

Common Myths About Gangs

My gang will protect me, and I will feel safe.

Wrong! While you may believe that joining a gang will protect you from bullies or other gang members, being in a gang greatly increases your chances to be a target for rival gang members. You are far more likely to be injured or killed if you are in a gang. Many former gang members report that they had to change their lives dramatically as a gang member. They could no longer wear clothing they used to wear. They got into fights while attending school with rival gang members, and ended up dropping out of school. They felt unsafe going out of their neighborhoods, and they couldn't ever be sure where rivals might confront them. Even if they got out of gangs, their rivals didn't forget them. They still had many enemies who might hurt or kill them.

Other people will respect me more if I am in a gang.

Wrong! Respect in many gangs really means fear. If you join a gang, you will constantly have to commit crimes in order to keep other gang members afraid of you. At any age, respect is something you can earn by getting an education and accomplishing goals in your life. Respect in the gang culture will go away the first time you fail to hurt someone who insults you or puts you down. That kind of respect isn't real, and it doesn't last.

Joining a gang means I'll have lots of friends.

You will have friends, but you'll also make lots of enemies--the members of rival gangs. Also, your friends who haven't joined the gang may stop wanting to be around you. Your gang may not approve if you have friends or date people outside the gang. They may question and test your loyalty, and insist that you hang out only with them.

My gang will be just like a family.

Wrong! Real families don't force people to commit crimes to get respect and love. Real families accept you and love you for who and what you are. Even if your family is having problems, being in a gang will not solve them--it will only make things worse. If you join a gang, your family members may become targets for rival gangs. Joining a gang will only increase the number of fights you have with your parents. You will eventually get into trouble with the law, and your parents and family members will be hurt and disappointed. You will set a bad example for your brothers and sisters. You will not find the kind of love you're looking for from a gang.

I'll make lots of money if I'm in a gang.

Most gang members make very little money being part of a gang. Those who do, usually end up doing time. Plus, if you're in a gang, it's far more likely that you'll drop out of school because of problems with rival gang members. Getting your education is the key to making money--not joining a gang.

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I can never get out of my gang.

Wrong! Gang members decide to leave the gang lifestyle every day in cities around the U.S. It is a myth that the only way to leave a gang is by dying. Most gang members who leave are able to live normal lives, going to school and working just like everyone else. However, in some cases, getting out of a gang isn't easy, and you may have to leave your home, school or community in order to be safe. It IS easier to get into a gang than to get out of one, but you can choose to leave the gang life today. **The best option of all is to stay out of gangs in the first place.**

SOURCE: Michelle Arciaga of the National Youth Gang Center

The information on these two pages describes what life is like in a gang in America. The arguments against gang culture are relevant to us, but are not written with British experience in mind. Choose any of the statements and write an argument against it, in the same style, based on life locally.

NOTES:

What Are Gangs?

DEFINITION OF GANGS IN LONDON

Gangs of youths on a Peckham estate, where weapons related deaths have occurred, made lives miserable for the people who lived there.

Some gangs can be violent with many members carrying weapons such as knives.

Some members of a gang on the Peckham estate had convictions for theft, assault and drugs.

It is often difficult to bring these gang members to court as they are so young.

And many people are too frightened to give evidence against them.

SOURCE: withheld

For director of Kids Company, Camilla Batmanghelidjh, teen gangs are a "loose collective of lone children who turn to each other for support". From her experience of working with children from inner cities, she says, members of teen gangs do not have any supportive adults in their lives, fail at school and feel on the outside of society. She believes: "Gang membership provides these young people with a sense of belonging, that they do not benefit from anywhere else."



SOURCE:<http://www.youngminds.org.uk/magazine/69/wahab.php>

What Are Gangs?

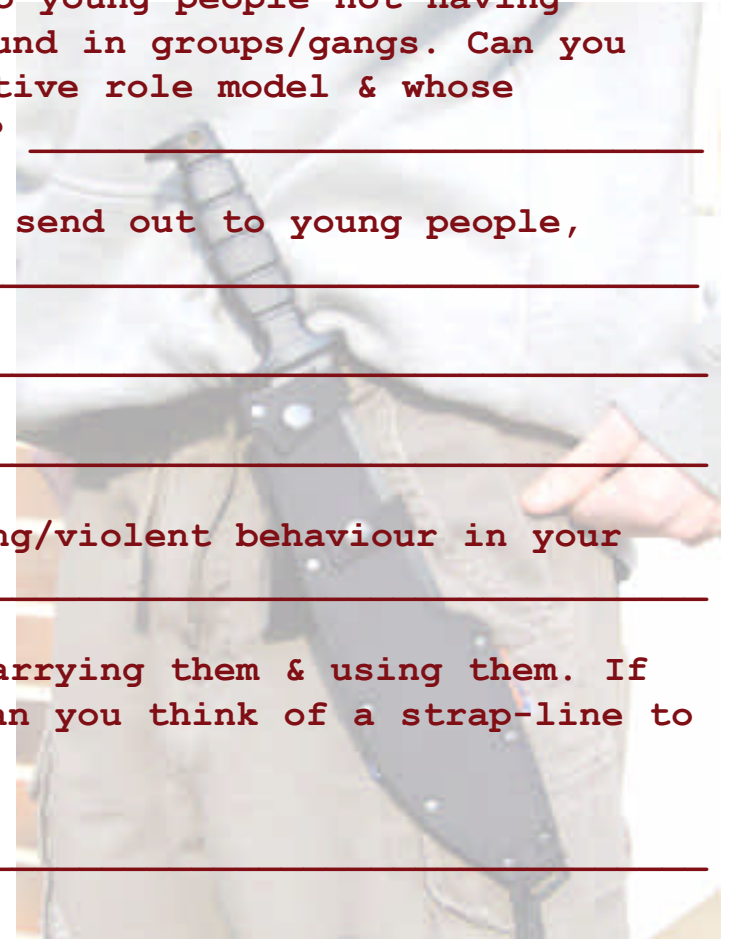
Opposite is a description of the gangs that terrorised the area in which Damilola Taylor lived and was killed plus that of a professional in children's services.

