CHAPTER 5

School Violence and Victimization

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will:

- Understand the major research findings on school violence.
- Learn why some youth become violent.
- Understand how schools influence violence and student disruption.
- Identify the warning signs of violent youth.
- Become familiar with the strategies for controlling school violence.

INTRODUCTION

An armed 15-year-old youth entered his school with three guns and fired 51 bullets at students and staff. When it was over, two students were dead and 22 injured. Back home, the police found the boy’s parents also shot dead. It soon turned out that accused assailant, Kip Kinkel, had been arrested the day before for trying to buy a stolen weapon.

Public schools must confront a number of challenges, such as how to educate students and provide a safe learning environment for students and staff. Despite overcrowding and other distractions in some districts, our schools are generally doing a good job educating and providing a safe environment for our children. However, recent violence in some of our schools has dispelled the notion that schools are safe. The 1999 school shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, in which 12 students and one teacher were fatally gunned down by two students, and a shooting at...
a suburban high school in Conyers, Georgia, where a student gunman opened fire on a group of students, reject this view of school safety.

A number of shooting incidents and acts of violence have been directed at teachers and students throughout the nation following these shootings, and undoubtedly there will be more. In some communities, gang intimidation and drug dealing on campus are added to the school violence scenario. But we must remember that schools are a collection of young people, most with serious aspirations to achieve in academic or extracurricular activities. School is a place of growth, a rite of passage before jumping into the uncertainties of adulthood. And for a few, it is a stressful environment, full of negativity and empty experiences, leading to violence or dropping out.

Schools, like workplaces, are miniature societies bringing together people from varied backgrounds, personalities, and cultural experiences. In other words, disruptive behavior and poor attitudes enter the school doors with students. Whatever the source of that violence, whether from the home, the community, or elsewhere, the effects of violence on learning are so destructive that educators are placing school security on the education agenda. Teachers cannot teach and students cannot learn in an environment of intimidation and fear.

**Research on School Crime and Violence**

Studies of school violence have variously used such terms as *teen aggression, conflict, delinquency, conduct disorders, criminal behavior, and antisocial behavior* to describe the sources of the problem. In simple terms, drugs, hormonal imbalances, conflicts with peers or parents, rejection of authority, and so forth fuel the anger many youth harbor. If the anger is not displaced at home, on the streets, or in some legitimate activities, then the schools are targeted.

Because of the opportunities presented by some school environments, school violence has increased dramatically in the past decade. A study of 10 inner-city public high schools in California, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Illinois funded by the National Institute of Justice (Sheley, McGee, and Wright, 1995) found that one in five inner-city students (one of three males) surveyed had been a victim of a shooting or stabbing while at school or in transit to or from school. Most students knew someone who carried a weapon to school; one in four reported carrying weapons while in school. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that 10 percent of U.S. public schools experienced at least one serious violent crime in the 1996–1997 school year. These incidents included murder, rape or other
types of sexual battery, suicide, a physical attack or fight with a weapon, or robbery. There were nearly 190,000 physical attacks or fights without a weapon, as well as high numbers of thefts or larceny and vandalism.

The use or sale of drugs as well as gang membership was part of the students’ experiences (Heaviside et al., 1998). Although only 4 percent of inner-city school students in one study reported using hard drugs, 13 percent reported either dealing drugs or working for a drug dealer (Sheley et al., 1995). The National Parents’ Resource Institute for Drug Education reported in 1994 that almost 1 in 13 (7.4 percent) of all high school students carried a gun to school in 1993–1994, that 13.8 percent joined a gang, and that 35 percent threatened to harm another student or a teacher.

In 1978, the National Institute of Education undertook the first comprehensive study of school crime and safety. Its purpose was to investigate the extent of student and teacher victimization. This study collected data from more than 4,000 principals, 31,000 students, and nearly 24,000 teachers representing rural and urban schools (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978: 35–36). Some results of the study are reported here. Although students spend only about 25 percent of their active time in school, about 36 percent of all robberies of teenagers occur in schools. Campus robberies may seem less severe than those occurring on our streets, but to some students it is a traumatic experience. Thus, taking a student’s lunch money or clothing article under the threat of violence qualifies as robbery. The problem of school violence is more serious in cities with populations of more than 500,000. The findings from the Safe School Study reported in School Crisis Prevention and Response include the following (National School Safety Center, 1990):

- Approximately 7 percent of high school students stay at home at least one day each month because they fear being victimized.
- Approximately 24 percent of students avoid three or more places at school because they fear being victimized.
- More than 29 percent of teachers are threatened with physical harm each month.
- More than 28 percent of teachers hesitated in the month preceding the study to confront misbehaving students because they feared for their own safety.

The authors of the report concluded that crime, violence, and the fear of both are present in our schools, especially in schools located in large cities. In 1987, the American School Health Association (1989) surveyed approximately 11,000 eighth- and tenth-grade students in 20 states about a wide
range of issues concerning school experiences. Of the students surveyed, about 2 percent admitted carrying a handgun to school at least once a year, and 33 percent of those had carried a pistol daily; about 8 percent said they had carried knives. The potential for violence is great, especially when more than one-third of tenth graders reported that “bullies” and others had threatened to hurt them while at school. Clearly, juvenile victimization on school property and in the surrounding community is a major concern.

