IN 1985, HANDGUNS KILLED
46 PEOPLE IN JAPAN
8 IN GREAT BRITAIN
31 IN SWITZERLAND
5 IN CANADA
18 IN ISRAEL
5 IN AUSTRALIA
AND 8,092 IN THE UNITED STATES.

GOD BLESS AMERICA.

The pen is mightier than the gun.
Write Handgun Control, Inc. Now.
1225 Eye Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005
Or call (202) 898-0792

STOP HANDGUNS BEFORE THEY STOP YOU.
A very special thanks go to the following people who, through their efforts, made the Gun Violence Prevention Group possible:

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Session 1: What's This Group All About?
Session 1: What’s This Group All About?

Objectives of today’s group:

- Take the pretest
- Set group expectations
- Provide an overview of what the group is about
- Learn about different kinds of gun violence
- Set homework for next week
- Wrap Up

Group Expectations (write them down!):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.
This group is about...

In recent years, gun violence among adolescents and young men, such as yourself, has been increasing at alarming rates. This has many negative effects. Gun violence can affect you, personally, either directly or indirectly. If you know somebody who has been shot at or has actually been shot, raise your hand. Keep your hand up. If you have heard gunfire in your neighborhood, raise your hand. Keep your hand up. If guns are a problem in your school, raise your hand. Keep your hand up. If you have ever worried about being shot, raise your hand. Keep your hand up. Now, look around the room.

- How many hands are up?
- What does this mean to you?
- How much of a problem do the other group members view gun violence to be?

The rise in gun violence has had devastating effects on individuals, families, and society in general. The purpose of this group is to help you learn what YOU can do to prevent gun violence. In this group, you will:

1. Learn about the impact of gun violence on individual, familial, communal, and societal levels.
2. Learn what contributes to the problem of gun violence.
3. Learn what factors may leave you vulnerable to being a victim of, or even a perpetrator of, gun violence.
4. Learn what you, personally can do to prevent gun violence.
5. Learn what families can do to prevent gun violence.

Before We Get Started

Gun violence has far reaching effects. Chances are you have been impacted in some way. You may have lost a friend or a family member to gun violence. You yourself may have been victimized directly. If this is the case, you may find yourself having trouble going through some of this material. This is natural and completely understandable. If you believe you may have difficulty working through some of this material, be sure to talk to the group facilitator prior to the next group session. Together, you and the group facilitator, along with your counselor, can determine how to best help you through the course.

What is Gun Violence?

Gun violence is any act involving a gun that harms another individual or group of individuals. There a number of different kinds of gun violence. The five main types that we will discuss in this group are:

1. Suicide
2. Unintentional gun violence
3. Crime-related gun violence
4. Unplanned, deliberate gun violence
5. Planned, deliberate gun violence

Suicide

Gun violence by suicide occurs when an individual kills him or herself with a gun, or injures him or herself in the process of trying to commit suicide.
Retired police officer commits suicide

A retired Philadelphia patrolman died Thursday at his home in Broomall of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Mr. Francis, formerly of the Northeast, had been suffering from cancer of the larynx. His family said he had been depressed because his treatments had not been effective and he was broke.

"He had no health insurance and the doctors wanted to operate on him again," said his son, a full-time staff sergeant in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. "My sister and I tried to help out, but the medical bills were too much.

"He was depressed and lonely," his son said.

Mr. Francis, who grew up in West Philadelphia, dropped out of West Catholic High School in the 10th grade and worked as a short-order cook until joining the Air Force in April 1965. He was honorably discharged after one month and five days according to military discharge papers.

Afterward, he worked at various jobs until marrying Michelle Stevens in 1967, the same year he joined the Police Department. He was a patrolman his whole career, and had beats in Southwest Philadelphia, South Philadelphia and Roxborough.

"My dad loved being a cop. He was proud to serve this city," his son said. "He liked patrolling streets, helping people."

He retired in 1988, and worked a number of security jobs before quitting for good in 1999. After he was diagnosed with cancer in November 2005, he had surgery, and moved to Broomall to be closer to his children. In December, the cancer returned, and he was told that he would need another surgery, his son said.

In addition to his wife and son, Mr. Francis is survived by daughter, Jennifer; two grandchildren; and a brother.

Unintentional Gun Violence

Unintentional gun violence occurs when somebody with a gun accidentally harms another individual. Such is the case when somebody is playing around with a gun and it accidentally goes off, striking another person.
19-year-old dies after accidental shooting

Posted on Jan 1, 2007 8:16:20 AM

Update From Volusia County Sheriff's Office:

Horseplay with a loaded handgun led to the death of a 19-year-old man New Year's Eve near Holly Hill. The Volusia County Sheriff Office was notified of the incident at approximately 11:59 p.m. and rushed to the scene at 1229 Derbyshire Road. They found the victim, John Debella Jr., dead inside on a couch with a gunshot wound to his head. Sean Page was also inside and admitted to deputies that he had accidentally shot his friend.

Investigators interviewed Page and other witnesses and determined that Page had recently purchased a .45 caliber handgun and was carrying it in a holster throughout the evening of the shooting. Witnesses said that Page had pulled the gun out several times and pointed it at others, including Debella, in jest. Page told investigators that each time he had done so, he checked to make sure the gun was not loaded and was safe. He also said that he and his friends often joke around with weapons, and that he is on active duty in the U.S. Army and has had weapons training and experience.

At approximately 11:50 p.m. Page pulled the gun from its holster and pointed it at Debella's temple. According to witnesses, Debella played along and adjusted the gun himself so that it pointed at his forehead. Page had his finger on the trigger and said that Debella's movement nudged Page's finger, causing the weapon to fire. Page said that he didn't know the gun was loaded at the time of the shooting. Page, 20, was charged with manslaughter and transported to the Volusia County Branch Jail in Daytona Beach.

Crime-Related Gun Violence

Crime-related gun violence occurs when an individual commits a crime using a gun. An example of this type of gun violence is robbering somebody at gunpoint. The other person is not harmed physically; however, he or she is harmed mentally or in other, nonphysical ways.
Hwy. 78 Subway robbed at gunpoint

By Sharon Swanepoel
The Loganville Tribune

Published January 19, 2007

LOGANVILLE — The Subway Restaurant in Loganville was robbed at gunpoint Monday evening by a woman allegedly carrying a semi-automatic handgun.

According to the police report, a black woman dressed in blue jeans and a black hooded jacket with her face partially covered by a red scarf entered the Subway at about 10:22 p.m., pointed a gun at the attendant and demanded money.

Cameron Hubbard of Loganville, who was working in the restaurant at the time, said the subject then handed him a red bag and demanded he give her the money but not to include any change.

She then grabbed the purse of another customer who was in the restaurant at the time before running out and speeding off in a sports car described as either silver or beige in color.

The customer who was in the store at the time said she had about $1,000 in cash, her check book, credit cards and about $1,500 worth of jewelry in her purse at the time it was stolen. Hubbard said the thief got away with about $187 in cash from the register.

Another witness who was at the four-way stop at the time reported he saw a dark figure jump into a car and speed off towards Snellville.

Police reported store owners from the surrounding stores that were open at the time said they hadn’t seen anything.

The suspect is described as a black female, about five feet, nine inches in height with a heavy set build. Police do not have any surveillance of the robbery since the surveillance camera wasn’t working at the time.

Unplanned, Deliberate Gun Violence

Unplanned, deliberate gun violence occurs when an individual physically harms another individual without advanced planning to do so. An example is when somebody shoots another person in the heat of passion, or if somebody shoots somebody while committing a robbery. Again, the key is that the person did not plan to shoot the other person before the incident occurred. It happened without planning.
Man dies from gunshot wound
By: Sara Randazzo, The Press-Tribune

The death of 40-year-old Christopher Lee Jackson has left a quiet West Roseville neighborhood shaken as friends and family mourn the loss of the man they knew and loved.

Jackson died Sunday night in a Sacramento area hospital of complications from a gunshot wound he suffered Aug. 13 following a shooting at his Magpie Court home.

Melvin Hunter, 86, is being held without bail in the Placer County Jail on charges of murder, police said. Hunter was arrested after the shooting and initially charged with attempted murder. The charge was changed following Jackson's death, police said.

Hunter lived with Jackson and his family for eight years and allegedly shot Jackson in the neck during an argument.

Wife JoAnna Rodriguez said she is still unsure what caused the argument and subsequent shooting.

Investigators are not releasing additional details in the case.

Jackson, who worked as a drywall contractor and real estate agent, was being remembered this week by family and friends as a loving husband, father and a selfless friend.

Planned, Deliberate Gun Violence

Planned, deliberate gun violence is when somebody harms another individual, either mentally or physically, after planning to do so before hand. For example, planning to shoot another individual after school and then doing so is considered to be planned, deliberate gun violence. In these circumstances, the perpetrator intended use the gun to inflict harm on the other individual.

Teen sentenced 50 years to life in slaying of De La Salle student
-Henry K. Lee, Chronicle Staff Writer

A Contra Costa County judge today sentenced a 17-year-old boy to 50 years to life in prison on a first-degree murder conviction for fatally shooting a former De La Salle High School football star in Richmond in 2004.

Darren Pratcher did not visibly react in a Martinez courtroom when Superior Court Judge Laurel Brady pronounced the maximum sentence for what she termed the "absolutely senseless violence" that ended the life of Terrance Kelly, 18.
"I don't do this easily. It makes me extremely sad to be here today, but I don't think it's inappropriate in this circumstance," said Brady, who earlier today rejected the defense's motion for a new trial and pleas to reduce the sentence.

In October, a jury convicted Pratcher of first-degree murder and gun enhancements in Kelly's slaying, convictions that under state law draw a sentence of 50 years to life in prison.

On Aug. 12, 2004, Pratcher borrowed a loaded, .22-caliber rifle, hung around an apartment complex on Seventh Street in Richmond and ambushed Kelly, who had stopped his car at the complex to give his stepbrother a ride home.

Pratcher fired the rifle four times at the victim as he sat in his car. Kelly was struck twice in the face, once in the back of the head and once in the back. Kelly died just two days before he was to leave for the University of Oregon, where he had a football scholarship and was expected to play safety.

"Justice has been served," Kelly's father, Landrin Kelly, said. "There's no gratification, no glory, nothing at all. Two lives are wasted, like the judge said."

He said he wanted to send a message to young people who consider settling arguments violently: "If you do wrong, you'll eventually get caught. The consequences are very severe. You kids don't know who's suffering the most -- it's the families, the parents, the victim's families. I can't see my son anymore."

Pratcher didn't speak in court today, but over the course of several hours, the judge heard arguments as to what the sentence should be.

Defense attorney Jonathan Laba read a letter his client wrote to the Kelly family in which he expressed his remorse. The attorney implored the judge, "I ask the court to show this boy some mercy."

Pratcher's mother, Muriel Pratcher, told Brady, "This is hard for a mother to defend her son. I love him deeply but I don't uphold what he did. I'm extremely, extremely sorry. My heart goes out to the family.

---

Exercise: Talking Points

A different set of circumstances can lead up to the occurrence of each of the different types of gun violence. Discuss what these circumstances may be for:

- Suicide
- Unintentional gun violence
- Crime-related gun violence
Unplanned, deliberate gun violence

Planned, deliberate gun violence

In what ways are these different types of gun violence the same?

Can crime-related gun violence also be considered to be planned, deliberate gun violence? Why or why not?

If you had to rank the different types of gun violence in order of “most problematic” to “least problematic”, what would your order be? What lead you to rank them this way?
Homework: Week 1

In the first week of group you learned about 5 different kinds of gun violence. Write about an example of one type of gun violence drawing from things that have happened in your home counties. If you can’t think of one, use a current news story. Be sure to write about what happened, how the act impacted the victim(s), and what you thought about the act when you first heard it had happened. We will review your work at the beginning of the next group session.

Type of gun violence: ____________________________________________

What happened? ____________________________________________
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How was the victim(s) impacted?

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What did you think when you heard?____________________________
Session 2: The Scope of the Problem
Session 2: The Scope of the Problem

Objectives of today’s group:

- Warm-up/review group expectations
- Review homework from last week
- Identify how big the problem of gun violence is
- Set homework for next week
- Wrap Up

What’s Your Impression?

Let’s take a few minutes to talk about gun violence back in your home counties. Here’s a few starter questions:

Are there many shootings in your county or city?

What were the circumstances of the shootings?

What types of gun violence happen the most in your county or city? Why do you think that is?

Are there many gun related deaths?

Are you fortunate to live where you live?

Are shootings just a “city thing”, or is it a problem in the suburbs too?
There needs to be a total, citywide effort to clamp down

There was little peace or hope on Philadelphia streets on the weekend before Christmas, as four men died early yesterday in separate shootings, pushing the city's 2006 homicide tally to 400.

The number of homicides in the city so far this year stands at its highest level since 1997, when 418 were recorded. From 1990 to 1997, the city averaged 435 homicides annually, with a high of 503 in 1990.

Community leaders warned of a bloody new year unless residents from throughout the region make a concerted response to the violence.

'We are beyond the prayer rallies,' said the Rev. Robert P. Shine Sr., pastor of Berachah Baptist Church in Philadelphia, and president of the Pennsylvania State Wide Coalition of Black Clergy.

'We when something is happening in the city of Philadelphia that is beyond the city's ability to cope, then we all need to help,' said Diane Edbril, executive director of CeaseFire PA, an advocacy group working for tougher gun-control laws in Pennsylvania.

Police Commissioner Sylvester M. Johnson last night said the answer goes beyond gun control and policing, noting that gun laws today are what they were in 2002, when homicides numbered 288.

'Unless you change the mind-set, [if] you take away the guns, I think you're still going to have the stabbings and the beatings,' Johnson said.

Issues such as education and jobs need to be addressed, too, he added.

Bilal Qayyum, cofounder of the antiviolence group Men United for a Better Philadelphia, said the numbers could continue to rise. 'Until we as a city totally change this environment, we're going to see the same in 2007 as we saw in 2006,' he said.

Young black men 'feel they are locked out of the system,' Qayyum said. 'What they are doing is out of anger and frustration.'

In the first of the weekend slayings, Michael Orlando, a pizza deliveryman, was shot late Saturday in Northeast Philadelphia in an apparent robbery. The
43-year-old Philadelphia resident was pronounced dead early Sunday at Frankford Hospital-Torresdale Campus.

An unidentified man was shot once in the neck at 2:25 a.m. yesterday near 13th and Parrish Streets in North Philadelphia and died a short time later at Hahnemann University Hospital.

Another unidentified man was found about 3 a.m. yesterday in the 3900 block of Market Street in University City with multiple gunshot wounds. He was pronounced dead at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

A third unidentified man was found at 48th and Walnut Streets in West Philadelphia with a gunshot wound to his chest. He was pronounced dead about 6 a.m. yesterday at HUP.

'There needs to be a total, citywide effort to clamp down' on violence in schools and on the streets, Shine said.