It has been suggested that the problem of gangs is due to young people not having positive role models or things to do other than hang around in groups/gangs. Can you suggest somebody who you think could be seen as a positive role model & whose behaviour would persuade young people away from violence? _____

You should think of a message that your role model could send out to young people, write it as a text message. _____

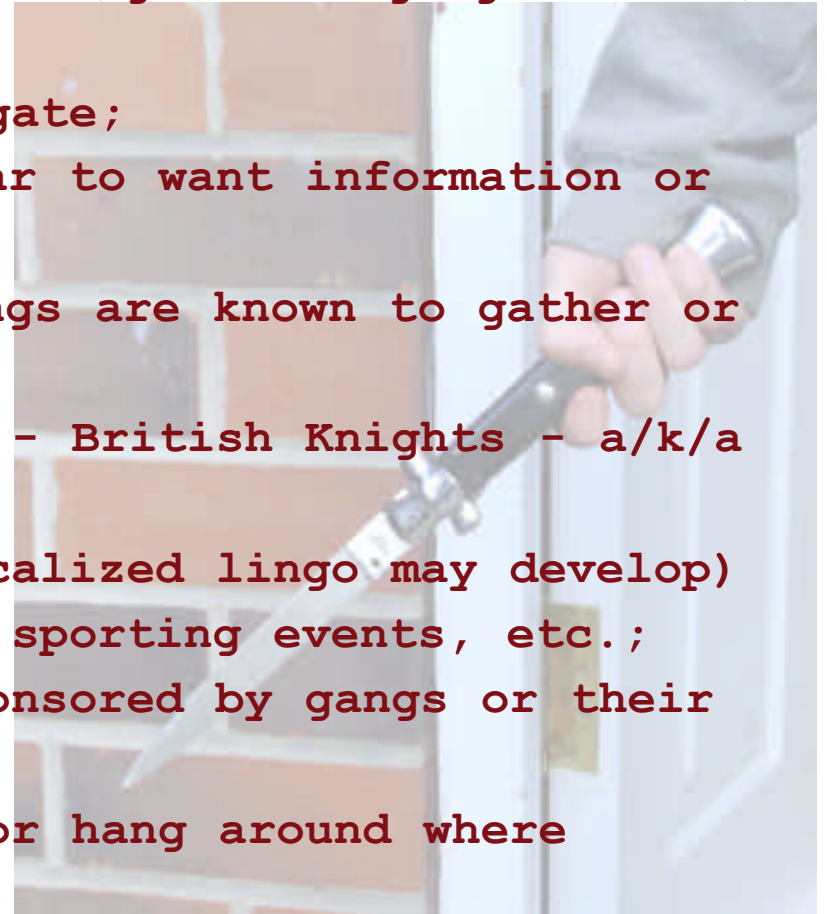
Suggest an activity that you think would help prevent gang/violent behaviour in your area. _____

Those who already have weapons need persuading to stop carrying them & using them. If the government were to produce an advertising campaign can you think of a strap-line to accompany TV, Radio & press adverts? _____



Gangs?

- (1) associate with gang members or "wannabe/gonnabe" gang members;
- (2) identify or communicate with gangs;
- (3) hang out near or where gangs congregate;
- (4) approach strangers in cars who appear to want information or directions;
- (5) wear gang-related clothing where gangs are known to gather or traverse;
- (6) wear initialled clothing such as BK - British Knights - a/k/a "Blood Killer" in high crime areas;
- (7) use words like "Crab" or "Slob" (localized lingo may develop) anywhere gangs may be; i.e., malls, sporting events, etc.;
- (8) attend any party or social event sponsored by gangs or their associates;
- (9) take part in any graffiti activity or hang around where graffiti is present; or
- (10) use any kind of finger or sign language in a public place.



SOURCE: <http://www.gangwar.com/parent1.htm#advise>

Gangs?

Opposite is a list of advice of things to avoid for young people who are at risk from becoming involved in dangerous gang culture.

Many young people congregate in groups that could be seen by outsiders as 'Gang' type behaviour. This misunderstanding can cause problems, Police getting reports have to respond and move the young people on.

Below make a list of advice to parents & Police on how to identify whether groups of young people are just hanging out:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____



When I Die

When i die

Tell my brothers thanks for always being there for me no matter wat i did
tell them i love them more than they cud ever know

When i die

Tell my twin its ok to b differnt but not ok to b like ev1 else

WHen i die

Tell Shada CHantelle Sasha Cynthia Leah and the rest that i love them more
than the world and they r the best friends a chula cud have

When i die

Tell Papi no matter how many times he beat me..

i love him cuz he is my papi

WHen i die

Tell all those who doubted me that im going to heaven to b wit ma friends
and family and im gunna b watchin over them

But most imporant

When i die

Jus promise me u wont cry