A study by Sheley, McGee, and Wright (1995) asked students for their perceptions regarding the following: the difficulty of obtaining drugs or alcohol at school; the prevalence of street gangs in school; and the degree to which students fear being attacked at school. The findings are based on a nationally representative sample of more than 10,000 youths who were interviewed from January through June 1989 and who attended school during the 6 months before the interview. Some findings of the study follow:

- Students older than age 17 were generally less likely to be victims of crimes at school than were younger students.
- Students living in families that had moved three or more times in the preceding 5 years were nearly twice as likely to have experienced a criminal victimization as were students who had moved no more than once.
- Victimization by violent crime at school had no consistent relationship to the income level of the victims’ families. For property crime, however, students in families with annual incomes of $50,000 or more were more likely to be victimized than students whose families earned less than $10,000 a year.
- Public high school students (9 percent) were more likely to be crime victims than were private school students (7 percent).
- High school seniors were the least likely students to be crime victims. Ninth-grade students were more likely to be crime victims than were students in all higher grades.
- In the first half of 1989, about 30 percent of the students interviewed believed that marijuana was easy to obtain at school, 9 percent said crack was easy to obtain, and 11 percent claimed cocaine was readily available.
- A larger proportion of males than females knew whether drugs were available in school.
- Similar percentages of black (67 percent) and white (69 percent) students claimed that drugs were available at school; these students were significantly more likely than students belonging to other racial groups to say that drugs could be obtained.
School Violence and Victimization

- Victims of violent crimes were about three times as likely as nonvictims to report that they were afraid of being attacked at school (53 percent versus 19 percent). The overwhelming majority of students who had not been victimized reported no fear of attack, either at school (81 percent) or on the way to and from school (87 percent).
- Students who had been robbed or assaulted during the previous 6 months were more likely to avoid certain places at school, such as stairwells and restrooms, out of fear of attack or harm (25 percent) than were those who had experienced a theft or attempted theft (10 percent).
- Six percent of students indicated that they avoided some place in or around their school because they thought that someone might attack or harm them there. School restrooms were most often mentioned as a place students avoided (3 percent), followed by school hallways (2 percent).
- About the same percentage of male and female students feared an attack at school and avoided certain places because of that fear. However, female students expressed more fear of attack going to and from school than did male students.
- Seventy-nine percent of students said no gangs existed at their schools; 15 percent reported gangs, and another 5 percent were not sure whether gangs existed at their schools.
- Of those students who said there were or could be gangs at their school, 37 percent reported that the gang members never fought at school, 19 percent claimed that gang members fought once or twice a year, and 12 percent said that members fought once or twice a week or even every day.
- The 15 percent of students who reported the presence of gangs at their schools were more likely than students from schools without gangs to be victims of some type of crime (12 percent versus 8 percent, respectively).

A study by the U.S. Department of Education of a nationally representative sample of 1,234 regular schools in the 50 states and the District of Columbia revealed some interesting data on school violence (Dwyer, Osher, and Warger, 1998). One in 10 public schools experienced at least one of these crimes, which occurred at a rate of 53 incidents per 100,000 students, during 1996–1997. Serious violent crimes were more likely to occur in large schools. Thirty–three percent of schools with 1,000 or more students experienced a serious violent crime compared with 4 to
TABLE 5–1  NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT REPORTED VARIOUS TYPES OF CRIME AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS, BY TYPE OF CRIME AND SELECTED SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS: 1999–2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Characteristic</th>
<th>Violent</th>
<th></th>
<th>Serious Violent³</th>
<th></th>
<th>Theft</th>
<th></th>
<th>Other</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Schools</td>
<td>Percent of Schools</td>
<td>Number of Incidents</td>
<td>Percent of Schools</td>
<td>Number of Incidents</td>
<td>Percent of Schools</td>
<td>Number of Schools</td>
<td>Percent of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58,500</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>1,466,400</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>60,700</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>217,900</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School level</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>30,500</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>717,400</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>15,100</td>
<td>42,200</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>13,500</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>441,300</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>18,200</td>
<td>9,900</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>13,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>10,900</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>261,400</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>100,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>46,300</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>12,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 300</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>115,400</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>6,900</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>21,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300–499</td>
<td>15,600</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>301,100</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>9,100</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>34,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500–999</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>755,100</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>27,500</td>
<td>15,300</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>73,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 or more</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>294,700</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>16,800</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>87,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>494,000</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>22,100</td>
<td>10,200</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
<td>67,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban fringe</td>
<td>17,800</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>453,000</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>82,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>221,300</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>7,100</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>18,100</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>298,000</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>45,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Numbers do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

### Minority Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Percentage</th>
<th>Total Schools</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Average Students per School</th>
<th>Total Teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Teachers</th>
<th>Total Student/Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Student/Teacher Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–5 percent</td>
<td>17,200</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>261,200</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>49,400</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–20 percent</td>
<td>12,600</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>284,600</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>12,100</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>54,000</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–50 percent</td>
<td>11,700</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>338,800</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>18,200</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>47,900</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50 percent</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>560,400</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>21,900</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>64,100</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Free/reduced-price lunch eligibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Percentage</th>
<th>Total Schools</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Average Students per School</th>
<th>Total Teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Teachers</th>
<th>Total Student/Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Student/Teacher Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0–20 percent</td>
<td>15,700</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>288,300</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>74,600</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–50 percent</td>
<td>20,500</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>499,800</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>84,400</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50 percent</td>
<td>22,400</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>678,300</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>58,900</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student/teacher ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Total Schools</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Average Students per School</th>
<th>Total Teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Teachers</th>
<th>Total Student/Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Student/Teacher Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 12</td>
<td>18,700</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>371,500</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>13,300</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>57,200</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–16</td>
<td>19,400</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>520,800</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>22,300</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>74,300</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 16</td>
<td>18,100</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>510,400</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>78,200</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Serious violent crimes are also included in violent crimes.

