THE GANG GLOSSARY

Banger – Gang member or a person shooting in a drive-by

Banging – Gang activities/fighting or violence

BG – Baby gangster

Blessed In – Being taken into the gang on the word of a current member

Busted, Popped A Cap – Shot at someone

Buster – A fake gang member

Cap – A bullet ("To cap" means to kill someone.)

CK And/Or BK – Initials for "Crip killer" or "Blood killer" used by members of those rival gangs

Colors – Item of clothing which IDs a gang

Do Work – Committing crimes, including robberies and drive-by shootings

Down For Mine – Ability to protect self

Down With The Set – On the gang's own turf

Dressed Down – Wearing gang-related colors

5-0 – The police

Flying Your Colors – Representing gang colors

G – Gangster

Gangbanger – Gang member

Gangbanging – Gang activities

Gangster – Gang member

GAT – Gun

Hood – Neighborhood

Hoodsta – Gangster

Jack – Rob

Jet – To leave quickly; run away

Jump On – Intimidation

Jumped In – Being beaten up as an initiation to joining a gang. You can also leave a gang by being "jumped out".

Killa – Killer

Loc's – Dark sunglasses

Man – The police/anyone in charge

New Jack – A new person attempting to be the best

OG – Original gangster

Packing – Gang member has a gun in his possession.

Popped A Cap/Busted – Shot at someone

Posse – Crew or gang

Put In Work – A military type of action, as in a drive-by shooting

Queen – Female member of a gang

Rank-Out – Failed to claim membership in a gang or crew when questioned by authorities

Rock It Up – Make powder cocaine into crack cocaine using baking soda and boiling water.

Rollin Good – Selling drugs

Saggin – Jailhouse life/wearing pants real low/gangstering

Set – Specific gang/location of turf

Shotcaller – A gang member, usually an OG, who gives orders to younger members

Shout – An acknowledgement of acceptance, a greeting

Snow White – Cocaine

Spot – A house or apartment run by a gang member for selling drugs and stashing guns and money

Strapped – Have a gun on you

Sweated – To be questioned by police about being a gang member or tagger

Tag – A nickname or the act of putting graffiti on an object

TG – Tiny gangster

We're Down With The Set – Mellow/fine/secure/OK

Wet 'em up – Refers to making someone bleed, as in being stabbed or shot.

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What Is A Gang?

A gang is an ongoing, organized association of three or more persons — some are formal and others, informal, but most have a common name or common signs, colors, or symbols. Typically, members or associates individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in criminal activity.

How Did Gangs Begin?

Gangs started in this country about the time of the Industrial Revolution, when people left their rural homes for the city. There was inadequate housing and few jobs available, so the unemployed turned to crime to survive. After a short time, individuals found safety in larger numbers. They began to band together, thus forming gangs. Early gangs were made up of the poorest people–usually Irish, Italian, and Polish. However, gangs in the United States have evolved to include people from all ethnicities, cultures, and socio-economic classes, as well both genders. Gangs flourished and continued to grow well into the 1950s. Generally, gangs fought in large groups and covered large territories. They were well-disciplined. Their weapons consisted of bats, chains, and fists. Gangs diminished in size in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but reappeared in the late 1970s tougher and more violent than ever. In the 1980s, gang fights escalated to include guns. The availability of vehicles and increased use of guns resulted in more drive-by shootings. In the 1980s and 1990s, gangs included more younger and older members, as well as an increased number of members with prison records or ties to inmates. Weapons became more lethal; alcohol/drug use and drug trafficking more prevalent. Some gangs have evolved into organized criminal enterprises and extend beyond international borders. The multinational gangs can be sophisticated and have vast resources. However, gangs remain mostly comprised of young people seeking attention and interaction not found within their immediate family.

Characteristics Of Gang Members:

- Lack of education or educational opportunities;
- Lack of job opportunities or skills;
- Absence of sufficient, positive adult role models;
- Lack of family support;
- Low self-esteem and the absence of a feeling of empowerment;
- Drug and alcohol abuse; and
- Lack of opportunities for pro-social interactions

Why Do Young People Join A Gang?

The reasons for joining a gang may range from wanting to have a good time to pursuing entrepreneurial ventures that may require a considerable commitment to delinquent or criminal activity. These reasons for gang participation, coupled with a society that is more violent and one that glamorizes gangs and criminals on television and in movies, make it no surprise that our youth are in gangs. Within the gang, they find identity, security, companionship, and a sense of belonging they never knew at home. Still other youths join gangs merely for survival or protection from other gangs. The gang may also represent a way to succeed and obtain material possessions the youth would not otherwise have.

In What Types Of Activities Are Gangs Involved?

Social — Some gang activity may be socially motivated or include parties, dances, and athletic events. Members share the same feelings and ideologies and are seldom delinquent.

Delinquent — These gang members engage extensively in property offenses and in serious crimes. They are sometimes termed "serious delinquents". Drug use and sale are relatively unimportant.

Violent — Violence in gangs and in their activities is extremely common and is done for gratification or retribution.

Drug Activities — The main motivator for the gang's existence is drugs. Their greatest financial success has come from increased involvement in narcotics trafficking. When these gangs first became involved with trafficking, the predominant drugs were marijuana and PCP. This trend has progressed to include cocaine, heroine, methamphetamine, prescriptoin drugs, and synthetic drugs.

How Can Gang Activity Be Curbed?

- Social Programs
- Establishing Community Centers
- Employment Assistance
- Dropout Services
- Mentor Programs
- Recreational Activities
- Family Intervention/Training
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Group Homes
- Self-Help Programs
- Counseling Services For Gangs, Families, Communities, & Teachers
- Educational Programs
- Rehabilitation Programs

What Are Law Enforcement Officials Doing To Counteract The Appeal Of Gang Activity To Youth?

- Participating in a community awareness campaign.
- Contacting parents to alert them that their children are involved with a gang.
- Sponsoring gang hotlines.
- Organizing athletic events between police and gang members.
- Making presentations about gangs in schools.
- Suppression. This approach has worked, but the results are sometimes short lived.
- Gang task forces. These are used to identify members and their operations.
- Neighborhood watch programs.

What Can/Should A Parent Do?

If you suspect your child is a member of a gang or involved in gang-related activities get informed and get involved. You CAN make a difference. For assistance or program information, contact your loacal law enforcement agency.

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