

Does Affirming the Self Decrease the Desire to Join a Gang?

by

James A. Brown

A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Psychology

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2012

© James A. Brown 2012

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Young people are being lured into gang life through many factors including bad decision making and the influence of their peers. My study suggests that there are alternatives to coercive suppression through law enforcement activities and incarceration for youth who chose this way of life. Self-affirmation or the reflection on important values that affirm the self, has been shown to significantly affect attitudes and behaviour (Cohen & Sherman, 2006). To date there have been none, however, that demonstrate that affirming the self can change attitudes regarding joining gangs. This thesis will test the idea. Generally speaking the justice system defines what gangs are and how to deal with gang members. Once a young person has gone down the path of joining a gang he or she is labeled. The problem is they become entrenched in being a gang member and less likely to be rehabilitated away from this way of life after a stint in prison. It would not be reasonable to think that a study of this nature would have the capacity of diverting all youths from being potential gang members but even if a small percentage were affected it could point to an important way to intervene with youth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Steven Spencer for his guidance and input into designing this study, assisting in the preparation of this thesis and for his advice and support throughout the past three years. I would like to dedicate this thesis to one of my sponsors, Dr. Paul Beam one of my sponsors who passed away in 2010.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Implications of joining a gang.....	1
Mara Salvatrucha – MS 13.....	1
Maslow.....	1
Hierarchy of Needs.....	2
Belonging.....	3
Gang Statistics.....	4 - 5
Gang Facts.....	5
CBC	5
Need forGang Studies.....	5
Thrasher, Gang Study.....	6
Living Environment.....	6
Self-affirmation studies.....	7 - 8
Adolescent brain development.....	8
Intention of the study.....	9
CHAPTER 2: AFFIMATION STUDY.....	10
Participants.....	10
Method.....	10
CHAPTER3: RESULTS.....	11
CHAPTER 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION	13
Role of belonging.....	13
Implications of joining a gang and consequents.....	13
REFERENCES	14 - 16
APPENDIX A.....	17 - 23

List of Figures

Figure		Page
1	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	2
2	Statistics on Youth Gangs from Public Safety Canada.	4 -5

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Does affirming the self reduce the desire to join a street gang? There are many factors that may contribute to youths wanting to join a gang. It could be the allure of excitement, peer pressure, a desire for belonging or just a bad decision making. Joining a street gang could end up being a very long lasting decision that could be devastating. In many instances you cannot leave the gang once you join. One of the most notorious gangs in the world was started by a group of youths banding together due to being harassed by already established gangs. The Marasalvatrucha or MS13 now considered *The World's Most Dangerous Gang*, an estimated membership of 50,000 to 100,000 members worldwide (National Geographic, 2006). One of the members of this gang has spoken out and he readily admits that because of decisions he made in his teenage years he is now tied into the MS13 for the rest of his life. His journey began in the basement of a church where he and a group of friends formed a small Latino gang in a major Canadian city. They were later approached by a MS13 gang member from Los Angeles and the small gang was swallowed up by the larger gang. He told me that if he had made a wiser decision to not join a gang earlier his life; living now at 30 years of age would be much easier. In this study I propose that participation in a self-affirming activity can positively affect this decision making process and reroute the path some youths will take. This will in turn lead to a more positive life-style.

Maslow (1970) suggests that there are certain needs that young people require and a certain order in which those needs will be sought to be fulfilled. He proposes a hierarchy of needs which physiological needs are the first and most important of these needs basic to life. When those needs are

fulfilled people pursue safety needs, followed by belonging needs, esteem needs, and finally the need for self-actualization (see Figure 1). Many of the aspects regarding this theory could easily apply to situations in which a gang would provide some of the most basic needs but as well as the catalyst for wanting to join a gang. Some communities are not stable environments and they pose threats to adolescents. These in turn create a high risk situation for youths living in these communities and the potential for joining a gang for a sense of safety and belonging. In lower socioeconomic environments physiological needs may be lacking. The criminal activity found in gangs can provide money to help satisfy some of these needs.

