

Project Gang-Proof

Ganggs

**A Handbook
For Families and
Community Members**

Second Edition

Manitoba 

Building for the Future

PROJECT GANG-PROOF

**A Handbook for Families and Community
Members**

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1

INTRODUCTION

Be Gang Smart – Use This Book

This handbook is a resource for families and communities who want to stop young people from joining or staying in street gangs. Gangs are not simply youth in trouble. They can be organized criminal groups who often commit violent crimes.

Young people often join street gangs because gangs may promise support, a sense of family and money that they don't feel they can find at home. The idea of belonging to a gang gives some youth a sense of security and support in what they see as a dangerous world. Gang members usually wear or show an identifying sign, symbol, colour, haircut or particular kinds of clothes (e.g. bandannas, hats) to show they belong.

Everyone – parents, youth, community agencies, police, corrections, teachers, child and family services – who cares about the future of our young people needs to be aware of what signs to watch for. This handbook is designed to help keep youth (male or female) from joining gangs. This information is based on solid research and the advice of:

- law enforcement agencies
- teachers
- child and family services
- Crown attorneys
- social workers and counsellors

A list of references is included at the back to help you find the resources you need.

Communities of every size across the province have reported gang activity. Gangs can only grow if we allow them to. As parents and community members, we need to teach our children to stay away from gangs.

The Project Gang-Proof Resource Line will help you find the appropriate resources. This is a non-emergency number.
1-800-691-4264

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GANGS IN MANITOBA

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Gangs in Manitoba form and change constantly. Outlaw motorcycle and street gangs are active in the province. The drug trade reportedly closely links these groups. Outlaw motorcycle gangs are responsible for most of the importing and distribution of illegal drugs into and across Manitoba. Street gang members are responsible for selling these drugs. Attempts by outlaw motorcycle gangs to take control of Winnipeg's drug trade have resulted in a lot of gang violence in the past few years. For more information on outlaw motorcycle gangs in Manitoba visit: www.cisc.gc.ca.

What is a street gang?

Street gangs can come in all sizes, from a few to many hundreds. They form and re-form almost daily; they split, or take over other gangs. Dictionaries usually define the word 'gang' as being associated with crime.

How do law enforcement agencies determine gang membership?

Manitoba law enforcement agencies define a gang member as a person who:

1. has been identified by reliable source(s) as a gang member
2. associates with known gang members
3. admits to gang membership
4. is involved in gang motivated crime
5. has a judge state they were a gang member in court rulings
6. displays common gang symbols

Note: *Individuals must meet #4, and any two others, to be listed as gang members on the data bases kept by Manitoba law enforcement agencies. This same measurement is also used by law enforcement agencies across Canada.*

What is a criminal organization under Canada's *Criminal Code*?

Under section 467.1(1) of the *Criminal Code* (Canada), a criminal organization is defined as a group, however organized, that:

- (a) is composed of three or more persons in or outside Canada; and
- (b) has one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offences that, if committed, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including financial benefit, by the group or by any of the persons who constitute the group.

It does not include a group of persons who form randomly for the immediate commission of a single offence.

How are gangs organized?

Some gangs have clear leaders and strict rules. Some copy the military, with soldiers and ranks, like lieutenants and captains. Others copy a business model, with a president, vice-president and board members.

Membership is often based on absolute loyalty. An initiation to join a gang may require illegal acts. Youth may rise to leadership over time.

Myth: All gangs have a single leader and a tight structure.

Fact: Most gangs are loosely knit groups and likely have several leaders. If one leader is removed, other members may be waiting to take over.

Why do people join gangs?

For youth, it is important to fit in and belong. Peer pressure and a desire for acceptance draw many young people to gangs. A lack of positive alternatives in their community or the desire for protection and prestige can also influence young people's decisions to join a gang. To a young person, the gang becomes a surrogate family offering their version of discipline and respect. Gangs generally emerge in communities that are struggling with problems of poverty, racism and lack social opportunities and supports (Bureau of Justice Assistance 19: 111). When children's needs are not being met, they will find other options to meet those needs.