*Student/teacher ratio was derived by dividing the total number of students enrolled in school by the total number of full-time-equivalent teachers.

**Note:** Violent incidents include rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack or fight with or without a weapon, threat of physical attack with or without a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon. Serious violent incidents include rape, sexual battery other than rape, physical attack or fight with a weapon, threat of physical attack with a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon. Other incidents include possession of a firearm or explosive device, possession of a knife or sharp object, distribution of illegal drugs, possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs, sexual harassment, or vandalism. Principals were asked to report crimes that took place in school buildings, on school grounds, and on school buses during normal school hours and at school-sponsored events or activities. Population size is 82,000 public schools. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and missing cases. Number of schools and number of incidents are rounded to the nearest 100.

9 percent in small and medium-sized schools. Large schools also had a ratio of 90 incidents per 100,000 public school students, compared with medium-sized schools that had 38 serious violent crimes per 100,000.

Higher percentages of middle and high schools experienced serious violent crime than did elementary schools. Schools in central cities, although more likely to experience serious violent crime than those in towns and rural locales, did not differ significantly from urban fringe schools in terms of the percentage of schools reporting at least one incident.

City and urban fringe schools reported a higher ratio of violence than did those in towns or rural areas. School size along with such characteristics as minority enrollment and percentage of students eligible for free or reduced school meals are variables associated with levels of reported violence (see Table 5–1). In addition, schools were more likely to take serious disciplinary action against physical attacks or fights among students (see Figure 5–1).

**FIGURE 5–1** PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT TOOK A SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR SELECTED OFFENSES, BY TYPE OF OFFENSE: 1999–2000

![Bar chart showing percentage of public schools that took a serious disciplinary action for selected offenses, by type of offense: 1999–2000.](chart)

*Note:* Serious disciplinary action includes suspensions lasting 5 days or more, removals with no services (i.e., expulsions), and transfers to specialized schools.

Despite a recent wave of high-profile incidents of violence committed in schools across the United States, statistics show that violent crime—particularly homicide—is relatively rare in our schools. Although the number of school-based multiple-homicide events has increased, there still is less than one chance in a million of a school-related violent death (Heaviside et al., 1998).

**Teachers at Risk**

Students are not the only victims of violence and crime at school. Over the 5-year period from 1998 to 2003, teachers were the victims of approximately 234,000 total nonfatal crimes at school, including 144,000 thefts and 90,000 violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault). The average annual rate of violent victimization for teachers varied according to their sex, instructional level, and location. Over the 5-year period from 1998 to 2002, male teachers were more likely than female teachers to be victims of violent crimes, and senior high school and middle/junior high school teachers were more likely than elementary school teachers to be victims of violent crimes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). In addition to the personal toll that violence may take on teachers, those who worry about their safety may have difficulty teaching and may leave the profession altogether (Elliott, Hamburg, and Williams, 1998). Information on the number of crimes against teachers at school can help show the extent of the problem.

Although the majority of teachers believe that they are unlikely to be victims of violence in and around school, the opposite is true. Most teachers feel safe in their schools during the day, but after school hours many teachers, especially those in urban areas, do not. Women and younger, less experienced teachers are targets, but they are not the primary victims of violence among school staff. Teachers who are considered to be strict, insisting that students adhere to rigorous academic and behavioral standards, are most at risk of being victimized. Thirty-eight percent of teachers and 57 percent of students rank strict teachers as more at risk of victimization than any other members of the teaching staff (American Teacher, 1993).

Another dilemma confronting teachers is their response to violence. In other words, teachers are not only concerned about being victimized, they are also concerned about being sued if they intervene in student fights or acts of violence. They may not intervene aggressively because of fear of being accused of child abuse. In this age of litigation, some parents are eager to sue teachers for the slightest mishandling of their child, even if teachers may be justified in their actions.
EXPLAINING SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The troubled youngster becomes increasingly isolated, leaving him—the typical offender is male—with no counterbalance for his violent thoughts. He wants to make people pay attention to him. If he has seen enough examples of violence and bizarre behavior on television and in movies, video games, and comic books, similar feats may seem a good way to impress others. Being kicked out of class may trigger an impulsive act of aggression.

—Richard Harding, Vice president and clinical professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, Columbia

A number of theories explain violence and deviance in youth (see, generally, Seigle and Senna, 1999). A full discussion of these theories is beyond the scope of this book. Suffice it to say that many offenders are also victims of biological, social, and psychological conditions that drive their propensity toward violence. This is not to say that we should excuse violent behavior because of background or social conditions, but we must recognize that these trappings do influence antisocial as well as proper behavior. Likewise, we cannot predict who will turn violent or when.

We can only look at the research and past cases to make any kind of projection as to who may be on the road to violence. Over the years, however, attempts have been made to identify factors that may lead to violence and victimization in some youth. For purposes of this discussion, the risk factors are presented in eight categories. Children suffering from these risks are also victims because many of these conditions are beyond their control.

