schools and communities might take in helping alleviate risk will be discussed in a later section. As the next section demonstrates, preventing youths from becoming involved with gang life also has potential for reducing crime and victimization in neighborhoods and schools.

**Role of Youth Gang Membership in Violence and Victimization**

Contrary to common perceptions and portrayals of gang life, the majority of gang members’ time is spent in activities common to most adolescents: hanging out, playing video games, cruising in cars, and cavorting with the opposite sex (Klein, 1995). But, it is also the case that disproportionate rates of delinquency, violence, and victimization are found among gang members, according to multiple sources of data. Across various self-report studies, for example, gang members comprised 9% to 31% of the samples, but were responsible for 54% to 79% of all violent offenses committed (Battin et al., 1998; Esbensen et al., 2010; Huizinga, 1997; Thornberry et al., 2003). The high level of delinquency among gang members has prompted research on the question of whether gangs attract or recruit youths who are already delinquent (a “selection” explanation) or whether the gang provides a context in which youths are socialized into delinquency (a “social facilitation” explanation). Research to date supports an “enhancement” explanation that encompasses both of these: youths who are already delinquent or have delinquent tendencies are likely
to join gangs and their delinquency increases while in the gang (e.g., Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Gatti, Tremblay, Vitaro, & McDuff, 2005; Gordon et al., 2004; Thornberry et al., 2003).

**Group Processes**

Understanding why gangs enhance delinquency and violence requires an understanding of the role of group processes (Klein, 1971; Papachristos, 2009; Short & Strodtbeck, 1963). Psychological processes of “de-individuation” mean that youths are able to abdicate individual responsibility for crime to the group, as “group esteem” supplants individual self-esteem (Vigil, 1988). Individuals’ engagement in crime is rewarded by the group, increasing youths’ commitment to anti-social ideals and to the group (Vigil, 1988). As more recent empirical work suggests, threats of and actual violence thus serve important uniting functions in the gang and result in increased violence in the forms of, for example, retaliation, “face-saving,” and punishment for rule or norm violations (Anderson, 1999; Decker, 1996; Hughes & Short, 2005; Papachristos, 2009). In addition, external forces acting upon the group serve to reinforce group cohesion, as members view themselves as victims or unfair targets who are disrespected, oppressed, and justified in acting out (Decker, 1996; Klein & Maxson, 2006). These increases in cohesiveness are directly related to increases in delinquency and create a cycle of violence (Klein, 1971). Breaking this cycle requires recognizing youths as individuals (rather than members of a gang), holding them individually responsible for their actions, and avoiding strategies that reinforce gang loyalties. In addition, given gangs’ enhancement of delinquency, it would be advantageous, as the risk factor literature also suggests, to address youths’ anti-social attitudes and behaviors in an effort to reduce likelihood of gang joining and, therefore, escalation of delinquency.

**Negative Consequences of Gang Involvement**

Preventing gang membership may reduce not only crime associated with gang involvement, but also the negative consequences youths experience as gang members. Compared to non-gang youths, gang members have higher likelihood and levels of victimization before, during, and after their membership; gangs therefore also “enhance” victimization (Peterson, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2004). Furthermore, despite the fact that about half of gang youths reported joining their gangs for protection, there were no differences in victimization levels for these youths compared to youths who joined for other reasons. That is, gang membership appears to offer no additional protection. Membership in gangs also has long-term consequences, even for those who leave gang life behind. Having been gang-involved significantly increases the odds of dropping out of school, early pregnancy, teen parenthood, unstable employment, and adult arrests (Decker & Lauritsen, 1996; Hagedorn, 1998; Thornberry et al., 2003).

**Gang Violence and the Internet**

More recently the Internet has also come to play an important role in the perpetration of gang violence (Associated Press, 2006; Ferrell, 2008; Friedman, 2010; Gavin, 2009a,b; Van Hellemondt, 2010). Gang members in many cities have taken to posting videos and information about their activities on Facebook, MySpace, or YouTube. Such postings often glamorize gang violence and allow gangs to recruit by touting their endeavors (Ferrell, 2008; Van Hellemondt, 2010). Newspapers and some studies provide examples of gangs using the Internet to promote criminal acts, including violence. In 1999, for example, the first New York City Internet drug sales ring was uncovered, and 13 members of a gang were arrested (Blair, 1999). More recently, police in upstate New York connected three gang members to a high profile attempted robbery and
subsequent shooting death of a university student after they had posted videos on YouTube tout-
ing their violent gang lifestyle and bragging of their involvement in the murder (Gavin, 2009a).
In Brussels, Belgium, Black African youth gangs use Internet blogs to promote their gangs and taunt rival gang members (Van Hellemont, 2010). What often starts as an insult or threat posted on a blog, such as a photograph of one gang posing in disrespecting ways in another gang’s territory, can easily turn into a violent encounter on the streets or in schools.