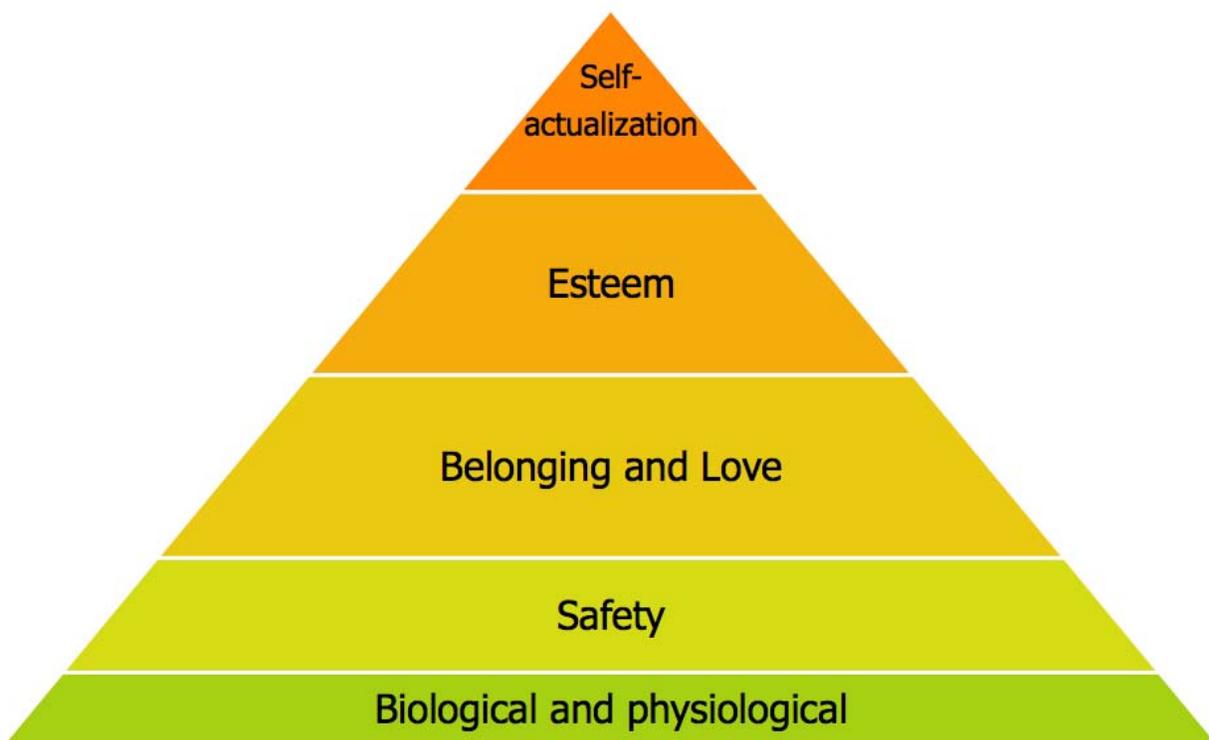


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, 1970.

Belonging is another aspect that may be lacking in the home environment as well. Single parent families, foster homes, abusive parents are just some of the issues contributing to the feeling of not being wanted. Gangs can lure young people with the aspect being wanted, of belonging and being part of something even though it may not be good. The fourth need is esteem. A false impression can be created by a gang environment but worthy of causing a youth to join a gang. Gang members have a status in communities because of the fear they evoke. In many instances the gangs can actually control the community by fear. They control what they refer to as, “their *turf*” the area or boundary that is maintained by a gang; which is strictly enforced even to the death. Many of the homicides involving young people occur because a rival gang member trespassed on to rival turf. An excerpt from *Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles: Fact Sheet: Gang Violence*, suggests, “Most gang homicides are not random, nor are they only disputes over drugs or some other crime. The vast majority of violent incidents involving gang members continue to result from fights over *turf*, status and revenge. This may appear extreme and unbelievable but it is a fact and a reality. Gang members in their *turf* area would feel that they were significant and have control which would boost their self-esteem. It is evident that membership in a gang can supply needs that may be missing from their home environment. This is critical because once the youths are committed to the gang the gang supercedes family, school, friends and anything meaningful in their life.

