



PATHWAYS OF YOUTH GANG- ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOUR

SEE SOMETHING,
SAY SOMETHING,
WE WILL **DO** SOMETHING

INTRODUCTION

British Columbia is committed to ensuring that each child in our province feels safe and educated about gangs and the dangers of becoming involved in negative peer groups and gang-associated behaviour. Gangs have a negative impact on communities throughout the province. The violence associated with gangs goes beyond where you live, your family circumstances, and financial means. The safety and well-being of citizens are compromised and even threatened by the presence of gangs that often involve youth. It is important to raise awareness with youth, educators, and families to prevent young people from becoming involved in a gang lifestyle.

This resource consists of two modules with short video clips and accompanying lessons that help youth:

- Gain a better understanding of gang-associated behaviour
- Understand the importance of reporting worrisome and concerning behaviours exhibited by others
- Learn how the anonymous erase | Report It tool is used for responsible reporting and timely response to ensure student safety
- Recognize the dangers of becoming involved in drug lines (dial-a-doping)
- Recognize warning signs of gang involvement
- Learn how gangs use social media for recruitment and grooming

The lessons complement the Understanding Youth and Gangs resource developed by Safer Schools Together and the End Gang Life resources developed by the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit BC (CFSEU).

The End Gang Life resources address how to prevent youth gang involvement and how to get help. Additional valuable information is provided about gangs, drugs, and crime prevention for youth, families, and members of the broader community. <https://www.cfseu.bc.ca/end-gang-life/>

BUILDING STUDENT SUCCESS: BC CURRICULUM

The lessons in this resource are aligned to the BC's Physical and Health Education Curriculum as well as the Core Competencies. The lessons can be adapted to meet the needs of students in Grades 4-12.

Big Ideas

- Personal choices and environmental factors influence our health and well-being
 - Developing healthy relationships helps us feel connected, valued, and supported
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Core Competencies

Communication

- Encompasses abilities to impart and exchange information, experiences, and ideas, to explore the world, and to understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media.
- Provides a bridge between learning, personal and social identity, relationships, and interactions in the larger world.

Critical Thinking

- Considers options; analyzes these using specific criteria; draws conclusions and makes judgements based on reasoning.
- Encompasses abilities to examine one's thinking, and that of others, about the information that they receive through observation, experience, and various forms of communication.

Personal Awareness and Responsibility

- Employs skills and strategies to stay healthy and active, set goals, monitor progress, regulate emotions, respect personal rights and the rights of others, manage stress, and persevere in difficult situations.
- Demonstrates self-respect and a sense of personal well-being.

Social Responsibility

- Considers the interdependence of people with each other and the natural environment; to contribute positively to one's family, community, society, and the environment; to resolve problems peacefully; to empathize with others and appreciate their perspectives; to create and maintain healthy relationships.

Note: The depth and complexity of the approach in dealing with topics and the ages of the students need to be considered by the teacher. Please be aware that these lessons could be traumatic stimuli for students who have recently experienced personal and family-related trauma. It is important to monitor your students' responses throughout the lesson.

MODULE ONE: HOW TO HELP ENSURE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Time Allotment: Approx. 90 mins (Lesson can be adapted to fit different time frames.)

Required Materials:

- Medium-sized post-it notes, felt pens, and chart paper.

Learning Outcomes:

- Gain a better understanding of gang and gang-associated behaviour
- Understand the importance of reporting worrisome and concerning behaviours displayed by others

Introduction

Youth gangs consist of anti-social youth coming together to engage in criminal behaviour to enhance their reputations, claim territory, or seek financial gain. Often, we see youth gang-associated behaviour being played out in our schools and communities.

This module builds on the statement ‘See Something, Say Something, We Will Do Something’.

Relationships between adults and students are the most important factor in promoting safe, healthy, and caring schools free from violence. When students feel connected enough to tell an adult about rumours they hear or facts about possible impending school violence, school safety improves, and violence can be stopped or minimized.

‘School Staff are the Best App!’

Identifying Trusted Adults (approx. 15 mins)

Large Group Discussion

Ask the students – What characteristics do you think a trusted adult would have? Students verbally provide a few characteristics they think are important.

Small-Group Work

Have the students brainstorm as many characteristics they feel are important and put them on medium-sized post-it notes.

Then, have the students discuss and collectively determine the top five they think are most important. Have the students report out from their groups by having the first group post their top five characteristics on the whiteboard (wall, etc.). The remaining groups add any additional characteristics.

Individual Reflection

Have the students write a journal entry identifying those adults in their lives including a staff member that they feel comfortable reaching out to if they were ever worried or needed help listing their particular characteristics.

Defining Gangs and Gang Life (approx. 30 mins)

BC has a gang problem that affects youth, families, and communities across our province in various ways.

Tell the students that in their small groups, they are going to create a mind map (on chart paper) about gang life. Have the students write the word 'gang' in the middle of their chart paper and brainstorm answers for the following questions¹ and chart their answers on the chart paper.

