GANGS 101

Understanding the Culture of Youth Violence
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PREFACE

There are many reasons for why gangs tend to develop and proliferate. The reasons as to why youth join gangs can be external or “societal,” as well as, internal or “personal.” Many practitioners continue to confuse intervention with prevention and when strategies are formulated and employed programmatically, they may not meet the mission statement or goals for which they were originally developed to address the gang issue.

Criminal and delinquent behaviors arise from weakened ties to conventional society, which include attachment to significant others (family), commitment to conventional goals and the means to reach them, involvement in conventional activities and the sharing of common moral beliefs of mainstream society. As one or more of these elements of the social bond becomes weakened, the individual becomes more likely to engage in delinquent behavior, including associating with gangs. In essence, since risk factors permeate all components of a youth’s life, prevention and intervention efforts need to do the same in order to be effective in each major area stated previously.

Unfortunately, in an attempt to address the gang issue and the problems gangs cause within our community and society as a whole, at times we become fixated on what gang involved youth are doing rather than what they are missing in their lives which is contributing to their behavior and involvement with gangs. Why are they involved with gangs when there are other youths who live in the same neighborhoods and go to the same schools, play together and even attend the same churches that have not fallen into the gang lifestyle?

Contrary to what many people might believe, youth want to respect and look up to their parent figures and other positive role models. They want to have boundaries and live in a healthy, happy and nurturing environment, and they want to be normal and productive members of our society. Nothing can fill an individual’s life more than the unconditional love and acceptance of a parental figure. When this is missing, the systems which must be put in place to reach wayward youths are extremely costly in many ways.

This manual addresses basic issues regarding the many types and definitions of gangs which will give the reader a better understanding about the subject. It also explains the one common thread that links all gangs together making them similar is their behavior. But one thing to keep in mind is that every situation is different and that what might work in one community may not work in another.
DEDICATION

This manual is dedicated to parents, guardians and service providers; juvenile probation and parole officers; faith based organizations and law enforcement agencies; clinical social workers and therapists, counselors, teachers, mentors and all others who strive to reach those youth who are caught up in the cyclical hopelessness of the gang lifestyle and especially those who have had the strength to leave it and not return.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to convey my most sincere appreciation to Esperanza for the opportunity they have provided me to impart eighteen years of experience into a format and vehicle which can support those who might work directly or indirectly with gang involved youth and help them apply and direct their own talents in a more focused, efficient and effective manner.

A special thank you also goes to the National Gang Crime Research Center in Chicago, Illinois and to Dr. George W. Knox for developing their multidisciplinary approach for a better and more complete understanding of the gang issue.

Finally, I would like to thank those who have worked with me for so many years: the Prince William County Court Services Unit Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers, the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force and GRIT (Gang Intervention Response Team) Coordinators, Executive Director Rebecca Keegan, Ann Wood, Gladys Santiago and staff of the Multicultural Clinical Center of Springfield, Virginia, and the team members of the Gang Intervention Services Program: Nestor Mantilla, Deepa Patel, Michael Torres and Julio Chacon, Kris Eckerd (Fairfax County's Juvenile Probation and Parole), Corryne Deliberto of World Vision, Col. Joseph Nattans B/W HIDTA Prevention Committee, Prince William County’s “31st Court Services Unit” and (special mention for Jordan Balzer) and especially Ana Bonilla (LCSW Gang Specialist) who has helped me to better understand the operational concerns which surround the gang issue within the public school setting.

Henry R. Pacheco, M.S., / QMHP
Law Enforcement Certified Gang Specialist
Dear Friends,

Gangs and violence in our neighborhoods are a very real issue, affecting our youth. Every day, news stories remind us of the reality and the proximity of gang-related incidents. For me, this problem hits especially close to home in the north Philadelphia neighborhoods that surround Esperanza’s headquarters.

We are driven by the biblical mandate to serve and advocate for “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40), in this case our vulnerable children and at-risk youth. To respond to this growing crisis, Esperanza initiated Communities United to Empower Youth (CUEY) in 2006. Since its launch, CUEY has helped bridge the gap between the young people most affected by gang violence, and the service providers at faith and community-based organizations who can help them.

We present “Gangs 101,” a new resource to help service providers address the challenge of gangs, developed in partnership with our good friend and nationally recognized gang expert Henry R. Pacheco. This practical manual provides insights into the psychology and lifestyles of gang members, as well as important information for those who are working in the trenches on behalf of our most vulnerable populations.

I am excited about this new resource, and excited to share it with you. I trust that it will not only shed light on the difficulties and dangers faced by youth who have joined gangs, but also provide hope for finding solutions in what may seem like an impossible challenge. I encourage you to make the most of the information in this manual as you respond to the needs of at-risk youth in your own community. I thank you for your persistence and dedication to this important cause.

Many blessings,

The Reverend Luis Cortés, Jr.
President, Esperanza
A historical review of American gangs suggests that they began to emerge along racial and ethnic lines in the 1760s (Bonn 1984: P. 333). These organized crime gangs had ethnic homogeneity in terms of their organization. The Irish gangs were the first to emerge, followed by the Germans, Jewish and Italians.

Although the United States is not alone in being an industrialized nation with major urban areas with denotable inner cities, a sizeable minority population and failed social policies for our urban poor, or in relinquishing much of our responsibility for social control to our criminal justice system, the U.S. is unique in its development of the urban street gang. Gangs in the U.S. are far more prevalent and more permanent in our communities and infrastructure, as well as being larger and more complex than in most countries.

Gangs are not a static phenomenon. They are always in an ongoing state of evolution and transformation, impacted by processes of social exclusion, rapid and uncontrolled urban growth, migration, community disorganization or lack of positive social capital, racism, bias, presence of readily available drugs and weapons, difficulties of youth building personal identity, politics, mental health issues, problematic families and the lack of a
faith foundation. All these factors can contribute to one's option of joining a gang and can be translated into lack of hope for oneself and one's future. Therefore, if we accept that street gangs are constantly changing in response to their street environment and internal changes, then we can assume that they may start out as a social group or may form for their own protection, that over a period of time they might evolve and become more prone to violence, as it has occurred within the “tagger culture” which will be defined later within the realm of gang types.

Estimates of the actual number of gangs and gang members in the United States fluctuate wildly, largely due to differing definitions of what constitutes a gang and the various methods of identifying gang members. Nevertheless, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics illustrate the scope of the problem. In 1996, the FBI reported that violent street gangs were active in 94% of the medium- and large-sized cities in the United States (many of these cities had up to forty different gangs), and that gang membership exceeded 400,000. However, more worrisome than the actual number of street gangs was their rate of growth. In 1991, there were an estimated 249,324 gang members and according to the 2009 National Gang Threat Assessment this number has gone up drastically.

Gangs in the U.S. have continued to gain legitimacy through our tendency to romanticize and idolize their lifestyle through several media vehicles within our culture. “Gangs today have come to have their own spokespersons who have their own academic credentials; gangs today have their own publications and Internet websites; gangs today have their own counterparts in government who act in denial or outright cover-up the syndrome and who benefit from downplaying the role of gang crime. Gangs today have their own political activists and front groups to give the appearance that they are do-gooder groups; gangs today have an enormous ability to corrupt everyone from university professors to judges and sworn police officers and those working in the criminal justice system, especially in corrections” (Knox, 2000, An Introduction to Gangs, 5th ed. P. x).

The U.S. has developed an entire industry in order to address the gang issue, including: gang investigator associations, specialized criminal justice training, conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. New roles and policy issues have developed in response to gangs in the areas of corrections, social services programs, the public school system, youth development, the military, health care functions and a variety of counseling and intelligence networking centers, just to name a few. This in turn has created new employment opportunities which are not likely to disappear in the near future. Throughout the United States, there are now many public and private programs which employ gang specialists.
We live in an open society, and gang experts agree that our society has institutional vulnerability to gangs and that there should be an expectation that gangs will be able to further develop their capability and capacity to exploit this vulnerability.

**A. SUMMARY OF THE 2009 NATIONAL GANG THREAT ASSESSMENT**

In 2008, the National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) and the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) collected and analyzed strategic gang related intelligence in order to produce the “2009 National Gang Threat Assessment.” This report examines the threat posed to the United States by criminal gangs. It also supports the U.S. Department of Justice and its strategic objectives to reduce the threat, incidence and prevalence of violent crime and to reduce the threat, trafficking, use and related violence of illegal drugs. This assessment is based on federal, state and local law enforcement information and is supplemented by information retrieved from open sources. According to this document, gangs continue to pose a serious threat to public safety in many communities throughout the United States. It reports that gang members are increasingly migrating from urban to suburban areas and that they are responsible for a growing percentage of crime and violence in many of our communities.

Increasingly, much of today’s gang-related criminal activity involves drug trafficking but now they are also engaging in trafficking undocumented immigrants and weapons, as we routinely see in the news media. In addition, a rising number of U.S. based gangs are attempting to develop working relationships with U.S. and foreign based drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and other criminal organizations in order to gain direct access to sources of supply for illicit drugs.

The report’s key findings show that as of September 2008 there were approximately one million gang members that belonged to more than 20,000 criminally active gangs within all fifty states and the District of Columbia. In addition, it found that local gangs or what we call neighborhood-based street gangs, remain a significant threat because they constitute the largest number of gangs nationwide and engage in violence in conjunction with varied crimes, including retail level drug distribution. The report also says that 58% of state and local law enforcement agencies reported that criminal street gangs were active in their jurisdictions in 2008 compared with 45% in 2004. The document noted that some gangs which traffic illicit drugs at the regional and national levels are capable of competing with U.S. based Mexican DTOs. It also found that many gangs actively use the Internet to recruit new members or to communicate with members in other areas of the United States or in foreign countries.
B. GANG TYPES

Whether you are a service provider or work in law enforcement, the sociological classification of gangs may differ only slightly. However, law enforcement definitions share some of the same descriptions and general views. Although gangs can be classified in a variety of categories, which might depend on its membership, history, function or activity, it is important to note that classifying any gang by just one single category could potentially exclude or include groups.

Having said this, the following are various types of gangs, which in themselves can be broken into larger categories.

▶ **Traditional Gangs (Turf and Barrio Centered)**
These are gangs that have been around for generations and have strong foundations, like the Crips, Bloods, the Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs) and MS-13. They are also known as super-gangs because they have national and/or international ties.

▶ **Business / Profit Gangs**
These gangs are formed solely for financial gain (drugs, prostitution, human and/or weapons trafficking, etc.). Drug gangs fall within this category.
  • **Drug Gangs**
  These gangs are found in certain cities across the United States and they are made up of smaller groups with a more cohesive organization. They focus on the business of selling drugs and have sales market territories. The members of these gangs are older on average but with a narrower age range and are extremely violent. They have defined roles, abide by a code of loyalty and are controlled by market competition. The difficulties encountered in working with youth gang members within a drug gang setting tends to create a more difficult and less safe environment, especially for those who engage clients in a home based setting.

▶ **Hate Groups-Gangs**
These gangs target homosexuals and minorities, such as the Aryan Nation and Skinheads, among others which can work together encompassing mixed ethnic groups and races.

▶ **Copycat and Delinquent Social Gangs**
These two types of gangs do not have strong foundations and may pop-up one
day and disappear the next. They are the easiest gangs to address and prevent; some believe that “taggers” and “families” fall into these groups.

▶ Street Gangs
These gangs involve themselves in “cafeteria style” crimes – doing a little of everything. At the street level, their groups are usually larger but are less cohesive as an organization. They have a code of loyalty and generally have ill defined roles for its members, who are usually younger on average but with a wide age range. These gangs operate in residential territories and its members may sell drugs. They are controlled by inter-gang rivalries.

▶ Third Generation Gangs
Also known as terrorists, these gangs have evolved political aims. They are the most complex gangs and operate – or aspire to operate – at the global end of the spectrum, using their sophistication to garner power, aid financial acquisition and engage in mercenary type activities. To date, most Third Generation Gangs have been primarily mercenary in orientation. In some instances, however, they have sought to further their own political and social objectives.

▶ Hybrid Gangs
They are a new type of gang; they often mimic traditional street gangs in their way of dressing, their tattoos, hairstyles and attitudes and in their graffiti but may or may not follow expected rules and contain a mix of self developed activities and behaviors.

