

Unit 7: Gang Crime



Time Required: 2.5 hours

Resources Needed

- OVC *Listen and Learn* DVD (clip: Gang-Related Homicide/Teri)
- *Participant Workbook*
- TV and DVD player
- Chalkboard or tear sheets

Prior to the Session

- Consider gathering local and state statistics and newspaper or magazine article clippings for the discussion about gang crime trends.
- Research your state's statutes related to gang crime; be prepared to provide information to participants about these statutes.

Objectives

- Define **gang crime**.
- Provide examples of gang crime.
- Describe current trends in gang crimes.
- Explain the impact of gang crime on victims.
- Discuss thoughts and feelings about being held accountable for gang crimes.



Facilitator Tip

- Confront assertions about “innocent” and “guilty” victims or gang members who deserved the treatment they received.
- Note that families of gang members are harmed by their actions.
- Avoid participants’ rationalizations about victims being in the “wrong place at the wrong time.”
- Avoid discussions about gang intervention and prevention; keep the focus on victim impact.



What Is Gang Crime?

Gang crime refers to criminal activity committed by individual gang members or a group of gang members. Due to the seriousness of gang violence, many states have included legal “enhancements” for gang behavior. This means that if a crime is determined to be gang influenced or gang related, the offender’s sentence can be increased. Gang crime includes, but is not limited to, graffiti, extortion, drug sales, burglary, home invasion, physical assault, sexual assault, and murder.

Because of the violent nature of many gangs, whose members often carry weapons, victims of gang violence often suffer severe or fatal injuries, and may face the possibility of having multiple family members and relatives injured or killed by gang crime. Some families bury two or three of their children within a short period of time.



Have participants read the “Words To Know” aloud.

Delivery options read words aloud yourself, write the words on a chalkboard or tear sheet, selecting participants to read words aloud, or divide participants into small groups or pairs and have them discuss the terms among themselves. For all delivery options, survey participants to ensure that they understand the terms before moving on.



Words To Know

Extortion: The use of fear of death, injury, property loss, or damage to reputation to induce or compel another to deliver property or perform some act of omission.

Intimidation: The act of making others do what one wants through fear.

Retaliation: Action taken in return for an injury or offense or a response to perceived wrongdoing.

Victim blaming: Holding victims completely or partially responsible for what offenders do to them.



Group Discussion

After reading the “What Is Gang Crime” section, have participants discuss their thoughts and reactions and identify common themes or patterns.

Delivery options include taking turns with participants in reading the content aloud; dividing participants into small groups or pairs for part of the session; referring back to “Words To Know” as they appear in the unit; covering only a few sentences or paragraphs at a time. Solicit feedback from participants on an ongoing basis to ensure that they understand the material. Ask the following: “Do you understand what we are talking about?” “Talk about the information in your own words.” “What do you think?” “What is your reaction?” “What are you feeling?” “Do you know of other examples?” Encourage note taking.



In the News: Gang Crime Trends

This section offers recent statistics about gang crimes. Select specific participants to read gang crime trends aloud. If you have gathered local and state statistics, integrate them into your discussion on gang crime trends. If you have found newspaper or magazine articles relevant to gang crime, read them out loud or assign participants into groups of three to discuss and then present the information to the larger group.

When discussing gang crime trends:

- Use local news articles, reviewing them carefully to avoid overly complex issues. Make sure that the articles do not identify offenders in your facility or victims in your community.
- Ask participants which trends do not surprise them.
- Come up with additional questions, if desired.

Examples of Gang Crime

The *Participant Workbook* offers examples of gang crime along with personal stories. Share any state-specific statutes you have found that are related to gang crime. Remember to use varied delivery options when discussing the examples of gang crime.

Triad Session

Have participants write down their answers to the questions under each example. Then, in groups of three, have participants share their responses with one another and offer feedback. Finally, bring the larger group back together to review and discuss participants' responses.

What Is the Impact of Gang Crime?

Gang violence and gang crimes have a devastating impact on victims, their families, and their communities. These crimes create a ripple effect throughout several areas in victims' lives: financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual.

Chalkboard Exercise

Have participants take turns reading from the areas of impact lists. Solicit additional examples from the group, looking for the following:

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical bills • Funeral expenses • Wage loss • _____ • _____ 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken bones • Stress reactions • Problems sleeping • _____ • _____
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger • Sadness • Guilt • Depression • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____ 	<p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the goodness of others • Questioning faith • Forgiveness issues • _____ • _____ • _____ • _____

**Facilitator Note**

For participants who say that they have never committed gang crime, ask them whether they or someone they know was ever a victim of gang crime and what the impact of that crime was.

