

## *A Special Thank You*

A special thanks goes out to Beth Teolis and the Ohio Attorney General. Their hard work and dedication to youth is appreciated. Beth Teolis, author of *Ready to Use Self-Esteem and Conflict-Solving Activities for Grades 4 – 8*, graciously allowed us to use her materials in this resource free of charge. Her book is an amazing compilation of over 100 step-by-step lessons and activities to build students' security, friendships, positive identity and competence plus goal-setting and conflict resolving skills.

The Ohio Attorney General has also done a lot of great work to benefit youth including developing a curriculum on gang prevention. Their hard work appears in this resource material and is an amazing tool towards the prevention of gangs.

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Foundational Objectives**

Students will:

- Students will better understand the basic elements of social and emotional well-being
- Students will identify sources of risk to healthy living
- Students will identify sources of support for healthy living
- Students will treat themselves and others with respect
- Students will develop their ability to avoid danger or react to it in ways likely to reduce any harmful effects
- Students will help members of their family, class, and community achieve physical, mental and social well-being
- Students will develop their ability to make decisions
- Students will develop attitudes necessary for healthy living

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to identify what a gang is and how they can negatively affect their lives

Students will understand that friendships have problems that can be worked on

Students will develop skills to deal with issues that involve their friends

Students will recognize the importance of positive friends

Students will become aware of bullying behaviours

Students will understand what a good role model is

Students will understand what recruitment is and tactics that some gangs use to recruit youth

Students will become aware that you lose your freedom when you are in a gang

Students will understand that anger is natural and there are positive ways to deal with it

Students will become aware of the negative consequences of violent behaviour

Students will recognize unsafe situations

Students will learn tips to avoid dangerous situations



*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to identify what a gang is and how they can negatively affect their lives

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, direct instruction

**Activity #1: What are Gangs**

**Background:** When someone chooses to join a gang, they have chosen a negative lifestyle, and can expect bad things to happen to them. Joining a gang is dangerous and detrimental to youth. Throughout our nation young people are being seriously injured, or killed each year because of gang activity. Other youth are spending time in jail because of their gang involvement, and the crime and violence it generates. Even if gang members are not injured or incarcerated, gang activity can cause them to lose interest in school, as well as participating in recreation and sports activities with other youth their age. Thus, children who become involved in gang activity exclude themselves from fun and positive activities, deprive themselves of an education, and are not prepared to get a good job in the future.

Many students may know what a gang is and many may not. It is important to get all the students to the same knowledge base before delving into gang awareness. Gangs are a negative group of people, small or large, that join together to commit criminal offenses and share a common identity. For more information visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/safe/gangproof/ganghandbook2004.pdf> or another resource listed in this material.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Introduce the topic of ‘Gangs’ to the class. Have students independently answer the following questions on a sheet of paper before any information on gangs has been given. Ask them to write as much as they can for each question:
  - What is a gang? Can you name some gangs?
  - Who gets involved in gangs?
  - How do kids get involved in gangs?
  - What do you think life in a gang is like?
  - What are some ways kids can stay away from gangs?
- Conduct a classroom discussion using the answers the students wrote down and ask each student to contribute at least one thing from their answers. Conclude that there is a lot to learn about gangs.

- Hand out the Gang Awareness Quiz, or a similar quiz. Have students answer the questions in pairs and go over the answers with them when they have completed the quiz. Collect this information and use it to deduce areas that students need to build awareness.
- Using some of the resources listed in the resource section, give students notes on what a gang is and list some examples of what a gang is not (i.e. a group of friends at the playground). Be sure to cover the following questions:
  - What is the difference between a good group/gang and a bad group/gang? A good group or gang is a bunch of kids or adults getting together to do positive things. A bad group or gang is the gathering of adults or kids to do bad things like bully other people or vandalize the neighbourhood.
  - What is a criminal gang? A criminal gang consists of at least three members. It can be organized or unorganized. The purpose of the gang is to commit criminal acts like stealing, vandalizing, selling drugs...often to gain money or material possessions. Gangs often dress similar, use symbols to identify themselves and usually end up in jail. They are a bad group.
- Prepare six different images of kids together in groups (three positive and three negative groups). Ask the class which are 'good' groups and which are 'bad' groups. Discuss why each group is either good or bad.
- Have students start an *ongoing* journal. Each time the student learns something new about gangs, have them write a journal entry. A suggested title for today's entry might be - *What I know about gangs and what I want to know*. When they are finished with their journals, the journal should serve as a guide for their final activity (a letter to someone important to them that discusses what they know about gangs).

