

Key Messages – for the 'Promoting youth non-violence' project

These key messages are to be used by all people involved in the 'Promoting youth non-violence' project. The key messages are to give to others, including the media, to give a consistent communication about the project and youth violence. They're also to provide useful support to any project people that are presenting to others.

Key messages about the 'promoting youth non-violence' project

- The 'Promoting youth non-violence' project helps youth organisations to reduce and replace violence in the environments they provide to young people.
- This involves the management strategies that reduce the likelihood of violence occurring and deliberately promoting the positive alternative behaviours wanted instead of violence.
- If youth organisations ensure the environment they provide to young people is deliberately promoting non-violent behaviour they will reduce the incidents of violence occurring there.
- Young people, like all humans, generally conform to the prevalent social norm so youth organisations need to deliberately establish non-violence as the desirable norm. They can do this by reducing the likelihood of violence and by promoting the appropriate behaviour they want.
- The 'Promoting youth non-violence' project provides ideas, training and encouragement to youth organisations. It is also researching young people's attitudes to violence.

Key messages about youth violence

- The behaviour of young people reflects adult behaviour. If the adults in their lives are violent, the young people are likely to also behave violently. The best way to reduce violence amongst young people is to reduce adult violence.
- Young people are victims of adults' violence, especially in their home. If someone is treated violently they're likely to treat others violently¹. A reduction in domestic violence will reduce the likelihood of youth violence.
- The level of youth crime is stable. The level of violent crime, typically committed by a small number of young people, is increasing, but about the same rate as it is amongst adults. There is no evidence of an 'epidemic' or dramatic increase in youth violence.
- About half of young people [51% of males, 40% of females] report being deliberately hurt by others in the last year². The other half of New Zealand young people are not violent – they are behaving how we want them to.
- It is clear that the best intervention with disruptive youth is for them to have an effective relationship with an influential adult who influences them positively. They need to know they're cared for and they'll respond to having clear guidelines of appropriate behaviour. They need meaningful opportunities to test themselves and try out identities.

¹ 'Violence and New Zealand Young People', See www.youth2000.ac.nz

² 'Violence and New Zealand Young People', See www.youth2000.ac.nz