



**Philadelphia Collaborative  
Violence Prevention Center**

**Safe Neighborhoods, Safe Lives:  
Things that Youth Can Do to Prevent or Reduce the Impact of Violence  
in the Community**

Expert's Tips for Preventing Violence from  
the Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center  
For more information, please visit [www.phillyviolenceprevention.org](http://www.phillyviolenceprevention.org)

**Introduction**

When violence is pervasive, people may feel powerless to stop it. But there is good news—it is preventable. We know a lot about how people and communities can make things safer. There are many ways we can reduce the chances that violence happens, and there are many ways we can reduce its impact when it does happen.

We can all help reduce the number of injuries and disabilities that are caused by violence in our communities and reduce the emotional impact on individuals. This will improve long-term health and mental well-being. Addressing the impact of violence can improve everyday life for the whole community: safe communities are strong communities. When community members feel safe, their chances for a healthier life also improve.

The tips below are based on what researchers have learned about what can work to prevent violence. Some tips relate directly to the risk of violence. These tips focus on things like weapons and conflict. For other tips, the link to violence is less obvious. But we know that supporting youth and improving community environments are important tools for violence prevention. We are also beginning to understand that helping those who have been hurt to heal and teaching people how to cope with stress are important too. These tips provide each and every one of us with a powerful collection of prevention tools. We all can contribute to the safety, and health of our neighbors, family and friends.

## Table of Contents

PREVENTION IS POSSIBLE/COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION (Tip 1).....	4
1.    Use the wisdom in your community.....	4
PROMOTING COMMUNITY SAFETY (Tips 2-4).....	4
2.    Talk to your parents about guns. Don't carry a gun.....	4
3.    Don't buy, hold, or carry guns for friends.....	5
4.    Speak up.....	5
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (Tips 5-8).....	6
5.    Focus on what you can change, not what you can't .....	6
6.    Look for opportunities to get involved .....	6
7.    Good friends matter .....	7
8.    Make room for sports and active play .....	7
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING (Tips 9-21).....	8
9.    Expect Respect .....	8
10.   Feeling nervous, scared, or worried after being hurt or seeing violence is a normal reaction .....	8
11.   Living with violence is very unhealthy and makes people more scared and anxious.....	9
12.   Holding a grudge hurts you.....	9
13.   You have the power .....	10
14.   When you're threatened .....	10
15.   Practice ways to calm down.....	11
16.   Know yourself .....	11
17.   Know you.....	11
18.   Don't Assume .....	12
19.   Shake it off .....	12

20. Practice optimism .....	13
21. Humor and laughter make life easier .....	13
CARING FOR OTHERS AND ABOUT OTHERS (Tip 22) .....	14
22. It's basic--treat others well .....	14

## PREVENTION IS POSSIBLE/COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION (Tip 1)

### 1. Use the wisdom in your community.

Is there someone who does well, even in the face of violence or other obstacles? Or someone who knows where to turn to really get things done? Find your local "in the know" experts to help you solve problems.

**How it helps:** Seeking out the experts in your community can produce a valuable link to guidance and knowledge. Commonly, these leaders are at the forefront of a movement to enhance the community. The information provided by these leaders may answer your questions and give you the direction and motivation needed to solve problems.

#### For more info:

Big Brothers, Big Sisters

<http://www.bbbs.org/>

National Crime Prevention Council for Teens

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/by-audience/teens>

McGruff for the National Crime Prevention Council

<http://www.mcgruff.org/>

## PROMOTING COMMUNITY SAFETY (Tips 2-4)

### 2. Talk to your parents about guns. Don't carry a gun.

Appearing more dangerous to others actually increases your chance of being severely hurt or killed. Work together with your parents to make plans to be safer, to not get caught up in trouble, and how to get out of risky situations.

**How it helps:** Fostering public awareness about the risks of carrying guns, gives community leaders an opportunity to create safer alternatives and solutions. When parents talk to youth about staying away from guns, it can have an impact on decreasing accidental deaths by handguns.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/watch/house/gun\\_safety.html#cat115](http://kidshealth.org/kid/watch/house/gun_safety.html#cat115)

Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE)

<http://www.safeyouth.gov/Resources/Impact/Pages/ExtentProblem.aspx>

**3. Don't buy, hold, or carry guns for friends.**

Not only does this help violent criminals, it's also dangerous and a crime with hard time.

**How it helps:** A large majority of guns used in criminal activities have been bought or given to dangerous and irresponsible individuals by friends. By not buying, holding, or carrying guns for friends, you can help reduce the potential for guns to end up in the hands of criminals.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/>

Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE)

<http://www.safeyouth.gov/Resources/Impact/Pages/ExtentProblem.aspx>

**4. Speak up.**

Let police, prosecutors, clerks, and judges know that you are concerned about guns. Show up at sentencing. Let them know that even "small" gun crimes affect your daily life and that you expect them to focus on gun violence and other violent crimes.

**How it helps:** Speaking up and letting law enforcement know that stopping gun violence is not someone else's problem can make an impact in pushing intervention and prevention programs to the forefront. The community recognizing the severity of the problem can help aid the proper agencies develop comprehensive strategic plans to reduce gun violence.