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Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will understand that friendships have problems that can be worked on

Students will develop skills to deal with issues that involve their friends

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, indirect instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #2: The Importance of Friendship**

**Background:** Gang activity, whether it is associating with gang members, acting like them, or becoming one, can have a very profound, and overwhelmingly negative impact upon the families and the close friends of individuals who are involved with gangs. Many young people who are involved in gang activity fail to fully realize this, and consequently act like they are the only ones who can get hurt by their gang involvement. Contrary to this, the opposite is true. When a person is involved in gang activity the whole family could be effected. Just one family member's involvement in gang activity could hurt the entire family, and puts the family in jeopardy.

When a young person becomes involved in gang activity their family and friends can expect to experience:

- *Fear for their own safety and the safety of their family and neighborhood.*
- *Damage to personal property.*
- *Trauma, grief, confusion and/or depression over the injury or loss of a loved one due to gang violence.*
- *Possible injury, or even death.*

Gangs often exploit youth that have trouble forming relationships. It is important that youth understand how to build positive relationships instead of being lured into negative ones. The following lesson can be found in Beth Teolis's book, *Ready to use self-esteem and conflict-solving activities for grades 4-8*. The lesson shows the importance of letting your friends know they are important to you by handling difficult situations positively.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Lead a discussion with the class around the importance of friends. Gangs like to try to get people who are having problems with their friends to join their gang. If you are fighting with your friends, it may be hard to resist the offer to join.

- Use the *Between Friends* worksheet and choose an activity from the list below that best suits your classroom needs.
  - Fill the frame with photos or drawings of friends, including yourself, doing things together
  - Write a poem about friendship dedicated to a special friend
  - Compose a letter written to a chosen friend, recalling special times shared together
- \*\*Musical link – “Between Friends” by Richard Samuels
- Write solutions to the **How Would You Handle “Between Friends” Scenarios** below or form pairs of students, each of which will rehearse and perform a role-play from the scenarios. Students should be given the option of creating their own real-life situations, which should be written up in the format of the other situations for this activity and accepted by you before they rehearse and role-play.

### **How Would You Handle “Between Friends” Scenarios?**

1. Your friend shows up twenty minutes late to meet you to play ball. The week before, this same friend arrived late, causing you both to miss the movie you’d planned to see. You have to be home and now only have ten minutes left to play. How would you handle this situation?
2. You and your friend have been renting videos together every Friday afternoon for three weeks. The other two trips to the video store, your friend excitedly chose the video, saying you’d love it too. You split the cost of the video both times. On the third trip, you decide to choose the video you want. Instead, before you know it, you are going to the counter with your friends’ choice again! How would you handle this situation?
3. Your friend has been in a bad mood a lot lately and you appear to be the target! But, you can’t think of anything you have done to upset the friend. You’ve really tried to overlook the moods and negative reactions to anything you suggest doing together. How would you handle this situation?
4. You confided a family secret to your friend one day when you were feeling upset about your situation at home. Your single mom had just lost her job, but you didn’t want anyone else to know all the details about it. When you arrive at school the next day, it turns out that several kids know all about it! How would you handle this situation?
5. Your best friend and a “sort-of” friend of yours have both gone to the mall together Saturday afternoon. You were NOT asked to go. Every other Saturday you and your best friend have hung out together. You spend all day all alone because you didn’t make other plans. How would you handle this situation?
6. Extra! You loaned your friend money - \$2.50- several weeks ago (three weeks and four days ago, but who’s counting??). The money has not been paid back or even mentioned since then. You don’t know whether to bring it up or not. You tell yourself it isn’t a large amount of money

and this is a very good friend. Then why do you keep thinking about it?  
How would you handle this situation?

