

## **Lives Worth Saving Gang Involvement Assessment**

**This assessment tool was taken from the following website:**

[www.webcalesolutions.com/Parenting-Assessments/Gang-involvement.asp?Group=Parenting-Teens-Assessments](http://www.webcalesolutions.com/Parenting-Assessments/Gang-involvement.asp?Group=Parenting-Teens-Assessments)

A gang is a group of teens and young adults that hang out together and initiate violent, illegal, or criminal activity. They usually have a name and/or symbol. They often choose to wear a certain style or color of clothing. Many people think of gangs as just an inner-city problem. That is clearly not the case anymore, with more than 24,500 different youth gangs around the country, counting more than 772,500 teens and young adults as members. In the 1970's, gangs were active in less than half the states, but now every state reports youth gang activity, including smaller cities, towns, and rural areas. Youth gangs are responsible for much of the serious violence in the United States and pose one of the greatest threats to the safety and security of average Americans.

Teen gang members are much more likely to commit serious and violent crimes than other teens. A survey in Denver found that while only 14% of teens were gang members, they were responsible for committing 89% of the serious violent crimes. Teens join gangs for a number of reasons (excitement, money, prestige, protection, or acceptance) but joining a gang is dangerous. Violence between gangs is common, and gang members are at least 60 times more likely to be killed than the rest of the population.

Few teens are forced to join gangs; teens can usually refuse to join without fear of retaliation. For most teens, gang membership is a brief phase. One-half to two-thirds of teen gang members leave the gang by the end of their first year. You can help slow the spread of gang violence by learning what a gang is, what the signs of gang involvement and gang activity are. If you are concerned that your teenager may be involved with a gang, take this quick assessment to learn more about the warning signs and help you determine if your child may truly be getting into gang activity.

*Please complete the following assessment as honestly as possible. Do not justify or excuse the behaviors in the questions asked.*

*Once you complete the assessment please contact us so we can assist you in developing a plan to help your child to stay free from gangs.*

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**For more information:**

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Visit our website at [www.LWSGI.com](http://www.LWSGI.com)**

## Gang Involvement Assessment

Read each question carefully and completely. Take as much time as you need to reflect on each question. This tool is of no help to you if you refuse to answer each question honestly. Answers are completely confidential. No personal information is requested and your answers are not saved. Remember, if you cheat, you're only cheating yourself.

- Yes    No   1.   Is your teen obsessed with clothes of one particular color or does he/she want clothes that have a certain logo?
- Yes    No   2.   Does your teen wear sagging pants?
- Yes    No   3.   Does your teen wear a lot of jewelry with distinctive designs? (He/she may wear it only on the left or right side of their body.)
- Yes    No   4.   Is your teen obsessed with gangster-style music, videos, movies or websites?
- Yes    No   5.   Have you noticed a change in your teen's demeanor and withdrawal from the family?
- Yes    No   6.   Does your teen consistently break your (parents) rules?
- Yes    No   7.   Are the teen's friends undesirable?
- Yes    No   8.   Has your teen developed an unusual desire for privacy and secrecy? (He/she may even rearrange their room to create more privacy.)
- Yes    No   9.   Does your teen use hand signs with their friends, maybe even practicing them at home?
- Yes    No   10.   Has your teen had physical injuries (bruises, knuckle scrapes) he/she can't or won't explain, or the explanation doesn't make sense?
- Yes    No   11.   Does your teen's school books or other belongings have strange drawings or language (they may also have these tattooed)?
- Yes    No   12.   Does your teen have more cash than you expect or clothing, jewelry, or other things you don't know where they came from?
- Yes    No   13.   Has your teen recently begun to use alcohol or drugs, along with a noticeable change in attitude?
- Yes    No   14.   Does your teen admit or brag about gang activity or involvement?

**If total number of “yes” answers is 0** – This teenager is probably not involved with a gang at this time. Talk with your teenager about the dangers of gang activity and youth violence, especially if you still feel he/she may be interested or involved with a gang.

**If total number of “yes” answers is 1 to 3** – There are some warning signs that could indicate your teenager is involved in gang activity, but some of these behaviors are normal as teenagers grow up. Learn all the warning signs of gang activity and talk with your teenager about gangs and youth violence. Get help for your teenager if these warning signs happen repeatedly or if more warning signs develop.

**If total number of “yes” answers is 4 or more** - Your teenager may very well be involved with a gang or at least very interested. The more warning signs there are, the more likely it is that your teen is into gang activity. Get some help working with your teenager to teach them the consequences of gang activity and help them get out.

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