

Warning Signs of Youth Violence:

The presence of some of the signs or factors listed below should alert us to the possibility that an individual may be at risk of violence. It should be noted, however, that the presence of one or more signs or factors does not necessarily mean that the person will be violent.

Some signs of potential for violence may be historical or static (unchangeable) factors like:

- A history of violent or aggressive behavior
- Young age at first violent incident
- Having been a victim of bullying
- History of discipline problems or frequent conflicts with authority
- Early childhood abuse or neglect
- Having witnessed violence at home
- Family or parent condones use of violence
- A history of cruelty to animals
- Having a major mental illness
- Being callous or lacking empathy for others
- History of vandalism or property damage

Other signs of potential violence may be present over time and may escalate or contribute to the risk of violence given a certain event or activity. These might include:

- Serious drug or alcohol use
- Gang membership or strong desire to be in a gang
- Access to or fascination with weapons, especially guns
- Trouble controlling feelings like anger
- Withdrawal from friends and usual activities
- Regularly feeling rejected or alone
- Feeling constantly disrespected

Some signs of potential violence may be new or active signs. They might look like:

- Increased loss of temper
- Frequent physical fighting
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Increased risk-taking behavior
- Declining school performance
- Acute episode of major mental illness
- Planning how to commit acts of violence
- Announcing threats or plans for hurting others
- Obtaining or carrying a weapon

There is research that indicates that new or active signs are more predictive of short-term risk of violence than historical factors, which may be more predictive of longer-term risk.

More information on [Warning Signs of Youth Violence](#)