- As a class, discuss the proper way to handle each situation and what may happen if they do not handle the situation properly. You may want to brainstorm as a class or individually. Handling situations in a positive way will help youth keep their friends and promote healthy problem solving skills.
- Have students write a journal entry that discusses why it is important work out issues with their friends. How do gangs take advantage of them when they aren't communicating well with their friends. Students may want to write a poem or tell a story in their journal entry.

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Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will understand what a good role model is

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, independent instruction

**Activity#3: Everyone Needs a Positive Role Model**

**Background:** It is no secret that youth can be easily influenced. However, the influence does not have to be a negative one. Gangs try to lure youth that have unclear views of what positive and a negative role models are. It is important to distinguish the difference between positive and negative influences.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Ask/discuss the following: What is a role model? What is a good choice for a role model?
  - Discuss any answers students give and add that role models come in many forms. They are someone we look up to or maybe someone we would like to be like. A good choice for a role model is someone that achieves his or her goals positively and is successful in life (not necessarily rich).
- Ask/discuss the following: What are some qualities you have that would make you a good role model. How can you build on these qualities?
  - Answers will vary.
- Ask/discuss the following: List people that may not be a good role model. Are there bad role models on T.V.? What makes them bad role models?
  - Answers will vary.
- Have students make a presentation on one of their role models (pre-approved by you). You may want to have them draw a picture of their role model, say why they chose that person and list the qualities they like about that person. They should be able to answer the question – Who did you choose as your role model and why?

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**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will recognize the importance of positive friends

Students will become aware of bullying behaviours

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #4: Bullying and the Connection to Gangs**

**Background:** Social relationships are an important part of a youth's life. Peers and friends are key players in social relationships. Not all social relationships are positive. For some youth bullying and peer pressure are something they deal with everyday. Choosing friends wisely and recognizing misuse of power and inappropriate behaviours will help youth to make positive social relationships and help them stay away from gangs.

Gangs are often drawn to bullies or victims of bullies because of their low self-esteem. Additionally, they are drawn to bullies because of their violent tendencies. For more information on bullying, visit the sasklearning website [http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/pol\\_eval/school\\_plus/crse/anti\\_bully.shtml](http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/pol_eval/school_plus/crse/anti_bully.shtml). In addition, look at the report on bullying by the kids help phone. [http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/beingthereforkids/khp\\_reports/2006\\_Bullying\\_Report.pdf](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/beingthereforkids/khp_reports/2006_Bullying_Report.pdf)

**Teaching Notes:**

- Ask the class if they know what a bully is. Start at one end of the class and ask each student – what are some things bullies do? (i.e. say you're dumb, push you, ignore you, take your money, talk about you behind your back...). After hearing everyone answer, ask the class if they have ever been bullied (show of hands). Using their facial expressions, show how it makes them feel. Now ask them if they have ever been a bully (show of hands). If being bullied makes you feel bad, is it right to bully others and make them feel bad?
- Bullies are often targets for gang recruitment. They often use violence for many different reasons and that is attractive to gangs. Bullies also make those they bully targets for gang recruitment by diminishing their self-esteem, leaving a void that needs to be filled. Have students watch the "Words Hurt" commercial under the title 'Children and Bullying' from the TV&ME program and choose lessons plans that correspond to the commercial and your student needs <http://www.cca-kids.ca/tvandme/>

(Program is free from Concerned Children's Advertisers, order 4 – 6 weeks in advance or use online information and links).

- Visit [http://www.actsofkindness.org/file\\_uploads/files/117\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.actsofkindness.org/file_uploads/files/117_pdf.pdf) and engage students in the lesson entitled 'Words Will Break Your Heart' by Patricia Ladysmith.
- Conduct a discussion with the class that talks about gangs targeting people who have been hurt or hurt others.
- Visit <http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/beingthereforkids/info-schools/issuecards.html> to look at ways youth can deal with bullying.
- Have students write a journal entry that discusses why it is important to choose good friends and stay away from people who are bullies and in gangs.