Describing the death toll as a form of domestic terrorism, Shine also urged the state legislature to adopt tougher gun-control laws to limit access to handguns.

In the course of one year, more than 400 people were killed by guns. Take a minute to think about that number.

- How many people are at your facility on a given day? How does that number compare to 400?

- If each of those 400 people killed by guns in Philadelphia had 4 family members who were left to mourn their deaths, that would make 1600 family members who are additional victims to their murders. Additionally, if each of those initial 400 people who were killed by guns had 6 friends who were left to mourn their deaths, that would create an additional 2400 victims. All in total, there would be 4400 victims who were touched by gun violence.

The following pages contain a number of different statistical figures. The statistics were drawn from fact sheets offered publicly on the Brady Campaign’s website at: http://www.bradycampaign.org/facts/factsheets/. Read the fact sheets as a group and then discuss what you think they mean.
CHILDREN & GUNS: A LETHAL COMBINATION

In 2002, the most recent year for which data is available, nearly eight young people aged 19 and under were killed a day by a firearm in the United States[1]. Nearly 36 per day were non-fatally wounded.[2] The scourge of gun violence frequently attacks the most helpless members of our society - our children. Consider these facts...

- In 2002, 1,830 children and teenagers were murdered with guns, 828 committed suicide with guns, and 167 died in unintentional shootings. A total of 2,893 young people were killed by firearms in the U.S., one every three hours. [3]
- Each year from 1993 to 1997, gun murders were committed by 1,621 killers under the age of 18.[4]
- In 2002, 82% of murder victims aged 13 to 19 years old were killed with a firearm.[5]
- During 2002, 48% of all murders of those under age 18 in the U.S. involved firearms.[6]
- Firearms are the second-leading cause of death (after motor vehicle accidents) for young people 19 and under in the U.S.[7]
- The rate of firearm death of under 14-years-old is nearly 12 times higher in the U.S. than in 25 other industrialized countries combined.[8]
- In 2002, for every child and teenager killed by a gun, more than four were estimated to be non-fatally wounded.[9]
- From 1999 to 2002, firearms were responsible for 18% of injury deaths for Caucasian teens ages 13-19 in the United States, 51% of deaths for African-American teens, 32% of Hispanic teens, 17% of Native American/Alaska Native teens, and 20% of Asian/Pacific Islander teens.[10]
- In a study of inner-city 7-year-olds and their exposure to violence, 75% of them reported hearing gun shots.[11]
- The firearm injury epidemic, due largely to handgun injuries, is 10 times larger than the polio epidemic of the first half of this century.*[12]

Endnotes:
3. WISQARS, Injury Mortality Reports.
4. Supplemental Homicide Data from the FBI.
5. WISQARS, Injury Mortality Reports.
6. Ibid.
9. WISQARS, Nonfatal Injury Reports.
10. WISQARS, Injury Mortality Reports.
GUN VIOLENCE IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Gun violence is a priority issue for African-Americans and other minorities. Nearly 350,000 Americans were victims to murders, robberies, and aggravated assaults in 2003 committed by perpetrators carrying a firearm,[1] and our minority communities are the hardest hit:

- In 2002, firearm homicide was the number one cause of death for 15-34 year old African-Americans.[2]
- In 2002, the firearm death rate for African-Americans was over twice that of whites.[3]
- In 2002, an African-American male under age 30 was nearly 9 times more likely to be murdered than a white male under age 30.[4]
- In 2003, 91 percent of African-American murder victims were slain by African-American offenders.[5]
- In 2002, African-American males accounted for 47 percent of all homicide victims,[6] while they only account for 6 percent of the entire population.[7]
- Firearms have become the predominant method of suicide for African-Americans aged 10-19 years, accounting for 64 percent of suicides in 2002.[8]
- In Florida, African-American males have an almost eight times greater chance of dying in a firearm-related homicide than white males. In addition, the firearm-related homicide death rate for African-American females is greater than white males and over four times greater than white females.[9]
- In Florida, White males have over twice as high a firearm-related suicide death rate as their African-American male counterparts and almost five times the rate of white females.[10]

Endnotes:
4. Ibid.
6. WISQARS, Injury Mortality Reports.
8. WISQARS, Leading Causes of Death Reports.
THE RISKS OF GUNS IN THE HOME

In 2002, 30,242 people were killed by guns in America - 83 people a day - including 17,108 suicides; 11,829 homicides; and 762 unintentional or accidental shootings.[1]

A gun kept in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in an unintentional shooting (4 times), a criminal assault or homicide (7 times), or an attempted or completed suicide (11 times) than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense.[2]

An estimated 33-40% of households own guns [3, 4] and approximately 44-51 million Americans personally own guns.[5, 6] As of 1994, Americans owned an estimated 192 million firearms.[7]

One out of three handguns is kept loaded and unlocked. More than half of all handguns are kept either locked and/or unloaded.[8]

Nearly all childhood unintentional shooting deaths occur in or around the home. Fifty percent occur in the home, and 40% occur in the home of a friend or relative. Most of these deaths involve guns that have been kept loaded and accessible to children and occur when children play with loaded guns.[9]

When someone is home, a gun is used for protection in fewer than two percent of home invasion crimes.[10]

Children and Teens

In the U.S. in 2002, firearm injuries were the third leading cause of death among children aged 10-14 and the second leading cause of death for ages 15-19.[11]

For children and teens, 19 years and under in the year 2002, we lost 1,830 to firearm-related homicide; 828 to firearm-related suicide; and 167 lives to unintentional shootings. One young life lost every 3 hours.[12]

Storage

In 1998, it was estimated that 43% of households with children ages 3-17, keep at least one gun in the home. Of this 43%, 23% keep a gun loaded some of the time and 28% keep at least one gun hidden and unlocked.[13]

Have you ever thought to ask?

According to a study by Peter Hart and Associates and The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 42% of parents polled revealed that they would be extremely concerned about their child’s safety if they knew there was a gun in the home of their child’s friend. When asked if they ever thought to ask:

- 61% of parents reported that they never thought about asking;
- 30% reported that they have asked; and
- 6% thought about it, but never asked.[14]

A gun in the home increases the likelihood of an intentional shooting, particularly among children.

Unintentional shootings commonly occur when children find an adult's loaded handgun in a drawer or closet, and while playing with it shoot themselves, a sibling or a friend. The
unintentional firearm-related death rate for children 0-14 years is 9 times higher in the U.S. than in the 25 other high-income industrialized countries with populations over 1 million combined.[15]


Endnotes:
8. Ibid.
12. WISQARS, Injury Mortality Reports.
14. Ibid.
GUNS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Guns and domestic violence make a deadly combination. Over half of family murders are caused by firearms.[1] Firearms assaults have been found to be 12 times as likely to result in death as non-firearms assaults.[2]

Women as Victims in Firearms Homicides
In 2002, firearms were responsible for the deaths of 3188 white women, 825 African-American women, 309 Hispanic women and 131 others.[3]

In 2002, 1,202 women were killed by their intimate partners,[4] accounting for 30% of all murders of women,[5] and of that 1,202, 58% were killed by guns.[6]

In 2002, 700 women were killed by intimates using guns compared to 175 men.[7] From 1990 to 2002, over two-thirds of the spouse and ex-spouse victims were killed by guns, while 57 of girlfriends and 47 percent of boyfriends were killed by guns.[8]

African-American and Hispanic females, especially young women, remain at high risk.

In 2002, among young women age 15 to 24, 225 African-Americans and 67 Hispanics were killed by firearms.[9]

The African-American rate was over 5 times the rate of young white women and the Hispanic rate was nearly 50% higher.[10]

Guns in the Home are Risk Factors for Domestic Violence
In 1997, the presence of a gun in the home made it 3.4 times more likely a woman would become a homicide victim and 7.2 times as likely she would be a victim of homicide by a spouse, intimate or close relative.[11]

Children are also seriously affected by gun violence in the home. Children who witness the use or threat of a firearm exhibit greater behavioral problems than those who do not.[12]

Endnotes:
5. WISQARS, Injury Mortality Reports.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. WISQARS, Injury Mortality Reports.
10. Ibid.
Exercise: Open Discussion

After reading and discussing the statistics about gun violence, what are your thoughts? Go around the room and state your position on how big of a problem you think gun violence is. Be prepared to back your position with well-grounded justifications. Saying, “I think it is a small problem because I just don’t think it matters” won’t work. You can’t justify an opinion with another opinion. You will need to back your opinion with facts.
Homework: Week 2

Write about the ways in which gun violence has impacted your life. If you don’t believe that gun violence has impacted you personally, how do you think it has impacted others? We will review your homework during the next group session.

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Session 3: The Impact of Gun Violence
Session 3: The Impact of Gun Violence

Objectives of today’s group:

- Warm-up/review group expectations
- Review homework from last week
- Develop an understanding of the impact of gun violence
- Set homework for next week
- Wrap Up

Levels of Gun Violence

Gun violence impacts people in many different ways. Some are obvious; however, some are not that easy to see. Basically, gun violence can impact people directly on a personal level, indirectly on a personal level, on a family level, and on a community level.

Direct, Personal Level: The person who was shot suffers.

Indirect, Personal Level: People who know the person who was shot suffer. Friends and coworkers are examples of people who fall on this level.

Family Level: The family members of the person who was shot suffer.

Community Level: Members of the community in which the gun violence occurred suffer.
Impact of Gun Violence

There are also a number of different ways in which people at different levels suffer as a result of gunshot wounds. They are:

- **Physical pain**: This includes not only the pain endured shortly after being shot, but also on-going pain that often occurs among those who are shot. Sometimes, pain associated from gunshot wounds can last a lifetime. For example, damage occurring from a gunshot wound can leave the person with a condition called neuropathic pain, which leaves the victim with a constant sensation that feels like the affected part of the body is on fire. This is a result of nerve damage and is irreversible.

- **Physical disability**: Gunshot wounds, particularly those involving nerve damage, can permanently affect an individual’s ability to perform physical tasks that they once did with ease. The most obvious form of physical disability is paralysis. Paralysis occurs when nerve damage occurs in the spine, leaving the person unable to effectively use their legs, and in some cases, their arms or legs. Paralysis occurs to varying degrees. People may lose partial control or total control over a limb or limbs.

Another type of physical disability is less visible. Usually, these are also the byproduct of nerve damage. For example, an individual may have total control over his or her arm, however he or she may be unable to feel anything in that arm. This creates a whole host of problems. For example, when you cannot feel your arm it is hard to track its movement. This creates awkward, inaccurate movements. Have you ever tried to eat while your mouth was still numb after having dental work done? Did you bite your tongue, or possibly your cheek? This is because you cannot feel your movements. If you cannot feel your movements, you cannot coordinate your movements. You cannot judge where your tongue is in relation to your teeth coming down, which results in you biting your tongue. Now,
imagine trying to write without being able to feel your fingers, hand, or arm. How difficult would that be? What other types of physical disabilities may result from gunshot wounds?

- **Having to go through medical procedures:** When someone is shot, the bullet not only tears at flesh, it also liquefies the tissue lying along bullet’s path. This compounds the damage resulting from the bullet. Depending on where the bullet strikes and the path the bullet takes, the gunshot victim may have to go through a number of complicated medical procedures in an effort to either repair or minimize the effect of the damage. At the most basic level, the person may require surgery to repair the bullet hole, followed by hospitalization for observation and later by physical therapy. On a more severe level, the person may require multiple, complicated medical procedures. For example, if a gunshot victim receives damage to the lower intestine, he or she may need to have a portion of the organ removed. This creates problems with digestion, and in some cases may require the person to use a colostomy bag for the elimination of feces. Additionally, the person may have to go through a number of corrective surgeries to address on-going problems with his or her intestines.

There a vast number of different medical complications that can arise from gunshot wounds. Likewise there are a vast number of different medical procedures that a person may require. What other medical complications and/or procedures are you aware of?

- **Emotional pain and anguish:** Gun violence has more than just a physical impact on the victim; it also has a mental impact. Each act of gun violence is a traumatic event that impacts people on many levels. Gunshot victims often experience symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Symptoms of this condition include increased anger, sensitivity to things or situations reminding the individual of the traumatic event, and
fear. Difficulty sleeping, avoidance of certain people or places, and distressing thoughts and/or dreams are other symptoms. What might be some additional emotional reactions occurring on this level? What does being shot do to one’s ability to trust others?

On an indirect, personal level and family levels, people may be left to mourn the loss of loved ones. Additionally, they may be fearful of losing a loved one, or perhaps about being shot themselves. What might be some additional emotional reactions occurring on this level?

On a community level, the community in general may be left living in fear. Overtime, people living in the community may also become numb to the violence. This is a natural reaction to living in dangerous situations. Typically, being in a dangerous situation for a brief period of time creates a brief, intense feeling of fear. Prolonged exposure to violence, however, creates a different reaction. People cannot live in a perpetual state of fear. Often times, it is easier for somebody to become numb to the fear than it is to change the level of danger in their neighborhood. This is a maladaptive outcome of living in a dangerous area. The level of danger still exists; however, people in the community have “normalized” the experience. Danger becomes an accepted, and even expected, part of everyday life.

What are some other emotional effects of gun violence?

- **Financial hardship**: This refers to the financial impact of gun violence. On an individual level, there are the costs associated with medical bills stemming from treating gunshot wounds. There are also decreased earning potentials if the person becomes disabled as a result of his or her gunshot wound. This can also negatively impact members of the family, who may have to go without because of less money coming into the home. There are also costs on a community level. For example,
the value of houses in a neighborhood where gun violence is frequent drop dramatically, as fewer people want to move into the neighborhood. Read “Economic Costs of Gun Violence” later in this chapter for more information on the financial hardships faced on a community level.

Quality of life: Quality of life basically boils down to how much an individual is able to enjoy his or her life given the circumstances that he or she faces. Being paralyzed from the waist down has a negative impact on quality of life in a number of ways. The individual would be unable to do a number of things that he or she may have formerly enjoyed, such as playing basketball or riding bikes. He or she may also have a more difficult time getting around. Think of what all would be involved for a person in a wheelchair in order to leave his or her house, get into a car, drive to the mall, and then go shopping. What would be involved in going back home? What are some other ways in which gun violence can negatively impact a person’s quality of life? What about on a family or community level?

Exercise: Exploring the whole picture
Read the article “My back! My back!”

‘My back! My back!’
Girl, 7, critical but stable after shooting on Beaver St.
By Janet Kelley And Chad Umble
Lancaster New Era

LANCASTER COUNTY, PA - The little girl and her mother stood frozen on the city street corner Thursday when a gun battle erupted around them. When the shooting stopped, 7-year-old Brianna Platt called to her mother, “My back! My back!”

Residents in the area of Beaver and Andrew streets heard the exchange of gunfire, followed by the mother’s cries.

“She was screaming, ‘She’s dead. She’s dead!’ ” one neighbor said today.