▶ Prison Gangs
For some gang members joining a prison gang is an actual goal. After their incarceration, the new inmates have the opportunity to join a prison gang and learn their ways. Prison gangs are functional and thriving within the corrections system and the reality is that there is an endless stream of people wanting to join their ranks. Prison gangs have a direct influence on street gangs and their activities. For example, in 1994 the Mexican Mafia (a.k.a. La EME), a West Coast Latino prison gang, actively made an effort to curb the violence between Latino street gangs in Southern California when too many drive-by shootings were killing gang members and innocent bystanders, as well as, bringing too much negative attention by law enforcement and affecting drug sales.
C. GANG LEVELS
Gangs can also fall into four levels which were developed by Dr. George M. Knox:

- **Level One Gangs**
  These are emergent gangs which usually consist of one unit of operation. They can be less structured as an organization and typically operate without written rules. These gangs fall into the copycat category because they may take on the name of a national gang, such as the Crips, but they may have no real connection with said gang. Youth involved in these gangs may mimic aspects of the gang lifestyle but are considered “wannabe’s” and can become “gonnabe’s” if not checked.

- **Level Two Gangs**
  These are crystallized gangs and have a defined structure or formal group. They consist of several units of operation or sets that operate in cooperation with each other on a regular basis.

- **Level Three Gangs**
  These are highly structured super gangs or corporate gangs, also known in classical sociological language as formal organizations. They may have numerous chapters, sets or franchises. Typically, these gangs have formalized their codes and have a written constitution and as well as bylaws.

- **Level Four Gangs**
  These are organized crime groups that use political corruption for their advantage to secure their operations and accumulate sufficient capital to enter in legitimate business.

D. FEMALE INVOLVEMENT IN GANGS
Though gangs are primarily male dominated, research indicates that female gang membership is on the rise. In 2006, the National Youth Gang Center stated that “youth gang membership among girls has been more widely reported by law enforcement than in the past.” In May of 2008, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) found that in high risk and high crime neighborhoods 29.4% of girls and 32.4% of boys claimed gang membership when self definition was used as a measure.

In accord with several studies, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency ranked young females as the fastest growing offenders in the nation. Female gang members continue to
perform the traditional subordinate functions of providing financial, sexual and emotional support to the male gang members. They continue to take on more active roles in gangs, gaining added responsibilities and independence.

Reports from the FBI indicate that the “Sureños” or southern gangs are developing female subset organizations with their own names and hierarchies. Their activities involve recruitment of male and female associates, hiding weapons and drugs (as in most gangs) and organizing crimes which benefit their subset or gang as a whole.

Although “all female” gangs do exist, they are rare and infrequently the focus of law enforcement. Furthermore, law enforcement officials are less likely to recognize or stop female gang members and have experienced difficulty at times in identifying them in gang related activities.

E. THE EVOLUTION OF GANGS

Today’s street gangs are not a recent or new phenomenon. They are the result of an evolution more than two centuries in the making. During this progression of change, the street gang has evolved due to both external and internal influences from a set of traditional guidelines and/or street rules and many new nontraditional standards, as described below:

- Common behaviors
- Mix of graffiti and symbols
- Less concerned over turf or territory –the “barrio” concept
- Members of mixed races and ethnicities
- Members may belong to more than one gang
- Members may switch from one gang to another
- Rate of female gang membership is increasing
- Three R’s: Reputation, Respect and Retaliation

F. GOVERNMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS OF GANGS

As of 2007, research has found that gangs can be found in all parts of the country and that all ethnic groups and income levels are represented.

- 49% of all gang members are Latino
- 35% are African American
- 9% are white
- 7% other
Other studies estimate the gang population to be one quarter Latino, one quarter African American and 40% white (www.justicepolicy.org). The recruits generally range in age from 10 to 24 years but they are getting younger. Most members are boys, but 10% of all gang members are girls and some say this percentage is growing fast.

Although there are many reasons and factors for gang proliferation, the following facts give hope to those who work with gang involved youth:

• “Law enforcement estimates of nationwide juvenile gang membership suggest that no more than 1% of all youth ages 10-17 are gang members.” (OJJDP 2006)

• “The best estimate of general U.S. youth gang prevalence is 5% ever-joined, 2% current gang members... the strongest message in this research is that most youth (7 or 8 out of 10) do not join gangs through adolescence.” (Klein, Maxson – “Street Gang Patterns and Policies” 2006)
A. WHAT IS A GANG?
There are various definitions and classifications for gangs and they are essential whether you are a law enforcement officer or a service provider. Nevertheless, any definition of “gang” when used for law enforcement must hold up in court.

The emphasis of gathering gang intelligence within the criminal justice system is a response to the gang threat problem. It is similar to the “Targeted Offender Programs,” where strategic intelligence gathering proves invaluable, particularly in gang member database development and gang member tracking systems. Within correctional institutions, a defined classification system, which identifies gang members, is fundamental to effective processing and management within that system. The same holds true for service providers in developing programs of intervention or prevention.

1. Standard Definition
By definition, a gang is an organization of two or more individuals who form an alliance for a common purpose; the gang identifies with and claims a territory in the community and engages individually or collectively in violence and other criminal activity.
2. Practical Working Definitions
There are many working definitions with respect to gangs but the clearest and best definition tends to be: that which encompasses all aspects of the gang lifestyle and can be broken down both programmatically and operationally and is essential to those who work with gang involved youth on a daily basis. Below are some examples.

“A gang is an organized social system that is both quasi-private and quasi-secretive and whose size and goals require that social interactions be governed by a leadership structure that has defined roles. The authority associated with these roles has been legitimized to the extent that social codes are operational to regulate the behavior of both leadership and rank and file. They plan and provide not only for the social and economic services of its members, but also for its own maintenance as an organization and pursue such goals irrespective of whether the action is legal or not and lacks a bureaucracy” (Jankowaski, 1991).

“A gang has the following characteristics: a denotable group comprised primarily of males who are committed to delinquent (including criminal) behavior or values and call forth a consistent negative response from the community such that the community comes to see them as qualitatively different from other groups” (Klein, 1995).

The following is the definition best suited for service providers:

The gang lifestyle or culture is a way of life that includes patterns related to conduct and indoctrination, beliefs, traditions, values, language, art, skills and social and interpersonal relationships.

3. Brief Review of Federal and State Definitions of the Terms “Gang,” “Gang Member” and “Gang Crime”
A review of current federal and state laws for various states’ definitions of the words “gang,” “gang member” and “gang crime” reveals the following information: (For the complete report, please go to http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Definitions.pdf.)

a. “Gang” Definitions
- Thirty-seven states and Washington, DC, have legislation that defines “gang.”
- Twenty-nine states and Washington, DC, define a gang as consisting of three or more persons.
- Twenty-two states include a common name, identifying sign, or symbol as identifiers of gangs in their definitions.
- Twenty-three states refer to a gang as an “organization, association, or group.”
• Twenty-one states and Washington, DC, use the term “criminal street gang” to describe a gang. Every definition includes criminal / illegal activity or behavior.

b. “Gang Member” Definitions
• Fourteen states have legislation that defines a “gang member.”
• Six states have a list of criteria, some of which a person must meet to be considered a gang member. Of those, five states require that a person must meet at least two criteria to be considered a gang member.
• Kansas requires an admission of gang membership OR three or more of its criteria.

c. “Gang Crime” Definitions
• Twenty-one states define “gang crime / activity.”
• Twelve states refer to it as a “pattern of criminal gang activity.”
• Eighteen states enumerate the exact crimes that are to be considered criminal gang activity.

B. WHY DO YOUTH JOIN GANGS?
Understanding the underlying basis for gang membership is the key to answer the question as to why youth join gangs in the first place. One must also ask not just why they join but what motivates a youth to desire and acquire gang membership?

Those who have worked with these youths on the field and have gained their trust have heard the answer to this question. They join for a great number of reasons, including safety, friendship, status, recognition, curiosity, excitement, money, out of a sense of tradition due to generational commitment, peer pressure and drug abuse, just to name a few. Belonging to a gang gives them a sense of power and control over a specific geographic area, a certain group of people and even their own lives.

Feeling wanted and loved, giving and receiving love are essential expressions for a gang member, as for everyone in society. This is most evident in the way they commonly refer to the gang as their “family.” Being part of a gang gives them a sense of belonging, of pride and honor. They feel they are accounted for and that they are contributing to something bigger than themselves. They also receive guidance, shelter and money. The gang becomes the member’s sole source of survival, a surrogate or replacement family that provides posi-
tive reinforcement, direction, focus and a sense of purpose, which develops into a strong sense of blind commitment and loyalty. In exchange for the false sense of security and love, this new “family” expect their members to accept all their philosophies and rules and willingly participate in violent actions and crimes for the survival of the gang.

Below is a letter written by a young female gang member on why she joined:

“Everyone wants to know why. Why did you join? You have a family who loves and cares for you. Why “mija,” why? I joined because when I was a lil’ girl a lot of shit happened to me that nobody knows about and I have kept it inside of me all this time. Nobody listened to me and when they did, they said I was lying.

Drug addict dad and work alcoholic mom, no brothers, no sisters, a step dad that only wants to touch me and a babysitter whose son did touch me. My mom always ripping me out of families that I thought were mine, it was all lies. Living in the ghetto, wandering why? Can you tell me why? Can you tell me why I was born in this life of sex, drugs and alcohol, backstabbing my so-called real family?

I was just a lil’ girl, damn. Those memories are with me forever. I’m scared to live. I’m scared to trust nobody. I’m scared. So why did I join? I joined because I needed someone and they were the only ones there. I needed someone to make me feel wanted and I needed someone to care. That’s why.”

1. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory
By joining a gang, youths fill a void or satisfy a need in their lives. This can be explained with Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. “We each have a hierarchy of needs that ranges from lower to higher. As lower needs are fulfilled there is a tendency for other, higher needs to emerge.” Maslow’s theory maintains that a person does not feel a higher need until the needs of the current level are satisfied.
This pyramid in Figure 1 represents Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. He described both the external and internal basic needs.

The external needs include:
- **Physiological** – food, air, water, clothing and sex
- **Safety** – protection, stability, pain avoidance, routine and order
- **Belonging** – affection, acceptance and inclusion
- **Esteem** – self-esteem, self-respect, respect of others and respect by others
- **Self-Actualization** – achieve full potential and achievement

The internal needs include: self-confidence, love, health, as well as, emotional and spiritual security.

Two things can result when these needs are not met:
- The price they pay: youth join a gang to receive the basic needs of love, supervision, spiritual guidance, etc.
- What they do to other people: they gain “respect” showing how brave or tough they are by physically harming or killing another person.
For those who work with at-risk youth, the external and internal components that are missing from these young peoples' lives can be evident and it is easy to understand the attractiveness and allure of the gang lifestyle, with its empty promises for meeting these needs.

2. Types of Gang Members
There are many ways to examine the myriad of gang issues and types of members within a gang. It should be understood that a gang member does not have to commit to a drive-by shooting or some other qualifying crime in order to be considered a gang member. In some states, legal enhancements or predetermined violations of the law committed by a gang member may qualify for a harsher sentence if convicted. The following definitions for types of gang members are generic in nature rather than legal.

- **The Hardcore**
  These are the original gangsters (OGs), the leaders or “shot callers” who are down for the gang and will do whatever it takes to defend it. They are the most violent.

- **The Regular Gang Members**
  They are the typical “soldiers” who pay dues and defend the gang. They get involved in situational and sometimes planned events, which include violence.

- **The Associate**
  They hang around gang members and may be involved in every aspect of their life but have no authority over other gang members and may not be present in official meetings. They can be very dangerous given that fact that they have something to prove and follow no designated rules.

An unofficial type is the **Potential**. These are youth who may be at high risk and are easy targets for recruitment.

C. Gang Symbols
Within the gang culture many things can represent the gang, like stylized hair cuts and clothing, religious articles and self-inflicted burns. But the most common symbols associated with gangs are tattoos and graffiti.
1. Tattoos
Gang members may wear tattoos which are specific to their gang, set, clique, etc., or may convey their status or represent a region, like in the case of the “Sureños” and “Norteños.”

Some tattoos are generic in nature and cannot identify membership to a particular gang but may convey a particular meaning and significance to that individual. Tattoos of teardrops have been said to represent the pain of losing fellow gang members, having killed someone or having done time in a correctional facility. Although tattoos should not be considered the single indicator for gang involvement, for most gang members they represent their symbol for being “down” (doing whatever it takes) for their gang.

2. Graffiti
In the gang culture, graffiti can range from writing words or names to more elaborate or artistic symbols or messages. Graffiti may show what gangs are fighting, arguing or “beefing” about. They may also present the gang roll call or mark their territory.

a. Types of Graffiti
   • Tagger – They are tags, monikers (street names of members) or murals. This type of graffiti is more elaborate.
• **Gangs** – The objective of this type of graffiti is to intimidate, mark turf or send a message. They are territorial rather than regional. It leads to violence and usually involves multiple symbols.

