We Can Prevent Youth Violence

Youth violence is one form of violence that young people experience. Youth violence affects youth, families, and communities across the U.S. If we want positive change, all members of a community must work together to create it.

Understanding youth violence is the first step to prevention

Youth violence is:

- A widespread but preventable public health problem that negatively affects youth, families, and communities
- The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, by or against youth ages 10 to 24
- An adverse childhood experience (ACE) and type of community violence that can have serious and lasting effects on a young person's physical, mental, and social health

Youth violence includes:

- Fighting
- Threats with weapons
- Bullying
- Gang-related violence

Addressing root causes can help prevent violence

Addressing root causes, including racism and other social determinants of health, is critical to preventing violence in communities.
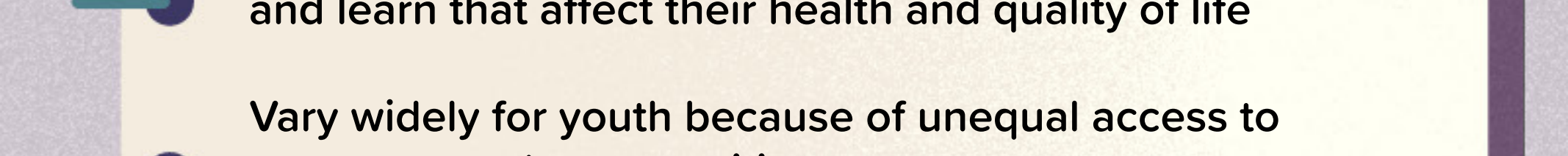
Social determinants of health:[1,2]

- Are the conditions where people live, work, play, worship, and learn that affect their health and quality of life
- Vary widely for youth because of unequal access to resources and opportunities
- Help us understand how unequal access to resources and opportunities can increase risk factors for violence

Racism:[3]

- Is an example of a social determinant of health; it impacts other conditions that affect health risks
- Includes structures, policies, practices, and norms that assign value and determine opportunity based on how people look or the color of their skin
- Has profound impacts on youth of color, especially those who live in communities of color, and the violence they experience
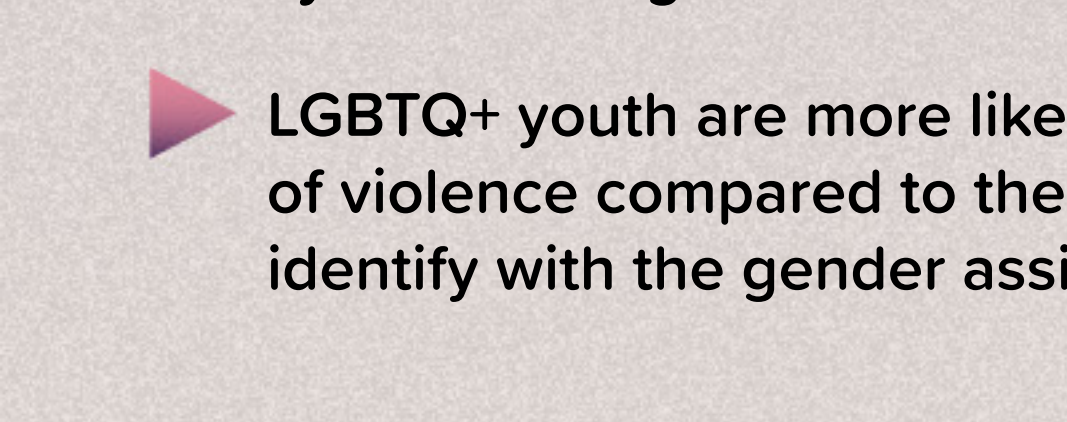
We all share responsibility for fostering safe, healthy, communities where all youth can thrive. Effective violence prevention efforts consider the societal conditions experienced by youth and address the root causes.

Health inequities in youth violence

Some youth are at greater risk of experiencing violence than others.

- LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience multiple forms of violence compared to their peers who are straight and identify with the gender assigned to them at birth.[4,5,6]

Over 1 in 4
LGBTQ+ students report being electronically bullied each year, compared to about
1 in 9 straight students.

Over 9 in 20
LGBTQ+ students experienced electronic harassment, or cyberbullying, via text messages or social media posts.

Over 17 in 20
LGBTQ+ students were harassed or assaulted at school.

7 in 20
transgender students reported being bullied at school.

