

## Chapter 9 Lesson 3: Understanding Violence

### Introduction:

There are many factors that can increase teens' risk of being involved in violence. Gang membership is one of the strongest risk factors. The Web site below provides more information about gangs, the people who join them, and ways to avoid their influence.

### Links to Explore:

#### Youth Gangs

<http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/teens/gangs.asp>

### Directions:

- Click on the link and read the fact sheet about youth gangs.
  - Then answer the following questions:
1. How many teens and young adults in the United States are members of youth gangs?
  2. What is the average age of gang members?
  3. List three reasons teens may have for joining gangs.
  4. What are some healthy alternatives to joining a gang?
  5. Some teens carry weapons to protect themselves. Is this a good idea? Why or why not?

### Answers:

1. More than 772,500
2. 17 to 18 years
3. Any three of the following:
  - Excitement
  - Prestige
  - Protection
  - A chance to make money
- A sense of belonging
4. Sports, recreational, and after-school programs
5. No. Weapons can escalate conflicts and increase the chances that someone will be seriously harmed.

### Additional Links to Explore:

Use the links below to gather additional information on the activity topic. When appropriate, have students extend their research to include important concepts contained in these Web sites.

**Youth Gangs: An Overview**

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/167249.pdf>

**National Youth Gang Center**

<http://www.iir.com/nygc/default.htm>