• **Snipe** – This advertisement type graffiti uses signs or posters without permission.

• **Hate** – Gangs that use this type of graffiti write racial, religious or cultural slurs.

• **Generic or Conventional Graffiti** – This type of graffiti includes random markings.

b. **Graffiti Lingo**

• **Tag** – A tag is usually a stylized signature, usually simple and uses only one color.

• **Piece** – Short for masterpieces, these are large, detailed drawings, sometimes in 3-D or other special effects.

• **Throw Up** – This is a more elaborated tag, normally using more than one color, but it takes much less time than a piece.

• **Bombing** – This means to hit many different surfaces with graffiti vandalism.

• **Crew** – These are a group of graffiti vandals.

• **Slash or Strike** – When someone slashes or strikes graffiti it means they put a line through or cross out another gang’s graffiti.

• **Burner** – This is a very large, elaborate and detailed piece of graffiti.

• **Buffing** – This is to remove graffiti with chemicals or other methods.
Some gangs may “strikeout” a rival gang’s tag or symbol (Figure 2) this is usually done by crossing out a tag with a rival gang’s color. A tag where all colors are the same (Figure 3) is written by the same gang to send a warning message rather than a challenge as in a strike out tag.

![Figure 3](PHOTO BY HENRY R. PACHECO)

Figure 4 shows a tag where individual gang member monikers (street nick names of members) and sets, cliques or groups supporting and backing said gang are present. It may also include the deaths of individual gang members as well, represented by the letters RIP (Rest in Peace). This is important information for law enforcement intelligence gathering.

![Figure 4](PHOTO BY HENRY R. PACHECO)
Tagger graffiti is usually more artistic (Figure 5, 6). The authors of this type of graffiti consider it art and it may reflect social issues.

With any kind of graffiti, you should follow the four “Rs”:

- Read it.
- Record it (photograph or videotape).
- Report it to the authorities.
- Remove it as soon as possible.

**3. Gang Related Art Drawings**

If we understand the diversity of graffiti in form, content and construction, it is possible to see how graffiti and gang related art drawings are a unique method of expression used by an often overlooked subculture in our society. Gang related art drawings may convey a
particular meaning and significance to the individual drawer or may tell a story to those who understand the meaning of specific symbols within said drawing.

**FIGURE 7**

Figure 7 is an example of this type of gang art drawing. Each element within the drawing has a specific meaning:

- The Greek drama masks (laugh now/cry later) signify the life of a gang member.
- The cross and heart with an arrow through it represent an aching heart (in this case, the emotional pain and suffering of a gang member’s mother).
- The praying hands represent the gang member asking for help or forgiveness from a parent.
- A heavy heart is represented by a tightly wrapped heart.
- The brick wall symbolizes someone that is incarcerated. If a brick is missing, he/she was recently released back into society.
- The cobweb stands for having “done time” in a correctional facility.
- Specific to this drawing, the phrase “Perdóname Madre” (forgive me mother) is directly asking for the mother’s forgiveness.

Gang related art drawings can also represent violent overtures and scenarios as well with no remorse whatsoever.
D. USE OF TECHNOLOGY BY GANGS
Spreading the gang culture has continued through the use of modern day technologies. Many street gangs are using the Internet, Twitter and other social sites and all types of new technology available to them to recruit and plan criminal activities and to gain a tactical advantage against their rivals. Street gangs from all over the world have created their own web sites in order to advertise their respective gangs. All professionals who work with at-risk youth must keep up with these fast unfolding technologies which can be used to make them more vulnerable to gangs.

E. HIGH RISK SOCIETAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUTH INVOLVED IN GANGS
There are certain high risk factors which increase the likelihood of gang involvement in youth. These may include situations with their family and/or community, as well as, issues in their personal lives and in school.

► Family Risks
These include a stressful home life, abuse and neglect, low parental education level, poor or no study area, low parental expectations, limited or non English-speaking parents, ineffective parenting, permissive truancy and lack of emotional, social and educational support.

► Community Related Risks
Apathetic communities with high incidence of criminal activity and high transient population offer greater risks for youth gang involvement. Other risks include, lack of school and community support activities or recreational facilities, lack of youth employment opportunities and poor police-community relations.

► Personal Risks
On a personal level risks include, unmotivated youth with low self esteem and low education and/or occupational aspirations, conflicting values regarding education and poor or no study habits, drug and/or alcohol abuse and negative police contact.

► School Risk
At the school level, risk factors can come from the student (lack of student responsibility, apathy and poor attendance), the teachers (low teacher expectations and apathy) or the school’s environment (high violence and crime level, poor academic standards, lack of an effective discipline system, lack of education op-
tions, negative school atmosphere and poor condition of school's facilities, where the environment is not conducive to learning).

F. GENERAL HIGH RISK FACTORS FOR GANG MEMBERS
In the case of gang members, there are general risk factors that may have contributed to their involvement with gangs. These may be related to their families, attitude towards school and their peer groups.

► Family
Youths may be more prone to the gang lifestyle if they have a family history of gang involvement or if the parents or grandparents were gang members and have a positive attitude towards gang membership. Having a positive attitude or view towards gang membership is not uncommon among generational gang families which have been a part of the gang culture, especially those who have been associated with the lifestyle for over a generation. Other factors that can contribute are excessive use of alcohol and/or drugs in the home and dysfunctional families with unclear or inconsistent rules for behavior, lack of supervision and severe discipline methods. In addition, youths living in single parent homes or with grandparents, without a role model or where routine guidance may be limited or not present are at greater risk.

► School
Some gang members may have shown alert signs as children if they displayed early anti-social behaviors, especially in elementary grades, usually demonstrating little or no commitment to school and school activities and had problems accepting authority.

► Peer Groups
Fighting, general aggressiveness and difficulty functioning in a socially acceptable manner during early adolescence is another risk factor. Early exposure to gangs by gang member friends can strongly influence a youth with feelings of alienation and rebelliousness.
CHAPTER 3

The Culture of Violence

"The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: the Lord gives sight to the eyes of both." (Proverbs 29:13)

Gang violence is systemic – meaning it takes place in a system that allows and even contributes to this violence.

Violence, sometimes called intentional interpersonal injury, is “behavior by persons against persons that intentionally threatens and attempts or actually inflicts physical harm” (Reiss and Roth, 1993). The closely related terms “aggression” and “antisocial behavior” are generally applied to lesser forms of violence and include, but are not limited to, behaviors that are intended to inflict psychological and physical harm.

There are different forms of violence. Institutionalized violence, structural violence and direct violence are highly interdependent. Institutionalized violence is violence that serves or results from institutional objectives; it can take extreme forms, like concentration camps or murders committed by totalitarian governments or it can be part of a socially accepted
economic system or religious organization’s goals. It can also be subtle, resulting from acts of omission or deception rather than force. Direct violence is physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging or abusing (crimes of violence). Structural violence inevitably produces conflict and often direct violence, including family and racial violence, hate crimes, terrorism, genocide and war. These definitions are working components of gangs operating simultaneously within the individual and the group in maintaining organized violence.

Violence is used within the gang to:

- Defend or expand gang turf
- Recruit new members
- Keep members from leaving
- Exclude or remove undesirable members
- Exercise revenge or seek redress for actual or perceived wrongs, no matter how slight they might be
- Enhance perceptions of power and invincibility
- Gain respect or dominance over others
- Enforce rules

The 2008 National Gang Threat Assessment reports that for the five year period ending in 2007, 94.3% of gang related homicides supposedly involved the use of a firearm and that gang members are increasingly using guns in conjunction with other crimes. For violent gang members, guns are the tools of the trade, as shown in Figure 1 – graffiti of a young gunman on traffic sign at a street crossing.
A. THE THREE “R’S:” RESPECT, REPUTATION AND RETALIATION

To defend the reputation and respect of the gang is logical and expected behavior among gang members. It becomes a primary function of gang membership. Any disrespect or challenge towards the gang or one of its members, whether perceived or real, will force an action. The challenge must be answered in order to maintain the respect and reputation of the gang. The response or action is usually violent and criminal and it serves as an opportunity to increase a member’s individual status or to regain the gang’s respect and reputation.

Within this context, two scenarios are created (shown in Figure 2):

- Gang members become involved in gang crime because it shows their support of the gang (undirected as a planned event).
- Gang members may participate in criminal activity as directed by a gang leader or “shot-caller” (directed event or involving a possible chance encounter with a rival gang).

Early academic studies by sociologists Larry J. Siegal and Joseph J. Senna categorized street gangs as social, delinquent or as violent gangs. This chapter will focus on violent gangs and its indoctrination process, remembering that mostly all gangs are involved in violence within the gang, with rival gangs or towards their community.

![Crime and Gang Involvement](image)

**FIGURE 2**
(GRAPHIC BY THE NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL, 2006)
For violent gangs, as noted by Siegal and Senna, violent activities provide some kind of emotional gratification to its members. They will spend their time collecting weapons and planning their activities. Gang leaders may overestimate the importance of power and the size of the gang and may be emotionally unstable.

The following is an excerpt from the book “This is for the Mara Salvatrucha” by investigative reporter Samuel Logan (page 55).

“As the others watched, Denis sawed at Joaquin’s neck, cutting deeply to the spinal cord before cursing, frustrated with the inadequate steak knife. It wasn’t sharp enough to cut off the head. Denis settled for what he could do with the dull blade: he cut out his victim’s larynx, esophagus and windpipe. Finally, done with the grisly task, Denis threw the body parts aside, stood up and stepped over Joaquin’s body to begin the walk back to the car. The others followed in silence, stupefied by what they had just witnessed. But no one dared to say a word. As calmly as they had arrived, the group drove back to an apartment in Alexandria, where Denis washed off the blood.”

According to the researchers, these gangs provide a vehicle for violent, hostile youths to act out their aggressions and personal problems. Skinheads and certain national and international gangs also operate in the same fashion, utilizing violence as a tool for their cause.

Gang violence is a communal event, like a ritual which links members together in a common bond. By engaging in violence in the company of one another, the gang creates its own subculture dynamic that takes on a momentum of its own. The gang culture, with all its traditions and rituals, is greater than the sum of its individual participants.

In 1997, the OJJDP released findings stating that juveniles are more likely than adults to be the victims of violent crimes and that more than two-thirds of juvenile violent victimizations were not reported to law enforcement, suggesting that the problem of violent gang-related crimes may be even greater than documented.

Understanding the power of the gang to motivate, direct and positively sanction violence by its members is essential. Statistics suggest that in some places in America one in five students brings a weapon to school. If this is true, then it is safe to say that 20% of the U.S. student population is armed. In many cities, school safety has become paramount, especially when gang violence occurs on school grounds. Surveys show that in some cities
at least one half of students worry about their personal safety while at school.

“More than anything else, the violence associated with gangs has aroused public anxiety and has made gang intervention a high priority in national and state policy. Further, it is generally assumed that delinquents who belong to gangs are more violent than are delinquent youth who are not gang members (Klein, 1995) and that there is a progression in youth who join gangs from minor crime toward more extensive and more violent criminal involvement” (Elliott & Menard, 1993).

B. REALITY MAINTENANCE
The reality maintenance is the process which helps to create child soldiers in third world countries or gang members in the United States. This, combined with substance abuse, makes a potent vehicle for violence. The reality maintenance consists of two stages:

- **Functional Substitution**
  This is the replacement of an already existing understanding (norms and values) and having a practical application which allows for the replacement of said beliefs for a useful purpose, like control, compliance and service to the gang. For example, children are taught not to throw the first punch or to start a fight; in the gang culture, if gang X drives through a rival gang’s territory throwing their “flag” (bandana) to the ground in front of them, then gang X has already thrown the first punch and therefore the rival gang may retaliate or seek revenge. Another example is how gang members believe that stealing for the gang is not a bad thing.
**Twin Defensive System of Neutralization and Legitimization**

These are corrective processes operating on the assumption that the former social identity of a member must be alienated or redefined and that a new subjective reality must be actively sustained. For example, the separation of the ties the youth has with previous friends and family; the gang stresses that they no longer have friends or family outside of the gang and that everything (their identity, allegiance, trust and loyalty) now lies only with the gang.

The systemic application for this stage includes:

» Neutralizing the influences of competing allegiances (opposite of what family and others have taught you).

» Legitimization of goals/beliefs which are deemed to be only valid by compartmentalizing truth and error (what the gang says is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable).

» Redefining the member’s past, present and future, which creates the foundation of the gang through history, purpose and direction.

