Youth Violence

Youth Violence is the
4th leading
cause of death
in young people worldwide.

200,000 die
each year.

R.I.P.

The Health Sector Role in Prevention and Response

World Health Organization

What is **youth violence?**

Youth violence:

Involves **children and young adults aged 10 to 29**

Peaks during **late adolescence and early adulthood**

It takes **many forms.**

Homicide
Assault

Fighting

Bullying
Emotional abuse

Dating violence

Youth violence affects countries unevenly. In some, rates of youth violence **are 100 times higher than in other countries.**

Youth violence is **widespread.**

4 out of 10 young people were in a physical fight in the last year

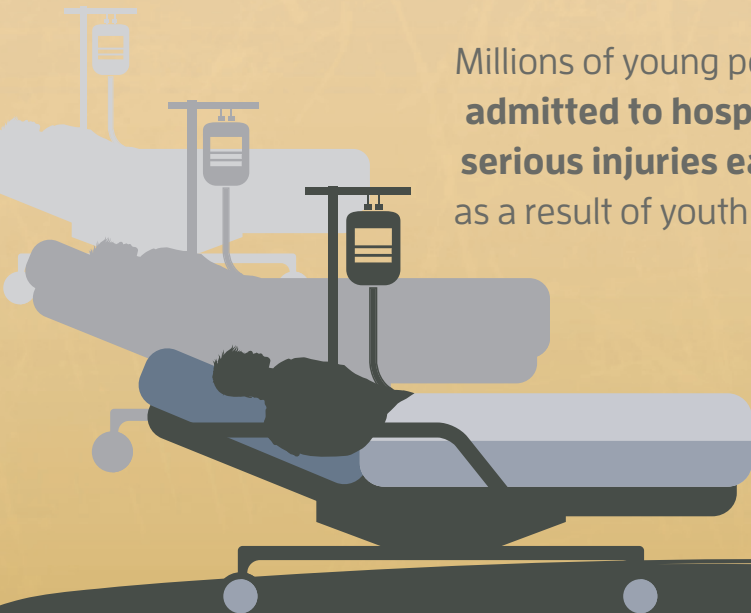**1 out of 4 teenagers** were bullied in the last month

Males are far more likely than females to be killed in youth violence.
83% of victims are male.

Youth Violence has **severe consequences.**

Some effects of youth violence are **visible.**

Millions of young people are **admitted to hospitals for serious injuries each year** as a result of youth violence.

Others are **hidden.**

1 out of 3 victims of school violence **never tell anyone about it.**

Youth violence has a **lasting impact.**

Mental health problems

Poor performance in school

Harmful use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol

Being a victim of violence as an adult — or committing it

Youth violence **harms communities.**

It **drains economies.**

Fear and anxiety, loss of social cohesion

Health care costs, legal and judicial costs, lost future earnings, destroyed property

Youth violence is **predictable.**

Risk factors include problems and behaviours such as:

| Struggling in school | Truancy and destructive behaviour | Having antisocial peers | Abusing alcohol and drugs | Behaviour problems | Criminal activity |

Circumstances like:

- Living in an area with concentrated poverty
- Weak governance and poor rule of law
- Having easy access to alcohol, drugs, and guns

Having parents who are:

- Harsh, inconsistent, or disengaged
- Involved in crime

These factors increase the risk of involvement in youth violence — **the more risk factors, the greater the risk.**

We can **prevent** youth violence.

Punishment alone is not the answer – because **we're not addressing the root causes.**

Interventions at different stages of life can make a difference – **and help stop children from becoming violent.**

During adolescence and young adulthood

✓ Life and social skills development programmes to help young people build healthy peer relationships

✓ Schools-based violence prevention programmes to prevent bullying

✓ Therapeutic interventions to help children and teens manage anger and behaviour problems

During early childhood

✓ Parenting programmes to help parents build strong relationships with their children

✓ Early childhood development programmes to help disadvantaged children keep up with their peers

Society-level prevention strategies

✓ Policies and programmes to reduce alcohol and drug use

✓ Reducing access to firearms

✓ Urban upgrading and deconcentration of poverty

✓ Community- and problem-oriented policing

The health sector has **a vital role** in **preventing and responding** to youth violence.

1 Collect data on the impact and costs of youth violence

2 Start programmes to reduce risk factors for youth violence, such as behavioural problems, child maltreatment, and the harmful use of alcohol

3 Include interventions to prevent youth violence within existing early childhood development, education, and health programmes

4 Provide comprehensive health services to survivors, including emergency care

5 Collaborate with other sectors to address youth violence, such as criminal justice, education, and social services

Youth violence is predictable — and preventable.
Together, we can save lives and ensure a safer future for young people across the globe.