

YOUTH & VIOLENCE

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BACKGROUND



We lead

- No universal definition of terrorism.
- Underlying meaning generally the same although worded differently by experts, international bodies, governments and law enforcement agencies.
- Acts of aggression and violence towards individuals, communities, and society at large.
- Acts of terrorism strongly correlated with religion, politics, economic and social issues.

- The vast majority of Malaysians believe that violence has increased dramatically over the past decade.
- Most feel that violence is particularly high among young offenders (12-29 years of age).
- Fear of crime is increasing in most major urban areas in Malaysia.

Disturbing Trends

- Although official rates of violent crime are low by international standards, Malaysians data suggest that most young people will experience some form of violent victimization.
- Most violent victimization incidents are never reported to parents, police or other adult authority figures.
- Violent crime is becoming more concentrated among young people (under 29 years of age).
- Violent victimization is increasingly concentrated among young, minority males from disadvantaged communities.

Disturbing Trends



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- Violent crime more likely to take place in public spaces.
- Apparent increase in violent gang activity.
- Bullying is a major problem among school children.
- New forms of violence emerging – virtual bullying.
- Increased media coverage of serious crime.
- Increased fear of crime.
- Increasing economic polarization in major urban centres.
- The most economically disadvantaged communities are highly racialized.

What Causes Youth Violence?



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- Biological theories
- Psychological theories
- Sociological theories
- Criminological theories
- Child Development theories

RISK FACTORS



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- Neurological problems/learning disabilities
- Early childhood development issues (abuse, neglect, etc.)
- Poor parenting/parental supervision/fatherlessness
- Mental health issues
- Low self-control (need for immediate gratification, etc.)
- School failure/difficulties
- Absolute deprivation
- Relative deprivation
- Anger/Frustration/Alienation/Hopelessness
- Deviant peers (exposure to pro-crime values)
- Violent media (exposure to pro-crime values)
- Violent victimization (crime as self-help)
- Criminal opportunities (lack of legitimate opportunities)
- Labeling (stigmatization, etc.)

- *Tough on Crime* advocates put an emphasis on detection, deterrence, denunciation and incapacitation.
- *Soft on Crime* advocates call for an emphasis on intervention, rehabilitation and prevention.
- There is also a difference between those who advocate for prevention through the targeting of *at risk* individuals and those who advocate for prevention through meaningful social change and community development.
- What strategies should we adopt?

School Safety Options



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- Zero tolerance strategies
- Increase security in schools
- Use of security and police officers
- Academic tutoring/special needs programming
- Extra-curricular programming
- Increased school-community-family interface
- Clearly stated and enforced rules
- School *engagement* policies
- Culture of inclusion – even for disruptive youth
- Dedicated, culturally competent staff

Key Recommendations



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- Governance and Coordination
- Anti-drug strategy
- Anti-poverty strategy
- Education strategy
- Anti-racism strategy
- Mental health strategy
- Evaluation (as a form of accountability)

THANK YOU