Neighbors called 911 and ambulance personnel rushed the child to the hospital.
She was taken to Hershey Medical Center, where she was listed in critical but stable condition today, Mayor Rick Gray said.

This morning, Gray said he had to control his anger over such a senseless shooting that injured an innocent child.

He said city police will make the case, and finding the culprit, a “top priority.’’

“She’s a tough guy shot a little girl in the back,’’ Gray said.

It was shortly after 5 p.m. Thursday when Brianna was walking with her mother to Rivera’s corner store at Beaver and Andrew streets, near their home.

“All of the sudden someone started shooting,’’ the girl’s great-grandmother, Gladys Conyers, said this morning.

The child “just stood there frozen,’’ Conyers said. “She didn’t know she got shot until she told her mom, ‘My back! My back!’ ’’

“They saw the blood, that’s when they realized she got shot,’’ Conyers said. “They never knew it...She just got in the way and got hit.’’

Several neighbors said this morning they heard multiple gunshots, from different sounding guns, which they believed indicated a fight between two groups.

Charles Hogan, 77, who lives near the grocery store, said he heard at least five gunshots and saw the immediate aftermath.

“She had the baby laying there,’’ he said, “and she was screaming — I heard her — ‘She’s dead. She’s dead!’ ’’

According to a news release issued early Thursday evening, no arrests have been made and there is no description of the suspect.

City police officials could not be reached for comment this morning.

Police and ambulances were dispatched to the 400 block of Beaver Street at 5:27 p.m.

Gray said he was told the child underwent surgery at Hershey Medical Center Thursday night.

“When a tragedy like this occurs, you think of your own children and grandchildren,’’ Gray said.

“When an innocent like this is harmed, it shows the problem with too many guns,’’ he added. “You pull that trigger, God only knows where it’s going to end.’’

On Thursday, Gray said, the bullet landed inside an innocent child.

“This is going to be the top priority,’’ Gray said. “We’re going to find who did this.’’
“Everybody was working last night,” Gray said, noting that all the detectives were called in to investigate the case.

The mayor asked that anybody with information please contact police.

“Anything could help, even if they’re wrong or if they think it doesn’t mean anything,” Gray said, “it could be a break in the case.”

Anyone with information is asked to call city police at 735-3300. Callers can remain anonymous.

“All you can do is say a prayer for this little girl and hope she is OK,” Gray said.

Hogan, an 8-year-resident of the block, said frequent neighborhood violence and drug activity have gotten worse.

“Around here, it is nothing new. There’s always been shooting down here,” he said.

Another neighbor, who has small children, also heard the commotion.

“I thought it was a fight because that is common around here,” she said.

According to police records, there have been several robberies in that section of the city in the past two weeks.

Gray acknowledged “there are problems in the neighborhood.’’

“But there are decent people who live there,’’ Gray quickly added, “and no one should have to tolerate’’ such conditions.

Gray said he and Louise Williams, chairwoman of City Council’s Public Safety Committee, were planning to go down to the neighborhood today and talk to the residents.

“We’re going to let them know we’re interested,’’ he said.

Several neighbors, who asked not to be identified, say police often ignore the violence. “It is not only yesterday, it is a lot of times and we’re calling and (the police) don’t do nothing.

They don’t pay attention,” one neighbor said.

Another neighbor, who recently moved to the area, said that despite the area’s reputation, she was shocked by the shooting.

“It is obviously not the best neighborhood in town, but this is kinda scary,” she said.
Talking Points:

Discuss the different ways in which the gun violence reported on in the article created problems on a direct, personal level for the little girl.

Discuss the different ways in which the gun violence reported on in the article created problems on an indirect, personal level.

If this happened to your sister, in what different ways would you be impacted on a family level? What about for other members of your family?

Discuss the different ways in which the gun violence reported on in the article created problems on a community level.

What were your emotional reactions when you read the story?
More on the financial impact of gun violence

ECONOMIC COSTS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Medical costs of gun violence put a terrible burden on health service providers and governments. When indirect costs of gun violence - loss of productivity, mental health treatment and rehabilitation, legal and judicial costs - are figured in, gun violence costs the US at least $100 billion annually.[1]

Medical Costs
In a recent study, the average costs for treating gunshot wounds were:

- $22,400 each for unintentional shootings
- $18,400 each for gun-assault injuries
- $ 5,400 each for suicides.[2]

Over the course of the lives of gunshot victims in the United States in 1997, medical treatment alone will amount to $1.9 billion.[3]

Other Indirect Costs
Along with direct medical costs, gun violence involves loss of productivity, mental health care, emergency transport, and insurance administration. A 1997 study estimated direct and indirect medical costs at:

- $2.8 million per firearms fatality
- $249,000 per hospitalization for gunshot wounds
- $ 73,000 per emergency room visit and release for gunshot wounds.[4]

With the cost of health skyrocketing, these costs are far higher today.

The Los Angeles Times found in a 1994 shooting of a teenage victim who survived as a paraplegic that medical care, disability payments, rehabilitation, police and trial costs amounted to $1,091,768.[5] The Washington Post [6] and U.S. News and World Report [7] have both found total costs in similar cases to exceed $1 million.

The Annual Bill To The Nation Annual costs of gun violence in the US have been estimated at between $100 billion [8] and $126 billion.[9]

Costs only for young people under the age of 24 have reached $41 billion.[10]

Who Pays?

- Of $4 billion in medical costs in 1995, the public paid about 85 percent.[11]
- Of victims hospitalized for gunshot wounds in California in 1996, 81 percent were uninsured.[12]

Endnotes:
2. Ibid, 65.
3. Ibid.
8. Cook and Ludwig, passim.
http://www.futureofchildren.org/information2827/information_show.htm?doc_id=154472
Homework: Week 3

Read each of the following stories. Pick one particular story to write about for this homework assignment. The stories were retrieved from Linking Victims with Change, at http://www.linkingwithvictims.org/memorial/

Story 1

Jerome Herrington McBride

On Friday, July 28th, 1995, I lost my son Jerome to gun violence. He was shot three times in the back. There were three different weapons, three different shooters, two of them minors. He was unarmed, outnumbered, and defenseless. He died alone; he was only 18 years old.

What can I tell you about Jerome; you see his image before you but how can I make you know him as we knew him. We called him Jay. He had just recently graduated from High School. A short time before his death, he enlisted in the Marine Corps, he wanted to serve his country.

Jay was bi-lingual; he spoke both French and German. He lived in Europe and Japan; and as a toddler, I called him my "Tiny World Traveler". He enjoyed a good breakfast, and he was a "Star Wars" fanatic!

He was a child of the future and was truly amazed that he would live to see the year 2000. He would make me look up at the stars; he told me that people were too busy to stop and look up.

I considered myself very lucky to be his mother. When I buried my Jay, I not only buried my son, I buried my friend and I miss him.

But, Jay was not mine alone. His father describes him as a good son and a loyal friend. His baby brother, Kenneth, likes to remember the funny Stories he told on their long drives to and from school. His Grandmother remembers how quiet and well behaved he was, always seen but not heard. Jay often referred to his Aunt Debra as his role model but she recently confided in me that Jay was "her" role model. He and his cousin, Rodney, grew up together. They were not only cousins, they were "Best" friends.

As you can see, he was truly our Angel, an angel lost to us because Cowards cut
his life short.

I cannot truly find the word to describe the pain and loss this careless, thoughtless act has caused our family.

We were forced to bury our "Beloved" Jerome; because of the callous lack of arms control and easy access to weapons in this country, all of our hopes and dreams for Jay were destroyed.

Patricia McBride-Thomas

June-July 1999

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**Story 2**

**Omar A. Soto**  
**October 26, 1977 - January 21, 1988**  
**A Rose in the Garden of Innocence**

Omar was a loving, friendly, witty, sensitive child who was full of life. He was much like his father that he enjoyed making others laugh. He was our first born and our pride and joy. Omar was an older brother to Ivan and Nissha who both loved him very much. I remember vividly when he would wake his dad up at 6:00 AM, "Dad, wake up! It's time to go fishing!" They would go fishing on the boat and return home very happy, having caught the "big one". I remember his playing baseball and all of us cheering him on as well as sitting in the back seats, watching him learn Karate. These are only some of the beautiful memories we have of our beloved son, Omar.

On January 21, 1988, our lives were shattered forever. After coming home from school, Omar went to ride his bicycle with his friend. They decided to go to a friends home and ask if the friend could come out and play. The 13-year-old was home, unsupervised, with his two sisters, 9 and 11 years-old respectively, when he invited Omar and his friend inside. The 13-year-old decided to bring down his father's loaded .357 magnum to "show off". He cocked the gun. Trying to uncock the gun, it went off, hitting Omar in the head. Omar later died in the hospital.

The gun that was used to kill my son was not unloaded and securely locked. It didn't have a trigger lock and was left in a closet accessible to a 13-year-old. I can
assure you that it is a horrifying and shocking experience to learn that your beloved son has been shot to death only hours after telling him "I love you" and dropping him off to school.

Omar was an innocent child who was deprived of his future and his dreams because a .357 magnum was left accessible to a child by an irresponsible gun owner. We will never see Omar off on his first date, applaud as he accepts his high school diploma, marry and have a family. Those precious moments will never be ours.

Grief is helplessly watching your six-year-old daughter and eight-year-old son writing letters to you asking "Why?" "Why did God take him from us? If we don't behave, will this happen to us, too?" Grief is having to carry an indescribable pain and wound in your heart for the rest of your life. All you have is the memories that you hold dear-you pray to God that your memories do not disappear.

I became very depressed for many months and visited my son's grave daily. I was grieving the loss of my son, but at the same time, I was also outraged because of the negligence and irresponsibility of an adult was the cause of my son's death. A loaded gun was left accessible to a child. I felt strongly that the adult should be held criminally responsible for Omar's death. After visiting the library, I found that there were no such laws. I visited the State's Attorney's Office many times, but they did not want to press charges against the 13-year-old who had killed my son.

My beloved son's life appeared to be unimportant and forgotten by everyone. Omar was about to become just another number in the statistics of children killed by guns. We promised this would not happen.

I decided to do something about it. In April of 1989, I got involved with a bill introduced by Rep. Harry Jennings of Sarasota, Florida that would hold gun owners criminally responsible for leaving loaded guns accessible to children. Rep. Jennings was having great difficulty in obtaining the votes necessary to make this law. My husband and I circulated petitions and collected signatures. These were sent to representatives that did not agree with the bill. I testified before the Criminal Justice Committee. The NRA, of course, was against the bill because it "prevented citizens from the right to firearms protection." Despite the objections of the NRA, the law passed. It became effective October 1, 1989. It was the first Gun Responsibility law passed in this country. Fourteen states now have some form of gun responsibility law. The 13-year-old was found guilty of manslaughter. My family was able to have some closure.

My involvement with gun violence prevention continued and I became a Board member of the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, based in Washington, D.C.
and chaired by Sarah Brady. We made Public Service Announcements and was involved in the STAR curriculum for gun violence prevention in the schools.

I urge everyone to become involved with Brady Campaign, Inc. and the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence and make a difference. These are the only organizations that are active in passing sensible gun controls laws that will benefit our nation and our children. Our main objective should be to save lives and protect our children. If but one human life is saved, then gun control and gun responsibility laws are worth the time and effort. Each human being and life is a rare gift to mankind, irreplaceable and priceless. A human life cannot be substituted or replaced. I thought this type of tragedy could never happen to me or my family, but it did. In the same manner, it could happen to your child or grandchild when he goes out to play.

When Omar's fifth grade teacher brought us a white rose the class had placed on Omar's desk in the classroom, I knew my son was a Rose in the Garden of Innocence and now he is an Angel in Heaven's Paradise

**Story 3**

**Mark Chilutti**

Six years after fully recovering from brain injury, broken bones and severe burns inflicted by a drunk driver I opened M and M Jewelers not far from my home in Northeast Philadelphia. It was a dream come true!

Hard work, determination and good luck were all factors contributing to the success of the store. Shortly after opening in the spring of 1994 my store became a frequent destination for people to shop for their loved ones.

I always lived my life as a goal oriented person. I constantly reached for the stars and loved working hard so that I could afford the luxuries in life. A Lexus, a house, and a new Rolex watch...the rewards were just starting to come my way. My next goal was well within my reach. It was to make $100,000 by my thirtieth birthday. Man, life was great!

We are always taught that it is impossible to prepare for the unexpected, so when I walked around the corner to my store on December 5, 1996 I never imagined that would be the last time I would walk. But, in the course of a terrifying 8 1/2 minute experience later that morning my life was changed forever.
I had a busy morning with the holiday quickly approaching. Suddenly after a short break in the action I greeted a customer as he walked in. Quickly behind him a man pulled a gun and pointed it right at me. My role suddenly changed from jewelry salesman to a cooperative victim in a robbery. I had a gun myself, but with his gun pointed 12 short inches from my chest the opportunity never presented itself for me to reach for it. I had always said in my mind that the jewelry in the store had insurance; my life did not. I was not thinking of being a hero, but of being a survivor.

"Take whatever you want" I quickly told him in a very scared voice. "Please don't hurt me" I begged. They emptied out the safe in the back of the store which was filled with diamond jewelry. Next, they took my three week old Rolex watch as well as the other jewelry I was wearing proudly. They began to argue and disagree with each other. Suddenly BANG. I GOT SHOT!

Yes, you read that right; I GOT SHOT! I knew as soon as I tried to move that I had lost my legs. I never imagined at that point how much more they took from me. My dreams were suddenly stolen by 2 guys who probably never had dreams.

A 51 year old career criminal had just shot me in my chest. He had only been out of prison for four months! As if that was not bad enough, I now had to lay there on the floor while I listened to them break the showcases and steal more jewelry.

After they left the store I struggled to pull myself to another room and pull a panic button to notify the alarm company, and in turn the police, that I was in trouble. It only took 2 minutes for the police to arrive, but at that point in my life it was 2 minutes that seemed like an eternity!

I quickly learned that I was a T-5 paraplegic, with no movement, feeling or control from my chest down.

I chose to accept what happened to me immediately and rather than focus on what I lost, to concentrate on what I still had; my arms and my brain. My old goal of making a lot of money was quickly replaced by a goal of being able to tie my shoes by myself. Quite a change!!! I had to close my store to focus on the challenges that would lie ahead and getting back to being ME!

I was always in good physical shape, but had never lifted weights before. Dr. Staas, who I was lucky to receive as my doctor, quickly taught me that my shoulder was now my hip, my elbow was now my knee, and my hands were now my feet. It makes a lot of sense if you think about it. I had to count on those parts to survive and make them the strongest that I could. Everyday I continue to work on strengthening and making the most out of what still works, so that I can be totally independent.
My quick acceptance allowed my family and friends to deal with it as well. The outpouring of support and love from them and the entire community are things I will never forget. I consider myself very fortunate to have such a wonderful group of friends who look at me today and know that I am the same person; I am just sitting down.