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| Q. How would you define a gang? | A gang is defined as being a group of three or more persons that plan and carry out crime for profit (money). |
| Q. How do gangs identify themselves? | Gang members may identify through a common name, symbols, colours, hand signs, clothing brands, or tattoos. |
| Q. What do gang members look like? | Gang members are from any race, culture, or social-economic group. |
| Q. Why would someone join a gang? | The goal of joining a gang is to make money through illegal activities using violence and intimidation. |
| Q. What do you think the average age is of a gang member? | In BC, half of the gang members are under the age of 33, and some as young as 15. |
| Q. If you know someone being pressured/recruited who could they go to for help and support? | Tell a trusted adult, teacher, principal, vice-principal, counsellor, coach, etc. |

Have the students post their mind maps around the room and do a gallery walk. Engage the students in a discussion about their answers.

Provide the students with any information they may have missed to further their awareness and understanding of gangs in BC.



¹ Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of BC (CFSEU-BC); <https://cfseu.bc.ca>

Reporting Concerning Behaviour (approx. 40 mins)

Have students watch the following short video: <https://vimeo.com/382515347/9fce0d75e5>

Small-Group or Pair Work

Tell the students that they are going to create a storyboard using drawings and writings about the video clip.

Post the following questions for the students to consider as they develop their storyboard:

- Why do you think the youth posted online?
- Why do you think the youth had the gun?
- What might be going on in the youth's life?
- How do you think the youth got the gun?
- Why might the youth bring the gun to school?
- Why do you think the youth placed the gun in the locker?
- How did the students in the hall react when they saw the post?
- What was concerning about the post?
- Why do you think one of the students reported seeing the gun in the locker?
- How do you think this ends for the youths that were apprehended?



Have students create a storyboard using drawings and writings about the video clip and have the students share their storyboards that can be posted around the room.

Journal Reflection

Have the students reflect on the following and write a one-page journal entry:

- What was the meaning behind the video?
- Why was it important that the student reported the incident?
- How would you feel if this happened at your school?
- What might be the impact on the youths taken into custody by police on school grounds?
- What might be the impact on youth that possibly observed the arrest?
- What was your most important take away from this video?
- To what extent do you think social media might play in the recruitment and grooming of young people?
- What can you do to contribute to ensuring a safe school environment?
- Why might school staff be the best 'app'?

Exit Ticket: Write one powerful take-away from this lesson and post it on your way out of class.

MODULE 2: DANGERS OF GANG INVOLVEMENT

Time allotment: Approx. 90 mins (Lesson can be adapted to fit different time frames.)

Materials Required:

[erase | Report It PowerPoint](#), post-it notes or paper for exit tickets.

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize the dangers of becoming involved in drug lines (dial-a-doping)
- Learn how gangs use social media for recruitment and grooming
- Learn how the anonymous erase | Report It tool is used for responsible reporting and timely response to ensure student safety
- Recognize warning signs of gang involvement

Instructor Note:

Become familiar with the erase strategy = Expect Respect and a Safe Education website as well as the erase | Report It PowerPoint. The erase | Report It tool is accessible by visiting the website:

<https://erasereportit.gov.bc.ca>

Introduction

Module 1 focused on developing awareness and understanding of gang life in BC. Module 2 focuses on recognizing the warning signs of becoming gang-involved, dangers of becoming caught up in drug lines (dial-a-doping), and how social media is being used to glorify the gang lifestyle and for recruitment/grooming purposes.

Students will also develop an awareness of the value of the erase | Report It tool (an anonymous reporting tool) where they can report anything that they find worrisome or of concern, directly to their school administrators via a secure, online platform.

The importance of reporting concerning posts or behaviours can potentially save a life and ensure appropriate interventions are put in place to change the pathway of youth becoming involved in the gang life.

Large Group Discussion (Approx. 10 mins)

Have the students brainstorm signs of worrisome behaviour that indicate a youth may be involved in gang-associated behaviour (change in their behaviour, associating with other youth involved in criminal behaviour, frequent absences from school, overly tired, marks dropping, lots of money, sudden increase of flashy designer wear – usually not authentic; i.e. Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada, etc.).



Sequence 1 'This Did Not Need to Happen'

Have the students watch the following short video: <https://vimeo.com/382527648/c019b0ed1b>



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Large Group Discussion (approx. 10 mins)

- Where did the opening scene take place?
- What concerning things did you observe? (drugs, bands of American and Canadian money, alcohol, weapons, a scale)
- Why do you think the youth was there?
- What might be going on in this young person's life in terms of the following – personally, family, peers, school, and community?
- What was the youth being promised? ('We are going to make you rich', 'let's take a picture with my new friend', 'you're a part of us now')
- Why do you suppose a group picture was taken?
- Why do you think the youth was the only one shot?
- What would be the impact on his family?