Myth: Most street gang members are under 18.

Fact: Most gang members are over 18, but recruitment into a gang can begin with children as young as nine or 10.

Common reasons include:

- *Stand-in family*—They join a gang to get attention and a sense of belonging.
- *Recognition*—Some people join gangs to feel important if they are jobless or doing poorly at school. If they don't see themselves as smart, leaders or star athletes, they join groups where they can succeed by different standards.
- *Tradition and hero imitation*—Some join because people they admire – family members or others – were or are gang members.
- *Protection*—Some join gangs to feel safe. Fellow gang members help protect them from outsiders or help them get revenge against others.
- *Threats*—Some feel real or imagined pressure to join a gang. Some are actually threatened by gang members if they refuse to join.
- *Lack of choices*—Lack of opportunities, poor life choices and heavy peer pressure can result in a young person becoming a gang member.
- *Money*—The desire or need for money can be hard for a young person to turn down. The money from criminal activity and illegal drugs can be highly attractive.

Gang members are aware of the influence they can have on the choices made by young people. Offers of money and attention can make gang life look attractive.

Who is at risk of joining a gang?

Although anyone can join, experts have found that people who join gangs tend to:

- lack basic survival needs, feelings of safety and belonging
- be male, although some gangs have female associates/members
- be between the ages of 13 and 23
- have other family members or friends involved with gangs
- come from homes where alcohol or drug abuse is present
- do poorly at school

- have a need to exercise power and control over others
- have a history of violent or criminal acts
- come from poverty
- have low self-esteem
- be victims of abuse or neglect
- have negative role models
- be unemployed with few work skills
- have angry, pro-crime attitudes

Why are children who suffer from FAS at risk for recruitment?

What is FAS?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorders (FAS) affect some babies. Drinking alcohol while pregnant means the baby drinks alcohol because it passes through the mother to the baby. FAS babies usually show birth defects – physical, mental and behaviour problems.

What happens to children born with FAS?

Along with many physical problems, children with FAS can grow up with mental limitations. Children with FAS may:

- have trouble controlling how they act and get along with others
- have trouble paying attention and learning at school
- struggle with depression and may also have drug and alcohol problems
- have trouble holding jobs
- get into trouble with the law because they have difficulty knowing right from wrong

Children with FAS and similar syndromes can be vulnerable to the lure of gangs because of their limitations. They may be easily manipulated into poor behaviour because of their decreased ability to reason and to understand that actions have consequences.

For more information visit:

www.gov.mb.ca/hcm/programs/fas/fastfacts.html

Gang Life

The three Rs of gang life are: reputation, respect and retaliation. Gang members work at building reputations so their peers will hold them in high regard. They demand the respect they feel they deserve as gang members. If they don't get that respect, they retaliate, often with violent acts.

Gang members actively promote their gangs. They depend on their gang sub-culture to provide their major wants and needs. Gang members manipulate and bully lesser gang members and others in a community.

Are there different levels of gang involvement?

Families should not assume that their children will never be curious about gang life. Children who live in a community with a gang presence may be curious. Knowing something about how gangs operate and how to recognize a gang's influence on a community can help families respond quickly and correctly if a child shows at-risk behaviour. A response based on reliable knowledge could save a child's life.

Knowing about attitudes that lead to gang involvement may help guardians, educators, law enforcement officers and others who work with, or relate to, young people.

Fantasizing about gang activity

Some people come to admire a gang member or the gang lifestyle and fantasize about gang membership. This can happen even if they don't know a gang or gang members. Films, television, newspapers and other media can stimulate such fantasies.

Potential or "wannabe" members

These are usually the youngest people associated with a gang – youth who are likely recruits for the gang or actively seeking gang membership. They may be as young as nine or 10. They hang around with gang members and believe gang life is normal and worthwhile. They may have problems and opinions in common with gang members.