As for me, I have a new goals, which include enjoying life to the fullest; even if it is in a wheelchair. I hope and try to bring as much positive out of my misfortune as possible. I do this by working with newly injured patients back at Magee Rehabilitation Hospital in Philadelphia to help them adjust. I also do a lot of public speaking in schools as a part of a program called "Think First" which tries to get kids to think before they get involved in situations that could cause permanent injuries. People need to realize and accept the fact that guns do not solve problems; they create them!

I also like to take advantage of every opportunity I can to share my story with others. I have testified before the Philadelphia City Council, at town meetings, done television interviews and stories with Fox News, CNN and the Montel Williams show just to name a few. I have been involved with efforts and events sponsored by the National center for Handgun Violence also.

I can't rewind the clock and change what happened to me, but, if through my efforts and outreach I can prevent it from happening to someone else I will achieved a goal with much more satisfaction than any amount of money I could have ever earned.

Don't give up. Stand up and help the cause to end handgun violence. It will only help to create a better world for us, and those who follow us.

Which story did you choose? __________________________________________

What type of gun violence was committed? ____________________________
What was the impact of the gun violence on a direct, personal level?

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What was the impact of the gun violence on an indirect, personal level?
What was the impact of the gun violence on the family level?

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What was the impact of the gun violence on the community level?

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Reviewed and approved by Facilitator: ____________________________  _____
Facilitator Signature                        Date
Session 4: More on Victim Impact
Session 4: More on Victim Impact

- Warm-up/review group expectations
- Review homework from last week
- Further explore the impact of gun violence
- Set homework for next week
- Wrap Up!

Who are the victims of gun Violence?

When we think of the victims of gun violence, we initially think of the many who are injured and killed by guns every day. The effects of gun violence cross all socioeconomic and geographic boundaries from inner cities to rural communities. Gun violence victims are young and old, male and female, and come from all races; although gun homicide victims are predominantly young males.

When we look further, we see not only these direct victims, but also the large number of secondary or indirect victims. These are the parents, children, siblings, friends, and others who have lost a loved one to gun violence. These people may be responsible to deal with many loose ends after the death of their loved one. Some of the things they may be forced to deal with are:

- Law enforcement – investigation of the shooting
- Medical examiners
- Press/Media
- Court System – could be a long drawn out process until they see their loved ones killer brought to justice
- Clean up the Crime Scene- the victim might have been shot on their own front porch
- Pay Victims Medical Bills
- Arrange for Burial and Pay Funeral Costs

What other things may the family and friends of a direct victim have to deal with?
Comforted by his friends, Diane Adams makes her monthly visit to the yet-unmarked grave of her son Kareek. He was 16.

Diane Adams coaxes three of her son's friends toward his still-unmarked grave at Philadelphia's Greenmount Cemetery. Would they like, she asks softly, to tell him anything?

I love you, dog.

You was like a brother to me.

We love you, Kareek. Rest in peace.

This visit last month, which began with a prayer circle, has not gone badly.

Kareek's cousin Larry, who had been dragged from the grave sobbing on other visits since the August murder, is only weeping quietly today. Before disbanding, the visitors manage to smile as they listen to Kareek's rap music, saved on their cell phones.

Which is ironic, because it was a rap contest, Diane Adams says, that started the argument between Kareek, 16, and the 18-year-old being sought in the fatal Frankford shooting.

"My son loved to rap and challenge people," Adams says. "I told him, 'I want you to stop battling, because some people can't handle things.' The grudge came in because my son beat him rapping... and one thing led to another."

Kareek Adams was one of 24 young people - ages 3 to 17 - who were killed by gunfire this year in the eight-county Philadelphia region.
Nearly half appear to have been killed mistakenly - in gun accidents or by assailants aiming at others.

Almost all the rest were shot because of jealousy or perceived disrespect, or disputes over turf, drugs or girls.

"Is it just expected for the children to kill each other with guns?" asks Israe Gilliard. In July, her nephew Jarrett Gore, 15, was preparing to settle an argument with fists when he was shot by an acquaintance.

Long after rain washes the blood from the sidewalks of the city, after kids are placed in their coffins, and after T-shirts dedicated to the memory of "Mook" and "Goub" and "Gussie" are tucked away in dresser drawers - what, then, for those who loved them?

The haunted

For weeks now, Adams has haunted the El like a ghost, using her cell phone to photograph strangers who look like the mug shot of the man police think killed her son. The other day in the grocery store, she was sure she saw the gunman. She got so close and stared so hard that when she finally realized it wasn't him, she lied and told him she thought they had once dated.

"Maybe one day," she says hopefully, "I'll look up and snap the right picture."

Diane Adams doesn't just call homicide detectives every day. "I pray every night," she says, "that God will help them find the guy that killed my son."

In Philadelphia, there have been no warrants or arrests in a third of the cases.

Lawanda Welton's son Tariq Blue Jr., 14, was gunned down at a South Philadelphia recreation center in March; police have not found his killer.

"I trust no kids," she says, "because this same child who's going to walk up to me and be smiling in my face could be the same child that pulled the trigger and killed my son."

With no arrest in the April slaying of her son, Vincent, 17, in a Northeast Philadelphia drug house, Donna Thomas believes she has been followed. Her daughter has been jumped. "I'm always looking over my shoulder," she says. "I feel like a sitting duck."

The family of 17-year-old Robert Pierson III is as frustrated as it is frightened. Although the teen who allegedly shot and killed Pierson in the spring is in jail awaiting trial, five other youths who had set out to rob people in Fairmount with him are not, with most charges dropped.

Recently, a kid from another neighborhood pointed a gun at Pierson's younger sister, Monica, 14, who is slated to testify in the trial. Was it a random attempt to start trouble, or friends of the accused trying to intimidate a witness?

When two teens robbed Robert's other sister, 19-year-old Lauren, in September, she was "more mad than upset." She refused to give up her purse until one youth suggested they shoot her; then, when the boy with the gun fled, she chased the other, who had taken the bag. She asked him to give her back something - anything - from the purse. "I said, 'Really, my brother just died. I don't need this!'"

But he refused.

Some survivors have plunged into their jobs. Some are on antidepressants or so paralyzed, they miss months of work.

Donna Thomas is "going through the motions" - barely able to eat and sleep, much less pick up her son's belongings at the morgue.
Others have found their voices in tragedy. When no witnesses came forward to identify her son’s assailant, Lawanda Welton spoke out repeatedly on television and at community events.

“That's not me,” she says. Under normal circumstances, “I shy away... but my son needs justice.” Even though the case is unsolved eight months later, Welton won't stop. “Believe me,” she says, “I'll be back on the news again.”

When Chelena Hammond, whose son, Raphael Glee, was shot in North Philadelphia, demonstrated for stronger gun laws in Harrisburg, she placed a packet in the mailbox of every state legislator. The envelopes contained accounts of his death - two days before his 18th birthday - and autopsy photos “so they could actually see it.”

“I don't know what else we could do,” she says. “They need to find out how it's so easy for someone so young to get a gun.”

Hammond does have one consolation: an arrest. “I do feel blessed,” she says, “that they have my son's murderer.”

The empty desk

It took a couple of weeks for someone to tell Nache Rennick she was sitting at the dead boy's desk.

New to the school, the 17-year-old had no idea the chair had been occupied for the previous two years by Terrence Adams, killed in August by a drug dealer who police say was trying to rob people.

Martel Davis, another senior at the Parkway Northwest School for Peace and Social Justice, finally told her:

"I'm not trying to be disrespectful, but the seat you're sitting in was Terrence's, and if it wasn't a problem for you, you could move."

The horrified girl changed her seat, and the small classroom was transformed.

"After that," Martel says, "everybody just started looking at the seat and remembering that he wasn't coming back, and then everybody started getting emotional."

Not all the students were comfortable with the outpouring. “Some people thought, 'Get over it. Don't keep bringing it up,'” says Nifia Medley, 18. “Other people felt, 'Bring it up, because that's what I need to get over it. It'll soothe my heart.'”

It also moved many of them to take action, joining the march in Harrisburg and plunging into projects against violence.

For Martel, who visits Terrence's sister Tasha "to let her know I'm still here for her," a cherished friend is gone. “You can never be the same after that,” he says. “Sometimes I need to laugh, but it's hard because you're not laughing with all the people you're used to. You're missing this one laugh.”

It's also a reminder of the world they inhabit, where the smallest slights can bring on bullets.

"Our generation," says Martel, 17, "lives from TV, what they see, what they hear, what they think is cool. And that's being a gangster, being a hood, having street credibility."

He and his classmates say that, in Philadelphia, being in a neighborhood not your own can make you a target - and that's just the beginning.

"I'll fight if I feel threatened, but not over stupid stuff, like a girl, or an argument, or somebody's sneakers," Martel says.

Since Terrence's death, he's loath to do battle at all, "because you don't know what the other person's going to do."
Nifia, too, is amazed at the ease with which her peers shoot each other. "Back in the day," she says, "drugs were the reason for everything. But it's not even about drugs now; it's about the dumbest things ever."

Fury and forgiveness

Augustus Favors wasn't worried about Gussie and guns.

"I talked to my son about drugs, about smoking, about getting high," the father says sadly of his 15-year old, killed in a gun accident in Northeast Philadelphia in February.

"I didn't think I had to talk to him about guns."

Gussie Favors was at Sadir Reddy's house that day with Evens Occean, and the three friends were about to go shopping downtown.

According to court testimony, Sadir, 16, had been showing off his prized .380 semiautomatic for weeks. The question was: Who would carry the gun to the Gallery?

Gussie volunteered because he had the biggest coat. He started "twirling" the weapon - a weapon shared so often among the friends that during Sadir's trial it was referred to at least once as "a community gun."

According to Evens, Sadir had taken the pistol back to adjust the safety when the gun fired into Gussie's chest.

Gussie's dad doesn't buy it. "I think he meant to do it," Augustus Favors says of Sadir, although he acknowledges that "if that was my son that shot him, I might be thinking a different story."

Immediately after the shooting, Sadir called 911 to say a mysterious gunman had shot Gussie. Then he ran from the scene where his friend lay dying.

"His lack of character, integrity and basic decency could not be clearer," said Common Pleas Judge Benjamin Lerner, adding at one point: "And I don't care that there are other idiots who wanted to carry his gun!"

Moments after the judge convicted Sadir of involuntary manslaughter, Gussie's and Sadir's loved ones brawled fiercely outside the Criminal Justice Center.

Epithets and bodies flew across the pavement until the guards, who see this all the time, shooed them home.

Tanya Bullock's son Jarred, 16, died at the hands of best friend William Leon in May while the two were playing with guns. She was just as surprised as Favors that her son would be interested in weapons.

But she is as forgiving as Augustus Favors is furious.

"In a million years," says Tanya Bullock, "nobody could ever make me think he meant it. They were like brothers. If God could forgive me, who am I not to forgive William?"

William Leon, 15, had taken two guns from his uncle's collection to his buddy's Northeast home to show him. "But Jarred had a gun in his hand as well," his mother says. "It could just as easily have been his gun that went off."

Prosecutors initially pushed for first-degree murder, then backed off to third-degree. It couldn't have helped their case that, at a preliminary hearing, both boys' families sat together - on the defendant's side of the courtroom.

William Leon did as much as Sadir Reddy to make himself look guilty. Prosecutors say William warned a third boy - who was in the bathroom at the time of the shooting - not to snitch, and even dragged Jarred's bleeding body into the alley behind the house.
Yet Bullock, who credits the Leons - "a really nice, Christian family" - with helping to raise Jarred, thinks she knows why.

"He's a child," Bullock says of her son's killer. "I would panic, too."

Dreams of escape

Terrell Anderson, 16, pleaded with his mother, Angel, to get him out of their South Philadelphia neighborhood. But like so many other frightened families, they had nowhere to go.

Terrell was terrified even before a teen, apparently gunning for him, fired three bullets into his 17-year-old brother, Christopher, outside the family home at South 21st and Sigel in April.

"I'm sorry, that's not him," the young shooter blurted to a shocked Angel Anderson before running away.

His family says that after a dispute over a girl, Terrell had bested his nemesis in a fistfight - more than enough to get you killed in this part of town.

After Christopher was wounded, Angel told her boys that they couldn't go anywhere for the next two years.

Four days later, Terrell was told the feud was off. Elated, he went to meet friends and was gunned down within hours.

A grieving Angel Anderson still dreamed of moving - maybe to New Zealand, where she imagined her family on a farm. Or Chestnut Hill.

The Philadelphia Housing Authority offered her 44th and Brown. "Why move," she asks, "from one war zone to another?"

In October, Kyle Brown, 17 - Christopher's close friend, who lived four doors down - was gunned down while hanging out with friends. Kyle's older brother had been killed in May.

Chris fled to another part of the city, moving into his girlfriend's house.

Lawanda Welton, whose son was gunned down in nearby Point Breeze, says, "It's a disaster. I'm leaving South Philly. They can have it."

She wants to tell the kids, "You're all killing each other, but the neighborhood will still be here. You'll be dead or in jail for trying to claim a corner, a corner that's always going to stand!"

Some parents manage to leave a rough part of town, then lose their children anyway. Two families moved to Lansdowne - from Frankford and West Philadelphia - only to see sons killed this year visiting friends in their old neighborhoods.

Chelena Hammond moved from North Philadelphia to "a nice section of Olney" last year to try to keep her son, Raphael Glee, safe. She really worried in the summer when he couldn't find a job; she kept calling his cell phone to check on him.

Her efforts failed. He was gunned down on a Saturday afternoon in August near his old turf at 25th and Cecil B. Moore.

"If you don't take them out of the neighborhood while they're young," Hammond says, "it's not going to work... . He was already 16, and all he knew was North Philly. I think it was pretty much too late."

Remembering

The names of the dead children are spray-painted on walls, tattooed on their mothers' arms, and ironed onto T-shirts, tote bags and jackets.
"I don't want my son's name to ever die," says Darcell Winn; her Darnell was killed by an assailant who says he was aiming at someone else.

At least two of the victims - Scott Sheridan, killed in Chester County, and Yagouba Bah of Olney - have elaborate Web sites where hundreds of classmates share memories. Terrence Adams' family plans to set up an art scholarship in his name, and a scholarship has been established at Cardinal O'Hara High School in memory of Scott Sheridan.

After Angela Burke's 16-year-old son, Shadeed, was shot in the family's Camden home, she and her husband, Johnny Strong, took solace in his baby - until DNA test results arrived after the funeral.

"We found out he wasn't my grandson," Burke says sadly. "That was a big blow there. But I see him and treat him like he was."

Yet nobody can deny the brutal, bloody, bottom line that Chelena Hammond, mother of Raphael Glee, says "hurts your soul."

"I will never, ever see his smile again," Diane Adams says of her son, Kareek.

"I will never, ever hear him say, 'Mom, you're a weirdo' because I like to watch the Animal Channel."

