

# Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere

## Executive Summary to the STRYVE Foundational Resource



STRYVE's goals are to:

- Increase public health leadership in preventing youth violence.
- Promote the widespread use of youth violence prevention approaches that are based on the best available evidence.
- Achieve national reductions in youth violence.

Youth violence is a public health crisis in the United States. Violence destroys lives and diminishes the freedom, health, and prosperity of individuals, businesses, and communities.

- Homicide is the third leading cause of death for youth—an average of 13 young victims each and every day.
- Each day approximately 1,939 youth are treated for physical assault-related injuries in emergency departments—over 707,000 young people were treated in 2011.
- A third of high school students are in a physical fight and 20% are bullied each year.
- Youth violence results in an estimated \$16 billion in combined medical and work loss costs each year.

Youth violence is not inevitable. Youth violence is preventable. A strong and growing research base demonstrates that there are multiple approaches to preventing youth violence that are cost effective, scientifically supported, and proven to work. The necessity and possibility of stopping youth violence before it starts is recognized by many groups, including Attorney General Eric Holder who has argued: "We can't arrest our way out of this problem." The prevention of youth violence is the key to long-term success.



## Preventing Youth Violence and Creating Safe and Healthy Communities

**STRYVE, or Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere**, is a national initiative led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prevent youth violence before it starts. This initiative provides direction and builds capacity to prevent youth violence with a public health approach, action that is comprehensive and driven by multiple sectors, and the use of prevention strategies that are based on the best available evidence. STRYVE's vision is safe and healthy youth who can achieve their full potential as connected and contributing members of thriving, violence-free families, schools, and communities.

The STRYVE Foundational Resource describes CDC's public health approach to preventing youth violence and the activities that are a part of this initiative. The research and practice that guide this prevention initiative are summarized, and strategies to stop youth violence before it occurs are presented. The STRYVE Foundational Resource is accessible at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/STRYVE/index.html>.

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## Key Elements of STRYVE

**Public Health Approach.** Public health must be part of the solution to youth violence, a problem that jeopardizes the health and safety of all citizens and increases their risk for other health problems. With its emphasis on a science-driven approach and improving the health and safety for the entire population, public health provides a clear focus on prevention and has the skills and expertise to convene diverse groups and plan and implement youth violence prevention strategies.

**Multisector Action.** Preventing youth violence is a responsibility shared by all who shape the relationships and environments where youth develop. STRYVE emphasizes collaboration among multiple sectors and disciplines, including public health and safety, justice, education, labor, social services, and youth-serving organizations. No sector acting alone can prevent youth violence, but by working together prevention is possible.

**Comprehensive Prevention.** The likelihood that youth will engage in violence is influenced by multiple factors that can change over time. These factors include the characteristics of a young person and their relationships as well as influences in their schools, community, and society. Consequently, an array of culturally and developmentally appropriate approaches is necessary to effectively prevent youth violence. Key prevention strategies include:

- **Strengthen the personal capacity of youth to resist violence** by building their social, emotional, and behavioral skills to resolve conflict peacefully and engage in healthy relationships and by developing their interests and abilities to be successful at school and in the work force.
- **Build and support positive relationships between youth and adults and peers** by using family, school, and mentoring approaches that provide youth with positive role models and nurturing connections with others.
- **Promote thriving, safe, and connected communities** by designing safer environments, fostering economic growth, and enhancing the settings in which people interact to promote positive social relationships.
- **Create a society that promotes safety and health** by encouraging societal norms about the unacceptability of violence, addressing conditions that lead to health inequalities, and strengthening systems to build collaboration and effective prevention approaches.

**Strategies Based on the Best Available Evidence.** Youth violence prevention strategies are available that have been shown to lead to significant reductions in youth violence. The selection and implementation of strategies that meet the unique needs of communities and are based on the best available evidence are a priority.

**Action Oriented.** Effective prevention of youth violence requires information on what works and how to use it effectively. STRYVE provides guidance on actions communities can take to develop and implement a strategic prevention approach. Prevention support is available through a variety of STRYVE components, such as STRYVE Online (<http://VetoViolence.cdc.gov/STRYVE>). This resource center offers:

- **Interactive training** on key concepts and strategies about youth violence prevention.
- **Information resources** about a public health approach to youth violence prevention, including up-to-date data, research documents, educational materials, and a database of programs and practices with the best available evidence.
- **Customizable tools** to use in strategic planning and the opportunity to learn from other communities.

**Builds Partnerships and Capacity.** Strong partnerships and the capacity to develop and implement a comprehensive prevention strategy are critical to stopping youth violence before it starts. Activities must be data-driven and thoughtfully planned and conducted by multiple groups to address the needs and build on existing strengths within communities. CDC forges connections with organizations that represent key sectors in preventing youth violence. These multisector partners have a common focus on preventing youth violence but vary in their approaches to promoting safety and health. These partners are raising awareness about the potential and benefits of preventing youth violence and are helping develop the tools communities need to prevent youth violence before it starts.

Visit <http://VetoViolence.cdc.gov/STRYVE> for more information about STRYVE resources and [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence) to learn more about CDC's work to prevent youth violence.