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will understand what recruitment is and tactics that some gangs use to recruit youth

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #5: Gang Recruitment**

**Background:** Some children have parents that used to belong to a gang and they mistakenly believe that if they join a gang, like their parents did, they can survive gang activity without being hurt. The gang activity of today though, is different than the gang activity of the past. Due to the magnitude of the gang violence, being involved with the gangs of today is more dangerous, violent and deadly than it was to be involved with gangs in the past. However, recruitment is more aggressive.

Gangs seek out all kinds of people to join their gang. They often try to find something that someone needs and give it to him or her. However, what they do not tell you is that you now have to do things for them to pay them back. Gangs are manipulative and it is easy to fall into their traps. It is imperative that youth know of recruitment tactics and how to stay away from gang involvement.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Introduce the idea that gangs may seem like they are caring on the surface, but underneath they do not care about you as an individual.
- Conduct an experiment for youth to see how gangs can get into our lives by pretending to care. You will need 6 glasses of water (the heavier the better).
  - Ask for three volunteers
    - Volunteer A is being bullied on the way home from school
    - Volunteer B is trying to make money to buy a bike
    - Volunteer C is a gang member that is going to try to recruit the other volunteers
  - Fill up two cups of water and hand one cup to each student A and B. The cup of water represents the weight they are carrying around because of the problems they are dealing with. Have each student hold the full cup of water out in front of them above their head.
  - While they are holding the water out in front of them and above their head, introduce student C to the class. Tell them he/she is a gang member. He/she is going to show them how gang members can seem like they are being very nice and helpful even when they aren't. Make sure A and B are tired of holding the water before continuing.

- Have student C go up to student A and say - I noticed there are some kids bugging you on the way home from school. My friends and I can protect you. This sounds good to student A. He/she is tired of dealing with the bullies and really wants protection. Student A gives student C the cup of water. Student C puts down the cup of water.
- Have student C go up to student B and say – I noticed you have been mowing lawns and saving money to buy a bike. I have some money why don't I just get you a bike and you can go riding with my friends and me today. This sounds good to student B. He/she is tired of trying to save money and no one else is trying to help him/her. Student B gives student C the cup of water. Student C puts down the cup of water.
- Now have student C go back to student A and say. You know I've been making sure the bullies don't bother you on the way to school. I want you to do something for me. You have to do it or I will make sure you get beat up on the way home. I want you to take this bag of stolen CD's to this address. Hand student A two glasses of water and have him/her hold it in front of them above their head. The new cups represent the new problems the student has by getting involved with a gang. Now his or her problems are worse than before.
- Now have student C go back to student B and say. You know I got you that really nice bike and now I want you to do something for me. I want you to get me your parents' car keys. You have to do it or I will take your bike back and tell your parents you stole it from me. Hand student B two glasses of water and have him/her hold it in front of them above their head.
- Explain to the class that at first the gang member looked like he or she was trying to help, but he or she really just wanted to get close to them to get them to do bad things.
- What will eventually happen to students A and B? They will get tired of holding the glasses and just let go. In real life that can mean many different things. They may let go and fall into a life of crime with the gang or they may let go and seek help from someone they trust.
- Guide a discussion about the experiment and answer any questions that may arise. It is easy to fall into the traps gangs set up.
- Have class look up the word recruit in the dictionary. What does it mean to be recruited? Sometimes gang members don't try to trick you or threaten you into joining a gang, they often just ask you to. They will show you all the money they make, how many friends they have, tell you they have older friends that can drive cars or offer you alcohol and drugs.
- Create a poster with the class that shows how they can deal with recruitment tactics.
  - Be sure to include, leave the area, find a safe place (police station, school, store, family friend, other safe places), tell a parent or adult you trust, use the buddy system, avoid dangerous situations, look for positive ways to solve your problems. List as many as you can.
- Have students write a journal entry that discusses what they have learned about recruitment tactics gangs' use.