### The 2006 Toll

This year, 24 children and teenagers 17 or younger have been killed by guns in the eight-county region.

22 were killed in Philadelphia - two more than last year.

All but two were between 14 and 17 years old. The others were 3 and 5.

All but three were black; all but one were male.

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**Talking Points**

What are your thoughts on this story?

Discuss the different impacts of the gun violence across each of the levels described in this article.

Read the Following Story

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**Living, dying in Phila.'s 'Iraq'**

* A mother is shot to death, and a community is torn.

By Robert Moran

Inquirer Staff Writer

One in an occasional series.
Emily Jackson, 48, mother of two, wore a crisp, cream-colored pantsuit, a diamond-pendant necklace, and a diamond-pendant bracelet. Her body rested in a steel, copper-colored casket.

As the immediate family gathered for one last, private viewing, a handkerchief was placed over Jackson’s face. Overcome by the moment, her daughter, Aqueelah, 24, collapsed to the church floor.

Five days earlier, Emily Jackson had just walked her aunt to the Route 13 trolley stop when a gray minivan drove down the 2000 block of South 60th Street in Southwest Philadelphia. A gunman in the van sprayed the sidewalk with bullets, hitting four people, Jackson among them. She died early the next morning.

The night Jackson was shot, Monday, July 10, two others were murdered in Philadelphia - all in a half-hour span.

The day she was buried, Saturday, July 15, five more people were slain.

Yesterday, the city recorded its 219th homicide - 18 more than the same time last year. Police officials acknowledge that homicide detectives are overwhelmed by the deluge of killing.

“There’s so many homicides in Philadelphia, there ain't no way they can cover each case," said Naji Muhammad, 47, Jackson's ex-husband, outside the funeral service at New Fellowship Baptist Church on Woodlawn Avenue. "So we need to help."

On Tuesday, Muhammad walked the neighborhood where Jackson was killed. Since late April, two other people have been killed in the immediate neighborhood.

Muhammad, dressed in a dark suit and bow-tie and sweating profusely from the punishing midday sun, visited Upland Street, one block from where Jackson lived in a second-story apartment on Greenway Avenue.

There were more vacant lots than standing houses in the 6000 block of Upland. What’s left was either burned out, abandoned, or patched up just enough to remain habitable.

"IRAQ" was prominently spray-painted on some of the buildings. At one abandoned house, a makeshift memorial remained for Terrell Pratt, 18, shot multiple times in the head on April 28 as he sat inside a Chevrolet Lumina nearby. "Reel," as he was known, was scrawled on a boarded-up window, as was "Iraq Soldier 4 Life" (with soldier misspelled).

"Why do they call it Iraq?" Muhammad asked Danielle Carter, 35, the captain of what's left of the block.

"It looks like somebody dropped a bomb on it," she said.

Bewildered but undeterred by the scene, Muhammad explained that he was gathering men to go door to door in the area today at 5:30 p.m. starting at 60th and Greenway to ask questions about Emily Jackson’s murder.

"We’re going to be investigators," he said. There has been no arrest in the case. He asked her to get the word out. "I sure will," she promised.

"All the men getting together," he vowed. "Pen and pad."

The neighborhood is in the 12th Police District, the most violent in the city, with 93 shooting victims in the first half of the year - 94 percent more than the same period last year.

The police captain of the 12th, Khalid Syed, did not respond to a request for an interview about the violence in his district.
Mike Chitwood, once a top detective in Southwest Philadelphia and now the police chief in Daytona Beach, Fla., said the 12th is one of the busiest districts each year, with a disproportionate number of 911 calls relative to the population.

"They have 60,000 residents and 120,000 calls for [police] service," Chitwood said.

The district also has "one of the most - if not the most - economically depressed areas of the city," Chitwood said. "It's a trap."

But some struggle and succeed, like Danielle Carter, who has lived most of her life on Upland Street. Her oldest son now attends Pennsylvania State University's Reading campus. Her oldest daughter has an interview scheduled for August at Penn State's main campus in State College.

"You just have to ride them," she said of her seven children. "You can't let peer pressure take them."

When Terrell Pratt was murdered, Carter let her 15-year-old son stand on the porch and watch as police processed the scene.

"This is the reason you have to be inside the house," she told him.

Pratt was an uncle of Erica Pratt, the little girl who captured national attention in 2002 when she was kidnapped from the neighborhood but made a daring escape.

Another uncle, Joseph Pratt Jr., 25, had been shot to death earlier that year while sitting in a car - just as his younger brother was this year - at 56th and Woodland. He had been facing an attempted-murder charge at the time.

At Terrell Pratt's shrine of stuffed animals and empty liquor bottles, someone wrote the following:

"THE GOOD DIE young so they Can Get 2 HEAVEN Early so they can watch over the rest of the Slums."

"Emy" Jackson was a beloved figure in her neighborhood.

"She was a people person," said her mother, June Henry, 66, who lives across the street from her daughter's apartment.

Jackson worked at a group home for the mentally retarded in Delaware County until she hurt her back several years ago.

She stayed busy, however, being a foster mother and helping neighbors.

It was late that Monday night when Jackson's aunt, visiting from North Philadelphia, was ready to take the trolley back to Center City. That meant walking up 60th Street past Upland and Reinhard. Jackson walked with her to the trolley stop. On the way back, she ran into her daughter, Aqueelah, and they started to talk.

The police call came in at 11:21 p.m. The bullet had pierced Jackson's upper left arm and penetrated her chest. She staggered to the last house on 60th before Greenway.

Her mother and other family members rushed out to find her lying on the steps.

"Don't leave! Keep your eyes open! Keep your eyes open!" Henry pleaded to her daughter.

"Her eyes were open," Henry recalled. "She was bleeding from the mouth. We kept talking to her and talking to her, but she never said anything."

She was transported by medics to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and pronounced dead at 2:13 a.m.
She won't see me graduate from college. She won't see my children.

At Fernwood Cemetery in Delaware County, Muhammad could barely hear Aqueelah, still recovering from fainting in church, as she lamented in a weak, cracking voice about the loss of her mother.

The family then placed yellow, white and red flowers on the casket and said goodbye.

Talking Points

What are your thoughts on this story?

How would you feel if this were your mother?

Discuss the different impacts of the gun violence across each of the levels described in this article.

Read the next article

The young don't want to die.

They fight against the blood spilling from their bodies, the oxygen draining from their lungs. They will twist and shout and beg someone - any of these strangers surrounding them - to save their lives.

Amy Goldberg, chief trauma surgeon at Temple University Hospital, knows this. She has seen it, dozens of times, usually young black men struck down on the city's streets.

So it was on a recent winter night when police rushed in with an 18-year-old who had been shot once in the chest. His arms and legs flailed wildly as a team of doctors and nurses struggled to undress him and hold him down. He kept lifting his head, looking around wildly and trying to bite, despite one nurse's efforts to keep him still. His appearance didn't seem that dire: only a small amount of blood showed on his shirt and chest. There was no exit wound through his back.

His shouts were often unintelligible - sounding like, "no" and "stop" and "let me go" - but then he repeated one sentence in a clear voice: "I don't want to die."

Goldberg, 44, was in the middle of it, against the gurney and between the half-dozen doctors and nurses passing syringes, tubes and IV bottles over it. She was easy to miss, just pushing 5 feet, 2 inches tall, looking more like an intern or medical student than a veteran surgeon.
There was no doubt that she was in control here, instructing her team in a low, matter-of-fact, take-no-prisoners tone: "Pulse, pulse, pulse," she instructed repeatedly. "Put a line in," she told a surgical resident. "The blood. Where's the blood?" she asked the room in general.

To the 18-year-old, whose struggles were lessening, she was more gentle. She placed a firm hand atop his head and said the words he needed to hear, "We're going to take good care of you. You're not going to die."

**Surgery was critical**

The 18-year-old, now strapped down and sedated in the emergency room, had been shot in the left side. Goldberg likes to say that what you do in practice is what you do in the game, and she and her team proceeded calmly, yet briskly, practiced from previous experiences. Breathing tube in. Fluids flowing. X-rays taken.

On the film, it appeared that the bullet had pierced the young man's heart.

The most impressive cases - at least to nondoctors - seem to be the ones that involve the heart, Goldberg said. Not because they're the most difficult, she explained, "but because it's the heart." There is awe surrounding the body's blood-pumping center, the symbolic holding place of emotion. One's heart can be damaged by so many things: love, loss, a bullet.

If the teen's heart was damaged, things would be bad, but not necessarily deadly: Once, Goldberg said, she treated a patient who had two bullet holes in his heart. She sewed one wound, another surgeon handled the other, and the man pulled through.

"The guy lived," she said, still marveling.

What was worse for this teenager on this night, further examination found, was the blood pooling in his chest. There had been no outward sign that it was gushing so. Its existence was discovered only when a chest tube was inserted.

Surgery was needed. Immediately. Goldberg's team - two residents and a medical student - took hold of the gurney and hurried out the door.

"Don't run down the hall," she called after them, cognizant of the tubes, the breathing machines, the bystanders. "Don't run."

Minutes later, they had reached the operating room. The teenager's heart had stopped.

**A lecture is guaranteed**

While doing a trauma fellowship in Baltimore 14 years ago, Goldberg was in the ER when a 16-year-old boy came in with a gunshot wound to the stomach. He died in front of her eyes.

But then the doctors resuscitated him. Using everything she had learned and every skill she had, Goldberg was part of the team that saved the boy's life.
A month later, she saw him again in the hospital's outpatient clinic. And the reality set in.

"It occurred to me this wonderful operation I had done was so inconsequential because what was this kid's life expectancy? He wouldn't live to be 20, 25, 30," she said. "I don't think I've forgotten that.

"We can take care of them medically, but what kind of influence do we have on them when they leave?" she asked. "We have to get this to stop."

If this 18-year-old survived the night, he would likely receive one of Goldberg's patented lectures in the morning. Colleagues say there is nothing like seeing Goldberg stomping her size-5 foot and waving a finger in the face of those who are towering over her, warning them that she never wants to see them in her clinic as patients again. She'll tell them about Temple's outreach programs and where to get help dealing with drug and alcohol problems, even take them to the morgue if she thinks it will have an effect.

The response from many of the patients is surprising: Even those who scowl seem to appreciate the attention.

"For the most part, the patients are happy that somebody has noted and cared to say something," Goldberg said. "A lot of these patients are now given a second lease, and they probably know it, but by having this conversation and dialogue with them, it is now out there. And now it's up to them to do something with that second lease."

Some of them - too many of them - don't do anything with that second chance. Or that third chance.

Goldberg recalls one teenager who survived his first gunshot - a chest wound - but barely. His second gunshot wound severed a major artery and he almost bled to death - but he pulled through. The third time he was shot, the bullet struck his head. He didn't survive.

She had one patient, also shot in the chest and near death, who somehow lived and was sent home to recover. A month later, he was back again. Shot again.

"I said 'Listen, you get shot again and the next time you're going to die,' " she said. "They don't get it that death is a permanent thing. They don't see that on TV. They don't see that on the streets, where their friends get shot and are OK."

'You can stop now'

The 18-year-old lay on a table in the middle of the operating room, the only still body in a room whirling with people: nurses monitoring his pulse and blood pressure and handing over instruments, doctors cutting open the young man's chest and using an instrument similar to a car jack to keep it open.

His breathing, controlled by machines, was steady and slow, his pale lungs expanding and contracting in full view, his heart squeezed between them.
"We need as much blood as you can give him," Goldberg said. "We need more blood, more blood."

So much was happening, but time seemed to go so slowly. The doctors tried to stop the blood gushing into the boy's chest, suctioning it out and soaking it up with cloths. They alternatively took turns compressing the teenager's heart in their hands, willing it to fill up and start again.

Goldberg reached her red-smeared, white-gloved hands into the chest cavity and pulled out a small, bloody piece of metal.

"This is for the police," she said, holding it up briefly. "It's the bullet."

She tossed it to the end of the operating table, near the boy's bare feet.

"Oh, my God; oh, my God," one nurse said, staring at the bullet before another took it away. "He looks so young."

The teenager's body was still, unresponsive, but the doctors kept working. Goldberg never left the young man's side. She said his heart was cold so another physician poured warm saline on it. Goldberg supervised as they clamped the aorta to affect the blood flow. Her calls for blood were constant, and the medical staff poured unit after unit of fresh blood into the teenager's body. Nurses squeezed blood-soaked gauze-like sponges so the vital fluid could be used again.

Nothing seemed to help.

Goldberg called for the paddles to shock his heart, and the doctors took turns holding the lifeless organ within the metal prongs while the others stood clear. They did this once, twice, five, 10, eventually 12 times. No reaction. They injected the stimulant epinephrine straight into his heart muscle. It didn't flinch.

"You can stop now," Goldberg said. "We're going to have to call it."

She said it quietly, but everyone seemed to hear. One nurse walked out of the room. Everyone else kept working - counting sponges, putting away equipment, examining the open wound to determine what had gone wrong. The machines kept whirring and beeping.

Roughly an hour and a half after the teenager had arrived at the hospital, kicking and screaming, it was over. His heart, as it turned out, hadn't been damaged by the bullet at all. Instead, the largest vein leading to it had been sliced open by that seemingly insignificant piece of metal.

"It would have been easier to fix his heart," Goldberg said.

**The hardest part of the job**

There is no good way to tell a family their loved one has died. Goldberg has done it dozens, perhaps hundreds, of times over the years. Each time is a separate agony.

"I practice over and over again," she said.
She tries not to take her work home with her, she said, but each death stays with her for weeks afterward. She and her team break down what happened, try to figure out what they could have done differently or better. Despite having seen this so many times, she still remembers the details of cases from long ago.

"I guess every death stays with me in some way," she said.

While the other team members sewed the teenager's chest shut with black stitches, Goldberg walked out of the operating room alone. She took off her mask and gloves, pulled the coverings from her shoes, then began washing her hands. She scrubbed hard, until her skin was red.

"We're going to have to tell his family their little boy is dead," she said.

She wasn't sure what she would say. Experience had taught her that people want her to be direct: They don't want sweet words. They don't want long stories. They just want to know.

Still, before the family arrived, Goldberg paced in the hall, her head down, wondering which words she would use. She practiced possible openings on another doctor. Should she give many details of the surgery? Should she talk about how he'd fought to live? Should she tell him how they'd fought to save him?

But in the end, when she met with the teenager's stepfather in a small private room, she kept it simple. She looked up into his eyes, took his hand, and told the man that his boy hadn't made it, that his boy wasn't coming home.

"I'm very sorry," she said.

How would you feel if this were your mother?

Discuss the different impacts of the gun violence across each of the levels described in this article.
Homework: Week 4

Part 1: Review the article “You Wouldn’t Snitch Either.” Imagine that this happened in your neighborhood and you were a witness. Write an essay on how you would handle the situation. Start by describing what you saw. Then explain how you should handle the situation. Who should you tell? Should you go to the police? Then tell what you would really do in this situation? If the police questioned you, what would you say? Would you tell the truth or would you lie or act like you didn’t see anything to protect yourself? What would you do if you were the only person to see what happened?