The most significant of these needs regarding gang membership and relevant to this study is belonging. Humans need to belong. Some of the most significant studies on belonging were conducted by Marilyn B. Brewer of Ohio State University. Brewer concluded that human beings are characterized by obligatory interdependence, and our evolutionary history is a story of coevolution of genetic endowment, social structure, and culture (Brewer and Caporael 2006). A young person in a community that is left out has to develop some way to fit in and joining a gang may be the only way to

satisfy this need. The level of need may vary between individuals but belonging may be the catalyst required for this young person to make the decision to join a gang. Strong desire can easily supercede common sense and rational thought.

Gangs are a major problem in Canada a problem that should seriously be considered. Table 1 and 2 summarize some of the most important statistics about gangs obtained from *Public Safety Canada*.

Table 1: Comparison of Youth Gangs in Canada and the United States

	U.S. (2000)	Canada (2001)
Population	281,421,906	30,007,094
Percentage of jurisdictions reporting youth gang activity	40%	23.7%
Estimated number of youth gangs	24,500	434
Estimated number of gang members	772,500	7,071
Density per 1000 population	2.75	0.24

Source: Astwood Strategy Corporation (2004)

Table 2: Estimated Number of Youth Gangs and Youth Gang Members, Nationally and by Province, 2002

Area	Number of Youth Gangs	Number of Youth Gang Members	Youth Gang Members per 1,000 pop.
Canada	434	7071	0.24
British Columbia	102	1027	0.26

Area	Number of Youth Gangs	Number of Youth Gang Members	Youth Gang Members per 1,000 pop.
Alberta	42	668	0.22
Saskatchewan	28	1315	1.34
Manitoba	15	171	0.15
Ontario	216	3320	0.29
Québec	25	533	0.07
Nova Scotia	6	37	0.04
New Brunswick	0	0	0
Prince Edward Island	0	0	0
Newfoundland and Labrador	0	0	0
Yukon	0	0	0
Northwest Territories	0	0	0
Nunavut	0	0	0

- **Notes:** Data was collected on only four police agencies in the Province of Québec. As a result, the percentage of jurisdictions reporting active youth gangs in Québec (i.e., 100%) must not be considered representative of the entire province.

- **Source:** Astwood Strategy Corporation (2004)

These statistics from 2002 are 10 years old from 2002 but are the most current statistics available.

This data in itself is a testament to the lack of commitment and research regarding gangs. These 2002 statistics are non-reflective of the current situation of gang numbers in Canada. The United States is proportionally much larger than Canada and the gang issue is equally larger but not necessarily more serious. A CBC News Canada report dated October 28, 2009 suggested that one in four homicides in Canada were gang related. This is a very high percentage and should cause considerable concern. Wood and Alleyne 2010 suggest that gangs are worthy of research attention but that most of the research and attention is coming from Criminologist and Sociologists. Wood and Alleyne argue that psychologists need to become more involved. There is little Canadian research on the subject of gangs and certainly even less from the field of psychology pertaining to gangs. Most of the studies (not psychology based) that are available are from either the United

States or the United Kingdom and are not necessarily for the purpose of prevention. If self-affirmation studies can change attitudes of even a small number of youth then these types of studies will have value and worth.

The most extensive body of work relating to gangs to date was presented by Frederick M. Thrasher, *The Gang a study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago*, published in 1927. Thrasher studied 1,313 gangs located throughout Chicago. He dealt with the history and the definition of gangs in the first part of the study and then moves to look at life in a gang. This included the aspect of race and gender. In the final stage of the study Thrasher looks at the leadership, control and the criminality within the gangs. Thrasher's work still has relevance as the structure and workings of gang life has not changed since he conducted his study. Today though, gangs are more sophisticated with different elements of criminality. Furthermore globalization expands the ability for gangs to be spread out geographically with connection worldwide. This makes it very difficult for law enforcement to control. A street gang could easily have connections across the country or internationally with the use of the internet. A seemingly innocent localized street gang may be a *puppet gang* for a larger more established gang. These *puppet gangs* commit crime, distribute drugs and control sex workers. These issues were not part of Thrasher's study and in turn allowed the study to be simplistic in comparison to today's world. This study is still affective regarding the structure and characteristic of gangs and focuses on the nature of gangs but did not really look into ways to prevent or discourage gang membership. In a follow up study conducted by Shaw and McKay (1931) a quote from their study states:

