

RESEARCH BRIEF

PERCEPTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH BRONX

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=200; 2015, N=196).

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

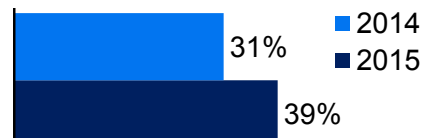
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

		2014	2015
Age	18-20	48%	28%
	21-24	30%	38%
	25-30	22%	33%
Education	Less than high school	17%	29%
	High school / GED	58%	61%
	Some College	19%	7%
	2 Year college degree	1%	1%
	4 Year degree or more	1%	2%
In School Now?	Yes	40%	29%
Employed?	Unemployed	58%	51%
	Part-Time	21%	24%
	Full-Time	18%	24%
Stopped/Frisked in Past Year?	Yes	78%	78%
Ever shot at?	Yes	45%	40%
Ever stabbed?	Yes	19%	20%

CHANGES FROM 2014 TO 2015

Confidence in Police

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

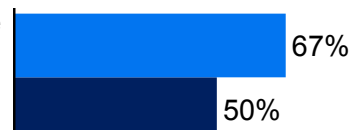


When violence breaks out in my neighborhood, I would call the police.

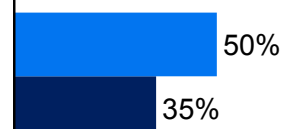


Exposure to Guns

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

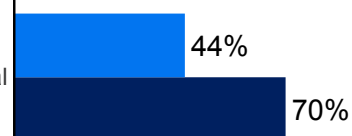
When shown photos of Cure Violence public messages (posters etc.), the survey respondent knew at least one.



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.

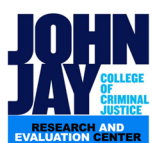
Type of Confrontation	Hypothetical Scenarios	Change 2014-2015
1 Competing for intimate partners by violent means	You are at a club talking to a girl and a guy tries to get her number. You are at a club talking to a girl when a guy comes and tells you she's his girl. Your ex's new boyfriend is playing her. Your girl and you broke up one week ago. You see her with a new guy on the street.	-2%
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.	-8%
3 Territory	Some guys you and your friends don't know try to take over the basketball court.	-2%
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.	-6%
5 Defense of others	You are hanging out with a friend and a guy tries to smack your friend around.	-6%
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.	-8%
7 Retaliation	You see a guy on the street who beat up your brother last week.	-3%

SUMMARY

In just one year, young men in the South Bronx report greater confidence in law enforcement and more willingness to contact police in the event of violence. Exposure to gun violence decreased between 2014 and 2015, with fewer respondents reporting having heard gunfire or having seen guns in their neighborhood.

Awareness of the local Cure Violence program in the South Bronx increased slightly, but the confidence of respondents in local efforts to reduce neighborhood violence grew markedly (from 44% to 70%) in one year.

When respondents in the South Bronx were asked a series of questions designed to measure their support for interpersonal violence in confrontational situations, they were slightly but consistently less likely to see violence as an appropriate response.



JohnJayREC.nyc

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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Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of John Jay College, the City University of New York, or the organizations that fund their research projects.