The counter point of this process is what some might call moral restraint or a moral conscience. In the gang culture, moral restraints in violent impulses are seen as dysfunctional. This will subsequently create psychic numbing regarding acts of brutality. It is the shared vicarious reconstruction or anticipation of violence that serves as the bonding agent, which includes storytelling in order to create a word of mouth history as an important content of “culture” development.
C. Limbic System Rush

During violent acts, participants and onlookers alike operate at an emotional peak. This high arousal condition may induce a quasi-disassociated state that allows violent actors to assume another identity. Like a drug that provides a temporary high, for gang members, violence can be a true power rush where they take on an altered self.

With gang involved youth there is a systemic pattern of control and management where a clear relationship between gang leaders (abusers) and members (victims) is evident. The caring and loving person that rewards members is also the punisher who has absolute power and instills fear through emotional ties and the use of violence.

Within the cycle of violence there are three distinct stages:

• The tension building stage – During this stage arguments or situations build up to the physical assault.
• The assault stage – This is the actual physical assault.
• The honeymoon stage – Where the abuser may apologize and reward with gifts.

The perfect symbol for a gang member’s life is exemplified in the Greek drama masks of the “laugh now” and “cry later” images so often seen in pictures and tattoos within the gang world. The gang maintains expectations and rules in the form of violation codes, also known in Spanish as “las movidas,” which are rules set forth in their bylaws. These codes may be color coded, as with certain Hispanic gangs were the codes are broken down into green – a sanctioned murder, yellow – an administrative punishment for breaking rules and “chapeta” or red – as a warning for not wearing the gang’s colors, which is enforceable by a beating. Again, different gangs have their own individualized rules to their specific group but all follow the overall general gang requirements.

Another component of the abuser-victim relationship revolves around what is called “compliance.” This means that the victim must comply with the abuser’s expectations and follow the rules in order to minimize the punishment. By doing this they are less likely to be focused on possible ways of escaping such a relationship. Gang members who may want out of the gang lifestyle are so busy being compliant that they will rarely act on a thought of getting out until a major crisis occurs in their lives. They come to falsely believe in what might be called the “all seeing eye” of their abuser and if they attempt to leave, the abuser will find them no matter where they go. This is also depicted in gang graffiti.
D. THE PERPETRATOR MENTALITY
A perpetrator is defined as one who consciously performs, carries out or is guilty of an act, offense or crime derived as unlawful or “outside” of deemed authority by society. When a group or organization redefines and reinforces its own reality with the use of violence by its members it creates a group ethos, mindset and characteristics.

The perpetrator mentality is:
- Confident
- Internalizes anxiety and is trapped in the past
- Perpetrators are former victims themselves and harbor anger due to a sense of injustice
- Unequal power relationships –they learn to hate authority

What do they mismanage?
- Power – The mismanagement of “Power” combined with “Fear” is the most dangerous.
- Fear
- Anger
- Pain

Mismanagement then creates:
- Lack of accountability
- Diminished need for self-reflection
- Causes underestimation of damage

These components are the most difficult to work through with gang involved youth. Although there can be much more said in detail on the culture of violence, the cyclical, ongoing pattern of violence in which these youth are involved in is very serious. Still, it is disconcerting that some service providers believe they will not get hurt while working on the field, a thought that can be attributed to their lack of understanding the dynamics of violence.

E. CONCERNS FROM A STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE
Many young people go through a period when being in a group is a key part of forming their sense of identity, building social skills and support networks. Being part of a group is a powerful and positive part of the school experience. However, sometimes the group progresses to causing harm and even committing crime. The use of the term “gang” can be misleading because it can unintentionally and negatively glamorize or reinforce the group
identity. Nonetheless, it is crucial that schools feel able to understand and deal with such issues insofar as they impact on the orderly running of the school or on the safety of staff and students.

By listening to students, parents and families, school staff should be able to judge how significant are the signs or indicators of serious gang activity within the school environment. The following are such concerns from a student’s perspective:

- Fearing of gang disruptions at school or in the neighborhood.
- Encountering gang members on the way to and from school.
- Anticipating violence from known gang members enrolled at school.
- Receiving specific threats or being harassed by gang members who stake out territory on school campuses or in neighborhoods.
- Facing peer pressure to join a gang.
- Being mistaken as a gang member during school or in neighborhood skirmishes between rival gangs.
- Feeling threatened by school/neighborhood graffiti displaying gang territorial claims.
- Perceiving at school an increased presence of firearms and other weapons related to gang activity.
- Experiencing apprehension due to escalating interracial/ethnic tensions between gangs at school and in the community.

(Based on student input [Arnette, J & Walseben, M 1998])

F. POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN GANG MEMBERS
Gang-involved youth have greater trauma exposure than their non-gang peers. Whether the trauma precedes a youth’s involvement from direct gang activity, research indicates that gang involved youth experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at over twice the rate of other youth.

A high number of delinquent and gang-involved youth have experienced abuse, neglect, and mistreatment, in addition to exposure to domestic and community violence. Exposure to community violence has been specifically shown to increase the risk of gang involvement.

While traumatic stress is certainly not the sole cause for gang involvement and delinquency, it can increase a youth’s vulnerability to the gang appeal. Gangs can offer a sense of safety, control and structure often missing in the lives of traumatized youth. They can also provide a place for youth to reenact learned patterns of behavior such as violence. Incarcerated
GANGS 101

Youth who profess gang involvement have been more exposed to violence and severe violence than their peers who are not affiliated with gangs.

Faced with school failure and a lack of positive options, traumatized youth may find some semblance of success, belonging and affirmation through gangs. Gangs may also provide these youth with an outlet for their often pessimistic or cynical beliefs that parents, adults or society in general cannot keep them safe or provide for their basic needs.

(For more information, visit The National Child Traumatic Stress Network’s Website – www.NCTSN.org.)

G. HORMONAL INDUCED STRESS RESPONSES – BASED ON BEATS PER MINUTE (BPM)

Some people react better than others to fearful or threatening situations. When fear and shock forces a person’s heart rate to escalate to 175 beats per minute (BPM) or higher, there is a catastrophic breakdown in his/her ability to effectively respond. The body's reactions can lead to freezing, irrational or submissive behavior and voiding of the bladder, among others. The higher the BPM, the more a person's perception of a situation and his/her ability to cognitively process response options will be affected.

The physiologic response to stress comprises three phases. In the first phase, known as the fight or flight response, the sympathetic nervous system is activated, increasing heart rate, respiration, and blood pressure. During the second phase, the body adapts to the source of stress. The third and final phase is exhaustion, also called general adaptation syndrome.

Having aggression protocols – the steps a person takes in the event of a verbally escalating or physical confrontation – may not be enough to stay calm during a crisis. There are trainings that teach specific techniques to handle these situations and to effectively respond to escalating and possibly violent scenarios where maintaining one's composure is essential. These trainings are especially important for the home based service provider who sees clients in their homes rather than at an office or who works in neighborhoods which might put him/her at higher risk. (For more information about these trainings, visit the following websites: www.crisisprevention.com/program/3training.html, www.crisisprevention.com/ and www.crisisconsultantgroup.com/crisis-prevention-intervention.shtml.)

The following chart describes the impact to fine motor skills when a person gets involved in a fight and is not trained in the purposeful control of breathing in order to reduce the extreme possible effects of the hearts' beats per minute increase.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BPM</th>
<th>IMPACT OF HEART RATE ON THE BODY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-80</td>
<td>Normal, resting heart rate for adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115 -145</td>
<td>Fine motor skills deteriorate; optimal survival and combat performance levels for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Complex motor skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Visual reaction time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Cognitive reaction time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>Complex motor skills deteriorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155-175</td>
<td>Cognitive processing deteriorates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tunnel vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of depth perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of near vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auditory exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 175</td>
<td>Irrational fighting or fleeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freezing (hyper vigilance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submissive behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vasoconstriction (reduced blood loss)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gross motor skills at their highest performance level (running, charging flailing), etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voiding of bladder and bowels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4

What is My Role as a Service Provider?

“To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity, to give prudence to the naïve, to the youth, knowledge and discretion, a wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.”
(Proverbs: 1:3-5)

“There is certainly (and sadly) a dearth of evidence to support the contention that traditional psychotherapeutic approaches are broadly efficacious in working with children and adolescents with oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder and even less evidence that these approaches work with manifestly antisocial youths in gangs. Yet, we hear anecdotal claims of success from many psychotherapists for such therapies as psychodynamic therapies, interactional therapy, pharmacotherapy, client-centered therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy and family therapy. There is no doubt that these therapies have had some success with individual cases in gang populations, perhaps because of patient-therapist “chemistry,” timing, ancillary interventions, individual characteristics of the youths and so forth. Each of these therapies brings its own strengths and weaknesses to the process of reaching, reversing and rehabilitating young people involved in gangs. Certainly, there are disorders in the American
Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders that necessitate specific interventions or medication, for example: cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), depression or obsessive-compulsive disorder” (Saul Levine and George Montoya: Juveniles in Gangs, Chapter 2 pages 30-40).

After working in gang neighborhoods and with gang involved youth for fifteen years, Levine and Montoya cannot stress enough that the most salient and crucial ingredient in successfully and effectively working with gang involved youth is the relationship between the gang member and the service provider. The crucial part of such a turnaround for a youth wanting to get out of the gang is not the credentials of the service provider, therapist or mentor but the relationship itself. If you are authentic in your desire to help them, these youth learn quickly because they are survivors, if nothing else. What is essential to the positive outcome is the fact that the relationship is based in reality, not in role playing. However, some gang involved youth do not like or trust “therapists” because it gives them a false sense of intimacy.

Gang involved youth tend to act very self centered and with a sense of entitlement in how they approach the world. For this reason, the following are things service providers can do, with the understanding that working with young gang members involves the following components:

► Unconditional Commitment (24/7 availability)
They must know that you are there for them, even if it is just to say hello or to tell you about a problem. Example: Six months after helping a client breakaway from his gang and getting him into a community college, he called to say that he felt lonely after leaving the gang. He wanted to reassure himself that he was not alone.

► Case Management
Provide assistance in obtaining employment and transportation to work, when necessary. Remember that these youth have very few social skills when it comes to things we take for granted, such as filling out a job application, interviewing for a job and dressing appropriately. Example: A client was filling out a computer application at a retail store and yelled out to me “Do you think I should tell them I was incarcerated?” I quickly replied: “I think you already did!”

► Resources
The ability to network and locate those things which are essential to assisting the family and the gang involved youth.
While developing a trusting relationship with these youth, two messages should be occurring simultaneously, although not all inclusive by any means:

- **Message 1**
  I am interested in you as a person and in your life’s direction. I have concern and care for you as an individual. I support your struggle to be heard and to amount to something. I respect you as a person, no matter your situation. I will help you to accomplish your goals. I acknowledge your right to have feelings. Let’s play to your strengths and assets. I am here for you through thick and thin. There is a better way of doing things.

- **Message 2**
  You cannot continue to break the law. There are limitations, constraints and controls for all of us. You have to show that you want to change and that you merit my trust, confidence and support. With privileges come responsibilities and demands. There are consequences for destructive behavior. What are you doing for others?

Working on gaining the trust of gang involved youth and supporting their needs is not enough to turn their destructive lives around. Neither does being coercive, limiting and demanding. We must also pay attention to personal and contextual problems, such as substance abuse, mental and physical illness and a lack of education when working with these youth.

### A. GANG RELATED ISSUES AND/OR SUGGESTIONS WHEN IN THE FIELD

Cultural competency, which is an essential element of family counseling practice, is defined “as the ability to maximize sensitivity and minimize insensitivity in the service of culturally diverse communities. This requires knowledge, values and skills… the workers need not be highly knowledgeable about the cultures of the people they serve but they must approach culturally different people with openness and respect a willingness to learn. Self awareness is the most important component in the knowledge base of culturally competent practice.” (O’Hagan 2001:235)

Given that the gang lifestyle is part of modern culture and meets the definition of a culture, it is essential to have a good grasp of the components that make it work. The following are a few points to consider while working with gang involved youth and their families, given the fact that the involvement of one family member impacts the whole family.
The primary focus in intervention should be to maintain or manage the situation. Many service providers believe that it is their job to “fix” the gang member when what they need to focus on is directing them through cumulative successes such as not reoffending, obtaining employment, showing up for school, developing goals and getting a GED. These successes are important because many youth tend to “mature out” or take on legitimate responsibilities in such a manner as to drift away from the gang lifestyle. In addition these successes affirm their ability to function and succeed in society.

