

RESEARCH BRIEF

PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN EAST NEW YORK

The Research and Evaluation Center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice is assessing New York City's violence reduction efforts. One element in the project involves in-person surveys with young men (ages 18-30) in various neighborhoods implementing the **Cure Violence** strategy. The survey relies on Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) methods (2014, N=198; 2015, N=178).

This research brief presents results from one of the first neighborhoods to be involved in the study. The results depict the respondents' personal attitudes toward violence and their experiences with violence, as well as their awareness of local violence prevention efforts and their confidence in police and local agencies.

Additional surveys will be conducted in 2016 in multiple neighborhoods around New York City in an effort to detect changes throughout the study period. See the Research and Evaluation Center's website for additional information: www.JohnJayREC.nyc

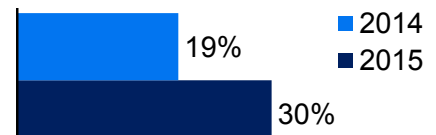
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

		2014	2015
Age	18-20	41%	31%
	21-24	35%	40%
	25-30	23%	29%
Education	Less than high school	29%	20%
	High school / GED	59%	65%
	Some College	10%	10%
	2 Year college degree	2%	2%
	4 Year degree or more	1%	1%
In School Now?	Yes	34%	33%
Employed?	Unemployed	56%	47%
	Part-Time	24%	26%
	Full-Time	16%	26%
Stopped/Frisked in Past Year?	Yes	79%	52%
Ever shot at?	Yes	41%	33%
Ever stabbed?	Yes	17%	20%

CHANGES FROM 2014 TO 2015

Confidence in Police

When violence breaks out in my neighborhood, we can count on the police to help.

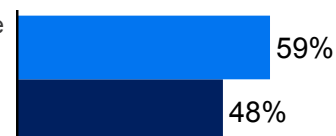


When violence breaks out in my neighborhood, I would call the police.

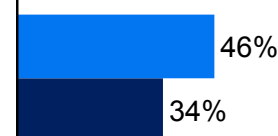


Exposure to Guns

I have heard of someone in my neighborhood being threatened with a gun in the past year.



I have seen at least one gun on my block in the past year.



I have heard gunshots in my neighborhood at least once in the past year.



Exposure to Violence Prevention Efforts

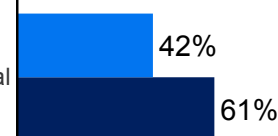
When shown photos of Cure Violence public messages (posters etc.), the survey respondent knew at least one.



When shown photos of Cure Violence staff from his neighborhood, the survey respondent knew at least one.



When violence breaks out in my neighborhood, we can count on our local programs to help.



This study's main goal was to measure changes in violent norms and attitudes in specific areas of New York City. The survey measured each respondent's willingness to use violence in 17 hypothetical confrontation scenarios that ranged from minor to severe provocations. An index (or a composite score) was created from all 17 scenarios.

The possible responses in each scenario were assigned a value from one to five, ranked in order of severity. An "ignore" response received the lowest score while "react verbally" or "react physically" received higher scores. The most violent responses, "pull a weapon" and "use a weapon" received the highest scores overall.

Survey respondents ranked the scenarios involving the need for protection (e.g., being physically attacked at a party or witnessing a friend being physically attacked) as warranting the most violent reactions. The five provocations eliciting the most severe responses all involved an element of past or present physical threat.

After the scenarios presenting physical threats, respondents ranked the most serious provocations as those involving property disputes, disrespect, and competition over intimate partners, in that order.

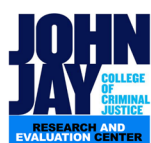
Type of Confrontation	Hypothetical Scenarios	Change 2014-2015
1 Competing for intimate partners by violent means	You are at a club talking to a girl and a guy tries to get her number. You are at a club talking to a girl when a guy comes and tells you she's his girl. Your ex's new boyfriend is playing her. Your girl and you broke up one week ago. You see her with a new guy on the street.	-8%
2 Disrespect	Somebody disrespects you in front of your friends. You are with your friends and a guy steps on your new Jordans. Somebody talked shit about you on a social media site.	-7%
3 Territory	Some guys you and your friends don't know try to take over the basketball court.	-17%
4 Money, debts or stolen property	You see a guy who has not paid you the \$100 he owes you. You see a guy who owes you \$200 and you think he is trying to play you. You won a bet (e.g., dice, craps) and the loser refused to pay you. Guy at the bodega cheated you at the cash register.	-13%
5 Defense of others	You are hanging out with a friend and a guy tries to smack your friend around.	-7%
6 Challenge to social identity or status	A guy takes a swing at you at a party in another neighborhood. You are on your way to a party outside of your hood. You bump a guy and he swings at you. Somebody shows up at a party wearing the jacket everyone knows he took from you.	-3%
7 Retaliation	You see a guy on the street who beat up your brother last week.	-5%

SUMMARY

Young men in East New York report substantially greater confidence in law enforcement to help with neighborhood violence (30% in 2015 versus 19% in 2014), but they were only slightly more willing to contact police in the event of violence (42% vs. 40%). Exposure to gun violence decreased between 2014 and 2015, with fewer respondents having seen guns in their neighborhood in 2015 (34% vs. 46%), but the proportion of young men that reported hearing gunfire in their neighborhood remained high in both years (79% in 2015 vs. 83% in 2014).

Awareness of the public messaging efforts of Cure Violence in East New York was very high (more than 90% in both years), but recognition of Cure Violence staff members fell from 79 percent to 69 percent.

When respondents in East New York were asked a series of questions designed to measure their support for interpersonal violence in confrontational situations, they were consistently less likely to see violence as an appropriate response to conflict. Two of the indices declined more than 10 percent between 2014 and 2015, and only one index failed to drop by at least 5 percent.



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The John Jay Research and Evaluation Center (JohnJayREC) is an applied research organization and part of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. Established in 1975, the Center provides members of the academic community of John Jay College with opportunities to respond to the research needs of justice practitioners in New York City, New York State, and the nation. The director of the Center is Dr. Jeffrey A. Butts. The Center operates under the supervision of the Office for the Advancement of Research (OAR).

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