There is no empirical evidence as yet to suggest that gang members’ use of the Internet has increased gang joining or violence, but police and other practitioners have noticed an increased use of the Internet by gang members (Ferrell, 2008). Extant research clearly shows that gang membership increases involvement in both violent and non-violent delinquency. Because gangs’ use of the Internet can increase violence as rival members threaten and taunt each other online, monitoring Internet interactions can identify avenues to intervene with violence and victimization, as discussed later.

Desistance from the Gang

Intervention cues may also be gleaned from research on youths’ desistance from gang life. Whereas the gang serves a variety of purposes for adolescents at particular points in their lives, for most, it is a temporary solution. Many have mixed thoughts and feelings about their gang membership, appreciating the benefits they received, but lamenting costs such as victimization and reduced educational and employment opportunities (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Hagedorn, 1998, Miller, 2001). Desistance has been relatively under-examined in the gang literature, however, and “gang myths” abound. It is commonly assumed, for example, that it is very difficult, if not impossible, for youths to leave gangs, that if they are able to do so, they must engage in some dire act such as crime commission or submit to a beating, and that there are negative consequences such as harm to self or family. The scant extant research reveals that gang membership is generally not forever. Although some individuals maintain involvement for extended periods or for life (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Hagedorn, 1998), gang membership is a transitory status for most. The peak age of gang-joining is 14 (e.g., Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Hill et al., 1999; Thornberry et al., 2003), and longitudinal self-report studies indicate that most (50%–69%) youths are gang-involved for just one year or less; about a quarter (22%–28%) are members for two years, and few remain in the gang longer than four years (Peterson et al., 2004; Thornberry et al., 2003). That youths do leave gangs, contrary to conventional wisdom (Klein & Maxson, 2006), allows research on why, how, and with what consequences they leave, uncovering the extent to which other gang myths are upheld.

Reasons for Leaving the Gang

Just as there are pushes and pulls into gangs, there are pushes and pulls out of gangs (Pyrooz & Decker, in press). While violence plays an important role within the gang, it may also serve as the impetus for leaving the gang. In a sample of adult ex-gang members in St. Louis, Missouri, two-thirds stated that threat of or actual violence to themselves or family was the key reason for them to make the move out of the gang (Decker & Lauritsen, 1996). Others left their gangs because they had moved or due to family reasons. In a younger (approximately 13 years old) sample of former gang members, violence was the second-most common reason for desistance (Peterson, in press). Asked to “circle all that apply,” respondents reported leaving because a friend (30%) or family member (17%) had been hurt or killed or they themselves had been hurt (21%). The most common reason given by this sample was that they “just felt like it” (34%). This may represent either a push or a pull, but another response indicates some disillusionment with gang life: 19%
reported leaving because “it wasn’t what I thought it would be.” Parents or other authority figures also serve as both pushes and pulls; some youths desisted because they got in trouble with police (18%) or their parents made them leave (9%), while 22% left because an adult encouraged them to get out. Normal adolescent experiences are also at work: 15% moved to a new home or school, and 20% made new friends. This multitude of reasons is supported in other studies (e.g., Decker & Lauritsen, 1996; Harris, 1994; Pyrooz & Decker, in press).

**Consequences for Leaving**

While some former gang members report having been beaten out of their gangs or committed a crime, the majority of both females and males “just leave” (Decker & Lauritsen, 1996; Harris, 1994; Peterson, in press; Pyrooz & Decker, in press; Vigil, 1988). And, for most, their exits are without major consequences. In one recent study, for example, 55% of youths reported no consequences when they left their gangs (Peterson, in press). Ever-present in gang life, however, violence is associated with desistance for some. Approximately 15%–19% reported being beaten up by members of their former gangs or rival gangs, or having a friend hurt or killed. Between 9% and 13% said that family, friends, or themselves had been threatened or that a family member had been hurt or killed.

