

High School: Violence (Multi-Grade Pilot Unit)



Attention Educator: The lessons in the Violence Unit are grade level pilot lessons for 9th -12th grade students. We need your professional feedback to determine the appropriate grade-level for each lesson. Please send feedback and any suggestions you may have to kelly@thriveway.com. We appreciate your assistance, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Lesson 3 – Gun Violence



Lesson Time:

30 Minutes

Materials Provided:

- Handout: “Gun Safety Proposals: Then, Now, & Future” (1 per 4 person group)

Materials Needed:

- Student writing utensils

Essential Question:
How can gun safety reduce the occurrence of gun violence?

Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- Define gun safety.
- Recognize that gun violence is not the answer to solving problems.
- Analyze past and present attitudes about gun safety.
- Propose solutions for increasing safety and reducing gun violence.

Did You Know:

- Most students run the risk of having a friend who wants to show off weapons that are in their house.
- Arguments are the number one reason for shootings and account for half of the severe incidents we hear about in surrounding areas.
- Violence prevention advocates say teaching people to settle arguments is more important than ever, given the glorification of violence on social media.

Educator Tip:

As you teach this lesson, be sure to talk about the seriousness of this topic and acknowledge that families have different, strong opinions about gun control. This is not a lesson or a debate about gun control. This is a lesson about teens’ immediate response to gun violence and the need to be aware of gun safety. Let students know that they can speak to you or a counselor privately if they have been impacted by gun violence personally. Much of the increase in illegal gun possession arrests have been of young people carrying firearms without a license. To keep students safe, we must do something to prevent gun violence. Students can’t learn if they feel unsafe, are dealing with fear, or are exposed to life-threatening situations.

Since this lesson addresses the severity of gun violence and many different types of violence, you may notice that some students respond by sitting quietly or acting out. Be mindful of those students. Remember, this could be a sign that they may need to speak with a counselor after the lesson.

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Introduction: (3 minutes)

Today we will conclude our lessons about Youth Violence by addressing the reality of increased gun violence in America and the need for greater gun safety. We recognize that you and your families have different, strong opinions about gun control. This will not be a lesson or debate that argues the topic of Gun Control; instead, this is a lesson to educate you on recent statistics and trends regarding gun violence and to prompt you to brainstorm potential solutions.

Gun violence has become so common in the U.S. that schools have changed their entire way of handling violence protocols. Think about it - only since the early 2000s has there ever been any sort of training in schools for lockdown procedures. Listen to this true story. In 1986, a school had a pep rally where every week a chosen student would perform skits to pump up the crowd. One week a student brought a shotgun into the gym as a prop for his skit. He did not fire the gun or point it at anyone; he simply held it as a prop. No one reacted fearfully. None of the teachers or administrators disciplined the student for having the gun at school. As a matter of fact, the crowd cheered for the skit and the yearbook posted a picture of him with the gun. Can you imagine that in today's world? When we hear that story today, we react with shock and disbelief. The truth is that you are growing up in a completely different society than the teens of the 1980s. Of course, they witnessed violence and were aware that homicide existed; however, they did not ever think that a student would actually use a gun to harm other students on campus. Unfortunately, our current situation is different. Between the quick reactions to anger, the demand for retribution, and society's promotion of violence, the occurrences of gun-related crimes are increasing.

Core Lesson: Trends in Gun Violence & Gun Safety (6 minutes)

I want to share a few statistics with you regarding homicides and gun violence. These will give you a better perspective when you complete your group activity concluding this lesson. First, youth homicides are spiking and have increased by 30% from 2019 to 2020 which was the largest increase since 1980.^[1] Two out of three of all youth homicides occurred with a firearm.^[1] That's two of every three young people who were murdered whose aggressors used a gun. The numbers only increase when considering the adult population. Another alarming statistic is that according to the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, "Gun violence is the leading cause of death for black males under the age of 55, and the second leading cause of death for Hispanic/Latino males under the age of 34."^[2] There are certainly cultural disparities throughout our country when it comes to the perpetrators and victims of gun violence, and attention should be drawn to this on a political and national level. It is not a fact that can be ignored if there's hope for a change.

Another national crisis that warrants attention is the prevalence of mass shootings. The number of public shootings, including school shootings, has nearly quadrupled in the last 10 years. People, especially students at school, should not have to fear the possibility of mass shootings and fatal gun violence. We could share dozens of statistics about the shocking number of firearm-related incidents, but let's focus on the positive by turning our attention to the contributing factors for some of this violence and the potential preventative measures.

The factors that contribute to community gun violence include easy access, income inequality, concentrated poverty, underfunded public housing, and underfunded schools and public resources. Does this sound familiar? It should. In our last lesson, we shared the risk factors and preventative

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measures for community violence. There is a direct correlation between neighborhood violence and firearm fatalities.