Distinguish between gang member and gang banger. Be concerned about your clients’ activities, especially if he/she shows signs of injuries. Remember that although gang members live within a violent environment, not all are killers and only 2% to 5% of gang members are extremely violent – usually the core members or “shot callers” of any group.

Get to know your client; based on psychosocial reports, court involved history and risk history. This information is usually obtained through release consent of parents, probation and parole, referring service providers, courts, etc.

Is your client a member or an associate? If so, for how long? What gang do they belong to? Which set, crew, clique, family or mob, etc.? Who they “roll” (hang out) with? The difficulty of your case, aside from the gang members desire to change, can become more difficult given the specifics of each case. These questions are essential and need to be answered in developing any treatment plan or steps to be taken with your client.

Avoid attempts to place middle class values on gang related issues. Personal biases, whether conscious or unconscious, if not explored within oneself will influence negatively and impact the family or gang involved youth in such a way as to fail to appreciate the lived reality for the client and may destroy a potentially good relationship with them.

Remember who you are. Too many service providers become enmeshed with their clients. This is most evident through “counter transference,” sometimes defined as the entire body of feelings that the therapist has toward the client, and also includes
cases where the therapist literally takes on the suffering of his/her client. In the most extreme of cases, it can result in the therapist taking on the neurosis or psychosis of the client. This should be taken into consideration when developing a program where former gang members are being employed, since they can and often do relate strongly to the indignations harbored against police, teachers, etc. by their clients thus over-sympathizing with them.

- **When transporting a gang member anywhere, be mindful of entering opposing gang territory (a major surprise when running into a rival who knows your client).**
  Know where gang boundaries lie. Although they may be fluid in nature you should have some idea of where “hot spots” are. Rival gang members will be reactionary (violent) in their response to your client.

- **Always have situational awareness. Do not get comfortable.**
  Gang members are usually very vigilant while on the streets and you should be as well. You will find that your client may seem uneasy, hyper vigilant and even nervous, which is usually a survival defense mechanism for them.

- **Draw clear boundaries or ground rules from the beginning (e.g.: no weapons possession, shared illegal activities with details will be reported to the authorities, etc.)**
  Be consistent and straightforward with your client, say what you mean and mean what you say.

- **Self reporting of wanting to hurt themselves or others will be reported to the appropriate persons.**
  As a professional service provider, you should never cover up or minimize any of the stated above situations for liability reasons. Remember that you are bound by certain state laws.

- **Be mindful of “being played,” you are the one being tested. (Stories of bravado are often shared to see where the information goes, such as to a parent or probation officer).**
  When a service provider is “being played” by his/her client, the client tries to manipulate them to take the direction that benefits him/her. For example: a client who is under house arrest has to report to a gang meeting at 5:00 a.m. and if he does not attend he could receive a severe beating. The client asks his case manager what he should do. If the case manager says he should go to the meeting, the client would violate his house arrest and, if caught, he can inform
the authorities that his case manager gave him permission to go. On the other hand, if he does not go and is beaten, this could also be blamed on the case manager. In this case, the client asked what to do so that he did not have to make the decision on his own; he was “playing” his case manager. The correct answer would be to tell the client that the decision is his alone to make and to face the consequences. If you set your boundaries during the early stages of the case, situations like this one will not be a problem but know that gang involved youth usually want to know if you will snitch them out or if you will align yourself with them.

▶ Avoid developing an attitude with your client. Do not make it an issue of his/her control versus yours.
Service providers sometimes forget that clients are not their children and what they choose to do may most likely frustrate them. This is why they are called “clients.” Remember that it took them a long time to get where they are and it will take them quite a while to change, if at all.

▶ On the street, what goes around comes around. Watch what you say!
The way you treat your client and what you say to him/her will undoubtedly be passed on to other gang members about you. Always treat clients with respect—it has nothing to do with the fact that they are gang involved as it does with the fact that all clients should be respected by their service providers.

▶ Do not allow “splitting” when working with a partner.
Splitting is the term used when two service providers are working with the same client and they are not consistent in their approach or keep each other informed of the clients’ issues. The gang member will manipulate who he/she believes will align themselves on their behalf. (e.g.: when a youth learns how to approach a parent who may be more permissive when it comes to bending the house rules).

▶ Do not underestimate the possibility that you can get hurt.
You can get physically hurt, directly or indirectly. This most likely happens when you are with a client in the wrong place at the wrong time.

▶ Always be aware and know that you may be followed or “checked out” (Zebra searched, “Googled” or looked up in any social networking site) by other gang members.
The client’s history is gathered through psychosocial reports, court involved his-
istory and risk history. They will do the same to see who you are and what you are about. (Please refer to the third bullet).

Be yourself.
Alongside of knowing who you are, being who you are is important in this line of work. You do not have to talk, dress, walk or act like your clients in order to fit in or to be accepted. You will be more respected for who you really are. Furthermore, those who are really street-wise can sniff a fake any day.

B. CONSIDERATIONS FOR “FLIPPING OUT” A GANG MEMBER
“Flipping out” is the expression used for helping someone breakaway from a gang. There are people who will assist youth in this endeavor without understanding the dynamics involved or the liability in doing so. The following are general rules to be considered when trying to assist a youth who truly wants out of the gang lifestyle:

• Do not make the decision for them; they have to ask for your help.
• Does the youth really want out? Be sure!
• What does “wanting out” mean to the youth? If the youth went through a painful experience he/she may feel they want to leave the gang and after you put in the work to assist them, you may find out that they have changed their mind.
• How involved were they with their gang? Fully invested or not?
• How long were they in the gang?
• What did they do for their gang? Especially important if they were the gang’s money or weapons source. If this is the situation, trying to leave will be much more difficult.

NOTE: The author stresses the importance of not attempting to get a youth out of a gang unless you have experience in this process or are working with someone who does.

C. WHAT IS IT GOING TO TAKE TO GET OUT SAFELY?
Assisting a youth who wants to leave the gang lifestyle is not an easy task. It can be a long and dangerous process for the youth and the service provider alike. Throughout the process you should ask the youth:

• What do you think they will do to you if you pull out of the gang?
• What happened to the last individual who tried to leave the gang?
The answers will give you an idea of how the gang may react to their member’s desertion. You should also get input from the client when developing the exit strategy and have them complete the “Imminent Danger Contractual Agreement.” This is highly recommended because once you get involved in such a situation, it can develop into a liability issue.

1. **Imminent Danger Contractual Agreement**

The Imminent Danger Contractual Agreement is a tool that should not be tried without knowing how to work with gang members and what it takes to assist one in getting out of a gang.

Imminent Danger refers to the immediate threat of harm, which varies depending on the context in which it is used. Typical considerations to find imminent danger include the attacker’s apparent intent to cause great bodily injury or death, the device used by the attacker for these means, and the attacker’s opportunity and ability to use the device to cause great bodily injury to another person. Contractual Agreement is an agreement with specific terms between two or more people in which there is a promise to do something in return for a valuable benefit, known as consideration.

Many well meaning service providers, in their honest attempt to help youth sever their ties with their gang, are not aware of the possible legal ramifications of their actions. For example, if a service provider in an attempt to assist a juvenile gang member escape the gang lifestyle and said youth is retaliated against causing injury or possibly death, may place the worker and his/her organization in a legal liability situation, more so if they did not receive training.

*The Imminent Danger Contractual Agreement was reviewed by a lawyer and can be used in assisting a gang member who wants to voluntarily remove him/herself from the lifestyle and with knowledge of the legal guardian(s).*

The following is a copy of the Imminent Danger Contractual Agreement developed and used by this author and the GIS Team for clients that make the serious decision of leaving their gang.
SAMPLE IMMINENT DANGER CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT

It is important to note that it is impossible to devise a single effective strategy to cope with aggressors, which can be applied to every situation and/or circumstance. Therefore, the following agreement is not intended to be a set of strict guidelines for absolute strategy but rather practical information to assist the youth. There is no guarantee that if your client follows all the recommendations he/she will be safe. However, implementing these strategies may reduce the odds of physical harm from an aggressor. Remember: always call 911 if you are in fear for your safety.

I _____________________________ agree to do the following in order to comply with my safety agreement/contract.
Initial one item per topic below.

1) I will treat any threats as legitimate and inform law enforcement immediately.
   (      ) I agree                                  (      ) I disagree

2) I will inform my parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
   (      ) I agree                                  (      ) I disagree

3) I will tell a service provider (e.g. school counselor, mentor, teacher and/or social worker) of my predicament, because I understand that an anonymous aggressor is a powerful aggressor.
   (      ) I agree                                  (      ) I disagree

4) I will document the aggressor's behavior (verbal or physical threats and activities) through the use of an “aggressor log.” I will keep it in a safe place and tell someone I trust of its existence. I understand that it may be useful in the future in a compliant proceedings for evidentiary or credibility purposes. (To be provided).
   (      ) I agree                                  (      ) I disagree
5) I will maintain “situational awareness” (the act of being observant within a given environment) at school, at home, in public areas and especially in my neighborhood.

(     ) I agree                                  (     ) I disagree

6) I will be selective of who I associate with and know those with whom I spend time with in public because of the possibility of becoming a target, either directly or indirectly.

(     ) I agree                                  (     ) I disagree

Follow the stated above additional guidelines.

“I” and/or “We” have read or a GIS staff member has read to me/us the above document explaining the reasons for the “Imminent Danger Contractual Agreement” and the need for such an agreement.

All questions have been made regarding each topic above and so “I” and/or “We” agree to voluntarily and freely sign below.

Agreement made between:

____________________________________    __________________________
Identified Client                                        Date

____________________________________    __________________________
Parent(s) or Guardian(s)                        Date

____________________________________    __________________________
GIS Staff Member                                  Date

*Materials developed by Henry R. Pacheco, MS/Program Manager/LE Gang Specialist*
2. Additional Guidelines
The primary goal of an individual who is in imminent danger by an aggressor is safety. Since prevention is the key to staying safe, the following are additional safety recommendations you can offer your clients:

- Before going out, inform someone of your whereabouts and when you expect to return.
- When away from the house or work environment, do not travel alone and always try to stay in public places.
- Do not delete any threatening messages from your answering machine or voicemail and keep written notes or letters sent by an aggressor (they may be useful in future compliant proceedings for evidentiary or credibility purposes).
- Report all types of vandalism.

D. Things a Service Provider Should Always Remember
“Perspectives come from the different goals that parents, teachers, mental health and law enforcement professionals have when dealing with gang related issues. Parents want to protect their children while teachers want to educate and train them. Mental health professionals want to assist children in becoming emotionally and psychologically healthy. Law enforcement just wants gang members to obey the law” (Al Valdez, 4th Edition, p.28).

Intervention workers facilitate successful escape from the gang lifestyle while prevention workers focus on awareness and preventing at-risk youth from joining a gang. Depending on what perspective you may have, you are inclined to design your activities within those parameters.

The following are operational suggestions and questions when working with gang involved youth:

▶ Never take what you cannot replace.
If you are not careful in replacing the original missing components from Maslow Hierarchy of Needs which the gang offered as a substitute, your client will relapse. For instance, if a gang involved youth does not know what a healthy relationship is, the total separation from former friends must be replaced by something or someone else.
- **Relocation is not always the answer.**
  Moving a client elsewhere will not solve the problem of imminent danger of physical harm to the youth and his/her family. One of the many reasons of gang proliferation has been migration. If a youth has not made the conscious decision to change, they will just relocate and start anew somewhere else with new gang friends and the problems they bring.

- **Understand that there are rules to the street subculture.**
  Neighborhoods with gangs have their own rules of what may or may not be acceptable behavior in that given area. Gangs are the same way, too. For example, do gangs in your area consider your involvement as a threat to their lifestyle? Ask yourself the following questions: in deciding to leave a gang, can a member in your area “fade out” (be forgotten) by the gang? Do they have to ask permission to leave to an individual or committee and what does this entail or is it a “blood in” and “blood out” gang (death or serious physical harm)?

- **One ounce of trust outweighs one pound of counseling.**
  Some gang involved youth do not like or trust therapists because it gives them a false sense of intimacy and it makes them feel more like a “project” rather than an individual. What is essential to the positive outcome is the fact that the relationship is based in reality, not in role playing as stated previously.

- **You are not an island!**
  Network, establish and maintain a good relationship with case managers, probation and parole officers, social services workers and law enforcement. To avoid “splitting,” make sure that all services are provided through collaboration and that they are not in conflict with the direction of the youth and his/her family’s developed treatment plan. If you try to do it all, you can became overstressed and possibly burnout, thus not being able to fully become engaged on the case.