These findings point to at least three conclusions. First, youths do leave gangs. Second, many just decide that they do not want to continue and leave without consequences. Third, despite the more mundane experiences of most, violence and victimization associated with both gang membership and desistance means that we should not just “let nature take its course.” Gang life poses additional risk for young people, and if knowledge about risk factors and desistance can be used to encourage youths to choose alternatives, some of these risks may be averted or alleviated.

**School Responses**

Research on gang joining, violence, and leaving can guide school personnel in developing appropriate responses to gangs in and around schools (see Table 10.1). It can also help them avoid responses that can either further alienate some youths (increasing their risk of gang involvement or continuation) or heighten gang loyalty and cohesion (potentially increasing delinquency and violence).

**Strategies to Avoid**

One method employed by U.S. school administrations to deal with violence, victimization, and other misbehavior on school grounds is zero tolerance (American Psychological Association [APA], 2008). This term refers to a loosely related group of policies and practices that mandate the use of predetermined consequences for student misbehavior, and the application of said consequences to all situations and students regardless of mitigating factors or extenuating circumstances (APA, 2008). Examples of zero tolerance in action include the expulsion of a 10-year-old girl whose mother had placed a knife in the student’s lunchbox to cut an apple; locker checks, security guards, and metal detectors; and use of legal consequences for relatively minor delinquency, such as expelling and/or arresting students for fighting (APA, 2008). These policies became popular in the early 1990s as part of an approach to drug enforcement (APA, 2008; Verdugo, 2002), and the No Child Left Behind act created further incentives for schools to use them to exclude misbehaving students as a method to increase test scores and school safety (Payne, 2010).

School administrators argue that zero tolerance policies will deter students from disruptive behavior by removing students who cause trouble and reminding remaining students of
Youth Gangs

the serious consequences of misbehavior (APA, 2008). This might therefore seem like an ideal approach to dealing with gang violence and victimization problems in school: expel gang members, and rates of violence and victimization will decrease, allowing remaining students to thrive in a safe and productive learning environment. This approach may also seem to be supported by research showing that gang presence at a school, school disorder, and lack of school commitment significantly increase students’ risk for victimization and gang joining (Esbensen et al., 2010; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, 2003). Findings from research on zero tolerance, however, often contradict these claims, instead providing evidence of harm and unintended consequences (APA, 2008; Payne, 2010; Thompkins, 2000; Vigil, 2000). Punishment is widely inconsistent across schools, for example, particularly in respect to the disproportionate sanctioning of minority students; the performance and school bonding of remaining students does not improve; and, in many instances, such measures produce an increased culture of fear (APA, 2008; Schreck et al., 2003; Thompkins, 2000; Verdugo, 2002; Vigil, 2000).

Studies have also found that exclusionary discipline has negative consequences for students punished in this manner (APA, 2008; Payne, 2010). Research on adolescent development shows that adolescents’ brains are not as developed as adults in the areas of decision making, risk assessment, and long-term planning (APA, 2008; Scott & Steinberg, 2008). Adolescents require strong bonds to prosocial adults and institutions to formulate decision making abilities that allow them to successfully function in society (APA, 2008). Excluding misbehaving students increases their alienation and feelings of rejection and decreases their chance of forming strong bonds to school or prosocial others. This can not only affect development (APA, 2008; Scott & Steinberg, 2008), but also close avenues for gang prevention and intervention (Peterson, in press; Thompkins, 2000).

Inclusionary Strategies

As opposed to using exclusionary measures such as zero tolerance, schools can increase at-risk or gang-involved youths’ chances of avoiding or disengaging from gang life by integrating them into the school, rather than street, culture. In recognition of group processes, schools should