**OVC Listen and Learn DVD****Teri is the mother of 16-year-old Anthony, who was murdered by gang members.**

Consider stopping and starting the video to reinforce key points and then initiate discussion at the end. Possible discussion questions and answers include the following:

What was the emotional impact of Anthony's murder on Teri?

- It was "hard to deal with" learning about the circumstances of her son's murder, as well as the condition in which his body was found.
- She suffered from memory loss.

How did the impact of Anthony's murder affect Teri physically?

- She couldn't go back to work for a while.
- She found it difficult to respond to people's questions about her son's murder.

How can gang members demonstrate accountability and remorse for harming and/or killing others?

- Understand that, as Teri says, the "victim's family . . . they're not going to go on, because their life is forever changed."
- Demonstrate nonviolent, noncriminal behavior.
- Pay restitution for funerals or any counseling for the surviving family members of the victim.

**Being Accountable for Your Crimes**

Gang crime has a serious physical and emotional impact on victims. Families are subjected to multiple tragedies as parents, children, and relatives are seriously injured and killed. **Remind participants that no one has the right to harm or intimidate another person or to destroy someone's property regardless of the circumstances.**

**Group Discussion**

Have participants read the accountability statements in their workbooks and share their thoughts with the group. Now have them read the quote on the same page by a victim of attempted murder. How would they feel if the victim was a friend or family member? Have participants write three of their own accountability statements.

**Additional Activities**

If time permits after covering the material in this unit, you may conduct the additional activities listed on the next few pages before debriefing participants. You may also want to schedule a guest victim/survivor speaker.

Activity A – How Does Gang Crime Affect Its Victims?

Objective: Participants focus on the effects of a gang-related assault.

Ask participants to pick one scenario from the “Examples of Gang Crime” section in their workbooks. Then, have them fill out “How Does Gang Crime Affect Its Victims?” at the end of this unit, using specific examples of the physical, emotional, financial, and religious/spiritual harm that the victims suffered.

Activity B – Restitution

Objective: Participants think about how they can make amends.

Have participants read and discuss the accountability statements in their workbooks. Have participants write three of their own accountability statements.

Activity C – The Tran Family

Objective: Participants focus on the effects of a gang crime on a specific victim and his family rather than thinking about gang crime in a general sense.

Read the following scenario or have participants take turns reading it (the scenario is also found at the end of this unit in the *Participant Workbook*).

When Mr. Tran fled his war-torn country 24 years ago, he vowed he would never pick up a gun again. As a member of this country’s Special Forces, he had seen enough killing.

But Friday, Mr. Tran took up a shotgun trying to defend his family from alleged gang members who had showered his home with 43 bullets. The Tran’s house has been shot at five times in 6 months. No one has been injured, but they are scared they will be killed the next time.

The detective assigned to the case said that the attacks are a feud between two Asian gangs. Tran, who immigrated to the United States in 1984, didn’t ask for police help until after the third attack. The detective investigating the case said that this is common and that the shooters know their victims don’t usually call police. Tran’s children have told police they don’t know the shooters’ identities, but detectives think that the children aren’t telling all that they know. The gangs have been known to retaliate against entire families.

One son was in a gang, but got out after being shot and nearly killed. He moved away from his family. Frightened for the rest of his children’s lives, Mr. Tran sent some of his children to live in another city, but they miss their parents and younger siblings, so they come home to visit.

The daughter and some of the other children were home the day of the most recent afternoon attack. A van drove by the house firing shots. The shooting went on so long that Tran’s wife screamed at her husband to shoot back. Tran hadn’t carried a gun since his vow, but he could no longer ignore the assault raging outside. Too afraid to leave the house, he simply fired two warning blasts into the wall of his kitchen.

He spent \$1,000 on a home-security system to help identify the young men he saw cruising his street and laughing at the bullet holes. The police department offered to put Mr. Tran’s family up in a hotel after the attack as part of a witness-protection program, but they refused.

The family knows the danger they pose to the rest of the neighborhood, and they are ashamed of how their neighbors may view them. Mr. Tran’s daughter cried when describing how she feels. “It hurts,” she said, turning her head as she wiped away tears. “We don’t want people to think we are bad people.”

After the first few shootings, neighbors stopped coming by to check on them, except for one neighbor, who helps fill the bullet holes. “We do not want to live in fear. I am a father, I am working so hard to support my children,” he said.

Have an open discussion or have participants answer specific questions:

How has Mr. Tran changed his lifestyle because of crime and violence?

Possible answers: He broke his personal vow about guns, sent his children somewhere else to live, and his relationship with his neighbors has changed.

What special issues do Mr. Tran and his family have to deal with?

Possible answers: Mr. Tran and his family live in the same neighborhood as the gang members, the gang members flaunt their behavior, the son was in a gang and was shot, and the gang members think Mr. Tran won't call the police.