A service provider must lead by example and take into account that the family and youth also have to maintain their everyday routines (parents going to work, other children in the household and the youth’s attendance to school). The impact on their time and schedule should be considered with respects to the difficulty of the case and the availability by the service provider and the client in developing rapport. You can develop rapport with your client by:

- Being punctual. Although the client may often not meet on the designated set
time as professionals we should contact the client if we are running late and be respectful of the client’s time.

- Setting boundaries and expectations with your client from the beginning, as well as possible consequences for noncompliance.

- Carefully introduce yourself to the client. Explain who you are, why you are there and set a clear agenda. Clients sometimes believe that you are there to be the eyes and ears of the probation or parole office; explain your relationship with the agency, if any exists.

- Watching what you say, the tone you use and your body language, e.g. in some neighborhoods you can get hurt just by the way you approach someone, by your tone of voice and even by the way you look at someone.

- Orchestrating the placement of all involved parties. Be specific as to where you will be sitting within their home. Parents will sometimes try to sit next to with you in order to send a message to their child. For safety reasons, always sit near an exit, whether in your office or at their home.

- Making no assumptions. Although gang members follow a set pattern of behavior, each client you work with is an individual; do not stereotype them and treat them accordingly.

- Acknowledge challenges early. During the treatment plan, share the challenges which will be encountered, like working with undocumented individuals, unemployed guardians, expulsions from school, case management issues, etc. Do not state them as obstacles, rather as challenges to overcome; be realistic with clients.

- Saying ‘thank you’ for allowing you to enter their home, seeing you, being on time, for following up or completing assignments you requested, etc.

- Being compassionate. It is okay to sympathize with a given situation that the client is going through.

- Being sincere. Be yourself by being genuine; youth are quick to identify a phony who works a job rather than a calling.
• Above all, give respect. This is a two way street; you have to give in order to receive.

• Delivery of service. Do what you can to the best of your ability as a professional while making no promises to the client.

• Being honest. Always be straightforward with your client, do not lie to them or to yourself.

• Being sensitive and acting proper in a given situation. Children learn not only by what they are taught but by what is caught (they know the difference between “do as I say and not as I do”) so say and do what you mean and mean what you say and do.

• Making realistic appraisals of personal responses, prejudices and needs. Know yourself and your limitations when working with difficult families and gang involved youth. If you are in way over your abilities, then admit it to your partner or supervisor.

• Take care of yourself by having a good support system (professionally and personally). You are not going to save the world alone. Remember that these families where here before you showed up and they will still be here way long after you are gone. Spend quality time with your family and friends. If you are burned out you cannot help anyone!
CHAPTER 5

Programmatic Considerations when Developing a Program for Gang Involved Youth

“Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.” (Proverbs 29:18)

Programs that have been developed following a formal needs assessment are implemented in significantly stronger form than those not based on a needs assessment. In contrast, the programs guided by a needs assessment are usually of higher overall quality, of longer duration and make more use of best practices with respect to the methods employed.

Certain programs focus on programmatic design and sustainability without much thought to operational realities that the staff encounters on a daily basis, creating a polarization between administrative and line staff. One should remember that the most important component of any at risk youth program is its staff. The selection process, recruitment, evaluation, continued training, team building, addressing staff stress and supervision is crucial within any developed program.
A. GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR GANG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

“As a nation, we have come to recognize that there are no simple solutions to the youth gang problem. There is an urgent need in gang-ridden neighborhoods to mobilize the creative energies of the entire community in a comprehensive campaign to identify the nature and extent of the youth gang problem, to prevent at-risk youth from joining gangs, to intervene with gang-involved youth to redirect their lives on a positive course, to suppress gang-related crime and to respond to the needs of gang-related crime victims and witnesses” (Shay Bilchik, OJJDP).

The most effective response to youth gangs is a combination of interdependent prevention, intervention and suppression strategies selected by a community to target their emerging or chronic gang problems, which have been identified by a comprehensive, systematic assessment.

1. Prevention

The first strategy is prevention. We must look beyond the immediate priority to safeguard the public and also attack the underlying root causes that attract youth to join gangs in the first place. We can offer our youth a viable alternative to gangs by providing opportunities for success as productive citizens. The primary prevention targets the entire population in high crime and high risk areas. The secondary prevention targets youth 7 to 14 years old who are at high risk receiving targeted services.

a. Prevention Strategies for Schools

Prevention programs should be age-specific, developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive. The higher the target population's level of risk, the more intensive the prevention effort must be and the earlier it must begin. The following are programmatic processes which can be implemented within the school system:

- Provide gang awareness in service training for all faculty and staff.
- Establish clear behavioral expectations.
- Maintain a model dress code.
- Maintain understanding of graffiti and contact the Safety Resource Officers (SRO) or the police, then remove it.
- Support and protect victims and witnesses as best as you can.
- Develop a good visitor screening policy.
- Provide adequate adult supervision (especially around the stairwells and bathrooms).
- Establish a good community networking system.
• Maintain on-going parental notifications.
• Provide gang awareness and parenting classes to parents.
• Cooperate with law enforcement.
• Develop attractive extracurricular activities or projects.
• Develop community service programs with active student participation.

2. Intervention
The second strategy deals with intervention. Gang members are case managed by an intervention team that develops an individualized case plan for each youth. When necessary, school social workers may refer gang involved youth to community profit or non profit mental health agencies specializing in working with gang involved youth through a community service board (CSB), which is the point of entry into the publicly funded system of services for mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse within a community. CSBs usually provide pre-admission screening services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

a. Intervention Strategies when a Gang Member Enrolls in School
The public school system is fertile ground for gang recruitment, especially through the English as a second language courses, and a potential for disruptive behavior and possibly violent confrontation with either a teacher, a rival gang member and even with a non gang member. Therefore, having an active gang member enroll in a school has many legal implications. Unfortunately, gang involved students can be labeled as that by teachers and treated unfairly due to ignorance or prejudice. “Calling out” or correcting a student in front of the class in a disrespectful tone of voice, regardless of whether gang involved or not, cannot possibly bring a favorable response to said teacher but rather escalation and even confrontation.

The following are suggestions to avoid possible legal implications:
• Increase supervision of students.
• Monitor teacher selection and class assignment.
• Monitor pertinent classroom assignment and progress (an assistant perhaps).
• Provide parent consultation.
• Provide specialized counseling.
• Provide teachers special training in classroom management, conflict resolution and crisis management.

(From the National School Safety Center http://www.schoolsafety.us)
3. Suppression
The third and last strategy is suppression. For years, police agencies have pursued tactics designed to deal with the proliferation of gangs and gang violence. According to the National Youth Gang Survey, the primary strategy in many jurisdictions is suppression (Sergel and Curry, 1990).

Suppression tactics have included tactical or saturation patrols where law enforcement officers conduct high visibility patrols in targeted areas, vertical prosecutions by district attorneys involving arrests and incarceration of gang members, intensive supervision by probation and parole departments, aggressive curfew enforcement, juvenile curfew ordinances and gang injunctions (a civil court order that prohibits gang members from engaging in certain specified activities while in public and within a defined geographic area known as a “safety zone”). Although suppression is the primary strategy in many jurisdictions and is frequently viewed as the least effective (Sergel and Curry, 1990), several authors note that although gangs cannot be eradicated, they believe that the police can manage and suppress the more negative aspects of gang activity (Huff and McBride, 1993; Owens and Wells, 1993; and Rush, 1996).

B. TYPICAL SERVICE COMPONENTS IN GANG PROGRAMS
As stated previously, it is important to clearly identify target populations, motivations, risk factors and demographics while designing prevention and education strategies that are tailored to address the specific needs of local communities, while recognizing the multigenerational characteristics of gangs. Gang programs tend to have several components to them and are usually limited by resources, staff and mission statement in addressing at risk youth. The following are general areas which can adversely impact youth gang programs:

- Confusion in public discourse and in scholarly analysis concerning how youth gangs are broadly defined has important implications for understanding youth gangs and for developing and implementing solutions to address them (Short and Hughes, 2006).
- Limitation to funding sources, like duration of a grant and what can be addressed operationally.
- Time constraints regarding program sustainability (duration of program given the funding resources).
- Community stakeholder’s cooperation and, collaboration for viability of program; will the community own the program or will it end after funding ends?
• Lack of ongoing staff training to address the gang involved youth and their culture through mental health and law enforcement avenues.
• Political pressures and organizational barriers to the program (e.g. mayor’s office wanting to carry out an almost exclusive suppression approach) (Spergel et al., 2006; Spergel, 2007).
• Barriers that may include “turf battles, undefined organizational structure, lack of leadership, ambiguous goals, conflicting community attitudes, recruitment difficulties, high turnover in the intervention team or other key work groups, unbalanced representation of the community, inadequate conflict resolution processes and fragmentation of efforts” (Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, 2002: 63).
• Lack of an evaluation process. Klein and Maxson, 2006; Esbensen, 2004; Reed and Decker, 2002, have observed that gang projects, programs and strategies have been, and continue to be, rarely evaluated. Moreover, many of those that have been evaluated have not been evaluated very well.

Spergel (2007:327) warns that “comprehensive, community-based projects that require institutional change are highly vulnerable to failure. Few innovative, if even effective, programs survive or develop further unless they serve and sustain important political interests. Below are several program service components and what they hope to accomplish:

► **Referrals**
Sending a youth or a family to a traditional service agency for a specific type of assistance, such as health, addiction, housing, etc. These referrals would include programs which are more specialized in nature, like sex offender therapy, substance abuse counseling, mental health counseling for post traumatic stress disorder or depression, and for case management issues, housing assistance (Section 8, etc.).

► **Individual Counseling**
This can help youth explore and improve a variety of relationship and personal challenges and motivate them to change their beliefs and behaviors. Individual one-on-one counseling is provided in a safe and confidential setting. Some issues youth talk about in individual counseling include: depression, low self-esteem, stress, abuse issues, grief and loss, sexuality, drug and alcohol use, eating disorders, etc.
► **Group Counseling**
These sessions use positive peer culture to facilitate individual change in beliefs and behaviors. Youth meet weekly with other members and one or two therapists to explore new ways of coping and to learn more about their interactions with others. There are “mixed” therapy groups, which focus on a variety of common concerns, and theme oriented groups, like gang, sex offenders, substance abuse, etc.

► **Family Counseling**
This type of counseling applies the social control of family members to facilitate individual change in beliefs and behaviors. The therapy focuses either on the problem or the symptomatic family member with the hope that the family system will reveal itself around these initial issues. The goal is then to introduce family members to a broader way of conceptualizing and experiencing their problems. This approach typically achieves the following:
- Primary problems in family functioning are delineated.
- “Scapegoating” is neutralized.
- Guilt and blame decrease.
- Empathy for differences increases.
- Family myths and nonfunctional rules are challenged.
- New agreements for living together can be formed.

► **Peer-Adult Mentoring**
This is offered through one-on-one volunteers or staff matching with youth in order to motivate or reinforce change in beliefs and behavior. The mentor role is one that can convey all three aspects of the supportive relationship: material aid, a sense of affirmation and positive effect and emotional support. The mentor provides an example or model willing to pass his/her skills onto the younger mentee or student and guides youth along the path toward realizing their dreams.

► **Educational Upgrading**
This component works to increase academic skills through one-on-one tutoring, independent study, homework assistance, computer instruction, etc. It focuses on learning and targets emotionally disabled youth who are at high risk of joining gangs.

► **Cultural Enrichment**
This is used to familiarize the youth with various aspects of American and other world cultures and some of the critical issues of the times. It increases youth awareness
of the larger social order and motivates them to respect it. The minimum a youth should learn is what makes up part of our shared common knowledge about who we are as citizens of an American and global culture. Cultural enrichment can be accomplished by planning visits to museums or cultural events and other similar outings.

- **Job Placement**
  A job can motivate youth to seek legitimate opportunities for achievement and for youth who face challenges and barriers, meaningful employment practices may help them believe, recognize and utilize their capabilities in determining their own success. Job placement can be accomplished through subsidized employment, summer jobs, apprenticeship or internships and other meaningful work experiences.

- **Court Liaison Advocacy**
  This component seeks leniency in juvenile courts for clients in return for their participation in appropriate programs. The Court Liaison Officer has the role of identifying and recommending the diversion of offenders from the criminal justice system. In the criminal justice system, diversion programs are run by a police department, court, a district attorney's office or an outside agency designed to enable offenders of criminal law to avoid criminal charges and a criminal record. The purposes of diversion generally include relief to the courts, police departments and probation offices, better outcomes compared to direct involvement of the court system and an opportunity for the offender to avoid prosecution by completing various requirements for the program.