Part 2: Imagine you are the shooter in any of the stories you read in group. Write a letter of apology to the mother in the story.

Read the Following Article

You Wouldn’t Snitch Either

Police say dozens of people were on Sigel Street when a bullet struck a 4-year-old girl. No one has come forward. Would you have? Are you sure?

by Kia Gregory

On Tuesday, June 13, 2006, at around 7:15 p.m., Nashay Little, 4yrs, was playing outside on the street in the 2100 block of Sigel Street in South Philadelphia when she was struck in the leg by a bullet fired by an unknown person who was engaged in a gun battle with another man. This happened in broad daylight and when the street was occupied with onlookers. We are hoping that someone will take advantage of this anonymous tip form to share their information about this crime.

—a posting on the Philadelphia Police Department website

The 2100 block of Sigel Street is a narrow stretch of tightly packed row homes. It's a block where on a sun-soaked Thursday afternoon in early summer, neighbors set up water ice stands and kids splash in an inflatable pool. It's a block where little girls sit on a step and giggle over a notebook, and where a little boy runs to the corner store for a soda.
It's a block where boarded-up houses are overshadowed by pretty ones, where neighbors celebrate children's graduations by putting their pictures in the window, and where one front-door sign proclaims: "JESUS IS LORD."

It's a block where neighbors congregate on front steps, and kids play in the street all day.

It's also a block where, not too far away, there are shootings, and where less than a month ago, when a stray bullet critically wounded a 4-year-old girl who was playing outside, no one said a word.

Her name was Nashay Little.

Police say dozens of people were on the 2100 block of Sigel Street when the bullet hit Nashay, and she collapsed in front of the house that she and her mother had been visiting.

"Everybody knows what happened," says a Sigel Street neighbor, sitting on his step. "If they're not going to say anything, why should anyone else?"

"It's not that people don't want to talk to the police," says another neighbor who'll identify himself only as Mr. M. "But you still have to live here."

Mr. M is holding court across the street from where Nashay was shot. The group grows as neighbors stop to offer their sad, fractured thoughts—like how it's always the innocent babies who get it, and how half the parents are scared of their own kids.

"Everybody feels sorry for that family and that little girl," says Mr. M. "But if you start running your mouth, those cats are gonna find a way to get at you or someone you love. Today's snitches are going to the grave."

The neighbors recall their own dead.

A nephew, 18, shot five times in the head over a turf war.

Another nephew, this one 20, shot in the back of the head on his way home from the store.

The woman on the corner who lost two sons in two months.
Gregory, 18, was shot and killed over a football game as he got off the bus near a mobile police station.

Asked what it would take for him to come forward with information about who shot Nashay, Mr. M stares straight ahead.

"Nothing," he says, finally.

It's not cold indifference or brotherhood with criminals that explains the silence on Sigel Street. It's fear—paralyzing fear—due to the bitter reality that cops are unresponsive, the criminal justice system is a revolving door, and snitches often get killed.

Neighbors here are desperate for a safer community. But in the meantime they have to protect themselves and their families.

If you lived on the 2100 block of Sigel Street, they say, and you knew what they knew about how life and death works here, you wouldn't snitch either.

investigate gun violence. Nashay is his youngest shooting victim.

Lucke says police have received all kinds of information from calls and anonymous tips.

Two weeks after Nashay was shot police arrested a 15-year-old suspect. But Lucke adds that police are still looking for another suspect as well as witnesses.

"We're not satisfied with the response from the community," he says. "This is a case that can be solved very easily if just one or two eyewitnesses come forward. It's not very complicated. Everybody in the neighborhood knows what happened. We know what happened. We just need the people who saw it to stand up."

Lucke and his team have knocked on every door on the 2100 block of Sigel Street. They've been greeted by people peeking back at them behind locked doors and others who ask incredulously, "Why should I help you?"

From his years on the force, Lucke says he knows that today's victim is tomorrow's shooter, and vice versa, and that kids who get away with shooting somebody once will do it again and again.
He’s seen victims refuse to say who shot them and cases where people have been paid or threatened into not testifying.

He knows the people on Sigel Street are afraid. He understands why someone wouldn’t come forward when, for example, a drug dealer shoots another drug dealer. What's the point?

But this was a 4-year-old girl.

"There were at least five, six people who know exactly what happened," says Lucke. "If you're going to stand up for something, stand up for a little girl."

In many of our city's communities—many of them gripped by gun violence—there's a cold fear of the police.

Fear that police don't protect witness confidentiality.

Fear that when you call 911, your name and number appear on the caller ID, and that makes you vulnerable.

Fear that the cops will come and park their blue-and-white car right in front of your house and knock on your door in full uniform, thus alerting the neighbors, the drug dealers and the shooters there's a snitch inside.

Four years ago, at the height of Operation Safe Streets, police flooded the city's high-crime and open-air drug areas. Then, earlier this year, the mayor and the police commissioner toured church pulpits to announce Operation Safer Streets, which focuses on "smarter policing, community engagement, social services and gun reduction" in the city's designated hot spots.

Over the last two and half years the number of cops patrolling Philly's streets has been reduced by 700. The lack of police presence has one Sigel Street resident so angry he says the cops are "full of shit." Another says the police commissioner came and visited the neighborhood only to use the crime scene as the backdrop for a "bullshit-ass" press conference.

"She isn't the first person around here to get shot," says an anonymous Sigel Street resident about Nashay Little. "We've been saying this neighborhood was crazy."

At community meetings throughout the city, terrorized neighbors testify about the need for more cops. They say the return of cops walking the beat would flip the script, making neighbors feel safe and thugs leery.
"When people say the only way we can be safe is by putting more cops on the street," says police commissioner Sylvester Johnson, "what they're saying is they're giving up."

Asked about the fear that keeps witnesses silent, Johnson offers the city's witness relocation program, and compares the "don't snitch" mentality to the valor of past civil rights workers and soldiers who risked their lives for a greater good.

"I've told them numerous times," Johnson says of potential witnesses, "that there's more danger having this person still in the community than if he were incarcerated. If we in the Afro-American community cannot stand up and protect our children ... and we accept people and call them brothers when they're murderers ... unless the community stands up, this will continue to happen."

Johnson says fear is an excuse.

"I think they have a moral obligation," says Johnson of potential witnesses. "I was at the hospital with the 4-year-old child fighting for her life, who did no more than just go out there and play. I was at the hospital the day Faheem Thomas-Childs was shot, who did no more than go to school with schoolbooks to learn. Either our children are going to benefit from our strength or they'll suffer from our weakness."

But Patrick Carr, a Rutgers sociology professor, says more must be offered to witnesses than simply calling them out.

"The thought that people are unwilling because they're of dubious moral character is just plain wrong," says Carr. "We get to the point where we want to give up on certain areas. That's something we absolutely cannot do. We give criminals the ability to control the roost. That's so wrong it's scary."

On the 2100 block of Sigel Street, neighbors say they're not the ones who've given up. It's the law enforcement system that's quit on them.
"These muthafuckas out here are ruthless," says Sigel Street resident Mr. M. of the thugs who do the shootings. "They're not playing, and when the shit hits the fan, ain't no cops out there to protect you."

Neighbors say a cop car sat on their block the night after Nashay's shooting and through the next day.

On this recent day a police car remains on the corner. Asked if the police presence is helping, the neighbors gathered on the steps collectively shake their heads in disgust.

"They were just shooting the other day outside the school," one woman says.

"Drugs and crime go where there's the least enforcement and resistance," says top cop Sylvester Johnson. "And when you have a community that doesn't resist, then it's going to continue."

The neighbors on Sigel Street agree with Johnson on this point.

"They need to get the guns off the street, and start putting these guys behind bars," Mr. M says.

"Mm-hmm," says another neighbor.

"Until then," says Mr. M, "it's not going to stop."

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**In the days after** Nashay Little's shooting, antiviolence activists showed up on Sigel Street to urge residents to get involved.

One campaign called Step up, Speak Up encourages the reporting of violent crime, and educates witnesses on making anonymous tips.

It's hoped the effort will counter the "STOP SNITCHIN" movement that's been promoted on T-shirts and baseball caps, and that's been used to keep witnesses silent amid the city's raging gun violence.

"It's not a very complicated program," says Jerri Williams, the campaign's FBI representative. "The whole purpose is to encourage people to come forward when they have information about violent crime."

The story of Dorothy Johnson-Speight, founder of the antiviolence group Mothers in Charge, inspired the program.
Johnson-Speight's son was shot seven times by a man who'd been seen by witnesses committing another murder five months earlier. No one had come forward.

"Hopefully people will get ingrained with our logo," says Step up, Speak Up's Williams. "The first thing that should jump into their mind is, 'Should I step up and speak up?' We don't care if it's a question. At least they're asking, as opposed to saying, 'I didn't see anything, and I'm walking away.'"

But to many Philadelphia neighborhood residents, the program might just as well be called Step up, Speak up, Get Killed.

"They're very well named, but that may be about it," says Councilman Jim Kenney, who recently proposed a $2.5 million witness protection program for city residents. "We need to get really serious about this problem of gun violence and murder and witness intimidation or many neighborhoods in our city are not going to be livable."

"We have to put more meat behind all this," Carr says. "We have to say, if you step up, the whole system is going to step up with you."

Carr says there was a failure to capitalize on the city's collective outrage two years ago when 10-year-old Faheem Thomas-Childs was shot and killed outside his elementary school. Another failure occurred when six prosecution witnesses recanted at his murder trial.

Now there's another victim.

The Nashay Little case offers further proof that the system can't rest in its effort to persuade witnesses to step up.

"It's not just moral, what's right and what's wrong," Carr says. "It's much more complex. Until you've lived that complexity and have been faced with that dilemma, you really don't know."

At the same time, says Johnson-Speight of Mothers in Charge, on any given day witnesses come forward and justice is served. She tells of a mother in her group who turned her son in to police after he accidentally killed an 8-year-old while he was shooting at his father. Johnson-Speight says if the media focused more on people who are doing the right thing, others would be willing to do the same.
But then she mentions another mother whose son graduated from high school last June and was murdered the following month after witnessing a violent crime. It's those cases that make headlines and keep witnesses locked in silence.

"Where are the people who live in those communities?" says Williams of the Step up, Speak Up campaign. "The mothers should be screaming and yelling. The fathers, the aunts, the uncles, more people should be saying this can't be done, and the best way to say this is to call and report violent crime when they see it."

"I understand people's fear," Johnson-Speight concedes, "but at the same time we're still not safe when we allow criminals to remain on the street. Who knows who the next person will be?"

Since the shooting of 4-year-old Nashay Little, the 2100 block of Sigel Street has been quiet. But the question of how to end gun violence in the city still screams loudly.

The residents of Sigel Street say you have to build faith into the system. To do that you have to improve it. You have to go beyond catchy slogans and

initiatives and make simple, long-lasting, even radical changes to its structure.

The ideas that spin out of the group's conversation seem simple enough. They want more cops to develop strong, close relationships with the community.

They want the city to get the illegal guns off the street.

They want to see criminal justice at work in their communities instead of thugs returning to the street.

Until the city moves beyond the failure of witnesses to come forward, and starts looking at our institutional failures, gun violence will continue.

And life on narrow little streets like the 2100 block of Sigel will keep going to hell, says Mr. M. "Literally."
Session 5: Risk Factors
Session 5: Risk Factors

Objectives of today’s group:

- Warm-up/review group expectations
- Review homework from last week
- Develop an understanding the risk factors for committing acts of gun violence
- Set homework for next week
- Wrap Up

To carry or not to carry, that is the question...

Research has shown that violence among adolescents has increased over the years, but there is no clear answer as to why this has happened. Why do some adolescents become involved with violence and some do not? Why do some adolescents decide to carry a gun while others do not? Taking a look at risk factors and protective factors may help provide a better understanding.

Exercise: Why do some people carry weapons?

We’ve talked a lot about the impact of gun violence from the victim’s perspective, but what about from the perspective of the person carrying the gun? What are things like for this person? List all of the reasons for carrying a gun.

1. 5.
2. 6.
3. 7.
4. 8.
Next, list the negative consequences that can result from carrying and using a gun. A participant can volunteer to write the responses of the group on the board. Keep listing the consequences until the list is fairly extensive. Identify consequences for the victim as well as for the perpetrator.

**Consequences for the Victims**

1. 8.
2. 9.
3. 10.
4. 11.
5. 12.
6. 13.
7. 14.

**Consequences for the Perpetrator**

1. 7.
2. 8.
3. 9.
4. 10.
5. 11.
6. 12.
Questions to consider:

Do the reasons for carrying a gun outweigh the potential costs? Why or why not?

On the list of reasons for carrying a gun, discuss how each of these needs can be met in other ways.

What do you think are some activities that youth get involved in that could eventually lead them to carry a gun or commit acts of violence?

Do you think family environment has anything to do with whether or not one eventually ends up carrying a gun?

For a youth that carries a gun, what is his attitude toward school?

What is his peer group like?

What might his neighborhood be like?

Risk Factors – Protective Factors

All the things that you have discussed are called violence risk factors. These are things that increase the chance that a youth will commit acts of violence. So if we were able to see into the background of a teenager who carries a gun, we will most likely see at least some of the risk factors you mentioned, as well as some others listed in table 1. A risk factor in of itself does not mean somebody will definitely commit an act of violence. However, the more risk factors that a person possesses, the more likely that he or she will commit a violent act.

Protective factors are the opposite of risk factors. A protective factor is something that decreases the risk that an individual will commit a violent act. The more protective factors that a person
possess, the less likely that he or she will do something violent. See table 1 for a list of protective factors.

Table 1. Risk Factors and Protective Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Early Onset (age 6-11)</th>
<th>Late Onset (age 12-14)</th>
<th>Protective Factors*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>- General offenses</td>
<td>- General offenses</td>
<td>- Intolerant attitude towards deviance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Substance use</td>
<td>- Psychological condition</td>
<td>- High IQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Being male</td>
<td>- Restlessness</td>
<td>- Being female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Aggression**</td>
<td>- Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>- Positive social orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Psychological condition</td>
<td>- Risk taking</td>
<td>- Perceived sanctions for transgressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hyperactivity</td>
<td>- Aggression**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Problem (antisocial) behavior</td>
<td>- Being Male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Exposure to television violence</td>
<td>- Physical violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Medical, physical problems</td>
<td>- Antisocial attitudes, beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Low IQ</td>
<td>- Crimes against persons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Antisocial attitudes, beliefs</td>
<td>- Problem (antisocial) Behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dishonesty</td>
<td>- Low IQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Substance use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>- Low socioeconomic status/poverty</td>
<td>- Poor parent-child relations</td>
<td>- Warm, supportive relationship with parents or other adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Antisocial parents</td>
<td>- Harsh, lax, discipline; poor monitoring, supervision</td>
<td>- Parents’ positive evaluation of peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Poor parent-child relations</td>
<td>- Low parental involvement</td>
<td>- Parental monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Harsh, lax, or inconsistent discipline</td>
<td>- Antisocial parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Broken home</td>
<td>- Broken home</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Separation from parents</td>
<td>- Low socioeconomic status/poverty</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Abusive parents</td>
<td>- Abusive parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Neglect</td>
<td>- Family conflict**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>- Poor attitude, performance</td>
<td>- Poor attitude, performance</td>
<td>- Commitment to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Academic failure</td>
<td>Recognition for involvement in conventional activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Group</td>
<td>- Weak social ties</td>
<td>- Week social ties</td>
<td>- Friends who engage in conventional behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Antisocial peers</td>
<td>- Antisocial, delinquent peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Gang membership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Neighborhood crime, drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Neighborhood disorganization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Age of onset unknown
** Males only
What risk factors are within your control and which ones are not?