What do you think will happen to the Tran family?

Possible answers: Family members may be injured or killed, they may continue to be threatened, all of the children may be sent away, the police may catch the gang members, the family may move, and Mr. Tran may shoot someone.

How do you think Mr. Tran will feel if he picks up a gun again and shoots someone?

Possible answers: He may suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder or feel guilty, fearful, or ashamed; alternatively, he may feel vindicated that he has protected his family.

Activity D – Victim Experiences

Objective: Help participants understand what victims and survivors of gang crimes might experience.

Break participants into groups of three and assign each group a scenario on the “Victim Experiences” worksheet at the end of this unit. Have each group discuss what the victim/survivor in their assigned scenario might go through, and then have them explain their thoughts to the larger group.

The scenarios, and possible experiences that victims/survivors face in each scenario, follow:

- A 50-year-old businessman is assaulted by gang members when he attempts to stop them from spraying a local business with graffiti. His briefcase and cell phone are also stolen. He is willing to fully cooperate with law enforcement and is willing to testify in court.
Possible Experiences: Threats from gang members at home or work, as gang members have access to his personal and professional information. With threats to family, friends, or coworkers, a victim may refuse to testify. The victim may be blamed: “He should have known better than to confront gang members.”
- An 18-year-old single mom is raped by two gang members and later threatened by other gang members at her job. She is on probation for a burglary and has been “gang-free” for 2 years.
Possible Experiences: The victim may not call the police because she is on probation and feels that she may not be believed. She may be threatened on an ongoing basis. Her children may be harmed. She may be pregnant or have a sexually transmitted disease. She may get fired from her job if the gang members continue to threaten her at her job.
- A gang member is killed in front of his house by a rival gang member. His mother does not speak English, and her other son is 10 years old.
Possible Experiences: The police and others may not be very helpful because the victim is a gang member. The mother will have language barriers with the police, detectives, and other court personnel. The mother may be blamed for “allowing” her son to be in a gang. The 10-year-old brother may have to interpret for the mother.
- A 5-year-old child is at the park with his aunt. While at the park, he is killed during a drive-by shooting. There are many adults and children at the park who may have witnessed the shooting.
Possible Experiences: The aunt may feel guilty and the family may blame her for taking the boy to the park. The family will have to identify the little boy and make funeral arrangements. The family will have to notify other family members of the death. Despite the number of witnesses, they may be afraid to identify the offenders or testify in court.

Activity E – Long-Term Impact

Objective: Demonstrate that for many victims, crime has a life-long impact.

Show participants the clip of Teri discussing the murder of her son Anthony. Anthony was in a gang and was killed by gang members. Teri plans to attend the parole hearings of all the offenders. Discuss with participants what Teri may experience before, during, and after the parole hearings.

Possible questions/prompts follow:

- Will Teri have to request notification or will notification automatically occur?
- How much notice or time will she have to prepare for the hearings?
- Who will pay for Teri to drive or fly to the hearings?
- Will Teri be allowed to speak at the hearings?
- Describe Teri's emotions before, during, and after the hearings.
- If you were Teri, would you attend the hearings? Why or why not?
- Will Teri have any rights if the offenders are paroled?

Recommended Speaker

Have an appropriate speaker address the class on the topic of gang crime. Listening to victim/survivor speakers may be uncomfortable for offenders. Make sure to instruct participants beforehand about appropriate behavior during the speaker's presentation. (See "Implementing the Program" for information about recruiting, selecting, and screening speakers and on how to prepare both speakers and participants for the experience.)



Discussion/Wrap-Up

Discuss what participants learned in the Gang Crime unit. Address any questions they may have.

Unit 7 Participant Worksheets

Activity A – How Does Gang Crime Affect Its Victims?

Select one of the examples of gang crime in your workbook and think about the very specific ways that victims would be affected or harmed. Write your answers in the chart below.

Chosen example: _____

<p>Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____
<p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____ 	<p>Religious/Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • _____

Activity C – The Tran Family

Read the following scenario.

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Activity D – Victim Experiences

Read your assigned scenario and determine what the victim might experience. (The facilitator will assign each group one scenario to discuss.)

A 50-year-old businessman is assaulted by gang members when he attempts to stop them from spraying a local business with graffiti. His briefcase and cell phone are also stolen. He is willing to fully cooperate with law enforcement and is willing to testify in court.

An 18-year-old single mom is raped by two gang members and later threatened by other gang members at her job. She is on probation for a burglary and has been “gang-free” for 2 years.

A gang member is killed in front of his house by a rival gang member. His mother does not speak English, and her other son is 10 years old.

A 5-year-old child is at the park with his aunt. While at the park, he is killed during a drive-by shooting. There are many adults and children at the park who may have witnessed the shooting.