**For more info:**

Moms Against Guns

<http://momsagainstguns.org/>

Step Up, Speak Out

<http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/step-up-speak-up-resource-guide-2006-pdf/view>

<b>YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (Tips 5-8)</b>
-------------------------------------

**5. Focus on what you can change, not what you can't.**

Be active in solving problems and move through what is beyond your control.

Talk to others about how to do this in your everyday life.

**How it helps:** By identifying and defining a problem, you can quickly discover if it is able to be easily overcome. Seeking help for a problem that is too much for you to deal with is not a sign of weakness. Evaluating and choosing the best course of action in solving a problem will help you to move past it more easily.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/school\\_jobs/school/make\\_change.html#cat20071](http://kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/make_change.html#cat20071)

American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/hurricane-resilience.aspx>

**6. Look for opportunities to get involved.**

Sign up for a mentor. Join your neighborhood boards; they need your advice.

**How it helps:** Participating in the planning and implementation process can improve your sense of self-worth and recognition. Just a year with a mentor can produce significant benefits for youth. Working with adult mentors provides youth with the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships and an increased stake in their community.

**For more info:**

City Kids Foundation

<http://www.citykids.com/index.php>

Volunteer Match

<http://www.volunteermatch.org/>

Youth Service America

<http://www.ysa.org/programs>

Kids Volunteer

<http://www.hud.gov/kids/kidsvlta.html>

**7. Good friends matter.**

Hang out with friends who are doing good things in school, in the community, and for their families. Let your parents' know who you are hanging out with, what they are doing, and where they are going.

**How it helps:** Friends provide emotional support, and youth with friends are less likely to feel lonely. Having friends provides another venue to receive social and emotional guidance. Youth also tend to be more enthusiastic about school if they have friends that attend.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/families/talk\\_to\\_parents.html?#cat20071](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/families/talk_to_parents.html?#cat20071)

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/friendships/MH00125>

**8. Make room for sports and active play.**

Sports can be a healthy outlet for excess energy, taking the place of hanging out with troubled peers. Sports also offer healthy role models through coaches.

**How it helps:** When children get involved with sports they gain the ability to get stronger physically and mentally. Sports can raise self esteem. Research shows that children that play sports tend to feel more confident and have an easier time dealing with stress or depression.

**For more info:**

Body and Mind

[http://www.bam.gov/sub\\_physicalactivity/index.html](http://www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity/index.html)

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay\\_healthy/fit/what\\_time.html#cat120](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/fit/what_time.html#cat120)

<b>EMOTIONAL WELLBEING (Tips 9-21)</b>
--

**9. Expect Respect.**

Abuse is never your fault and is not okay, no matter what a boyfriend or girlfriend might say. Talk to an adult you trust. You need someone to confide in to look out for you with your safety in mind.

**How it helps:** There are places you can go and things you can do to help yourself in this situation. Support from friends and family is one of the most powerful tools in dealing with intimate partner violence.

**For more info:**

Break the Cycle

<http://www.breakthecycle.org/>

Choose Respect

<http://www.cdc.gov/chooserespect/>

The National Domestic Violence Hotline

<http://www.thehotline.org/>

That's Not Cool

<http://www.thatsnotcool.com>

**10. Feeling nervous, scared, or worried after being hurt or seeing violence is a normal reaction.**

Seek help and talk with a counselor or doctor if these feelings don't go away after a few weeks.

**How it helps:** One of the most valuable resources available to allow a child to cope with exposure to violence is a strong relationship with their parents. When you talk about these feelings with your parent, it will help you cope with your reactions and move on.

**For more info:**

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/coping-traumatic-stress.asp>

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/mental\\_health/ptsd.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/ptsd.html)

**11. Living with violence is very unhealthy and makes people more scared and anxious.**

Even finding little ways to reduce everyday stress and to make things safer can make a difference.

**How it helps:** Establishing more opportunities for physical, emotional and mental recreation provides a means of lowering everyday stress. Exercising, eating properly, and getting enough rest are a few simple things that studies have shown to help reduce anxiety.

**For more info:**

CDC Tips for Coping with Stress

[http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/coping\\_with\\_stress\\_tips.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/coping_with_stress_tips.html)

Coping with Traumatic Events

<http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma/index.aspx>

**12. Holding a grudge hurts you.**

If you have been hurt, being able to forgive wrongs, no matter how small, can help end a cycle of anger. Start small and help children (and adults) practice this.

**How it helps:** Effectively managing your anger and other feelings can reduce the impact that a situation has on you. Confronting the individual and discussing your feeling can help to begin the process of forgiveness. By teaching your children how to do this, you are teaching them a valuable lesson in dealing with their emotions.

**For more info:**

International Forgiveness Institute  
<http://www.forgiveness-institute.org/>

Mayo Clinic  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/forgiveness/MH00131>

**13. You have the power.**

Promote positive thinking by reminding yourself of three good things every day. Do it at night, or make it a family tradition at dinnertime.