What can you do about the risk factors that are within your control?

For a youth that decides to refrain from violence, and does not carry a gun, how might his life be different?

What activities might he be involved in?

What might his neighborhood look like?

What might his friends be like?

There are some youth who have many of the risk factors, but never pick up a gun. There are also some who seem to have an ideal life, but choose to carry a gun every day? Why do you think this happens?
Homework – Week 5

Review the list of risk and protective factors that were discussed during group. Think about how many of these apply to you. Write an essay describing how these factors have affected your life and the choices you have made. How have these factors influenced your decision to carry a gun or to think about carrying a gun? How can you counteract these risk factors to lead a life where you do not feel the need to carry or use a gun?
Session 6: What You Can Do
Session 6: What You Can Do

Objectives of today’s group:

- Review group expectations
- Review/discuss homework
- Learn about what you can to do prevent gun violence
- Set homework for next week
- Wrap Up!

First, what do you think?

Finish the Following Quote:
Guns Don’t Kill People.....

What does this quote mean to you?

If tomorrow, legislators banned the use of all guns, would that end all violence? Why or why not?

If there were no weapons of any other kind available, would there be no more violence?

What else could be used in place of these guns and other weapons?

When you take away all of these means to commit violence, people would be left with..........their own thoughts, beliefs, and values.

If you are not willing to examine your own thoughts, beliefs, and values; gun violence will continue to be a problem.

What can you do individually to prevent gun violence against yourself and others?
Teen hurt in shooting at Sayre High
Feud suspected in gunbattle
By DANA DiFILIPPO

Joseph Donnelly was parking his car behind William L. Sayre High School in West Philadelphia yesterday morning when he heard the first gunshot.

He flung open his car door and hurled himself to the ground. Immediately, a barrage of bullets chewed through the air just feet away as Donnelly tried to disappear into the pavement.

"There wasn't a chance to be scared," said Donnelly, construction manager of a $12 million renovation at the school. "It was just: 'How do I get closer to the ground?'"

When the gunfire subsided, one Sayre student lay bleeding and seriously wounded, while his attackers – who police believe were three other Sayre students - escaped on foot.

Detectives believe the shooting erupted from an ongoing territorial feud between neighborhood teens from 56th Street and others from 60th.

The 8:25 a.m. incident, which prompted a daylong lockdown at Sayre and at a nearby church-run day-care center, left some shaken school officials thanking fate for its timing.

"Just imagine if this had happened a half-hour earlier," said district chief executive Paul Vallas, referring to the 680-student school's 8 a.m. starting time. "It could have been a much more tragic situation."

The school parking lot, off 59th Street near Locust, was mostly empty when three teenagers confronted a Sayre sophomore and began blasting away.

"I heard... seven or eight gunshots," said John Ingram, 37, who lives around the corner from the school. "It sounded like a little baby cannon. It was loud, though, and it got me out of bed. I said: 'That was too close!' These young kids done got out of control."

Crime-scene workers later determined at least 11 shots had been fired, possibly from more than one gun. That number of bullets indicates the attack was "victim-specific; it's not a random act," said Capt. Michael J. Sinclair, commander of Southwest Detectives.

Although several video cameras mounted on the school pointed at the shooting scene, the cameras - part of an ongoing security upgrade - weren't yet wired or working, Vallas confirmed.
A silver 9 mm semi-automatic Ruger had been discarded next to a nearby utility pole, cocked and presumably loaded, Sinclair said.

Donnelly told police he had seen the 17-year-old victim pull a pistol from his waistband and hand it to a teenage girl, who fled with it. Detectives were trying yesterday to identify that girl.

Investigators planned to dust the abandoned gun for fingerprints and do gun-powder-residue tests on the victim to determine whether he had fired a weapon, Sinclair said.

The victim, identified by a police source as Tariq Hannibal, had surgery yesterday at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for wounds to his leg and buttocks, Sinclair said. Detectives also were probing whether a Tuesday shooting was related to yesterday's violence.

In that case, a 19-year-old man showed up at a local hospital with gunshot wounds. He told police he had been shot in Sayre's schoolyard about 4:30 p.m. While Sayre security officers confirmed they'd heard gunshots, city police found no evidence to pinpoint the shooting scene, Sinclair said.

Joseph Golden, the district's chief safety executive, lamented yesterday's violence as another "disturbing example of the pervasiveness of gun violence in the city."

Vallas used the incident to demand tighter gun laws.

"The joke around town is: Sometimes it's easier to get a gun than a book," Vallas said. "Clearly the [gun-control] laws need to be tougher."

Parents also play a pivotal role in ensuring students' safety, Vallas added. "I always say: 'Feed and frisk.' Make sure the kids are fed when they get home from school, and make sure you frisk them on their way to school," Vallas said. "Parents have to take responsibility that when their kids are on their way to and from school, that they have the appropriate things with them."

So far this school year, from September to yesterday, 10 firearms have been found in or around schools, said district spokesman Fernando Gallard. He said seven weapons were found in schools, two on school property and one on the highway outside a school.

That number is up from six firearms found in or around schools in all of the 2005-06 school year, Gallard said, when three weapons were found in schools and three on school property.

School officials planned to send letters home to parents yesterday about the incident. They also beefed-up security for the day and crisis intervention teams were available to counsel frightened students, Golden said.

But one neighbor predicted that tightened security would do little to curb violence around Sayre. "This is not unusual for this neighborhood," said Freida
McClendon, a mother who sends her two teenagers to private schools because she feared for their safety at Sayre. "This is an everyday thing. They fighting all the time out here."

Overhead, a detective walked across the roof of her rowhouse and five others, hunting for any gun-cartridge casings that might have landed there during the gunbattle.

Before she shut and locked her door on the crime scene outside, McClendon said: "I'll have to get barbed wire on my fence now."

If you knew that someone in your school had a gun and was planning to use it, what would you do?

What could happen if you ignore it?

How would you feel if you ignored it and later found out that your little brother or sister was shot and you could have prevented it?

Make a list of people you could talk to if you decided to report the gun:

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

What if you are afraid that someone will know that you snitched?
Preventing Gun Violence in the Schools

SPEAK UP Campaign

Call 1-866-SPEAK-UP to report a weapon threat at school.

If you know about a student carrying a weapon at school, or talking about bringing a weapon to school...

If you hear someone threatening violence with a weapon...

If you know about someone’s plans to hurt anyone at school...

Call 1-866-SPEAK-UP. That’s 1-866-773-2587.

Don’t ignore it. Don’t assume it’s a joke. No threat is a joke.

Don’t try to solve the problem yourself.

Tell a trusted adult at school or call 1-866-SPEAK-UP to anonymously report the threat.

The call is toll-free. Your tip will be transcribed and forwarded to the proper local authorities so the threat can be resolved safely. In case of an immediate emergency, please call 911.

You have the power to prevent school violence by just reporting weapons or threats of violence at school. Use your voice.

Call 1-866-SPEAK-UP. It’s anonymous and free.
Real Stories

Missy Jenkins
On December 1, 1997, then 15-year old Missy Jenkins was seriously wounded in the shooting at Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky, which resulted in three students’ deaths. Missy spent five months recuperating in a hospital and remains paralyzed from the waist down. She later discovered that her neighbor and friend had known of the shooter's plans beforehand, but did nothing. Missy has since become active in promoting the SPEAK UP message to young people across the country to help prevent tragedies like the one that occurred at her high school.

Celia McGinty
In September 2004, after an acquaintance told her that he planned a Columbine-like massacre at his school, Celia spoke up. The investigation that followed uncovered Nazi paraphernalia, stolen rifles, including an AK-47 assault rifle, bomb-making devices, hundreds of rounds of ammunition and hunting knives. Celia's courage undoubtedly prevented a senseless tragedy and the loss of innocent lives.

Crystal Miller
Crystal was a junior at Columbine High School in 1999, the year that two students opened fire on the school and killed twelve of her classmates and one teacher. She was in the library studying for a test when two boys rushed in with guns and she hid there under a table while they shot many people around her. Crystal survived because the attackers ran out of ammunition. The events of that day changed her life. Now twenty-four years old, Crystal travels around the country fulltime, telling her story at schools, community centers and churches. Crystal is committed to empowering young people and giving them tools to prevent similar tragedies in their own communities.

Francisco Rodriguez
In his senior year of high school, Francisco decided to do something about the violence that plagued his community in New Jersey. Along with a group of classmates, Francisco wrote, produced and edited a 30-second public service announcement to promote the SPEAK UP message and 1-866-SPEAK-UP hotline. Since then, Francisco has remained actively involved in working to prevent violence in schools. With his friends, he travels to schools throughout the area to talk with students about the importance of speaking up and keeping schools safe.
Michelle Houde
Michelle and her best friend found out that a boy had photos and detailed sketches of an attack he was planning at school. They reported what they knew. It turned out the boy was going to attack the school early the next day. Michelle’s quick thinking saved countless lives.

Josh Stevens
Josh was 15-years-old when his friend Andy Williams told him about his plan to attack his school. Josh assumed he was just joking. The next day Andy brought a gun to school and opened fire, killing 2 students and wounding 13 others. Josh says that not reporting Andy’s
threat was a mistake he will regret for the rest of his life.

**Kelly Vickery**
Kelly's friend told her that one of their classmates who they had known since middle school had brought a gun to school and had given it to someone else. Her friend tried to swear her to secrecy, but Kelly did not want her school to be "another Columbine" and decided to tell her mother. Together they went to the principal and the boys were taken in and the gun was confiscated. Though Kelly struggled with the decision and the fear of being ostracized, ultimately her sense of duty prevailed. Kelly prevented a potential tragedy.

**Sarah Hitchcock**
Sarah, an 8th grade student at Olive Perce Middle School in Ramona, CA, created a public service announcement for the SPEAK UP Campaign. She first learned about SPEAK UP while watching television so she was excited when her media teacher, Mr. Estrada, gave her the opportunity to make her own video project. Because she recognizes that school violence could happen anywhere, even in her own school, and that ‘figuring out what to do about a threat is the hardest part,’ Sarah made a PSA advertising the anonymous SPEAK UP hotline. The PSA is broadcast every morning in her school and has sparked discussion about school violence among her teachers and classmates.

The Speak Up Campaign is a national awareness and educational initiative that provides students with tools to improve the safety of their schools and communities. In 81% of school shootings, the shooters have told other students about their plans before the attack. Adolescents are also very aware of guns in their community which are often used in shootings. The Speak Up Campaign allows you to anonymously report guns in your school or community. This means that you can report guns or threats of gun related violence without the person having the gun ever knowing that you made the call.

*Imagine that you could make your school and community safer without worrying about being labeled as a “snitch”!*  

Would you consider using this option to report a gun in your school community? Why or why not?
Homework: Week 6

What are you willing to do to help decrease gun violence? Develop your own personal plan to keep yourself away from guns. Get a little more detailed in your plan than saying “I just won’t carry a gun.” This is a good start, but what else can you do? How can you talk to your friends and family about guns? How can you raise awareness in your school and community?
Session 7: More on What You Can Do
Session 7: More on What You Can Do

What Can You and Your Family Do?

Objectives of today’s group:

- Review group expectations
- Review/discuss homework
- Learn more about what you can do to decrease gun violence
- Set homework for next week
- Wrap Up

Talking Points:

What are reasons for keeping a gun in your household?

What are reasons for not keeping a gun in your household?

Are there currently, or have there ever been, guns in your household?

What is the main purpose of the guns in your household? (i.e. protection, hunting)

What are some of the risks that come with having a gun in your home?

Do you think that the presence of a gun in your home makes you and your family safer? Why or why not?

Research shows that a gun in the home is over 40 times more likely to injure or kill YOU, a family member, or a friend than to be used in self defense. This means that by NOT having a gun in your home, you are protecting yourself more than if you do have a gun in your home.
Although many gun owners keep a gun in the home for protection, studies show that risks of keeping a gun in the home out-weigh benefits. For instance, a gun in the home is actually used for self-protection in fewer than 2% of home invasion crimes.


Are there young children in your household? If so, write down their names and ages.

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Statistics show that 25 million American households contain handguns. Yet, in half of these households, the guns are left unlocked and loaded. This is especially concerning given that children are naturally curious and they usually are aware of the presence of a gun hidden in the home. Accidental firearm injury and death in children often occurs as a result of young children playing or experimenting with a gun. Even if you talk to kids about gun safety, it won’t ever make a child completely safe around a gun.
Read the following article:

Talib Bailey-Hankerson, 3

Ty-Ty died looking down a gun barrel. He was laid to rest holding a lollipop.

Police said that on Oct. 15, about 1 p.m., the child found a registered .45-caliber pistol and shot himself in the face. The gun and the Raymond Street rowhouse where it happened belonged to Dave Walter, boyfriend of Ty-Ty's mother, Lawanda Bailey, who lives across the street. Both adults and Ty's brother Dejour, 9, were in the house.

Ty-Ty tore up this little block of Feltonville, and they loved him for it. He'd open your car door as you pulled up - but only if he wasn't throwing a ball, trying on somebody's shoes, or visiting neighbors.

"I'm going to miss him pulling my screen door open and running," Lois Fleet said. It's not hard for her to imagine Ty-Ty firing a gun "because he was very curious."

Ramon Crespo Jr. calls Walter "a gentle giant" who'd often play with the children in the street, Ty-Ty on his shoulders. Hours after the shooting, Crespo was worried. Walter had come home from the police station and locked his door.

"All I heard was banging... . I kicked the door down and ran upstairs and held him, and we stood there crying together... . That's something he's going to have to live with for the rest of his life."

Two nights later, Walter and Lawanda Bailey were surrounded by relatives at her mother's home, his arm around her shoulders. Bailey, 27, who is studying to be a medical assistant, held a snapshot of Ty-Ty, crumpled because she'd been falling asleep with it. Walter, also 27 and soon to be an electrician, said the boy "called me daddy, every day, all day." He was proud that Ty-Ty was potty-trained in the last days of his life.