Associate/Affiliate members

Some gangs let people who are not fully initiated or involved with the gang to be affiliate members. The gang offers protection and support to affiliate members in exchange for specific services.

Gang Members

Members have full membership in the gang and owe absolute loyalty to it. These members have generally completed some form of initiation. They are active with the gang and show that they are committed to the gang lifestyle.

Females and Gangs

There are some female street gangs as well as females who are part of male gangs. They generally have the following characteristics. They may:

- come from poverty
- live in inner-city areas and areas of high crime
- be young, single, unemployed, undereducated
- have suffered personal abuse – sexual or physical
- be or have been involved in the child welfare system
- have been involved in criminal acts

Female motivations for joining gangs are the same as those for males. In tougher areas of a city or town, vulnerable youth sometimes feel forced to join gangs to survive – joining seems like their only option. Females generally participate in most of the same activities as male gang members, and may also be sexually exploited through prostitution.

As with most organized crime groups, female gang members are not leaders in male gangs. The females rank themselves and are often invisible to the males – until they're needed for something. Female members take many of the same risks but don't get the same benefits as male members. They often suffer abuse from the male gang members.

Are there different levels of gang activity?

Gang activity can range from juvenile delinquent behaviour to criminal street gang activity.

"I mean, if you see someone quivering at your feet, it makes you feel like: 'Yeah, I have power over this person.' It's a head buzz. It's better than actually really getting high. Even though the guy might be six-foot-six and you're only five-foot-ten and you've got four of your friends [so] this guy is scared of you. I mean, one-on-one you would never do that. It's a real big high. It makes you feel you're untouchable."

(Bill, 15) ex-gang member¹

¹ Matthews, Fred. Youth Gangs on Youth Gangs (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General)

Juvenile delinquent behaviour includes extorting lunch money, writing graffiti, vandalism, bullying, intimidation, stealing bicycles, burglaries, shoplifting, drug use, drug dealing and truancy. All this behaviour can lead to serious criminal street gang activity.

Criminal street gang activity includes more serious crimes, such as, assault, robbery, home invasion, homicide, manslaughter, murder, drug dealing, drive-by shooting, arson, sexual exploitation of women and children, intimidation of victims and witnesses and vehicle theft.

What gangs do

Street gang members spend some of their time doing the same activities as everyone else. However, much of their time is spent on planning or engaging in criminal behaviour. When they get together, the potential for violent crime is far greater than for other groups. The violence is indiscriminate, unpredictable and claims innocent victims. Gang members use violence to intimidate and build their reputations.

Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth

Gangs have a strong influence on the sexual exploitation of children and youth. Gang members may pressure their girlfriends or other young women to exchange sex for drugs, or to prostitute themselves on the streets or indoors for money that is handed over to the gang. Many of these children who are sexually exploited by gang members are either forced or coerced by people they consider friends. Many of them have not had their basic needs for survival, security and belonging met by their family or friends. The children see this as an opportunity to get their needs met and are misled into believing these people really care. The reality is much different, because the abuse and victimization continues.

In December 2002, the Government of Manitoba announced a new strategy to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and youth. The strategy was developed with government departments and community organization partnerships. It is the government's position that children and youth who are sexually exploited through prostitution are victims of child abuse. For more information and/or resources on this topic, please contact the provincial co-ordinator of Services for Sexually Exploited Children/Youth in Winnipeg at 945-5055 or 1-866-626-4862 ext. 5055 (toll free).

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WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT GANGS — THE ROLE OF FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

The more you get involved with children, their friends and the activities they're involved with, the less chance there is of losing children to a gang.

Gangs can be stopped from forming and spreading. This begins with families, schools, law enforcement agencies, religious institutions, community organizations, businesses and young people themselves. No single person, group or agency can solve a gang problem alone. We must act together against gangs and take responsibility for keeping our communities safe.