The first factor is referred to as character risks. In this group, researchers hypothesize that birth complications result in brain dysfunction and associated neurological and neuropsychological deficits that directly and indirectly predispose an individual to violent behavior (Moffitt and Silva, 1988). Birth complications, for example, could lead to cognitive deficits that translate to school failure, occupational failure, and, ultimately, engagement in violent behavior. Similarly, birth complications may contribute to a lack of self-control, resulting in explosive, impulsive aggression. Some of these children meet the diagnostic criteria for disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), conditions where the child resists authority, often aggressively. Although these are different disorders, they have related symptoms. The former is associated with poor attention and inappropriate behaviors, while the latter is more open defiance to authority. There exists a significant relationship between ADHD and ODD and risk for delinquency and violence (Moffitt and Silva, 1988).
In other words, many of these teens simply are unable to control themselves, and for years have constantly been criticized for their nonconformist impulsive behavior. Some of these youth resort to bullying to gain recognition or power over others. They feel that by bullying others, usually younger, weaker children, they gain a sense of satisfaction or getting even with authority (Olweus, 1994).

Some argue that violent youth are victims of environmental toxicants. A toxicologist researcher from the University of California at Santa Barbara argues that heavy metals and pesticides might hamper mental development and drive hyperactivity and impulsive behavior of youth. In other words, lead poisoning, which has already been established as a cause for poor mental development in youth, might be the culprit in teen violence. The researcher believes that hair samples should be taken from violent juvenile offenders to determine if such a relationship exists (Kisken, 1999).

A second risk factor is underdeveloped mental abilities. This factor is related to low verbal IQ, which ultimately leads to poor school achievement. This risk factor differs from the previous risk factor in that many children with ADHD have above average intelligence. Yet, children who do poorly in school, who cannot keep pace with their peers, are more likely to be truant or to stop attending altogether (Cairns, Cairns, and Neckerman, 1989). When they are not attending school, these youth are usually hanging out with others who are truant or who have dropped out of school. These deviant groups provide a setting where the opportunity for engaging in delinquent and violent behavior is significantly greater than it would be if a youngster enjoyed school and was doing well.

A third risk factor is the presence of early aggressive behaviors. There exists a relationship between aggressive and violent behavior and childhood impulsivity and child temperament. In other words, children who are aggressive and violent in adolescence most often exhibited the same behavior in kindergarten and first grade. Research has indicated that early conduct problems in kindergarten and first grade lead to poor school achievement in later grades, which, in turn, leads to delinquency in adolescence (Tremblay et al., 1992). A “difficult” temperament may be the cause of this continuum. Thus, a temperament characterized by high activity levels, inflexibility, easy frustration, impulsive behavior, and distraction usually will render a child more noncompliant and out of control. This may also relate to mental conditions such as ADHD, previously discussed.

A fourth risk factor is family relationships and influences. Children are socialized from a very young age about how to handle frustration, how to react to limits and consequences, and how to solve problems effectively and resolve disputes. Most of this socialization first occurs at home and in the family. The evidence is clear: parents of aggressive children punish
more frequently, but inconsistently and ineffectively. They also tend to
negatively reinforce coercive and manipulative child behavior and fail to
adequately reinforce positive, prosocial behavior. Psychologists argue that
raising boys to be strong and silent is promoting the outbreak of school
shootings and violence, subsequently causing the smoldering climate of
despair among male teenagers. In other words, American boys are reared
largely in keeping with the traditional code of male toughness, which
encourages boys to take action while inhibiting expressions of feeling and
gestures of physical affection.

Related to this concept is the coercive style of parent–child interaction.
This occurs when parents reinforce coercive child behavior and are inadver-
tently reinforced themselves—by giving in to their coercive child. In other
words, children learn that aggressive behavior often leads to parents’ giving
them what they want. By reacting to a parental request with an aggressive
response that is modeled on parental problem solving, “the child escapes
punishment, controls the social exchange, and continues desired behaviors”
(Patterson, 1992). One risk is that this learned style of interaction may be
generalized by the child from home to school, where it becomes part of a
child’s social repertoire with peers and teachers (Fraser, 1996). If a child
learns from parents to respond to authority with aggression and manipula-
tion (as in the case of bullies), he or she will have difficulty interacting
successfully in a school environment where other adults and authority fig-
ures make daily requests of the child. Obviously, parental harshness can
increase the risk of delinquency, possibly by increasing child resentment and
defiance, which are then expressed through truancy, poor school perform-
ance, and antisocial behavior. It is well researched that parental abuse and
neglect cause delinquency and antisocial behavior. The case of Rod Ferrell,
detailed in Focus 5–1, referred to as the vampire killer, illustrates a violent
youth who was exposed to a poor family environment. He was sentenced to
death in 1998 for the brutal killing of the parents of one of his followers.