- Black youth are also at higher risk of experiencing serious physical violence (such as homicides, fights with injuries, or aggravated assaults) compared with White youth.[8,9]
  - Homicide continues to be the leading cause of death for non-Hispanic Black youth.
- Youth who identify as a racial or ethnic minority as well as LGBTQ+ may also experience greater risk for violence.[6,10]

2 in 5
LGBTQ+ students of color were bullied or harassed based on race or ethnicity at school.

2 in 5
Native and indigenous LGBTQ+ students experienced both anti-LGBTQ+ and racist harassment at school.

Thousands of youth experience violence every day

Youth violence is common.

Nearly
1 in 5
high school students reported being bullied on school property in the past year.[11]

More than
1 in 5
reported being in a physical fight in the past year.[14]

Nearly
1 in 6
reported being bullied through texting or social media.[11]

About
1 in 8
reported carrying a weapon on at least 1 day during the last 30 days.[12]

About 1 in 10
did not go to school because of safety concerns on at least one of the last 30 days.[12]

Youth violence kills and injures

- Homicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10–24[13]
- Every day, about **19 youth die** from homicide[13]
  - Emergency departments treat more than 800 youth per day, or nearly 20 school buses full of youth, for physical assault-related injuries
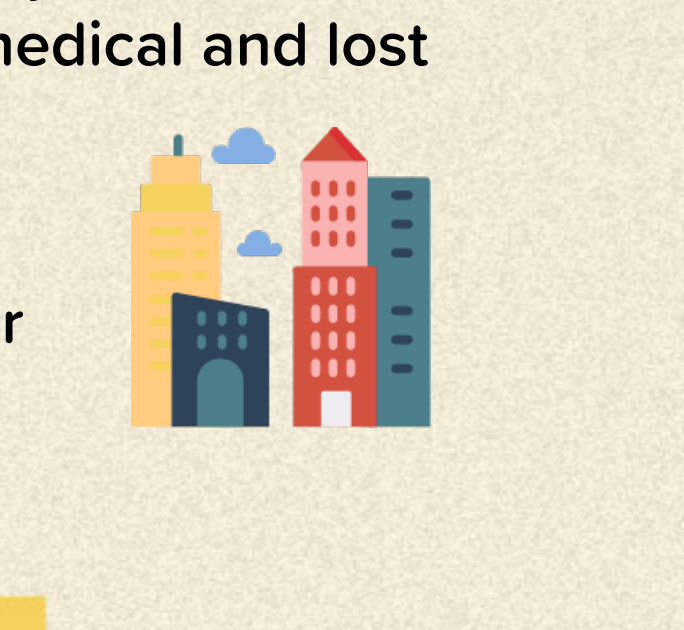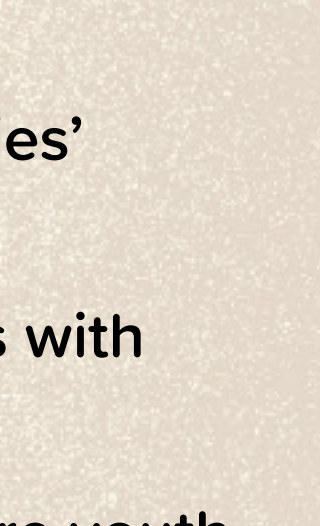
Youth violence is costly

- Every year, homicides and injuries from physical assault result in about $20 billion in medical and lost productivity costs.[2]
- Youth violence negatively impacts health, financial burden, well-being, and safety for youth, their families, and communities.

Youth violence is preventable

We all share responsibility for fostering safe, healthy communities.

Strategies that promote equitable, healthy development and environments[14] include:

- Connecting young people to caring adults and activities
- Strengthening individuals' and families' financial security
- Providing all youth and young adults with quality education
- Promoting family environments where youth can grow up with their social, emotional, and educational needs met
- Creating safe, healthy, and supportive environments for youth and young adults
- Providing trauma informed services, mental and behavioral health treatment, and community support services to address violence and its consequences and prevent future risk

Communities can act now

Communities can empower youth by providing leadership opportunities and activities. Directly engaging with youth can create stronger communities and help youth:

1. Make healthy choices
2. Be a leader and voice for change for healthier communities and schools
3. Advise community and school-decision makers
4. Promote respect and empathy with family, friends, and peers

Learn how to create family and community environments where all youth can thrive.
Visit https://www.cdc.gov/youth-violence/prevention/.

CDC