

Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia Focus Group Research Summary

In order to develop the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia Campaign, MEE Productions conducted audience research with parents of children and teens, Philadelphia youth (including those who have been involved in the justice system), and service providers who interact with youth in the public school system, recreation centers, the juvenile justice system, social services and more. The overall purpose of the research was to determine effective violence prevention messages that would appeal to and motivate Philadelphians to get involved in reducing violence in our city.

The findings from these focus groups indicate that neighborhood violence is a major area of concern for the majority of Philadelphia residents, young and old. In fact, many participants said that they don't feel safe in their neighborhoods or even in their own homes. While the prevalence of handguns and a lack of conflict-resolution skills were cited as major causes of violence, most participants blamed each other—adults blamed youth or media influences, youth blamed absentee parents and adults, some parents even blamed other parents. However, regardless of who's to blame, all participants strongly stated that they would welcome effective help if it were available.

Summary of Key Findings

- Handguns are easy to come by and are often used to settle disputes, both big and small
- Many Philadelphians feel that violent incidents often occur over "something stupid"
- Money, respect, power and control can incite violent behavior
- Youth believe they have an almost non-existent support system of adults
- Violence involving females is perceived as on the rise.
- Youth feel that they live in a city with limited messages of recovery for those who have "fallen" and limited access to meaningful assistance to get their lives on the right track

Sample of Recommendations

- Every segment of the Philadelphia community must play a role in addressing the issue of violence
- A stronger presence of positive role models, particularly males, is needed in the community
- Messages about violence prevention should not only show the consequences, but also promote positive alternatives for all youth.

The research report works hand-in-hand with a j]XYc`XcW a YbHJfmthat shows local residents, talking in their own words, about violence prevention in Philadelphia.

For more information on the research for this campaign, contact Alicia Jackson at MEE Productions, (215) 829-4920.