Fifth is the exposure to violence and victimization. Evidence is
quickly mounting that exposure to violence, and particularly victimization
by violence, is associated with increased risk of perpetrating violence
(Thornberry, 1994). One study showed that adolescents victimized by
assault were more likely to have a history of criminal activity or to develop
criminal behavior subsequent to their assault (Rivara et al., 1995). Singer
and others (1997) showed that even after controlling for the effects of
demographic variables, parental monitoring, and watching aggressive
television, recent violence exposure was the most significant predictor of
self-reported violent behavior among third- to eighth-grade students,
accounting for 24 percent of the overall variance. Farrell and Bruce (1997)
also showed that exposure to community violence for urban sixth graders
Focus 5–1  Case of Rod Ferrell

Rod Ferrell was born in 1980. His mother was Sondra Ferrell, a 17-year-old married to Rick Ferrell, also a teen. Rick filed for a divorce and joined the military, while Sondra kept the child. Her parents also looked after Rod, who claimed Sondra’s father—his grandfather—raped him when he was 5 years old. Rod also claimed that as a young child, he was exposed to occult rituals and human sacrifices and was introduced to the “Dungeons & Dragons” role-playing game. Sondra eventually remarried and moved frequently with Rod before leaving him in Murray, Kentucky, and moving with her new husband to Michigan. His mother’s new husband allegedly told Rod that they were never coming back, and Sondra apparently became so upset that she divorced the man and moved back to Murray to be with Rod. (Her second husband also allegedly engaged in satanic rituals.) Around this time, Rod began to undergo some sort of transformation. He walked in cemeteries at night, cut himself so others could drink his blood, and told people he was a 500-year-old vampire named “Vesago.” His schoolwork slipped, and he began flagrantly disobeying his school’s policies, skipping class, smoking on campus, and generally defying teachers and school officials. He also indulged in playing “Vampire: The Masquerade,” a realistic role-playing game in which players act out vampiric scenarios in real time. His mother allowed him to stay out all night, use drugs, and skip school, and he frequently spent time with a young man named Stephen Murphy, who brought the teenage Ferrell into the vampire world and “crossed him over,” turning him into a presumptive vampire and giving him his name. By the spring of 1996, Rod was also talking long-distance to Heather Wendorf, who apparently told Rod that her parents were hurting her and that he would have to kill them to do so. In September 1996, Murphy attacked Ferrell, who refused treatment when taken to a local hospital. Murphy was convicted for the attack. Shortly after, Rod’s mother Sondra was charged with soliciting a minor—Murphy’s 14-year-old brother—to whom she wrote love letters, imploring him to “cross her over” and have her as his vampire bride.


was related to their self-reported violent behavior, although they did not find increases over time in the frequency of violent behavior related to violence exposure. Many of our children grow up in environments where they see violence daily. This is particularly true in gang-infested urban settings, where walking to school or the store becomes an exercise in victimization avoidance.

The sixth risk factor is the role of the media and its impact on violence. It is estimated that by the time a child reaches the age of 18 he or she will have witnessed more than 200,000 acts of television violence, including 33,000 murders (American Psychological Association, 1993). Violent acts,
defined as acts intended to injure or harm others, appear approximately 8 to 12 times an hour on prime-time television and about 20 times an hour on children’s programming (Sege and Dietz, 1994). There appear to be three main effects of violence in the media. One effect is that children who are exposed to high levels of media violence are more accepting of aggressive attitudes and, after watching violence, behave more aggressively with peers (Centerwall, 1992). A second effect is that more chronic and long-term exposure to violence can lead to desensitization to violence and its consequences, as in youth exposed to the consequences of a shooting or frequent violence. Third, children who watch a lot of violence on television seem to develop a “mean world syndrome.” In other words, viewing violence may increase a child’s fear of becoming a victim of violence because he or she comes to view the world as a mean and dangerous place. Furthermore, younger children may have particular difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality and may not be able to differentiate science fiction from their everyday experiences. In general, violence on television occurs frequently and is typically inconsequential, effective, and rewarded. It is practiced as often by the heroes as by the villains. Violence ends confrontations quickly and effectively, without the need for patience, negotiation, or compromise (Sege and Dietz, 1994).

A seventh factor is the **general influence of our culture**. Our culture is made up of many influences and seductions (other than the media) leading to temptations of the worst sort, especially for the emotionally insecure teen. Wooden (1995) addresses the influences of culture and how some youth respond by joining counterculture groups, such as the pale-faced gothics, to gain recognition. In other words, we live in a society thriving on a **toxic culture** (Criner, 1998). We see scantily dressed women advertising beer and profiteers selling toys glorifying gang lifestyles (Larrubia, 1999). Our youth are constantly bombarded with messages and images of defiance and independence in the form of tattoos, body jewelry, and clothing resembling gang attire. Although a youth with pierced nipples and tongue, green hair, or tattoos of Satan is not necessarily a threat to society, these popular symbols do suggest something negative about the person. For the delinquent computer genius in our culture, pornography and instructions on bomb design can be downloaded from the Internet, where novel ways to act on hatred or to harass others also can be found (Brogan, 1999). It is ironic that many youth are poisoned by the very culture that supposedly promotes values and order. In other words, there are mixed messages and contradictions present in our culture that many youth are unable to digest or understand.

A **final risk factor is the schools**. Research has concluded that the following school conditions are contributing sources of violence: (1) overcrowding; (2) high student-to-teacher ratios; (3) insufficient curricular
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and course relevance; combined with (4) low student academic achievement and apathy, which give rise to disruptiveness; (5) poor facilities design and portable buildings that both increase isolation and hamper internal communication (Rossman and Morley, 1996). In addition, the perception of violence and crime makes it difficult to attract and retain good teachers, particularly in inner-city schools. School discipline may suffer as teachers hesitate to confront misbehaving students because the teachers fear for their own safety. In addition, students are sophisticated enough to recognize a teacher’s limitations with respect to using discipline or force to gain compliance and retain order in his or her classroom (Rossman and Morley, 1996).

EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

Based on the previous discussion explaining youth violence, we can come to some conclusions on predicting or explaining violent behavior and victimization. Obviously, a teen who has been severely abused at home or reared in a dysfunctional family environment with criminal parents has an excellent chance of turning violent and becoming a client of the criminal justice system. Teachers are often in a pivotal position to recognize certain early warning signs indicating some internal conflict of the teen. It has been reported that troubled teens often give potential signals, such as writing a note or a journal entry or making a threat to a teacher or student. In other words, in more than half the incidents, some type of signal was given (Anderson et al., 2001).

Bullying

“Bullying is nothing but child abuse by peers,” according to Peter Fonagy, an internationally recognized authority on infant and child development.

Related to the risk factors of youth violence and victimization is bullying. School bullying is a type of antisocial behavior associated with violence. Bullying involves students intimidating or threatening others (as in the workplace) or making students do things they do not want to do. It has been reported that the link of bullying to violent crime is clear, with 60 percent of playground bullies having a criminal conviction by age 24, and 90 percent of young juvenile offenders victimized by bullying. In more than two-thirds of school shootings, there was clear and obvious influence of bullying by social groups and individuals (Holmes, 2003).

Bullying is more common in public schools than in private schools, but decreases as grade level increases. If not addressed, bullying can contribute to an environment of fear and intimidation in schools (Arnette and
The movement toward private school education may be attributed to the perception by some parents that private schools are safer and less intimidating for their children.

Understanding School Violence

In response to school violence and associated victimization, the U.S. Department of Education has published a guide to understanding school violence and possible warning signs of violent youth (Dwyer et al., 1998). The following signs are offered as a guide:

- **Social withdrawal.** In some situations, gradual and eventually complete withdrawal from social contacts can be an important indicator of a troubled child. The withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, or lack of confidence. Students who suddenly drop out of school activities may be experiencing problems.

- **Feelings of being alone.** Feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently. These feelings may result from divorce or other home problems.

- **Excessive feelings of rejection.** In the process of growing up, and in the course of adolescent development, many young people experience emotionally painful rejection. Children who are troubled often are isolated from their mentally healthy peers. Thus, those teens with ADHD, for example, may be cut off from others as a result of their mental state. Their responses to rejection may be violent.

- **Being a victim of violence.** Children who are victims of violence—including physical or sexual abuse—in the community, at school, or at home are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.

- **Feelings of being picked on and persecuted.** The youth who feels constantly picked on, teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, and humiliated at home or school may initially withdraw socially.

- **Low school interest and poor academic performance.** Poor school achievement can be the result of many factors. It is important to consider the reasons for these behaviors.

- **Expression of violence in writings and drawings.** Children and youth often express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions in their drawings and in stories, poetry, and other written expressive forms. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, an
overrepresentation of violence in writings and drawings that is directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, or other adults) consistently over time may signal emotional problems and the potential for violence.

- **Uncontrolled anger.** Everyone gets angry; anger is a natural emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.

- **Patterns of chronic hitting and bullying behaviors.** Children often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. But, when the behavior becomes constant, it may escalate into more serious behaviors.

- **History of discipline problems.** Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met. These problems may cause the child to violate norms and rules, defy authority, and engage in aggressive behaviors with other children and adults.

- **Past history of violent and aggressive behavior.** Youth who show an early pattern of antisocial behavior are particularly at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior. Similarly, youth who engage in overt behaviors (such as bullying, generalized aggression, and defiance) and covert behaviors (such as stealing, vandalism, lying, cheating, and firesetting) also are at risk for more serious aggressive behavior. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. Thus, children who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age are more likely to show violence later on than are children who begin such behavior at an older age.

- **Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes.** Teens who pick on minorities, join hate groups, or victimize individuals with disabilities or health problems should be treated as exhibiting early warning signs.

- **Drug use and alcohol use.** Drug and alcohol use reduces self-control and exposes children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, victims, or both.

- **Affiliation with gangs.** Youth gangs that support antisocial values and behaviors—including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students—are a source of fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by these groups—those who emulate and copy their behavior, as well as those who become affiliated with them—may adopt these values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations.
• Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms. Children who have a history of aggression, impulsiveness, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms and other weapons.

• Serious threats of violence. Recent incidents across the country clearly indicate that threats to commit violence against oneself or others should be taken very seriously. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of these threats and to prevent them from being carried out.

An added dimension to identifying problem students is the concept of “student profiling.” The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has been providing local law enforcement and school officials access to programs to forecast future criminal behavior. This program has been developed by the FBI to provide a list of behavior traits to help those closest to the students—their teachers and school leaders—identify children who might be at risk.

To the FBI, telltale signs of trouble include having parental troubles, disliking popular students, experiencing a failed romance, and listening to songs with violent lyrics (Billupps, 1999). In a similar profiling program, the Capital Times in Springfield, Illinois, reports that one school district’s administrators are measuring students against a behavior checklist that includes use of abusive language, cruelty to animals, and writings reflecting an interest in “the dark side of life.” Students who fit the profile can undergo counseling, be transferred to an alternative education program, or even be expelled (Greenberg, 1999).