Some younger family members were "very angry at Dave," said Lawanda's mother, Celestine Bailey. "For the most part, the older ones understand that these things happen... . You got to forgive each other - and yourself."
Talking Points

What are your thoughts after reading this article?

What if this was your little brother/sister that shot him/herself in the face? How would you feel?

How would you feel if it was your gun that the child found?

Often we don’t allow ourselves to feel what another person might feel. But if something bad happens to us or to someone we love, we may feel intense anger and pain. The feelings others feel are just as real as what you feel.

The information that we have covered in the sessions thus far gives us a clear understanding of the impact of gun violence in our lives. Now we will discuss safe gun storage in the home, although our emphasis is decreasing gun violence by not having a gun in the first place. Still, we understand that your parents may already be gun owners, and therefore this information would be important for you to know. By sharing this information with you, it is important for you to understand that we are not advocating for guns in the home.

Project ChildSafe, The Nation’s Largest Firearm Safety Education Program

Project ChildSafe reminds gun owners to:

- Properly store firearms in the home
- Practice safe firearm storage options in the home
- Make certain that firearms in the home are not casually accessible to anyone --- especially a child.

Project ChildSafe provides safety kits that include

- a cable-style gun locking device
- lock installation instructions
- safety booklet
Project ChildSafe encourages gun owners to get a safety kit from participating law enforcement partners in their state.

Individuals, community groups and businesses interested in promoting the safe and responsible use and storage of firearms are encouraged to partner with a participating law enforcement agency.

Firearm safety is everyone's responsibility.

If Your Parents Have a Gun in Your Home

Many kids are raised with guns in the home, particularly if hunting is an important part of family recreation. If your parents keep a gun in the home, it's important act in a safe and responsible way around it. To ensure the safest environment for your family, your parents should:

- Take the ammunition out of the gun.
- Lock the gun and keep it out of reach of children.
- Lock the ammunition and store it apart from the gun.
- Store the keys for the gun and the ammunition in a different area from where you store household keys. Keep the keys out of reach of children.
- Lock up gun-cleaning supplies, which are often poisonous.

GUN SAFETY ROLE PLAY

Pair up with a peer and practice this role play. Be prepared to perform the role play during the next session.

Scenario: You are visiting your sister who has two children, a 6 year old boy and a 4 year old girl. While going through the kitchen cabinets looking for something to eat you find a revolver that belongs to your sister’s boyfriend. You see that it is loaded and unlocked. You know that your nephew really likes to play with toy gun and enjoys shooting games on PS2. You are very afraid that your nephew will find the gun and get hurt or hurt somebody. Your sister’s boyfriend comes into the kitchen. You don’t have a beef with him, but you don’t like him very much either.
One person plays the part of the main character, another plays the part of the sister’s boyfriend. The boyfriend should be moderately difficult to convince that he should take steps to make it impossible for your nephew to get the gun.

**Talking Points:**

What are your thoughts after performing this role play?

Was this a difficult situation for you? Why or why not?

What were your thoughts considering the fact that the gun was loaded and in your hand as you were being confronted by your sister’s boyfriend?

Read the next section that provide facts and information for you and your family to consider for making informed decisions about having a gun in the home.

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**Facts about Keeping a Gun in the Home**

Fifty-seven percent of handguns are stored unlocked, and 55% are kept loaded.

Twenty percent of all gun owners said they keep their guns unlocked and loaded, while 30% of handgun owners keep their guns unlocked and loaded.

Guns kept in homes are 22 times more likely to be involved in unintentional shootings, criminal assaults, homicides and suicide attempts than to be involved in injuring or killing in self defense.

The risk of suicide of a family member is increased by nearly five times in homes with guns.
Having one or more guns in the home makes a woman 7.2 times more likely to be the victim of a domestic homicide.

Homework: Week 7

This week you learned about the risks associated with having a gun in the home. You also learned about ways to address those risks. Take a minute to think about how safe your home is when it comes to guns. Write down how safe you think your home is. Be sure to include whether or not there are guns in your home, what the guns are for (protection, hunting, etc.), and how well they are secured.

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Give your home a grade for overall gun safety. Would it be an A, B, C, D, or F? Why do you give your home this grade?
What can you and your family do to improve this grade? If there are no guns in your home, think of another family who has a failing grade when it comes to gun safety. What could they do to improve their grade? What will you do to stay safe if you were to go to their house?

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Reviewed and approved by Facilitator: ___________________________ ________
Facilitator Signature Date
Session 8: Still More on What You Can Do
Session 8: Still More on What You Can Do

Objectives of today’s group:

- Review group expectations
- Review/discuss homework
- Share group project with the rest of the group members
- Learn more about what you can do to prevent gun violence
- Wrap Up!

So, say you decide that you want to help to make your community a safer place to live. Easier said than done, right? If you want to make your community safer, you can’t just sit around and wait for somebody else to do it, you need to take action. Maybe you want to do something, but you don’t know where to start. In today’s group, we are going to discuss some ways in which you can work with your community to help curb gun violence. To start, here are some ideas:

- Volunteer within your neighborhood organization or local violence prevention programs to prevent gun violence. If your neighborhood doesn’t have one, help start one.
- Work with the local police to start a community-policing program.
- Learn and teach others how to handle conflicts on the street.
- Campaign for gun violence prevention candidates.
- Talk to local doctors to see if they will distribute literature to their patients regarding the dangers of having a gun in the home.
- Clean up your local park, improve lighting, and have neighbors form a watch to keep the area safe.
- Volunteer to talk to children at your local Boys and Girls Club about the dangers of carrying a gun.
• Work to keep extra-curricular activities going at your school or community center to provide an alternative to violence.
• Sponsor a fund-raiser in memory of someone in your community who has died as a result of gun violence. Donate the proceeds to a local gun violence prevention group or a community center.
• Work with local police to start a program to get illegal guns off the streets.
• Work with local officials to organize a gun buy-back program to get guns people don’t really want anymore out of circulation.

**Gun Buyback Programs**

Many cities have sponsored gun buy-back programs in an effort to get guns off the streets. These programs offer cash or cash cards for anyone who turns in a gun on the designated day, no questions asked.

Read the following excerpt from December 2006:

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**NEWS INFORMATION FROM**

THE OFFICE OF MAYOR STEPHEN R. REED
City of Harrisburg
King City Government Center
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1678
Telephone: 717.255.3040

FOR IMMEDIATE USE
5 Dec 2006

**GUN BUYBACK PROGRAM TO RESUME WEDNESDAY**

Mayor Stephen R. Reed today said Harrisburg’s gun buyback program will resume on Wednesday, December 6, at the city’s two Community Policing Centers. New hours of 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. are being implemented to accommodate city residents who work during the day and have thus far been unable to participate. The program has garnered 290 weapons so far and will continue until funds run out. The buyback is not being held today as the supply of cash cards
were exhausted yesterday and new ones are currently being secured for the program’s resumption tomorrow.

Mayor Reed said the buyback program has been bolstered by an additional $10,000 donation from Steven Kusic and National Recovery Agency, a Paxton Street debt collection service agency. The program was initially funded by a $15,000 Legislative Initiative Grant from State Representative Ron Buxton(103rd).

Reed said the program is open to any city resident with a working firearm, including handguns, rifles and shotguns. Persons turning in weapons receive a $100 cash card for each weapon received, no questions asked. The buyback program is being conducted at the city’s two community policing centers, located at 313 S. 15th Street on Allison Hill, and at 2006 N. 6th Street in Uptown. Ammunition is also being accepted for disposal, and anyone bringing in a weapon is urged to remove the gun’s bullets if the weapon is loaded.

The Mayor said thus far 290 rifles, shotguns and handguns have been turned in. Reed noted that in its law enforcement work, the city itself has recovered or seized 1,460 firearms since 2003, with more being seized every week.

“Reducing violence on our streets begins with reducing the flow of weapons,” said Reed. “We may never be able to completely reduce the flow of weapons to the streets, but removing even just one can mean the difference between someone living or dying. We strongly encourage residents throughout the city to participate.”

Another successful gun buy-back program is Allegheny County’s Goods for Guns.
Committed to Preventing Firearm Death & Injury to Children

Goods for Guns has taken 8,192 operable handguns, rifles and shotguns off the streets of Allegheny County in the past ten years. It is the longest-lived program of its kind in the United States and provides a model for the nation.

The above picture shows guns that have been collected through Allegheny County’s Goods for Guns gun buy-back programs. The guns in this photo represent less than 5% of the total collected by Goods for Guns over ten years.
Changing Gun Laws

One of the most important things you as a citizen can do to help stop gun violence is to let your elected officials know how you feel about the issues. All too often, citizen input is only received at election time, if then. As legislation is introduced and debated, your voiced opinion can have an important impact on the local, state, or national level.

• Ways to contact your elected officials:

• By phone

• Person to person by appointment

• At community events

• By letter. See “A LETTER TO YOUR CONGRESSPERSON: ESSENTIALS” later in this section for more information

• Through e-mail (While email may be easier and faster, regular mail gives the elected official a piece of paper from a "real person" to carry into committee meetings to reinforce his arguments.) See the example taken from The Brady Campaign’s website
A LETTER TO YOUR CONGRESSPERSON: ESSENTIALS

Your Name & Address {PLEASE DO NOT FORGET THIS!}
Date

The Honorable______________
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

(OR)

The Honorable______________
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator_____________: (OR) Dear Representative_____________: 

1. The first paragraph of the letter should contain your purpose for writing the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it according to its House bill number (e.g., H. XXXX) and/or the Senate bill number (S. 952). This way, they know exactly what you're talking about.

2. Include information that supports your position and how the proposed legislation or issue affects you personally. Anecdotal evidence is a very effective and persuasive lobbying tool.

3. Offer your expertise if it is relevant. Believe it or not, as a medical student you may have experiential or trained expertise that may be useful to legislators.

4. Use simple language (within reason). Staff workers in Congressional offices are not experts on all issues. An example: the term "kidney doctor" may be more understandable than "nephrologist."

5. Always ask the senator or representative for something. This can be support of a certain bill, co-sponsorship of a bill, or you may want the legislator to introduce legislation.

6. Always thank the senator or representative for something. You can thank them for their time, their effort or for their support of legislation.

7. Be courteous, to the point, and try to keep the letter to one page.

8. Your name and address must be included so that you may receive a response.

9. Personal letters are much more effective lobbying efforts than postcards, petitions or even phone calls because they show more effort!

Sincerely,

Your signature
Your printed name
Sending a Pre-Prepared Letter Through The Internet
Example taken from The Brady Campaign’s website.

Strengthening the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS)

Since its enactment in 1994, the Brady Law has prevented more than 975,000 criminals and other prohibited purchasers from buying guns. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), a critical component of the Brady Law, contains records on criminals, drug addicts, domestic abusers and others prohibited from buying guns. However, because many states do not forward all relevant records, there are many gaps in the federal NICS - gaps exploited by people who are prohibited from buying guns.

1. Complete the form on the left with your information.
2. Click the Send Your Message button to send your letter to these decision makers:

Dear [Decision Maker],

I urge you to support H.R. 1415, legislation introduced by Representative Carolyn McCarthy, that would improve the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

Since taking effect in 1994, the Brady Law has prevented more than 1.3 million criminals and other prohibited purchasers from buying guns. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), a critical component of the Brady Law, contains records on criminals, drug addicts, domestic abusers and others prohibited from buying guns. However, because many states do not forward all relevant records, there are many gaps in the federal NICS - gaps exploited by people who are prohibited from buying guns.

H.R. 1415 would provide grants and other incentives to help states forward all relevant records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). This legislation will help keep guns out of the hands of criminals, terrorists, and other prohibited purchasers, and make our streets safer.

If you have already cosponsored H.R. 1415, thank you, but if you have not, please do so without further delay.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State ZIP]
Regardless of the method of communication you choose - the most important thing is to DO IT and do it NOW. If your elected official hears from only 10 people on a particular issue, she/he feels he has been hit by a landslide. Your voice counts.

Some basic principles about communicating with your representatives:

- It is important to contact your political policymakers early in the process, before a bill is passed. Once a bad measure is passed into law, it is much more difficult to change the law.

- It is important to contact your elected officials often on the same issue. They face several decision-making points - they are asked to be sponsors of the bill before it is introduced, they vote in committee, and they vote again in the full session. They are under great pressure at each point and need your support.

- Get involved with a group of people with like interests and join in common action. There is strength in numbers - and more people to share the work!

- You can't catch flies with vinegar. A firm, friendly approach to communicating your opinion is far better than an angry letter. Be respectful.

- Get familiar with the legislative process. Ask for legislator or elected official for a "Citizens Guide" to State, Local or National government processes.

- Before contacting any elected official, make sure you understand the major points at issue. Tell the elected official that these points are important to you. If you are communicating about a particular bill, use its name and/or
• If the contact method you are using is the telephone or a personal visit, prepare a short draft of what you want to say ahead of time.

• Tell the elected official that you are a citizen acting out of personal interest and concern.

• Always identify yourself. Being anonymous detracts from your credibility.

• If you want a response, don’t forget to give your address and/or telephone number and/or e-mail address.

• Contact your elected official whether they agree or disagree with your perspective. Those who agree will be glad for your encouragement, while those who disagree need help changing their minds.

• Be brief. A short, concise, to the point statement in your own words will beat out a dozen pages of statistics any day.

Mayors Against Illegal Guns is a bi-partisan coalition of mayor from across the county who have stepped up to challenge the problem of illegal guns in the U.S. This group is committed to decreasing gun violence in this country by stopping illegal guns from getting into the wrong hands. MAIG recognizes that keeping illegal guns off the street is not an issue of ideology but of law enforcement and has united in taking a common-sense approach to fighting illegal guns at the local, state, and federal levels, while also respecting the rights of gun-owners. This group is made up of over 150 mayors from more than 40 states.
The following mayors from Pennsylvania have joined in this effort:

Allentown – Ed Pawlowski
Bethlehem – John Callahan
Erie – Joseph Sinnott
Lancaster – Rick Gray
Philadelphia – John Street
Pittsburgh – Luke Ravenstahl
Reading – Tom McMahon
Williamsport – Mary B. Wolf
York – John S. Brenner

Is the mayor of your city on this list?

If not, what can you do?
Are You Willing to Sign the Pledge?

I will never bring a gun to school;

I will never use a gun to settle a personal problem or dispute;

I will use my influence with my friends to keep them from using guns to settle disputes.

My individual choices and actions, when multiplied by those of young people throughout the country, will make a difference. Together, by honoring this pledge, we can reverse the violence and grow up in safety.

Name: _____________________________________________________________

Grade: _____________________________________________________________

School Name: _______________________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________ Date: ____________________
know of a WEAPON THREAT?

1-866-SPEAK-UP

don’t keep quiet.
don’t risk it.
report it!

SPEAK UP. SAVE LIVES.
1-866-SPEAK-UP