Families in poor inner city areas have low levels of functional authority over children, who, once exposed to delinquent traditions, succumb to delinquent behavior. In such a cultural climate gang membership becomes a satisfying alternative to unsatisfactory legitimate conventions. If family, school, church and government all fail to adequately provide for

young people young people will form indigenous groups such as gangs which provide a social support system in socially disorganized communities (Hill, Howell, Hawkins, & Battin-Pearson, 1999; Lane & Meeker, 2004; Papachristos & Kirk, 2006; Spergel, 1995).

There was criticism to Thrashers study however by Cullen, 1984 and Sutherland (1937), Sutherland and Cressey (1960, 1974) suggesting that Thrasher limited his studies to working class families but Cullen et al argued that this behavior is prevalent across all classes. Youths may see an allure to gang life, one that is created in the media or through television and movies rather than their community situation. Therefore, their class or status may have no bearing on whether or not they will get involved with a gang. A youth in a busy modern well to do family may feel just as isolated and unwanted as a youth from a poor family. The desire to belong may be overwhelming and they may not have life skills or the confidence in their own ability to resist this allure. Gangs are here to stay and when youths have made the decision to join a gang and do join they have to live with the consequences of this decision. What needs to happen is to alter their decisions causing them to consider consequences with particular emphasis to their future. Gang recruitment will always happen for various reasons and through various methods. If there is a way of preventing gang recruitment with even a small number of youths, this is a move to the positive. Self-affirmation studies have the ability to change decisions. In turn this will help to *dry up the pond* as even the prevention of a small number of youths going the route of gang life will be significant.

Claude Steele's theory of *Self-Affirmation* purports that people are motivated to maintain self-integrity by preserving a positive, moral and adaptive self-image. Living in a social environment that is negative and threatening is definitely not maintaining self-integrity with a positive, moral self-image. A good person may mean something else to a person living in an environment proliferated with drugs and crime where their role model may be someone involved in criminal behaviour. Their

norm will be dramatically distorted from that of the rest of society. In fact the standards for what it means to be a good person varies across cultures, groups, and situations (Heine, 2005). Take for example a young person in a family where the father is a gang member and is in and out of jail on a regular basis. There might also be a brother, uncle who is a gang member in the community they consider are worth emulating. This environment would have a profound effect on how they will proceed with their life. Children emulate their parents whether it is good or bad and the chances of a young person going down the wrong path from a bad role model are fairly high.

Parental warmth and dominance were found to be salient variables in identification; however, parental dominance was more important for imitation by boys while maternal warmth was more effective with girls. Support was found for identification with the aggressor under the conditions of a high-conflict home where both parents were low in warmth.

If self-affirmation theory purports that people are motivated to maintain integrity. Integrity defines that one is a good and appropriate person (Steele, 1988). Applying a study of this nature to youths should have a positive effect on the perception of the subjects of a study. Questions addressing gang membership as a threat would as well be affective in creating a thought process to change attitudes. Challenging the notion of joining a gang as not being a positive choice could easily bring into question the viability of joining a gang. It is quite possible that when a young person decides to join a gang they are not thinking of the future or the consequences of gang membership. A young person's brain does not have the necessary development to make long term decision making and may also make bad decisions because of ignorance (Reyna & Farley, 2006). They cannot view what they will be like in 10 years or 20 years into the future or what consequences may be

involved when they become involved in gang life. So questions in the study that will evoke this train of thought will be relevant to decision making.