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will become aware that you lose your freedom when you are in a gang

Students will understand that anger is natural and there are positive ways to deal with it

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, direct instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #6: Respect Your Freedom to Express Yourself and Learn How to Keep Your Cool**

**Background:** A young person experiences many feelings and emotions everyday. If they become apart of a gang they no longer have the freedom to express their feelings and emotions. They are told how to feel and what to do by the gang.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Have students perform a feelings check. Using only their face and body (no words) have the class express the following emotions:
  - Happy, sad, surprised, confused, hurt, excited, angry...
- Discuss with the class and create a handout or notes on the concept of anger and emotions. Include the following:
  - Emotions are any strong feeling we use to express ourselves. They help to convey what we think about a situation or event.
  - Emotions and anger are not bad, but we do have to deal with them in an appropriate way to ensure they do not become negative.
  - Anger is negative emotional reaction associated with other bad feelings such as fear, disgust, shame, irritability, outrage, hostility and possibly even violence. Actions resulting from anger often have negative consequences.
  - Anger Management tips:
    - Count to ten
    - Provide and outlet for your emotions (basketball, painting...)
    - Visualization and deep breathing
    - Talk to someone you trust about your feelings
    - Contact the Kids Help Phone
    - Don't hold a grudge
    - Stop and think before you react
    - Take a time out and get away from the situation
    - Keep an angry log or diary
    - Learn how to act not react

- Use the decision making model
- Advise the class that we have all felt angry before. Have the class verbally list things that make them angry. You may want to bring in pictures of yourself or of the class that show different emotions and post them in the classroom.
- Using a show of hands, have the students answer if they have felt (happy, sad, angry, upset, lonely...) in the past few days. Draw the class to the conclusion that everyone is unique and they have the freedom to express themselves and feel their emotions when they need to.
- Conduct a discussion with the class:
  - People who are apart of gangs or even associated with gangs don't have the opportunity to express their emotions or have their own feelings. They are told what to do and how to feel. Even if an individual does not want to hurt someone or steal something, he or she often doesn't have a choice. Gangs run their lives. However, when you are an individual you have the freedom to make positive decisions and you are in charge of your life. You are free to feel, express yourself and act as you choose.
- Have students write a journal entry that discusses what they have learned about their ability to express themselves if they are in a gang. What does a gang take away from them?

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will become aware of the negative consequences of violent behaviour

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, indirect instruction

**Activity #7: Violence and Consequences**

**Background:** Violence is an integral part of the gang lifestyle. When someone joins a gang, they become a part of the "culture of violence" of the gang. This culture of violence promotes violent behavior as an acceptable behavior for gang members. Gang violence can be prompted by a wrong look, an insult, retaliation for a prior incident, a perceived "disrespectful act", or any number of real or imagined transgressions against the gang members, or their gang. Gang members can get so involved in the culture of violence of the gang that they fail to realize the full impact that gang violence can have on them, their family and the community. When someone begins to hang around with gangs, or gang members, they could become either a perpetrator of the violence, or a victim of it. Whether as a perpetrator, or a victim, gang violence adversely affects the lives of gang members and the communities in which they live.

Violent behaviour is unacceptable in every situation. Many youth use violence to try to solve their problems. However, most youth do not understand the impact violence has on themselves and everyone around them. In our society, media and other influential sources bombard youth with violent images that may desensitize them towards violent acts.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Read *Anger Management for Youth: stemming aggression and violence* by Dr. Leona and *Choices and Decisions: Violent Feelings modern issues that affect you* by Pete Sanders or similar books that deal with violence and anger management for youth. Choose appropriate activities and utilize them in the classroom.
- Arrange for your school resource officer to speak to the classroom about violence and gangs. Prepare an outline for the officer on topics you would like discussed in the classroom (gang violence, T.V./media violence, consequences)
- Have students write a song or rap about the importance of stopping violence. You may want to arrange to work with a music teacher to learn one of the songs/raps or visit

[http://www.actsofkindness.org/file\\_uploads/files/154\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.actsofkindness.org/file_uploads/files/154_pdf.pdf) and learn the song, *Kindness is Contagious*.