Here are some tips to help prevent gang activity:

- Know the signs of gang involvement, talk about gangs with children and listen to their concerns.
- Develop a prevention plan and learn how to help children, their friends and others stay away from or get out of gangs.
- Learn to identify when gangs are moving into a neighbourhood and mobilize local residents and agencies to fight against the spread of gangs in the community.

What to do to help keep children out of gangs

Here are some ways to help keep children safe from gangs:

Be gang aware. Read this manual and learn the signs of gang involvement. Go to gang awareness meetings in schools, community centres, places of worship or homes of other families. Involve the children. Involve the whole community in stopping gangs from forming or spreading.

Join a parent/family education program. Gang members often join because gangs offer attention, protection and a sense of belonging. Children who receive support are not as likely to join gangs. Many social/health agencies and school divisions offer parenting courses. These courses teach parents and other family members how to talk to children, how to better face the problems of blended and single-parent families and how to help children get the best possible education.

For further information on this topic visit: www.contactmb.org.

If you are worried about a child, ask your school division office, a school guidance counsellor, a public health office, a social agency, a youth leader or a spiritual leader for help.

Encourage children to stay in school. Research shows keeping kids in school is one of the best ways to keep them away from gangs and crime. Work with schools, parent-teacher associations, teachers and guidance counsellors to help children do well in school.

If a child has dropped out of school, ask the school about education re-entry programs. For employment training programs visit: www.gov.mb.ca/fs/bird/index.html or Human Resources Development Canada: www.youth.gc.ca/index.html.

Help children be socially and physically active and healthy. By helping children get involved in activities after school and on weekends, you will help them gain positive experiences, new skills and healthy friendships. Check with community centres, drop-in centres, youth groups, sports and cultural programs in your community. Find out what kind of activities they offer. Manitoba Justice operates Lighthouses – a crime prevention program for children and youth. For more information, visit: www.gov.mb.ca/justice/lighthouses.

Get professional help. Substance or drug problems put young people at higher risk of joining gangs. It is important to get professional help before it is too late.

Manitoba has a number of addiction and substance abuse services. They include Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Alateen and community services such as, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NADAP). Telephone numbers for these programs are in the Yellow Pages under Alcoholism Information and Treatment Centres.

Prevention Strategies

Don't risk having a child become a victim. Gangs do exist and they are a serious problem. Learn more about gangs and other things that could harm children. Talk with children about what to expect from gangs and how to stay safe in their neighbourhoods. Tell children that violence and crime are almost always part of gang membership.

Talk with and listen to children. Make them feel comfortable talking about any topic or problem. Allow them to express themselves to you without the fear of being judged or blamed. Try to problem-solve **with** children not **for** them. It's important to empower children so they are better able to make good decisions. You are better able to help them if you understand what concerns them.

Build children's self esteem through strong family and community ties so that they will not need to look other places for acceptance. Be sure children know they are important to you and your community.

What if I suspect a child is in a gang?

If you think a child may be at risk of joining a gang or already in a gang, get help. Contact programs and agencies in your community that help children. You may be saving a child's life. Learn about the law and legal issues in your neighbourhood and get involved with your community. Do your part to stop gangs in your area. A list of resources is included at the back of this handbook.

Families and communities should not jump to hasty conclusions about their children and gangs. The warning signs of gang involvement can be similar to normal behaviour during adolescence. The key is to question the behaviour if it appears to go beyond the norm.

What are the signs that a child is involved in a gang?