The intention of this study is to test whether questions that are self-affirming as compared to control questions that are not self-affirming reduces the desire to join a gang. We also examine whether this effect is equally strong among participants with high and low levels of desire for belonging.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

This study was conducted with first year students' at a large Canadian University. There were 69 participants with 35 being female, the mean age 19.46 with a SD of 2.78. The ethnicity was: 17.4% Black, 13% East Asian/Pacific Islander, 1.4% Latin American, 1.4% Native American, 21.7% South Asian, 23.2% White, 10.1% Middle Eastern and 11.6% other. It was a 2 x 2 factorial design with threat or no threat and affirmation on no affirmation. Participants were randomly assigned to the affirmation or control conditions. The purpose was to establish that if the subjects felt self-affirmed they will not want to join a gang. The questions were affirmation vs. control. The recruitment was based on two prescreen items: I have considered joining a street gang (17.2% of Ps indicated rarely, 10.9% indicated occasionally and I have close friend or family members who have been associated with gangs (82.5% indicated Agree or strongly agree). The participant answered a questionnaire that included questions that were designed to affirm them or not and they related to the desire to join a gang. The questions ranged from wanting to join a gang at one end of the spectrum to no interest in joining a gang. The major focus was on the aspect of belonging with low and high need for belonging. This applied to both male and female. There were a total of 17 questions with sub categories included in the questions with a 5 point Likert scale combined with yes/no questions. (See Appendix A).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

The Cronbach's' alpha on the measure of the desire to join a gang was .88 and on the 2 item belonging index was .64. Preliminary analyses revealed that the threat manipulation had no effect on the dependent variable or on the belonging index. Thus it appears that the threat manipulation did not successfully affect participant's sense of belonging. Therefore instead of the threat manipulation we conducted analysis using a median split on the belonging index as a replacement for the threat manipulation in the analyses. This resulted in a 2(affirmation condition vs. control condition) X 2 (high sense of belonging vs. low sense of belonging) X 2 (males vs. females) ANOVA. In this analysis there was a main effect for sense of belonging $F(1, 61) = 10.98, p = .01$ and a marginal further action between gender and belonging $F(1, 61) = 2.94, p = .09$. This interaction was qualified, however, by a 3 way interaction between affirmation, belonging and gender $F(1, 61) = 4.61, p = .04$.

If this 3 way interaction is broken down by gender, then for men there was a marginal significant 2 way interaction between affirmation and belonging $F(1, 61) = 2.98, p = .09$. Such that for men high in belonging needs those in the self-affirmation condition has less interest in joining a gang than those in the control condition (M 's = 1.61 vs. 2.30 respectively) $F(1, 61) = 5.50, p < .05$. Among those low in belonging needs, however, there was no significant difference between self-affirmation and control condition (M 's = 1.91 vs. 1.96 respectively) $F(1, 61) < 1$. For females there was only a main effect for belonging such that women who had a higher need for belonging had more interest in joining a gang than women who had a low need for belonging $F(1, 61) = 6.41, p = .05$ and a main effect for the self-affirmation such that women who were self-affirmed surprisingly showed more interest in joining a gang than women who were in the control condition $F(1, 61) = 10.51, p =$

.01. Among men with a high need for belonging self-affirmation led to a dramatic drop in the desire to join a gang but made very little difference if they had a higher need for belonging. This means that there was the desired effect, and affirmation reduced the desire to join a gang for males. The same effect did not hold for women, however. They did show a greater tendency to want to join a gang when they had a high need to belong, but surprisingly self-affirmation resulted in a greater reported desire to join a gang rather than a lesser desire to do so.

Chapter 4

GENERAL DISCUSSION

It is apparent from this study that the issue of belonging plays a strong role in the decision to join a gang. It is not the only reason but one that has to be seriously considered in the area of prevention. Gangs (the active members) do not really care for the welfare of individuals and the credo of a gang is to put the gang before anything else, even their belief system and family. The controls to maintain this attitude are very persuasive. Youths who do join gangs face violence and even death threats for being non-conforming or wanting to leave the gang. This makes it very difficult for gang members to leave this lifestyle even if they want to leave. In consideration of these issues it makes it even more compelling to try to develop methods to prevent youths from joining gangs in the first place. Self-affirmation is a move in the right direction. If studies of this nature are further developed and at risk youths (those with the potential of joining a gang) are exposed to a study of this nature then there is potential for a percentage of these youth to be swayed away from joining. Further investigation has to be done to determine why there is a difference with the response to affirmation regarding gender. Why do females not respond in the same way as males? This may be because the subjects of the study were in their later teen years. Levels of maturity differ for males and females. This type of study should be carried out with younger demographic to determine if the response is different or more effective. This will be able to determine whether or not applying self-affirmation has a greater effect with younger people. The results of this study do show promise that self-affirmation has great potential in the battle against gangs and the recruitment of our youths.