- Have students write a journal entry that discusses what they have learned about gang violence and the consequences.

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will recognize unsafe situations

Students will learn tips to avoid dangerous situations

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, indirect instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #8: Safety – You Come First**

**Background:** A lot of the gang activity of today is illegal or criminal activity. From vandalism to murder, gangs commit crime. When a person joins a gang they can expect to get arrested, go to court, and spend time in jail.

Ensuring youth are safe is a top priority. Gangs are experts at making youth make difficult choices. Many youth are not able to make positive choices because they are ill equipped. It is essential that youth learn how to avoid dangerous situations and make positive decisions. The following lesson was created by the Ohio Criminal Gang Prevention Curriculum, Marc Dann Attorney General and adapted to suit the needs of grade four students in Saskatchewan.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Read this or another scenario aloud to your students.
  - Michael and his friend Pascal play on a school intramural team. They are walking home after a game and they see a really cool sports car following them. There are stores and houses on the street and Pascal's house is just around the corner.  
  
Michael and Pascal know they aren't supposed to talk to strangers or get in a stranger's car.
- Ask the students the following questions: Is this a dangerous situation? Why? What should they do? Where should they go? Whom should they tell? Whom should the grown-ups call?
- Tell the class there is a difference between telling and tattling.
  - Tattling is letting a grown up know about a situation that you can handle on your own that will not put your safety at risk but will get another person in trouble. Example, letting a grown up know that Chris won't get off the computer and you want to use it is tattling. You are capable of resolving this problem using your problem solving skills.

- Telling is letting a grown up know about a situation that you cannot handle on your own and you need help to resolve. Example, letting a grown up know that Chris got into a car with a bunch of older kids that were drinking is telling and is the right thing to do. Chris's safety is in danger and you need an adult to help you resolve the problem.
- On an overhead, have the class write out the following *Rules for Safety*. As a follow up exercise have each students take their list home discuss it with their parent/guardian and add any rules they may think of. You may want to send a slip home for the parent/guardian to sign.
  - Before I go anywhere, I always check with my parents/guardian. I tell them where I am going, how I will get there, who will be going with me, and when I will be back.
  - I check first for permission from my parents/guardian before getting into cars or leaving with anyone, even someone I know. I check first before changing plans or accepting money, gifts, or drugs without my parents/guardians knowledge.
  - It is safer for me to be with other people when going places or playing outside. I always us the buddy system.
  - I will not do favours for people who want me to do something I am not comfortable doing.
  - I say No if someone tries to touch me in ways that make me feel frightened, uncomfortable, or confused. Then I go and tell a grown-up I trust what happened.
  - I know it is Not my fault if someone touches me in a way that is not OK. I don't have to keep secrets about those touches.
  - I trust my feelings and talk to grownups about problems that are too big for me to handle on my own. Many people care about me and will listen and believe me. I am not alone.
  - It is never too late to ask for help. I can keep asking until I get the help I need.
  - I am a special person, and I deserve to feel safe.
- Hand out a Safety Tips Card/Pamphlet. You may want to contact your local police to see if they have any promotional items or create the card yourself. Include the following:
  - Check first for permission
  - Use the buddy system
  - Say no, then go and tell
  - Listen to my feelings and talk with grown-ups I trust
  - Stay away from dangerous situations
- Discuss with the class that gangs will always try to get them to do things that will make them feel unsafe. They will need to take the rules for safety and apply them to their lives.
- Have students write a journal that talks about how they can apply the rules/tips they have learned to their lives. You may want to encourage the class to use real life examples.