What does all this suggest? In simplistic terms, teens who constantly fight, steal, set fires, show disrespect for the rights of others, threaten violence, destroy property, and so forth need swift and immediate attention. Parents or teachers who ignore these signs are either in denial, fearful of confronting the issue or problem student, or lacking in native intelligence. It is recognized that many teens hate school because it places stresses on them that they are unable to handle. It may be the curriculum, the preppy atmosphere, rejection by so-called popular “in” groups, or the general social setting. But, however trivial these circumstances may seem to the outsider, they are very real and serious to adolescents. Renegade students can victimize anyone at any time, and schools (teachers, students, and even a parent) are potential targets—not for what they have done, but for what they represent. Yet, schools must guard against overreactive policies that are counterproductive and harmful.
Responding to School Violence

Now that you have some idea of the risks and contributing factors to teen violence and victimization in schools, the focus shifts to what to do about it. Clearly, schools, society, or parents cannot prevent all teen violence. The best we can hope for is to develop plans and try to intervene if there is evidence of impending violence. Many schools are increasing their security policies and systems to address the problems of crime and violence. A number of school districts employ security officers. For example, the Los Angeles school district employs more than 300 security officers who have full police powers. They patrol campuses and investigate crimes occurring on or near school property. In some communities, schools have formed special police units to address violence in the schools. In 1991, Cleveland public schools, in collaboration with the local police, created a Youth Gang Unit. A relatively small contingent of half a dozen officers service 127 schools and more than 73,000 students. From 1991 to 1993, the schools noted a nearly 40 percent reduction in school gang incidents, dropping from 381 in 1991 to 231 in 1993 (Huff and Trump, 1996). The police presence in 1997 continued to deter gang activity at schools in the Cleveland district. Other districts have installed metal detectors to reduce the risk of gang-involved youth bringing firearms or other weapons into schools.

Some safety measures at schools are implemented specifically to reduce gang activity and children's exposure to gangs at school. More than half of school administrators report they have banned gang clothing and insignias (Thayer, 1996). Sometimes schools partner with communities to restrict vehicle access to school parking lots (to decrease loitering and quick drug sales) or with local law enforcement agencies to create violence-free school zones.

The National School Safety Center (1990) recommends that a security plan be prepared to decrease the chances of school violence. It recommends that the following general security measures be taken:

- School districts should establish a local school security committee or task force of school districts.
- This task force should plan and implement needed safety measures, including regular review of safety and security measures.
- Crime prevention expertise should be developed and greater responsibility taken by school administrators in working with the school boards and districts.
- Students, parents, law enforcement agencies, state government officials, and community-based groups should become involved in developing and implementing crime prevention efforts.
• A comprehensive crisis management plan that incorporates resources available through other community agencies should be developed by schools. Regular updates on safety plans and in-service training should be conducted for certified staff, classified staff, part-time employees, and substitute teachers to keep them informed.

• Volunteers from the community, as well as parents, should help patrol surrounding neighborhoods and supervise the campus before, during, and after school.

• Students should be taught to take responsibility for their own safety by learning personal safety and conflict resolution techniques.

• A curriculum committee should be established to focus on teaching students nonviolence, conflict resolution, and good decision-making techniques; developing prosocial skills; and incorporating a law-related education series.

• Alternative schools should be established to handle problem students. When these offenders are expelled from school, other programs must be in place to keep them off the streets where they may perpetrate violent incidents.

Mirroring the recommendations of the National School Safety Center of 1990, the U.S. Department of Education offers additional strategies for providing a safe physical environment for students (Dwyer et al., 1998). In other words, prevention starts by making sure the school campus is a safe and caring place. Responsible student behavior begins with a well-organized, attractive school environment.

The U.S. Department of Education recommends:

• Supervising access to the building and grounds.

• Reducing class size and school size.

• Adjusting scheduling to minimize time in the hallways or in potentially dangerous locations. Traffic flow patterns can be modified to limit potential for conflicts or altercations.

• Conducting a building safety audit in consultation with school security personnel and/or law enforcement experts. Effective schools adhere to federal, state, and local nondiscrimination and public safety laws and use guidelines set by the state department of education.

• Closing school campuses during lunch periods.

• Adopting a school policy requiring uniforms.
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- Arranging supervision at critical times (e.g., in hallways between classes) and having a plan to deploy supervisory staff to areas where incidents are likely to occur.
- Prohibiting students from congregating in areas where they are likely to engage in rule-breaking or intimidating and aggressive behaviors.
- Having adults visibly present throughout the school building. This includes encouraging parents to visit the school.
- Staggering dismissal times and lunch periods.
- Monitoring the surrounding school grounds, including landscaping, parking lots, and bus stops.
- Coordinating with local police to ensure that there are safe routes to and from school.

The physical condition of the school building also has an impact on student attitude, behavior, and motivation to achieve. Typically, more incidents of fighting and violence tend to occur in school buildings that are dirty, too cold or too hot, filled with graffiti, in need of repair, or unsanitary.

Arguments have been raised supporting the idea that school violence and victimizations can be reduced by eliminating the mandatory age for attending (Toby, 1995). By allowing other options to those who do not want to be in school, the learning climate will improve and schools will be safer. Some of these teens may simply be productive elsewhere. However, if these troubled adolescents are not provided with constructive options, their violent behaviors will only be shifted from the school to the streets.

The proponents of mandatory schooling argue that schools offer supervision, albeit often imperfect. Requiring students to be in school several hours a day reduces the threat of community violence and victimizations, at least for the time students are in school. In addition, crime targets are not as numerous in school as they are outside of school. The general school atmosphere interferes with student deviance, such as drinking and drug use; and schooling helps to contain crime and identify the perpetrators to appropriate authorities.

Zero-tolerance policies are used by many states and the federal government to address problems of weapons and drugs in schools. The

Zero tolerance is code language for no patience, no mercy and no empathy. The school system has failed children, law enforcement has failed, parents have failed and now they want to lock up our children.