References

- Armitage, C.J., & Rowe, R. (2011). Testing multiple means of self-affirmation. *British Journal of Psychology*, 102(3), 535-545. Doi:10.1111/j.2044-8295.2010.02014.x.
- Brewer, M. B., & Caporael, L.R. (2006. In ScallerM., Simpson J. A. and Kenrick D. T (Eds.), *An evolutionary perspective on social identity: Revisiting groups*. Madison, CT US: Psychosocial Press, Madison CT.
<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/docview/621477888?accountid14906>.
- Cullen, F. T., (1984). *Rethinking crime and deviance theory: The emergence of a structuring tradition*. New Jersey, US: Rowman and Allanheld Publishers.
- D Argembeau, A., Lardi,C., & Van, D.L (2012). Self-defining future projections: Exploring the identity function of thinking about the future. *Memory* 20(2), 110-120. Doi: 1080/09658211.647697.
- Heine, S. J. (2005). In Sorrentio, R. M., Cohen D., Olsen J. M. and Zanna M. P. (Eds.), *Constructing good selves in japan and north America*. Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, Hahwah, NJ.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/620685213?accountid=14906>.
- Hetherington, E. Mavis; Frankie, Gary, *Effects of Parental Dominance, Warmth, and Confliction on Imitation in Children*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 6(2), Jun 1967, 119- 125. doi: 10.1037/h0024639.

- Hill, K. G., Howell, J.C., Hawkins, J. D., & Battin-Pearson, S. R., (1999). Childhood risk factors for adolescent gang membership: Results from the Seattle Social Development Project. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 36, 300 – 322.
- Lane, J., & Meeker, J. W. (2004). Social disorganization perceptions, fear of gang crime and behavioral precautions among White, Latinos, and Vietnamese. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 32, 49 -62.
- National Geographic, Ling, Lisa, Jan 16, 2006. *World's Most Dangerous Gang* (DVD).
- Papchristos, A. V., & Kirk, D. S. 2006). Neighbourhood effects on street gang behaviour. In J. F. Short & L. A. Hughes (Eds.). *Studying youth gangs* (pp. 63 – 83). Oxford, UK: Altamira Press.
- Reyna, V. F., & Farley, F. (2006). Risk and rationality in adolescent decision-making: Implications for theory, practice, and public policy. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 7(1), 1-44.
- Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1931). *Social factors in Juvenile delinquency*, 2, 13.
Washington DC: government Printing Office.
- Sherman, D.K., & Cohen, G.L (2006) The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 38, pp. 183-242). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Sutherland, E. H., (1937). *The professional thief*. US: University of Chicago Press.
- Sutherland, E. H., & Cressey, D. R. (1960) A theory of differential association. *Principles of criminology*. 6th Edition Chicago: Lippincott.

Sutherland, E. H. & Cressey, D. R (1974). *Criminology*. New York: Lippincott.

Weiss, Billie, MPH, Violence Prevention Coalition, 10960 Wilshire Blvd., Suite # 1550, Los Angeles, CA 90024, Phone 310-794-2725. Email: bpweiss@ucla.edu.