**How it helps:** Positive thinking can help you overcome the challenges and stress that you face in everyday life. By putting a positive spin on the negative events that you encounter, you can gradually improve your outlook on life.

**For more info:**

LiveStrong  
<http://www.livestrong.com/article/176684-positive-thinking-ideas/>

Positive Thinking  
<http://www.guideposts.com/>

**14. When you're threatened.**

Stay calm; do not let others see that you are upset. Afterwards, talk to adults you can trust.

**How it helps:** While reducing the risk of a confrontation through prevention is beneficial, correctly analyzing a situation when faced with the potential of violence can be even more important in preventing injury. Talking to an adult can help youth work through their feelings after such an encounter.

**For more info:**

National Crime Prevention Council  
<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/conflict-resolution/?searchterm=anger>

Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE)  
<http://www.safeyouth.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>

**15. Practice ways to calm down before you are in a conflict.**

Stop, take a breath, and tell yourself: "Calm down" or "It's not worth letting him or her get to me."

**How it helps:** Taking proper measures once you feel yourself getting angry can reduce the potential for conflict. Controlling your anger can prevent tense situations from escalating out of control. Distancing yourself from the situation can provide you with time to calm down.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/expert/emotions/bully\\_stress.html#cat20071](http://kidshealth.org/teen/expert/emotions/bully_stress.html#cat20071)

Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE)

<http://www.safeyouth.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>

**16. Know yourself.**

Avoid things that might make you angry, especially if you are hungry, tired, rushed, or stressed.

**How it helps:** Avoiding situations of conflict when you are experiencing one or more of these emotions can reduce the opportunity for you to lose your temper. Also, keeping yourself healthy by getting enough sleep and eating properly makes it less likely that you will respond with anger when faced with a trigger.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/emotions/deal\\_with\\_anger.html#cat20071](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/deal_with_anger.html#cat20071)

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

[http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/self\\_care\\_after\\_disasters.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/self_care_after_disasters.asp)

**17. Know you.**

Learn to recognize how anger feels to you before it grows out of control.

**How it helps:** When anger is properly managed, it can help prevent situations from escalating to levels of physical violence. Having identified what triggers your anger

allows you to consider various options for solving it. Knowing the consequences of your anger getting out of control can provide further motivation to harness it.

**For more info:**

American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org/topics/anger/control.aspx>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/anger-management/MH00102>

**18. Don't Assume.**

Is someone really angry? Maybe he or she is scared or sad. Being able to correctly identify how someone else is feeling can often prevent arguments or confrontations.

**How it helps:** Many tense situations can be avoided simply by not assuming you know how a person feels. Instead, approaching the person without any expectations can lead to the resolution of any problems that individual might be facing. Also, a person may open up to you if they feel like you can relate to their problem.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/emotions/deal\\_with\\_anger.html#cat2007\\_1](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/deal_with_anger.html#cat2007_1)

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/anger-management/MH00102>

**19. Shake it off.**

When you are stressed, feeling angry, or anxious, your body builds up too much energy. Stretch, laugh, walk, run, or take a time-out to let off steam. Adults - understand when young people need to be active and build this into their day.

**How it helps:** When you pick up on the signals produced by your body alerting you to release your emotions in a constructive manner, it will allow you to deal with them more effectively. Studies have shown that there are various activities you can do that will reduce your level of stress, irritability, and frustration.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/5\\_steps.html#cat20071](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/5_steps.html#cat20071)

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/anger-management/MH00102>

**20. Practice optimism.**

In neighborhoods with lots of violence, it can take a little work. But, being able to see the good things in yourself and others will make it easier to cope with troubles.

**How it helps:** Parents can help by getting involved with their communities through attending town hall meetings and asking their neighbors to help with supervising the neighborhood. By taking self-inventory and maintaining optimism, you make it easier to handle whatever hardship you may face.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/thought/volunteering.html#cat20071>

Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE)

<http://www.safeyouth.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>

**21. Humor and laughter make life easier.**

Humor can help you overcome bad times, get over angry feelings, and diffuse a tense situation. Think or say something funny but don't make fun of the other person.

**How it helps:** Humor and laughter has been shown through research to aid in decreasing stress, blood pressure, and improving immune function. This free and convenient tactic can help distract an individual from anger or other negative feelings.

**For more info:**

WebMD

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/laughing-cure>

Laughter and Humor Benefits

[http://www.helpguide.org/life/humor\\_laughter\\_health.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/humor_laughter_health.htm)

<b>CARING FOR OTHERS AND ABOUT OTHERS (Tip 22)</b>
--

**22. It's basic--treat others well.**

Having a strong moral compass and caring about others not only makes people happier, but also makes it easier for them to weather bad times. Learn to live by principles of fairness and respect.

**How it helps:** By treating the opinions of others with respect, you show that you can acknowledge views that differ from your own. Showing respect for the feelings of others can prevent the potential for physical or emotional conflict.

**For more info:**

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/thought/volunteering.html#cat20071>

Showing Respect

<http://www.bblocks.samhsa.gov/family/showtell/showingrespect.aspx>