It's important to know what to look for if you think a child might be involved in gang activity. Normal teenage behaviour is sometimes hard to tell from the first signs of gang activity. You should consider gang involvement if you notice the following changes in a child:

Changes in the way they look

- dirty or messy in appearance
- wearing gang clothing
- odd haircuts
- tattoos
- odd eyebrow markings
- odd pen marks, bruises or burns on arms, hands and body

Changes in behaviour and personality

- sudden changes in mood
- anger, breaking rules
- resentful of authority
- bad attitudes towards family and/or school
- bullying or assaulting others
- trouble with the law
- drug, alcohol or substance abuse
- using hand signals
- using gang slang, heavy swearing
- claiming a new nickname
- lack of responsibility, not doing chores and/or homework, forgetting family occasions
- blaming, lying, making excuses
- asking for or stealing money
- spending lots of money
- having lots of unexplained money
- needing too much privacy

Changes in school

- lower grades, not doing homework
- often late for school and returning home from school
- skipping school
- falling asleep in class
- trouble with teachers or other students
- getting suspended or expelled
- quitting

Changes in friends and interests

- sudden change in friends
- friends rarely introduced and seldom come to the house
- more time spent in room or away from home
- secrecy about actions and belongings
- hobbies, sports or after school activities dropped
- staying out too late
- staying out all night—or for days at a time

Pro-gang attitudes

- pro-gang messages or posters or clothing
- strong defence of gangs and feels adults are hassling them
- easily angered when asked about gang involvement
- drawing graffiti symbols and names on books, folders or bedroom walls

Once in a gang, a child's behaviour can change. To be accepted by the gang, he or she must adopt a defiant attitude toward authority figures. This defiance may be expressed by disruptive or violent behaviour at school or home.

At school, the child lets everyone know his or her new status and becomes disrespectful towards teachers and others. The new gang member may also fight others to gain a reputation for being "bad." The gang member may pick a victim and constantly harass him or her.

When at home, the new gang member's defiance may or may not manifest itself in violence. How the new gang member acts at home will depend on his or her relationship with parents and other family members. However, if the family attempts to interfere with the child's gang involvement by setting limits and increasing supervision, there may be repeated confrontations.

Not all gang members are obvious in their dress or manner. They may not display gang characteristics while in school, so gang activity may go undetected until a major event occurs.

Remember this

If you think a child may be involved in gang activity, you need to be more aware than ever before.

Be nosy, if that's what it takes to get information.

A child could be in danger.

What can I do if I think a child is involved in a gang?

Before you ask a child about gangs, learn as much as you can. Read about gangs, talk to someone who has gang experience or see a counsellor. It is important to be calm. Choose a quiet time. Share your worries honestly. Explain why you are against gangs and how you will deal with it.

If you think a child is involved in a gang, ask him or her...but be prepared to hear statements like:

"Not me, it's just my friends."

"Don't worry, I didn't do anything wrong."

"Everyone in the neighbourhood/school is doing it."

"I have to, it is the only way I'm safe."

"Don't worry. I've quit."

Listen to the child. Don't argue but question. Ask the child if they'd like to see any changes in the way home functions. If you believe you have uncovered an action or activity that won't be repeated, you might treat it the same way you would if a family rule was broken. Let the child know you will be watching carefully and that it will take time to rebuild lost trust.

If you think this may be too much to handle alone, get help. There are many resources available. A list of resources to help you is included at the back of this book.

Tips for talking to a child about gangs

The following are ideas on how to talk to a child about gangs. If one suggestion doesn't work or is not to your liking, try another. The worst thing to do, is nothing. Raising and directing a child away from life's dangers is complex, time consuming and sometimes intimidating. Confrontations can be painful, but they could save lives.

Ask lots of questions. This is especially true when it comes to a child's friends or free time. Some specific questions to ask a child could include:

- *Where are you going?*
Ask for specifics. "Just out." is not an acceptable answer.