All of these statistics support the need for increasing awareness about gun safety. Many community action agencies are partnering with law enforcement to increase awareness about firearms. What do you think it means to be “Gun Safe”? (*Allow for response.*) Gun safety means practicing careful methods for acquiring, storing, using, and disposing of firearms. Educating young people about gun safety is critical, because many young people live in a home with a gun. Also, you will soon be the adult generation, and it will be your responsibility to advocate for a safer society. Some of the expert tips that I am about to share are more for the adult in the house, but they are still important for you to know. ^[3]

- Keep the gun unloaded and locked in a cabinet, safe, gun vault, or storage case.
- Lock the bullets in a place separate from the gun.
- Consider using a gun lock (a lock that makes the gun unable to fire).
- Hide the keys (or passcode) to the locked storage.
- If you think a family member or friend might be struggling or in crisis, remove firearms from their reach. This would be important if someone is suicidal or struggling with substance addiction.
- The safe way to dispose of a gun that you no longer want is to consult law enforcement.
- Be wise in using other types of air-soft guns that could be mistaken for real weapons.

Activity: “Gun Violence Proposal: Then, Now & Future” Handout (20 minutes)

Although not all deaths related to firearms are intentional, we must reflect upon how we are affected by gun violence. From January - November of 2022, there were over 41,000 Americans killed - whether by homicide, accidents, or suicides. Over 5,000 of those were teenagers who were either injured or killed. ^[4] This is an alarming number. How many of those to come could be someone you know? It’s time for you to examine the problem and plan for the future.

(Facilitator, divide the class into groups of 4 and distribute the handout.)

In small groups, you will be discussing several factors regarding gun safety. Consider the things you have heard in this lesson and work together to complete this handout. Your group will first consider some of the perspectives of people in the past regarding gun safety. You will then discuss our current situation with youth and gun violence. In the column on the right, you will brainstorm potential solutions and actions we could take to improve our society by reducing the risk of gun violence. Finally, you will conclude the violence handout by answering this BIG question: What are some ways to resolve problems without resorting to violence?

Group Members' Names: _____

Gun Safety Proposals

Directions: Work with your group to fill in each box of the table below. Take your discussions seriously! Be respectful of every opinion. Have a good time together and remember to have fun! You may be asked to present your proposals to the class.

PAST	NOW	FUTURE
Have you ever been involved in the past?	How do you think people view guns today?	What do you think will happen in the future?
How do you feel about it now?	What changes do they have to do with guns?	What do you think you have to do to prevent gun violence from becoming a problem in the future?

BIG QUESTION: What are some ways to resolve problems without resorting to violence?

P.A.T.H.

Gun Safety Proposals

Before you begin, the most important thing to remember while completing this is to make your discussions positive and accepting of all varying opinions. This can be a volatile subject, so I expect you to be open to all contributions. You may write all answers on your handout. (*Allow students 15 minutes to complete the handout.*)

Post Activity Discussion: Thank you for your effort in this activity. I know

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that you worked to think of many preventative measures. I want to share with you some safety proposals that have been mentioned by other organizations: enact secure firearm storage laws, require background checks for purchasing firearms, foster a safe school climate, promote safe gun storage, include prevention programs in schools like this lesson today, upgrade security measures in schools, and increase access to mental health support for students.^[5]

Closing: (1 minute)

Gun violence can be reduced if we are educated on how to remain gun safe. We must keep the conversation going and have real-life talks about gun safety and its importance. Talk to your parents about what they believe about gun safety, talk to our administrators if you feel unsafe at school, and most importantly, always report something that you know is unlawful and could create a dangerous situation.

References

1. Care, E. C. (2020). Juvenile arrest trends infographic. Infographic. Retrieved December 10, 2022, from https://info.mstservices.com/juvenile-arrests-infographic?utm_campaign=Blog%2FNewsletter+Emails&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=226490303&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--FVRIJsEN5I3nI0uN1MJgyDWwHibaTtdiQqW7oIHdlzAnixYORLWWIwt_ZayNg6Sx6Xmfz6gkkaFM4cuUI3-U99CrrTX1bC-7zAUglaMN0IDbN
2. Aufrichtig, A. (2021, October 15). Community gun violence. The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. Retrieved December 8, 2022, from <https://efsgv.org/learn/type-of-gun-violence/community-gun-violence/> CDC WONDER Database (2017)
3. Anzilotti, A. W. (n.d.). Gun Safety (for Parents) - Nemours KidsHealth. Kids Health. Retrieved October 1, 2022, from <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/gun-safety.html>
4. Gun violence archive. Gun Violence Archive. (2022, December). Retrieved December 8, 2022, from <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>
5. How to stop shootings and gun violence in schools: A plan to keep students safe. Everytown Research & Policy. (2022, September 14). Retrieved December 8, 2022, from <https://everytownresearch.org/report/how-to-stop-shootings-and-gun-violence-in-schools/>

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Group Members' Names _____

Gun Safety Proposals

Directions: Work with your group to complete each of the sections below. Make your discussions positive and accepting of all varying opinions. Think deeply about changes and prevention measures that could be implemented to reduce gun violence and fatalities.

THEN	NOW	FUTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How were guns viewed in the past? • How was gun safety addressed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you think people view guns now? • What impact do they have on our society? (List varying opinions.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What ideas do you have for making safer choices and laws regarding guns? (laws, educating people, etc.)

BIG QUESTION:

What are some ways to resolve problems without resorting to violence?