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will understand how gangs use drugs to lure them into gangs

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #9: Drugs and the Lure to Gangs**

**Background:** Drugs are a large part of the gang life style. When someone begins to hang around or associate with gangs the possibility of their using drugs increases. This is because of the availability of drugs (including alcohol) within the gang, and a gang mentality that promotes drug usage by gang members, and amongst the people who associate with them. The desire for peer acceptance also motivates youth that hang around with gangs, to use drugs. Drugs are often used to make money, gain status, lure prospective members and release inhibitions. Your class should have a background on drug prevention before taking this lesson.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Ask the class by a show of hands if they have ever been asked to do drugs, been around drugs or know of someone who sells drugs. Ask the class if they see drugs on T.V. and hear about them in music.
- Discuss with the class that they will face making decisions about alcohol and drugs. Refresh the class on what they have already learned about saying no to smoking and drugs.
- Drugs seem to be everywhere and youth can become complacent to that fact. Have students watch the commercial the *Brain* found at [http://www.cca-kids.ca/tvandme/english/educators/junior\\_substance](http://www.cca-kids.ca/tvandme/english/educators/junior_substance) from the TV&ME program under the heading 'Substance Abuse Prevention' and use the lesson plan that corresponds to the commercial (Program is free from Concerned Children's Advertisers, order 4 – 6 weeks in advance or use online information and links).
- Discuss with the class that getting involved with gangs and drugs will make reaching their dreams very difficult. Gangs have control over their lives and what they want comes last on the list of the gang's things to do.
- Have students write a journal entry that discusses what they have learned about drugs and how gangs use drugs to their advantage.

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Student will learn the availability of the offerings of the Kids Help Phone for a variety of issues including the prevention of gang involvement

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, direct instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #10: Kids Help Phone**

**Background:** Not everyone has someone he or she can trust. The Kids Help Phone and other available agencies in your area can help. The Kids Help Phone website at [http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/beingthereforkids/info-schools/teachersguide\\_eng.pdf](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/beingthereforkids/info-schools/teachersguide_eng.pdf) has lessons to teach students about Kids Help Phone. Please ensure that all information is up to date before using this lesson in your classroom (to find this lesson follow the path outlined in the resources section, call the Kids Help Phone and ask for assistance or use the link listed above). It is important to order free materials (posters, pamphlets, business cards) 3 to 6 weeks in advance to ensure they will make it to your school on time if you wish to handout material.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Choose the lesson designed for grades k-4 and depending on your students interests, pick an activity that will best suit your students needs.
- Remember NO problem is too small or too big for the Kids Help Phone. In the short case studies you will go over with the students, be sure to include 3 different scenarios that involve gang related issues that you feel your students may encounter.
- If there are other services in your area, please provide your students with contact information.
- If your school has the capabilities you may want to call the Kids Help Phone or show the class the Kids Zone on the website found at [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca).

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will understand that there are several things that help make a positive healthy person

Students will understand that even though they are unique they have commonalities with other peers

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, experiential instruction

**Activity #11: Learning To Be a Positive Healthy Person**

**Background:** Youth sometimes join gangs because they don't realize that there are other positive ways for them to spend time with kids their age. Unfortunately they erroneously think that there is "nothing else" for them do, and that joining a gang is the only way for them to associate with their peers. Instead of wasting their time on gang activity there are many other positive activities that kids can participate in, or many alternatives to gang involvement. These "alternatives" can provide youth with something constructive to do in their free time, as well as a beneficial opportunity to associate with other kids their age.

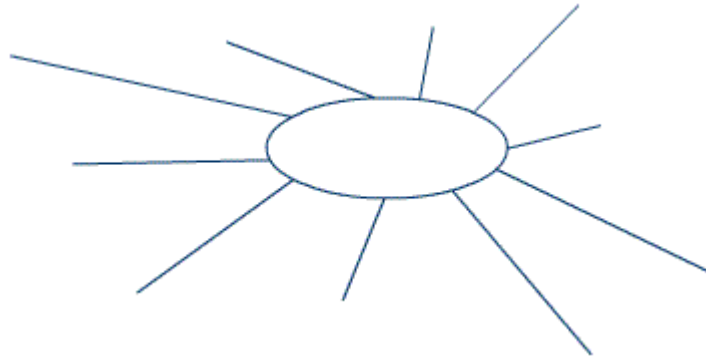
Promoting Self-esteem and allowing youth to gain confidence in their abilities is an effective strategy to help fend off gang involvement. Gangs prey on perceived weaknesses therefore, it is important for each individual to understand their worth. Allowing youth to express what they are interested in and finding ways to pursue those interests is a great way to show positive commonalities among members of their peer group.