- *When will you be home?*
Set a curfew and enforce it. Do not allow children to stay out late on the streets.
- *Who are your friends?*
Know who children are spending time with. Notice what they are wearing. Be suspicious if children don't want you to meet their friends or refuse to talk about what they do together.
- *What's your favourite music group or video?*
Find out what music a child is listening to, read the lyrics and watch for the Parent Advisory label on the CD or tape. This means the lyrics contain strong and/or sexually explicit language.
- *What do you know about gangs?*
You may be surprised at a child's answer. If children attend a school with a strong gang presence, they may know quite a bit. If they are evasive, it may mean they have more than a passing interest in gangs. Some kids will come right out and admit being in a gang.
- *Do you know how much you're needed in our family?*
Children need to know they are important. Tell them you care about them! Make them feel important and wanted. If you don't accept a child, gangs are more than happy to do it for you.

What do you tell a child about the realities of gangs?

Getting out of a gang is hard. Gangs work hard to recruit members.

"I was scared to death when I got out. [When I left the gang] I had people driving by my house firing shotguns in the air, obscene phone calls in the middle of the night. I was threatened with, 'If you say anything to anybody we're going to kill you and we're going to kill your family.'"

(David ,19) ex-gang member ²

Gangs pressure, intimidate, promise money, friends, support and status to recruits, and prey on vulnerable young people. Once you're in, you're in.

² Matthews, Fred. Youth Gangs on Youth Gangs (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General)

Getting out of a gang is really tough and, at times, dangerous. A child risks injury and ongoing threats for leaving with information on gang members and their activities.

You can be hurt. Gangs are involved in crime and violent behaviour. A child can be seriously injured by the initiation process, fighting with other gang members or while committing crimes.

Myth: *Most gang-related crimes involve gangs against gangs.*

Fact: *Crimes for money are mostly committed against innocent victims. Violent crimes are mostly against other gangs.*

You can hurt your family and others. Families can be put at risk when a child joins a gang. Family members and others can be hurt by the gang or by rival gangs. Homes can become a target.

The parent of a Winnipeg gang member:
"It is absolutely terrifying to live through. You don't go to sleep at night without checking every window and every door. You get phone calls 10 times a day, people hanging up. People trying to break down your front door. We had gun shots off in the backyard, threats, verbal threats that you're going to get killed. 'We'll kill your kid. We will find him.' There (are) severe consequences of trying to get out of the gang."³

NOTE: *If a child is being intimidated, the best strategy is to call the police.*

You can wreck your future. Gangs pull children towards a life of crime and away from school, recreation, family life and jobs. A criminal record can restrict freedom, career, public privileges, life opportunities and travel when children get older.

What are the warning signs that professional help is needed?

Educating children about gangs and setting standards and

³ Matthews, Fred. Youth Gangs on Youth Gangs (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General)

rules may be enough to keep them from joining or staying in a gang. Children need to know what is expected from them. Children may believe no one cares if they don't have someone watching out for them.

Sometimes no matter how hard you try, the lure of a gang can be too strong for a child. Gang recruiters and gang members are not easily deterred and for some children, gang life may seem like the best or only option for them. You may want to get some professional help if you've talked to a child about gangs and the child:

- promises to quit but doesn't
- is arrested because of gang activity
- continues to hang out with gang friends after being told to stop
- is involved in high-risk behaviour

Help is available from counsellors, spiritual advisors, support groups or treatment programs. Delaying action just delays solutions. If other children are involved, tell their families. Don't be surprised if some families don't believe their children might be in a gang.

How do I help a child get out of a gang?

Children need help if they are:

- in a gang and they want out
- thinking of joining a gang

Help them find someone they trust and respect to talk to about their feelings, thoughts or questions. Encourage them to:

- Talk to someone in their family. If children can't talk to their families, encourage them to talk with a friend's family.
- Talk to a teacher, principal, Elder or guidance counsellor.
- Talk to the local school to find out how they can help.
- Be careful who they talk to. Tell them not to talk about this to other gang members. It could be dangerous if word

- got back to the wrong people.
- Call the local police station to see if they have information on anti-gang programs. If they have a gang unit, ask to talk to someone from that unit.