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<th>Table 10.1</th>
<th>Implications for Practice: Toward an Understanding of Youth Gang Involvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Avoid making assumptions about which students may be gang-involved based on sex or race/ethnicity. Research shows that gang members reflect the demographics of the general population.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Take into account risk factors for gang joining and reasons for desistance when designing or adopting gang prevention and intervention services.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Refrain from implementing policies that isolate and alienate students and instead focus on ways to encourage student bonding to school and involvement with pro-social peers.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Beware of grouping gang members together and separate from the main student population, as group processes can increase isolation and cohesion of the group against authorities.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Zero tolerance policies and practices are not the most effective way to increase school safety and are likely to diminish opportunities for students to form the bonds with prosocial peers and adults necessary for healthy adolescent development.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>To improve school climate and reduce bullying and victimization, schools can utilize strategies and programs known to be effective in addressing some of the multitude of risk factors faced by at-risk and gang youth.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>The internet, particularly social networking sites, can be a powerful tool for school administrators to learn about gang members and gangs in and around school and about gang violence and victimization among students.</td>
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avoid grouping such youths together in, for example, in-class group work or in-school suspension. Doing so can reinforce social isolation and cohesion of the group against authorities and/or provide an opportunity for gang rivalry to ignite. Further, the more unstructured environments in alternative or continuation schools may not be advantageous for youth who have received much of their socialization on the streets (Vigil, 2000). Therefore, schools should use interventions based on “respect and social expectations” (Vigil, 2000, p. 279) that recognize that at-risk or gang youths can contribute positively to the school environment if given the right opportunity. Gang members are often talented and personable young people coping with a multitude of risk factors through what appeared to their young minds to be a reasonable option: joining a gang. Providing an alternative may give them an avenue away from the gang. Vigil (2000) describes schools in gang-infested Los Angeles neighborhoods that have been successful in engaging gang members by identifying youths who appear to have leadership roles. Keeping in mind the cumulative disadvantage the youths have experienced and approaching them with respect, teachers gently encouraged the students to participate in class and gave them some responsibility for class activities. Similarly, administrators invited them to participate in school decision-making processes and/or student governing bodies. While such processes took time, eventually the targeted youths were more enmeshed in school culture and this effect fanned out: because those youths were respected within their gangs, some other gang members followed suit (see also, Klein, 1971).

Prevention and Intervention Programs

The extant literature also points to a continuum of prevention and intervention efforts to target different risk factors associated with gang membership. Specific to gang joining or activity, there are unfortunately few school-based programs that have been deemed “exemplary” or “effective” (see, e.g., the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Model Programs Guide, 2010). One primary prevention program that may hold promise is G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training). Preliminary findings from an on-going evaluation indicate that G.R.E.A.T. improves students’ skills in a variety of areas to help them better resist gang involvement (Peterson & Esbensen, this volume). Despite the lack of research evidence about gang-specific programs, there are other avenues by which schools can address many of the risk factors for gang joining and increase school performance and safety. Promising or effective early intervention programs such as the Perry Preschool Project (now High/Scope Curriculum; Parks, 2000), the Preventive Treatment Program for kindergartners (Tremblay, Masse, Pagani, & Vitaro, 1996), and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS; Greenberg, Kusché, & Mihalic, 1998) for elementary school children can alleviate various community, family, and school risk factors to increase academic performance and decrease antisocial behavior, aggression/violence, and delinquency. In addition, programs that address school climate and student culture by focusing on a variety of school, individual, and peer risk factors have been found to improve perceptions about school and decrease bullying, fighting, and victimization; such programs include, but are not limited to, the Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999), Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP; Meyer, Farrell, Northrup, Kung, & Plybon, 2000), and the School Transitional Environmental Program (STEP; Felner et al., 1993).

Monitoring the Internet

School personnel can also attempt to control gang violence and victimization by monitoring Internet postings of local gangs and gang members. By setting up accounts or profiles on MySpace
and Facebook and being “friended” by gang youths, police personnel in cities from New York to Los Angeles have found that many gang members cannot refrain from bragging about their criminal exploits on such sites as Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube (Associated Press, 2006; Gavin, 2009a,b). Law enforcement considers any information posted on a social networking site as existing in the public domain, and “it has become a matter of routine (for police), to just automatically check (these websites)” (Friedman, 2010). MySpace has even formed an Anti-Gang Task Force, which includes law enforcement investigators and prosecutors, to examine gang members’ use of MySpace, and the company has been extremely supportive of efforts to decrease gang involvement and violence (Ferrell, 2008).

School personnel can similarly use the Internet, particularly social networking sites, to gather information pertinent to school safety. By regularly monitoring postings to such sites, schools may learn which students might be gang-involved, whether there are problems between rival gangs that might spill over onto school grounds, and who might be responsible for recent crimes at the school. This would allow schools an opportunity to provide anti-gang services to at-risk or gang-involved students, possibly preventing campus violence and victimization.

Summary

Although they make up a small proportion of the student body, young gang members can pose a number of difficulties, including fear and victimization, within and around schools. The first step in addressing these problems is an understanding of gang myths and stereotypes, cumulative disadvantages faced by these youth, and the group processes that increase cohesion and crime. Schools can then use this knowledge adopt strategies and programs to decrease risk of gang-joining, increase opportunities for youths to leave their gangs, and improve overall school safety to create a more positive learning environment for all.

References


