

# SVRC

## Fact Sheet Youth Risk Factors

The Surgeon General's 2001 Report on Youth Violence contains valuable information for educators, law enforcement, and community agencies. For further information, the report can be accessed at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence>.

### Definition of Risk Factor

*Anything that increases the probability that a young person will become violent.*

### Limitations of Risk Factors

No individual or group of risk factors can be used to predict violence with any degree of certainty. Risk factors are only indicators that may precede youth violence, and a misunderstanding of their value may lead to profiling which can result in stereotyping and discrimination. Some risk factors cannot be changed, such as gender, and therefore are not good targets for intervention.

### Risk Factor Domains

#### ◆ Individual Risk Factors

- Alienation/Rebelliousness
- Delinquent Peers
- Aggressiveness
- Gender (male)
- Substance Abuse (Drug, Alcohol, & Tobacco)
- Low Intelligence
- Birth Complications

#### ◆ Family Risk Factors

- Family History of Violence
- Lack of Clear Expectations and Limited Monitoring by Parents
- Excessively Severe or Inconsistent Punishment
- Parental Attitudes toward Drugs, Crime, and Violence
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Broken Homes

#### ◆ Community Risk Factors

- Availability of Drugs
- Availability of Firearms
- Laws and Norms Favorable to Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime
- Media Portrayal of Violence
- Transitions and Mobility
- Economic Deprivation/Poverty

#### ◆ School Risk Factors

- Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior
- Academic Failure
- Lack of Commitment to School
- Gang Involvement

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