Students can generate different hypotheses during the discussion.

Sequence 2: See Something, Say Something, We Will Do Something

Large Group Discussion (approx. 10 mins)

- What does the rewind signify ('This did not need to happen')?
- Who do you think saw the post? (Sister, classmate, etc.)
- What was the significance of the newscast? ('Explosion of gun violence that rivals anything in North America – 6 shootings in the past 6 days. Does this surprise you?')
- How was the post viewed on-screen reported? (erase | Report It Tool)
- What do you think happened as a result of the report being submitted?
- What is the significance of the statement – 'See Something, Say Something, We Will Do Something'?

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING

Promoting erase | Report It

Share the erase | Report It PowerPoint with the students: [School Safety - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/schoolsafety/schoolsafety.html)

Large Group Discussion (Approx. 10 mins)

- Awareness of the tool in the school community
- Concerns that can be reported including images, screenshots, and videos
- Reasons for the tool allowing you to remain anonymous or to provide your name

Small-Group Work (Approx. 30 mins)

Brainstorm various ways that the erase | Report It tool can be promoted.

Have the students develop a presentation (PowerPoint, skit, etc.) about how you could promote the tool for the:

- Whole School
- Individual Classrooms
- Parents/Community
- Associate Schools

Have the students share their presentations.

**Need help or know
someone who does?**

You're not alone—everyone needs
to ask for help sometimes.

[erase.gov.bc.ca](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase)

erase
EXPECT RESPECT &
A SAFE EDUCATION



erase | Report It tool digital and printable resources for schools/classrooms can be found at:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/tools>

Dangers of Becoming Involved in Drug Lines (Dial-A-Dope Operations)

At every secondary school, youth know of a classmate or a personal friend that is involved in negative peer group behaviour. Some youth and their family members or extended family members may be involved in drug lines (dial-a-dope operations) and/or gang-associated activity.

Social media connections among friends and peer groups about drug lines (dial-a-dope operations) increase in the digital world. Youth tend not to report because they are scared that they will get caught reporting. No one wants to be identified as a 'snitch'. However, you must know that by reporting them, they are getting their friends *out* of trouble instead of *into* trouble.



Large Group Discussion (Approx. 10 mins)

Discuss how the use of the reporting tool can help decrease gang violence/dial-a-doping operations.

Discuss what motivates you to report gang-associated activity in your community?

Discuss the trauma families face when losing a beloved family member to gang violence (Open source newspaper/news articles).

Case Study – Sajan

Independent Work (approx. 20 mins)

Have the students read the case study about Sajan.

Sajan grew up with three sisters and both parents, and they all still live together. Sajan's childhood and experiences growing up were relatively normal, except for some behavioural issues and his father suffering from some mental health issues.

When Sajan started high school, he continued to hang out with his elementary school friends and went through grade 8 without any issues. During the beginning of his grade 9 year, Sajan was out one day in his neighbourhood where a group of older youth confronted him, took his iPhone, and physically assaulted him. At the same time, they recorded the assault and some embarrassing acts they forced him to perform. The video was then posted online and went viral.

When Sajan returned to school, he found that many of his classmates had viewed the video and he was now the subject of constant teasing and bullying. Outside of his school community, the video gained popularity, and he was ridiculed on the street, often by strangers in passing cars. Sajan developed high anxiety surrounding these events and began getting involved in fights with people that would taunt him about the video. He started to self-medicate with marijuana.

In response to these events, Sajan's grades began to drop, and his attendance became sporadic. One day, he was at home when he received a friend request on Snapchat, which he accepted. The first snap he got from the account was a pistol sitting on a table with text saying, "School got you down?" Sajan ignored the initial message, but after a few more messages, engaged with the account and found out that it was the older cousin of a friend he had from elementary school. The guy asked Sajan if he wanted to meet up to grab pizza. Sajan agreed and met Paul at a local pizza place where they had pizza and talked about cars and school.



Sajan began to meet with Paul regularly and, for the first time in months, he was able to go out and do the things he had previously enjoyed in his neighbourhood. Paul had a reputation as being involved in gangs and the drug trade, and whenever Sajan was with Paul, no one dared say anything to him about the video.

Now, two years after the video was released, 17-year-old Sajan is currently not attending school as he was excluded due to safety concerns related to his current status as an active participant in the drug trade and the local, regional gang conflict. He has amassed over 70 negative contacts with police and is currently facing charges of extortion. He still lives at home with his parents and police regularly come to the house to conduct curfew checks. Recently, Sajan was also severely assaulted after he participated in a drug deal that resulted in him being robbed and assaulted.

Large Group Discussion (Approx. 10 mins)

- How could you have helped Sajan as a friend?
- How could Sajan's school have helped?
- How could Sajan's parents have helped?

Exit Ticket: Have the students individually write down 3-5 things that they found most interesting or impactful in this module. Students hand in their "ticket" as they exit the class.