This activity contains portions of the *Make Awesome Waves Together* lesson plan. The complete lesson for *Make Awesome Waves Together* can be found in Beth Teolis's book, *Ready to use self-esteem and conflict-solving activities for grades 4-8*.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Conduct a classroom discussion about all the things that make us who we are. You may want to discuss various things that impact youth including friends, family support, peer pressure, safety, healthy body, school, individual interest, quirks...
  - Draw a sun on the board and put your name in the middle. On each spoke write something down you think is important for you to be a positive healthy person (I have a loving grandma, I respect authority, I

am able to make positive decisions, I have a healthy self-esteem, I have supportive friends that I trust...)



- On a blank piece of paper have the class draw their own sun and write down the things they feel are important for them to be a positive healthy person.
- Using examples from the students work, illustrate to the class that there are many things that help encourage people to live a positive and healthy lifestyle. However, things can change in our life or something may go wrong, we are often left with a void that needs be filled. Gangs try to fill that void. Recall the lesson on recruitment.
- Make a 'yarn web' that shows the connection of living a positive healthy life and keeping a balance. You will need a ball of yarn, construction paper and tape.
  - Ask a student to volunteer their sun. Pick out five things that the student wrote down.
  - Ask for six volunteers and assign one of the five things from the sun to each volunteer; the last volunteer will be assigned the label '*A Positive and Healthy Me*'. Use construction paper to make signs to tape on each student or hang around their neck.
  - Have students stand in a circle and give the ball of yarn to 'A Positive and Healthy Me'. Ask the person with the yarn to hold on to one end of the yarn and toss the rest of the yarn ball to someone in the group that is not beside them. Continue tossing the yarn to each member of the circle until it reaches the start. You should have a 'yarn web' when you are complete.
  - Tell the class that each of those five things is helping to make that person who they are. It is important to try to keep these good things in their life.
  - Ask the class what would happen if one of the things wasn't their. Have one of the students drop their yarn. You will see the web start to fall apart. Sometimes gangs use this opening to try to get you to join a gang. Thus, it is important to have many positive things in your life that will help you keep your web strong. This way it will be hard for gangs to get into your life.

- Have the class share some of their ideas about what they enjoy doing at school or in their spare time and ask the students if they enjoy being with others who like some of the same activities as they do. Lead a discussion about “good times” students with common interests have shared together.
- Pass out the worksheet *Make Awesome Waves Together*. Tell the students they are about to complete an activity that lists their favorite activities and interests. Ask them to complete the fill-ins listed on the waterslide.
- Have students mingle in the classroom to find 6-8 other people that share some of their interests. Have them write down the names of the people they share interests with in the classroom. Collect and read the activity sheets. You may want to form future groups based on common interests.

\*\* Musical link – “Slip Slidin” by Paul Simon

- Have students write a journal entry on the importance of being a positive healthy person. Have them discuss what they have learned about how gangs can take advantage of them.

*Elementary Health Education and the Prevention of Gang Involvement*  
Grade 4

**Decision Making Process:**

Level A – Extend Knowledge Base

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will review what they have learned about gangs

**Teaching Strategies/Methods:**

Interactive instruction, indirect instruction, independent instruction

**Activity #12: Putting it all together**

**Background:** It is important for students to revisit and remember what they have learned about gangs. It is equally important to spread the word.

**Teaching Notes:**

- Briefly go over with the class the highlights of what they have learned about gangs. Answer questions and provide further information if needed.
- Have the students take out their journals and read them over. Tell them, that from their journals they are going to write a letter to a friend or family member that shows what they have learned about gangs and how to stay away from them.
- You may want to use a template or have the students answer specific questions in their letter. Read each letter and approve it before allowing the student to mail it.
- Ask the class to mail their letter or hand deliver it to the recipient.