- **Parenting Skills**
  This component recommends programs designed to increase and/or develop certain skills that parents must have to effectively shape their children’s behaviors. Effective parenting includes developing and clarifying clear expectations, staying calm in the midst of turmoil when the child gets upset, consistently follow through with positive and negative consequences, being a positive role model, role playing corrective behaviors and praising child for his/her behaviors.

- **Parent Empowerment**
  It is important to motivate parents who have been affected by gangs and drugs to help them once more regain control of their homes, children and neighborhoods. Parenting skills without the ability to follow through due to low self esteem issues caused from past emotional hurts are not productive. The author recommends the book *Parents on a Mission* by Richard Ramos. It is an excellent resource for
parents and provides a unique approach to gang prevention.

► **AIDS/HIV Prevention**
Young people in the United States are persistently at risk for HIV infection. This risk is especially notable for youth of minority races and ethnicities. Given the promiscuity and sexual exploitation within the gang lifestyle, AIDS/HIV prevention programs can increase youth knowledge of health risk behaviors and provide the tools to avoid such risks. Continual HIV prevention outreach and education efforts, including programs on abstinence and on delaying the initiation of sex, are required as new generations replace the generations that benefited from earlier prevention strategies.

► **Rites of Passage Awareness**
All cultures have ceremonial events that mark the passage of an individual from one social or religious status to another. Other rites celebrate changes that are wholly cultural, such as graduating from high school or an initiation into a special society (gang initiations). The rites of passage component seeks to increase the awareness of youth about human development, the responsibilities over ones lifespan and the celebration of manhood and womanhood.

► **Adult Supervised Recreation**
Drop in centers and day camps, also known as social recreation, such as health and physical education and activities.

**C. THE COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY: WIDE GANG MODEL (OJJDP)**
Community mobilization initiatives bring together stakeholders and services under a larger umbrella where all parties work cooperatively by targeting a specific population for intensive prevention and intervention services depending on the mission statement (e.g. Philadelphia’s Youth Violence Reduction Partnership –YVRP).

The author had the privilege of developing one of these programs, which entailed the following components:

► **Gang Member Intervention**
This component encourages gang members, their siblings and friends to discontinue violent, illegal and gang related activities in favor of other more constructive and enriching activities and relationships.
► **Community Outreach Campaigns**
By facilitating a community mobilization effort within the target community, this component increases participation and wider engagement of family members and their children in the larger community.

► **Prevention Strategies**
This component develops the appropriate strategies that fully leverage existing local social, recreational and educational opportunities and relationships available to impact children, youth and families at risk.

As essential as it is to know what works, it is equally important to know which youth gang responses are ineffective. Policy makers and practitioners wish to avoid wasting time, money and resources doing things that simply do not work. They also want to know that the interventions they are supporting will produce more positive benefits than harmful side effects. The following are considerations made by the author when developing the Community Mobilization Initiative Gang Reduction Program for the World Vision US Programs:

► **When developing your program, do not use the word “gang” or the term “anti.”**
In order to obtain a grant, the technical writing must be precise but one must be careful as to how the program will be viewed by the gangs because it can give your community a negative label. The term “anti” also makes the statement that you are against something, in this case gangs. You have to make clear what you are there for. Starting off your program by advertising that you are against gangs is not a positive first step. Your program can target gang reduction in writing but it should address all youth issues, not just the gang problem.

► **When starting a youth program within a community you should partner with other stakeholders.**
You can sit in on the coalitions within your targeted area of operations to learn about community issues and to offer your services and resources.

► **Always respect those in authority positions within your targeted areas and do not operate without their consent.**
Request formal entry into the local public school system in order to make presentations and subsequently take referrals from the school staff.

► **You can create a plan to develop rites of passage.**
Establish groups within the elementary, middle and high schools and have the
members run the groups. Upon graduating to the next school, have a base of recognition, like moving from the cub scouts to the boy scouts type of transition. This creates a sense of purpose, something to look forward to and a feeling of stability. The receiving group can also pair someone off in their first week of entry into the new school (buddy program).

Create the “hook” that brings in youth and something to keep them there.

Many programs chase youth rather than develop groups where the youth come to you and get the chance to actually run and ultimately own it as their own with the slightest of supervision. For example, a similar group accomplished this through teaching the youth to “DJ,” not just showing them. Your “hook” could be something else, be imaginative (e.g.; dance, art, etc.) Afterwards, the youth were assigned as the DJ’s for the end of the school year after-school program party.

Most importantly, when developing groups, it is essential to enhance participation and allow youth to develop ownership of the same. Your can accomplish this by:

- Developing an “ice breaker” for new arrivals (be imaginative!). Let them participate in something that makes them all feel welcome and get to know each other at the same time.
- Informing the youth that you do not have rules in the group but rather “traditions” (or whatever you want to call them). Let the youth decide what should and should not be allowed to happen in their group and you will be surprised by their answers. You may add important “traditions” of your own but do not dominate their list. Example of questions you can ask the group to help them create their own traditions are:

  » **What will be the name of the group?**
  
  Early on this will be your first project and eventually the name will be decided by the group as a whole.

  » **Who can join? How big should the group be?**
  
  Set parameters.

  » **What will be the disciplinary actions for someone who breaks the rules or is disruptive?**
  
  Consider that we all have bad days but that the group should not allow continued bad behavior.
» What might the group vote for collectively?
They can vote on letting someone in after leaving or been banned. If banned, then for how long? The idea is to teach forgiveness and compassion.

At the next meeting, have their new “traditions” typed out as a contract and again obtain a few more ideas. When complete, draw up a final copy which will have a place for each member to sign it, as well as a witness, someone whom they will pick in their group, and your signature as well.

• Develop a working relationship with your local police department.
Historically and unfortunately, even now the police are seen as heavy handed and field workers tend to mistrust them to the point where youth picks up on it, which in turn reinforces the negative attitudes towards the police and the police towards the field worker (also known as “Thug Huggers”) and so the cycle of mistrust continues.

• Put your words and actions to work!
You cannot promote unity within a community setting while acting through words or deeds in a disuniting fashion; e.g.; speaking negatively of law enforcement or other agencies.

• Choose your words carefully.
In this field of work, some words have a negative meaning associated to them that can impact on the program operationally, especially when developing an outreach team. These words are “activists” and “gang outreach worker”. When developing titles, understand that with law enforcement, these words can trigger confrontational memories, especially in cities like Los Angeles and Chicago, among others. “Community advocate” or “community transformation specialists,” are good alternatives. You can always add one or two designations, depending usually on salary and experience.

Small things are sometimes the most important things in our line of work and overlooking them can make a difference in our impact, depending on where we work and within what context. If we really want to do something for youth, then clearly there are a lot of ways to steer them away from gang involvement. Unfortunately, many youth tire of program promises that evaporate once funding runs out. If sustainability and community ownership are not the primary concerns when developing new programs, then we will continue to perpetuate an illusion of hope to the many youth who are trying to find their way.
D. GUIDELINES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF FORMER GANG MEMBERS

Detached worker or street gang worker programs typically provide services and support to gang members in their own environment (Thornberry, 2002). With respect to this type of intervention program, it is important to review the seminal work of Malcolm Klein (1968). He found that earlier versions of these programs actually led to increased gang crime as a result of detached workers inadvertently enhancing, as opposed to breaking, gang cohesion (Klein, 1995: 137). Moreover, although researchers differ in their views with respect to the effectiveness of the detached worker approach, “it must be concluded that, as a singular intervention, detached workers have not conclusively produced positive results” (Howell, 2000: 16).

The following are essential key elements when employing a former gang member:

- **Verify their status and make sure they are in fact former gang members.**
  It is recommended to always go through the standard criminal and child protective services background check. Determine that they have the educational, professional or para-professional skills to interact with youth in a manner acceptable to your organization. Most former gang members have the ability to connect and develop trust quicker with gang involved youth but are very limited in what they might have to offer developmentally.

- **Require direct supervision or monitoring.**
  Due to the addictive lifestyle and potential for relapse, former gang member status should be designated after a minimum of four to five years of leaving their gang. The “staffing” of assigned cases to workers should be reviewed weekly for issues arising from case and said progress.

- **Consult with the parents of youth who will be directly involved or exposed to former gang members.**
  Family involvement is paramount when working with at risk youth and should be fully involved in the development of any treatment plan and contractual agreements.

- **Set up an evaluation system for all team members.**
  Program evaluation conducted on a regular basis can greatly improve the management and effectiveness of your team, organization and programs. To do so requires understanding the differences between monitoring and evaluation. Program evaluations should be an integral part of regular program planning and implementation.

- **Be observant of the inter-relational conduct between former and non gang members in your program.**
  Understanding the program’s mission statement is essential for all staff members. In doing so, they can follow expectations and protocols, as well as provide all clients with consistent and uniform services, while minimizing any possible
conflict with staff when working with at-risk or gang involved youth. Conflicts between agency staff usually occur when management and former gang member employees are operating in a vacuum and believe that non gang member staff duties are not operationally connected to their work in the field.

- **Train your team members in the area of gang prevention and intervention through law enforcement, if feasible, and others specializing in gang and mental health issues.**

  If possible, become a Law Enforcement certified Gang Specialist through your local Gang Investigator’s Association and obtain assorted trainings which can enhance your team member’s ability to better address families with complex issues, like domestic violence, substance and sexual abuse, post traumatic stress disorder, etc.

- **Designate a person who is knowledgeable in being able to assist gang involved youth with getting out when requested. This entails very specific work and patience.**

  Assisting a youth who wants to leave the gang lifestyle is not an easy task. It can be a long and dangerous process for the youth and the service provider alike, and once becoming involved it can develop into a liability issue and requires quite a bit of case management (refer to Considerations for “Flipping Out” a Gang Member in Chapter Four).
CHAPTER 6

Gang Management Guidelines for Educators and Administrators

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted, he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners.” (Isaiah 61:1)

NOTE: No gang management plan is perfect or has all the answers; any plan needs to be continually tailored and revised to remain effective.

At schools, the attitude and awareness of the staff (from the administration down) are major factors involving campus climate. Many teachers, counselors and administrators are haunted by the idea of gangs or weapons in the schools, while the media continues to portray youth gang members as evil and unrepentant, when some of them are actually role models as “individuals”, e.g. helping others when asked, taking care of family members when required, etc. Nevertheless, schools must be prepared in case of a gang related crisis. For this reason, the principle, faculty, counselors and staff that deal with campus fights or disturbances must stay alert regarding potential confrontational situations.
A. DEVELOP A PRE-CRISIS PLAN

Prevention involves seeking to reduce known risks that could lead to a crisis. This is part of an organization’s risk management program. Preparation involves creating the crisis management plan, selecting and training the crisis management team and conducting exercises to test the crisis management plan and team. Organizations are better able to handle crises when they (1) have a crisis management plan that is updated at least annually, (2) have a designated crisis management team, (3) conduct exercises to test the plans and teams at least annually and (4) pre-draft some crisis messages (Barton, 2001 and Coombs, 2006).

The following are recommendations when developing a pre-crisis plan:

- Create clear and enforceable policies to address gang issues within the school. Do not make rules that you are not willing or able to enforce.

- Establish good communication with law enforcement, corrections, probation, parole and safety resource officers (SRO).

- Understand that a real gang member can make anything gang related. For example, gang attire changes quickly and when not overtly evident then covertly.

- Staff must be proactive then reactive; unfortunately due to zero tolerance, getting expelled is the way many gang members make it out of school.

- Administrators must analyze, understand and approve all school functions.

- Remember, that it is always less disruptive and easier to prevent a fight than to respond to a disturbance (having said that, Administration should always consult with those who have the “gang training” and “experience” in such matters).

- Strong and professional staff is important because students can sense weakness.

- Staff should work together and not at odds allowing students to cause splitting.

- Staff must be visible, decisive and mobile, as well as, accessible to students, parents and even gang members.
• All rumors, especially those that may involve violence must be immediately checked out and appropriate action taken.

• Develop clear policies in the maintenance of incident and student transfers when a student is a gang member.

• Treat threats as a real potential problem since a “terrorist threat” (threat to do bodily harm to another) is a chargeable offense, especially when aimed at a teacher or other staff member.

• Do not allow gangs to claim specific areas, such as trees, pathways, benches or tables and require ongoing monitoring by faculty and staff.

B. SAFETY WITHIN THE CLINICAL SETTING
The one factor that differentiates working with gang involved youth from working with families with general problems is that the clinical focus on safety is paramount to providing responsible treatment. In order to focus attention on safety, evaluations should be comprehensive and uncover risk factors among individuals, family interactions and environmental concerns.