—Captain Dennis Muhammad, Educating Neighborhoods to Obey Those in Authority (ENOTA Program)
Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, for example, provides that no federal financial assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is available to school districts that do not have at least one year of mandatory expulsion for students who bring firearms to school. Ninety-one percent of schools have adopted zero-tolerance policies for bringing a weapon to school (Cauchon, 1999).

Most schools also have zero-tolerance policies for alcohol and drugs, and violations often require mandatory expulsion, no matter how small the infraction. It stands to reason that states, confronted with the possibility of losing federal funds, have encouraged school districts to pursue zero-tolerance policies zealously. There are now accounts of students across the country being unjustly punished because any student found with a weapon or drug, regardless of reason or the student’s background, faces the possibility of sanctions such as expulsion or arrest. For example, a 10-year-old girl was handcuffed and taken to a police station and held for 8 hours because she brought a pair of scissors to school. The scissors were necessary to work on a school project.

The intent of zero tolerance is both preventive and punitive. In other words, when students have knowledge of such policies, they may be less likely to bring weapons or drugs to school (and parents are more likely to monitor their children’s behavior), and if there are infractions, swift and severe punishment will result.

Although zero-tolerance polices have a place in school security, there is the threat of overenforcement, which may undermine school–community relations and label students unfairly. Focus 5–2 indicates how zero tolerance policies can be applied too harshly and result in injustice.

Focus 5–2  A Father’s Mistake Penalizes Honor Student

An honor student maintained a straight-A average the entire sophomore year while participating in first-string varsity athletics. The student was a very focused youth with plans to attend the U.S. Naval Academy. One day a random drug search was carried out on students’ autos in the school parking lot. The search revealed no drugs. But during the search of one car, a scraper blade and small pocketknife were found in the auto, which was registered to the student’s father. The student’s father had used the instruments the night before to replace the metal anchor for the rearview mirror on the front windshield of the car. The father had carelessly left the instruments in the vehicle. However, the student, who had no history of trouble, was informed that he would receive a penalty of 3 days suspension and 45 days of alternative school. Although the father took responsibility, it made no difference to school officials.
Expulsion of students and their referral to the juvenile justice system under the zero-tolerance philosophy are forms of victimization, as in the case at a middle school in Dallas, Texas, of an honor student who also was a violinist, cheerleader, and student council member. The student, who had never been in trouble at school, was expelled and faced confinement in a juvenile boot camp for bringing a 20-ounce bottle of Cherry 7-Up mixed with a few drops of grain alcohol to school (Cauchon, 1999). Thus, although zero-tolerance policies have become standard operating procedure in the nation’s public schools, there have been a number of criticisms. Although supporters have credited zero-tolerance policies with helping to reduce drugs and firearms and with making students feel safer in school, such policies have been condemned for inflexibility, for failure to apply discretion on a case-by-case basis. A number of state cases reject zero-tolerance policies (see Stone v. Prosser, 971 P.2d 125 [Wash. App. 1999]; Wood v. Henry County Public Schools, 495 S.E. 2d 255 [Va. 1998]).

An appellate court in Pennsylvania held that a school’s policy of zero tolerance exceeded the authority of the school board in that it denied the superintendent, the school board, and the students the exercise of discretion specifically provided by the school code. In that case, a seventh-grade A student was expelled for possessing a miniature Swiss army knife. The student found the knife in the school hallway and was asked to turn it over when a teacher observed him with it. The student was expelled with no consideration of his record or background. The Pennsylvania court made clear that this zero-tolerance policy, even though not in writing, was nonetheless a school board policy that frustrated the legislative intent that the state’s expulsion statute not be “blindly applied” (Lyons vs. Penn Hill School District, 1999).

**Summary**

Schools are subcultures, mirroring the problems and trappings of society. Students struggling in their personal lives, or suffering from assorted risk factors, are candidates for failure and victimization. They bring to school fears, insecurities, and anger, often making poor decisions in their daily lives. A student who is rejected by his or her peers or who is performing poorly will not bond well. At an age when impressions are important, a number of students will fall through the cracks, victimized by the very institution that is designed to educate and prepare them for the adult world. Schools must become proactive in identifying problem students. Yet, this does not mean that schools should embark on witch hunts or demand that students conform to strict dress codes and unreasonable
zero-tolerance polices. It may be that schools are falling behind in their mission, or perhaps some students would be better served if they left school a year or so early, instead of being forced into curricula that serve neither their interests nor those of society.

**KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Coercive style of parent–child interaction
- Community violence
- Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994
- National Institute of Education
- National School Safety Center
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- Safe School Study
- School bullying
- Toxic culture
- U.S. Department of Education
- Zero tolerance

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

1. Discuss several risk factors that contribute to youth violence.
2. Explain how schools are a source of victimization.
3. Interview a school counselor or administrator and determine what is being done to reduce the threat of school violence.
4. Should some public schools require dress codes? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this requirement?
5. Should student rights regarding search and seizure and other forms of privacy be eliminated to combat violence and drugs? Which is more important, the rights of the student or of society at large?
6. Observe students after the school day and determine where they congregate. Are there particular hangouts that are potential trouble spots? What can be done about them?
7. Interview a police officer and determine what types of problems occur around schools.
8. What can teachers do to minimize their risk for victimization at school?

**WEB SOURCES**


RECOMMENDED READINGS


REFERENCES


School Violence and Victimization