Wood, J., Alleyne, E. (2010). Street gang theory and research: Where are we now and where do we go from here? *Aggression and Violent Behaviour, 15*(2), 100 – 111. doi: 10:1016/j.avb.2009.08.005

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

1. What is your age?

2. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

3. Which of these racial or ethnic groups describes you best?

- Black/African American (for example, African, Caribbean)
- East Asian/Pacific Islander (for example, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese)
- Latin American (for example, Mexican, Columbian)
- Native American Indian/First Nation (for example, Cree, Ojibway, Metis)
- South Asian (for example, East Indian, Pakistani)
- White (for example, Eastern European)
- Other:

4. In what country were your parents born?

Mother:

Father:

5. In what country were you born? _____.

6. Which neighbourhood do you live in? _____.

7. Who do you live with? (check all that apply)

- Mother
- Father
- Grandparents
- Aunt/Uncle
- Legal Guardian
- Other:

8. What is your current year in school?

- 7th grade
- 8th grade
- 9th grade
- 10th grade

9. What type of marks do you get?

- Mostly A's
- Mostly B's
- Mostly C's
- Mostly D's
- Other:

10. Below is a list of sentences that describe some ways that a person might feel about herself/himself. Please check the box that best represents your views.

	Not at all True of me	Not very True of me	Sort of True of me	Very true of me
a. I have high self-esteem (In other words, "I feel good about myself").	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I feel like there is a group to which I belong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I feel like I "fit in" with my circle of friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I feel "at home" among my family members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I see myself as: Anxious, easily upset.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I see myself as: Calm, emotionally stable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I like having authority over people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. I find it easy to manipulate people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. I am going to be a great person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please answer the following questions as truthfully as possible. Remember the survey is completely confidential. It is impossible for the researchers who know which survey a student completed. There will be absolutely **no** consequences for the answers you provide.

11. Are you involved with a gang?

- Yes
- No

12. Are you a member of a gang?

- Yes
- No

13. Please check off all people close to you who are or were involved with gangs:

	Involved	How many?
a. Close friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
b. Acquaintances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
c. Relatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____
d. Brothers or sisters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
e. Parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_

14. Now, you will be answering a number of questions specifically about you. Please answer as truthfully as possible:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I think I am stricter about right and wrong than most people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Before I do something I try to consider how my friends will react to it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. My home life has always been happy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I often act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I would do almost anything on a dare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. With things going as they are, it's pretty hard to keep up hope of amounting to anything.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I would rather go without something than ask for a favour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
h. I have had more than my share of things to worry about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. When I meet a stranger I often think that he or she is better than I am.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. My home is less peaceful and quiet than those of most other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. I give my teachers a lot of trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. I have stolen things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. I don't think I'm quite as happy as others seem to be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. A person is better off not to trust anyone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. I have never been in trouble with the law.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. I often feel as though I have done something wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. I often think about how I look and what impression I am making upon others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. I have never done any heavy drinking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. I have never done any illegal drugs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t. My home life was always very pleasant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u. I seem to do things I regret more often than other people do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. In the past, I have been involved in violence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now we would like you to complete a writing task in which we will ask you about your ideas, your beliefs, and your life. There are no right or wrong answers. From the list below please check two or three that are **most** important to you.

athletic ability

- being good at art
- being smart or getting good grades
- creativity
- independence
- membership in a social group (such as your community, racial group, or social club)
- living in the moment
- music
- politics
- relationships with friends of family
- religious values
- sense of humour

Look at the values you checked and in a few sentences write about why these values are important to you. Focus on your thoughts and feelings. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, or how well written it is:

15. List the top two reasons these values are important to you.

Reason 1:

Reason 2:

16. Rate your agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. These values have influenced my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. In general I try to live up to these values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. These values are an important part of who I am.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I care about these values.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Now, you will be answering some more questions specifically about you. Please answer as truthfully as possible:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. There are some attractive benefits of being in a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Gangs are a serious social problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The media makes gangs seem worse than they actually are.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. There should be tougher laws forbidding gang membership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Being involved with gangs is a natural way of life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I have considered joining a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I might be interested in joining a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Joining a gang could be a good experience for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. I would enjoy being in a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. I plan to join a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
k. I would never join a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. I see no benefit in joining a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. I have no interest in joining a gang.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Some people like gangs because it gives them as a sense of belonging.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Gangs can be a great way for young people to find adventure and get their adrenaline pumping.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You are now finished the questionnaire!