During observations by a counselor, the specific symptoms that emerge will be evaluated. Since symptoms that emerge can develop purposefully and have their respective origins in experience, attitudes and beliefs they can contribute to specific underlying problems. The evaluation process should address predisposition, precipitating and perpetuating factors which, during the observation, data collection and subsequent psychosocial assessment, may identify emerging symptoms that could contribute to specific underlying problems and/or potential tendencies towards violent behavior by a client or the possibility for victimization. This is important for those who work in home based service, where the worker is in the client’s home and neighborhood. Much too often, non-gang trained clinical and non-clinical service providers in the field can miss valuable information due to a lack of experience, knowledge or training in the area of gang identification and/or understanding why youth join gangs and their culture. For more information on the gang lifestyle and culture, please visit: http://www.gangwatchers.org/gang-culture.html.

For safety reasons, a team of two works best with high risk youth. One of the service providers is assigned to work with the youth and his/her environment (school, work, community) and the second works closely with the youth and his/her family.
The service provider should reinforce the use of community support “wrap-around services,” which have been put into place to ensure continued progress with the goal of preventing reoffending behaviors and further gang involvement prior to termination of services.

**CONCLUSION**

“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

*(1 John 3:18)*

To further improve our likelihood of success, it will be important for future research and evaluation to examine the diversity of youth gangs, compare the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of various program modalities and delineate the range of access points (e.g. pre-gang involvement versus youth already engaged in gang activities and behavior), settings and delivery modes as has been briefly attempted to relay in this manual. Perhaps more important, decision-making around policy and practice issues should be based on the best available research evidence.

“Despite the thousands of projects, programs and strategies that have been developed and implemented to date, one lesson is clear: the diversity and complexity of the youth gang problem defies an easy solution or single strategy” (Wyrick and Howell, 2004).

In conclusion, as we develop more knowledge about what works, we will also be challenged to identify ways to translate the lessons learned into policy and practice to prevent and reduce youth gang involvement.

Although this manual cannot begin to encompass the complexity of the gang issue, I hope it helps those who ask the why and how youth become caught up in this lifestyle and how we might address these questions programmatically and operationally, while shedding some light on this complex subject.
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*The National Child Trauma Stress Network*
RESOURCES

The following are organizations for which the author has worked or trained with or is a member of, uses and/or recommends, among many others within the scope of his professional career.

**National Gang Crime Research Center (www.NGCrC.com)**
Formed in 1990, the NGCRC exists today as a non-profit independent agency. They carry out research on gangs and gang members, disseminate information through publications and reports, and provide training and consulting services.

**High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (www.HIDTA.org)**
The Washington-Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area was founded in 1994 to foster cooperation among law enforcement agencies in this region and involve them in developing a strategy to address the region’s drug related public safety threats. The W/B HIDTA uses funding provided through ONDCP to sponsor a variety of law enforcement, prevention and substance abuse treatment initiatives throughout the region.

**The Phoenix Curriculum (www.gangprograms.com)**
The program provides two separate program elements: 1) The in-school Gang Prevention Curriculum which is designed for elementary, middle school and high school students and 2) The supplemental Gang Intervention Curriculum which provides elementary, middle and high school students with classroom and counseling-based curricula, which is designed for the higher risk students and targeting the highest risk factors.

**National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (www.safeyouth.org)**
A Federal resource for communities working to prevent violence committed by and against young people. The mission of the NYVPRC is to provide key leaders in communities—local government leaders and community leaders—with dynamic resources to help support their efforts to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate effective youth violence prevention efforts.

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov)**
The OJJDP provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. They support states and communities in their efforts to develop and implement effective and coordinated prevention and intervention programs and to improve the juvenile justice system so that it protects public safety, holds offenders accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to the needs of juveniles and their families.
OJJDP Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/180863.pdf)
This Website maintains the latest facts and figures on juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and violence and victimization.

Gang Reduction through Intervention, Prevention and Education – GRIPE (www.gripe4rkids.org)
East Coast Gang Investigators Association and their application to shut down the gang recruitment base which is used in many jurisdictions.

Information, blogs, education, research and resources for gang prevention and intervention.

Latino Coalition (www.latinocoalition.org/resources.html)
The Latino Coalition specializes in programs that address the needs of high risk and adjudicated youth. Multiple links can be found there regarding gang prevention and intervention.

Institute for Intergovernmental Research (www.iir.com/nygc)
IIR specializes in research and education services involving intergovernmental issues at a local, state, tribal, and federal level, in the areas of law enforcement, criminal justice, homeland security and juvenile justice, with concentration in law enforcement agency organization and management, gang research, grants management, economic crime, organized crime intelligence, homeland security, and major criminal conspiracy investigations and prosecutions.

National Gang Center (www.NationalGangCenter.gov)
This Website features the latest research about gangs: descriptions of evidence-based, anti-gang programs, and links to databases, tools and other resources to assist in developing and implementing effective community-based gang prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies. Here you will find an analysis of the findings from nearly 15 years of data collected by the annual National Youth Gang Survey of 2,500 U.S. law enforcement agencies. Visitors can read and download public actions related to street gangs. An online form allows communities to request training and technical assistance as they plan and implement anti-gang strategies. Users can register for a variety of anti-gang training courses. For the definition of gang, gang member and gang crime by state go to: www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Definitions.pdf
Using automated databases and working with a variety of entities, the National Gang Center identifies gang-related legislation. This information is updated as new legislation and existing legislation are identified.

New York Gang Investigators Association (www.NYGIA.org)
The New York Gang Investigators Association was established in 2006 by criminal justice professionals who recognized the importance of sharing information and working with social service agencies, community based organizations and the education system to impact the spread of gangs. The Association works in partnership with fellow gang investigators and law enforcement associations throughout the world to develop anti-gang strategies in the areas of gang prevention, gang intervention, gang enforcement, gang suppression, gang member rehabilitation and gang member reentry into mainstream society. An excellent organization for resourcing and networking, the New York Gang Investigators Association is open to associate membership to non-law enforcement personnel.

Type in any abbreviation or word and it provides its definition and meaning.

Justice Policy Institute (www.JusticePolicy.org)
The mission of the Justice Policy Institute is to promote effective solutions to social problems and to be dedicated to ending society's reliance on incarceration.

National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations (www.NAGIA.org)
Considered the only alliance association of gang professionals in the world. On the left side of the home page it provides the links for all the Gang Investigator Associations nationwide.

Know Gangs (www.KnowGangs.com)
Since 1997, Know Gangs has been a leading training provider for law enforcement, educators and social service workers seeking to enhance their knowledge about gangs, drugs and school violence. This is an excellent webpage for gang info, videos, etc.

www.GodsGangsters.org
Godsgansters is about ex-gang members reaching out to the community and raising up leaders to go back into gang neighborhoods using dance, rap, drama and technology.

www.NoToGangs.org
Checkout the You Tube section on gangs.
The Bureau of Justice Statistics (www.OJP.USDOJ.gov/BJA)
The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) was established on December 27, 1979. The BJS is a component of the Office of Justice Programs in the U.S. Department of Justice. BJS collects, analyzes, publish, and disseminates information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. These data are critical to Federal, State, and local policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded.

www.WOLA.org
One of WOLA’s most important roles is to function as a key resource and interlocutor for Latin American non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) working for human rights and social justice. WOLA also plays an important role in fostering dialogue, debate, and policy-consensus among U.S. and Latin American NGO’s with diverse perspectives that share the same goals. WOLA plays a leadership role in several advocacy coalitions and regularly organizes workshops, conferences, roundtables, and briefings designed to stimulate policy debate.

www.RichardRamos.com – Creator of “POM” (Parents on a Mission)
For his twenty-eight years of community service and his work in the field of human rights and interfaith understanding, he has received numerous accolades and awards including recognitions by the White House Administration, the U.S. Congress, the California State Senate and Assembly and the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapels Board. Ramos is also a nationally recognized expert on gang prevention and has authored two books on the subject, his most recent on is titled “Gang Prevention and Schools - The Ultimate Parent & Teacher Guide on How to Keep Kids from Joining Gangs” (2008).

www.StreetGangs.com
A reporting information Web page that lists organizations that reach out to and help youth gang members, as well as, provide great news updates regarding multiple issues.

www.JRSA.org/jjec/index.html
Although the Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center (JJEC) is no longer available they have maintained the link to their publications.

www.Drugs.com/imprints.php
This link will identify any drug A-Z by pill imprint (an indented or printed marking on a pill, tablet or capsule. These imprints can also be symbols, text, numbers or any combination. This link will identify legal and illegal drugs. It gives you multiple categories such as, class, side effects, dosage, new drug approvals and applications, etc.
There are many urban legends regarding gangs and their activities as they relate to initiations. These stories go around so frequently that criminal justice personnel and citizens alike come to believe them and circulate these myths through the internet thus creating anxiety and fear. This link will allow anyone to type in any rumored stories and find out if it is actually true or false.

www.GraffitiTrackingSystem.com
Blue Archer Graffiti Tracking System (GTS) is a centralized, web-based application that helps multiple users document instances of graffiti crime, manage investigations, track graffiti removal requests and compile actionable intelligence, all through the Internet. GTS represents an effective strategy to manage graffiti crime data and ultimately stop graffiti vandalism in its tracks. Here you can learn more about the features and benefits of using GTS, as well as how you can easily and cost effectively deploy this asset in support of your anti-graffiti mission. Blue Archer originally developed GTS as a custom application for the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, but now the software is available to clients throughout the world. GTS is designed for use by any organization that is fighting graffiti crime, like law enforcement, prosecutors, public works departments, railways and local and state officials. Since the application is accessed through the Internet, any authorized user can open or modify a case tracking an incidence of graffiti, from the initial report through clean-up and prosecution.

www.EMRTC.NMT.edu/training/upsbi.php
This link will allow its user to sign up online and earn a certification (which upon passing the exam sections at the end of each chapter) to be able to print out him/herself in Understanding and Planning for School Bomb Incidents (UPSB1). It takes approximately two and a half hours to complete. It is very good for school personnel.

www.VGIA.org
The VGIA was established in 1997 by a group of law enforcement professionals who recognized the importance of having a gang based information sharing network narrowly but intensely focused on responding to the proliferation of street gangs in Virginia. Like other states along the East Coast, there is a phenomenon in Virginia where well-established criminal street gangs hailing from the West Coast, Mid West and South West have recently and increasingly joined the population of our existing gangs, bringing the potential of further criminal networking to a new and more threatening level. VGIA will remain committed to bridging the lines of communication between all aspects of law enforcement and providing the most current and reliable information to our membership.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A counselor since 1986, **Henry R. Pacheco** has worked with the homeless, battered women, a teen group home, sex offenders, refugees – during the “Marielito” boat lift immigration from Cuba, with the Young Offenders Program and in corrections. For the last 18 years, he has been involved in home-based counseling, providing mentorship and counseling services to Hispanic and non-Hispanic youth involved in gangs.

As Program Manager for World Vision’s Community Mobilization Initiative, Pacheco supported a gang reduction strategy implemented in the city of Herndon in northern Virginia, under an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) earmark which was obtained by Congressman Frank Wolf and whose team received a best practices designation from the Washington Office for Latin America – 2008. He also served as gang consultant for World Vision’s “Pipeline Vision” tour to Los Angeles, Mexico and El Salvador while employed with them.

He is a member of the Gang Investigators Association in Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey and is certified as a Law Enforcement Gang Specialist by both the New York and Virginia Gang Investigators Associations. Presently, he is the Vice Chairman of the Baltimore/Washington High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Prevention Committee, and also served as its Chairman from 2007 to 2008.

Pacheco has received various honors and awards for this work. Among them, the Spirit of Excellence Award in 2003 and 2009 from the National Gang Crime Research Center in Chicago, Illinois, and the Fredric Milton Thrasher Award in 2006 from the National Gang Crime Research Center for the Multicultural Clinical Centers’ work with at risk youth which included the Gang Intervention Services Program which he developed and has coordinated for the last seven years.

He has testified as a gang consultant and has participated as speaker on the subject of “Psycho-social Dynamics of Gangs” for the Department of Labor’s Youth Services Division Symposium on the East and West Coasts. In 2009, Pacheco was also a presenter for M. H. West & Co. at the School Community and Citywide Gang Strategies Training Program for the U.S. Department of Labor. He was also a presenter for Esperanza’s Communities United to Empower Youth (CUEY) Project in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Pacheco has an MS in Human Organization Science, specializing in Administration of Justice and a BS in Criminal Justice. Currently, he is involved in Domestic Counter Terrorism studies.