Make a plan to get out

When gang members decide they want to leave, there are a few steps they can follow. Help a child:

- get help to develop a protection plan that can be followed
- begin spending time doing positive things
- make new friends
- stop looking like a gang member
- find people who will support them and believe in them
- encourage them to believe in their own power to change

There may be helpful programs in your community. Here are some ways to find them:

- Review the list of resources in this book. Look in the Yellow Pages under Community Services.
Visit: www.contactmb.org.
- Ask the agencies about programs they have that serve children and youth.
- Call the crisis lines that have been set up for children and youth (listed at the back of this book).
- Call Lighthouses Program, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters or local service groups like the Rotary Club or Lions Club. Ask about programs for youth and young adults.
- Call or visit a local Elder, or a place of worship and talk to a priest, pastor or rabbi. They may have after-school programs or offer counselling.
- If your community has special sports clubs or groups for young people or gang-involved youth, give them a try.
- Look in the local newspaper for articles about programs that help gang members, children and youth.

The most important thing is to find someone to help.
Don't give up.

4

How to tell when a gang moves into a community

Gangs today are mobile and not as turf-oriented as we tend to think. No neighbourhood is safe from gangs. Youth gathering in places like shopping malls, corner stores, parks or schools may be one of the early warning signs of gangs. The gathering area is sometimes the gang's "turf" or "hood." Gangs may cause an increase of the following in your community:

- graffiti
- crime, especially violent crime, and especially if they fit the description of gang members
- drug activity

Myth: All street gangs are turf-oriented.

Fact: Some gangs may not claim any specific turf, while others operate in many locations, even in small communities.

Gangs' impact on communities

Gangs bring fear and violence to our communities. Property can be vandalized and marked with graffiti. Residents sometimes become afraid to leave their homes. Vandalism, stealing and frightening customers can ruin businesses or force them to move away, taking jobs and money out of the community.

Gangs can also increase the criminal activity in a community. Gang members are involved in violent offences more often

than non-gang criminals are. Gang members commit more serious crimes over longer criminal careers.

Myth: Gangs are just a law enforcement problem.

Fact: Gangs are a problem for everyone.

Communities need to bring together citizens, law enforcement and social agencies to stop gangs.

SIGNS OF GANGS IN A COMMUNITY

Gangs often use signs, signals and actions to show they are active in an area. These may change quickly but there are some standard signs.

Gang Graffiti

Gang graffiti is used to glorify the gang. Graffiti on public or private property is often one of the first signs that gangs are active in a neighbourhood. Graffiti defaces personal or public property with lettering, symbols, nicknames and drawings – usually done in spray paint. Names, symbols and characters are used to identify gangs and gang members, and graffiti helps mark their turf in a dispute. Graffiti has been used to announce top-ranking members and advertise activities of the gang or its members.

Gang graffiti is also used to make threats and challenge other gangs. Distorting a rival gang's graffiti is considered an insult. Violence can result when one gang challenges another gang with graffiti.

How to tell if graffiti is gang-related

Gang graffiti:

- is often in block letters
- is often in a gang colour
- may contain a list of nicknames
- may be crossed out by rival gangs
- may be found in areas where gang activity is common

The word "tag" is short for turf art graffiti. A "tagger" is a graffiti artist who takes a unique nickname and then puts the nickname on objects. Sometimes taggers compete to place their names or slogans in visible locations. Tagger graffiti is usually not associated with gangs.

What are the differences between tagging and gang graffiti?

Gangs use graffiti to threaten, boast and make turf claims. Gang graffiti is more concerned with letters and numbers and is rarely artistic. Gang graffiti is sometimes used as evidence or information by the police. Taggers often produce artistic graffiti that features pictures and symbols and boast about the tagger.

What to do if you spot graffiti in your neighbourhood?

If you are a home or business owner, you should report gang



graffiti to police before you remove it. In most cases, removal is safe as long as it is all removed at once so no particular gang feels singled out.

Gang identifiers

Along with an arrogant attitude, boasting and bullying, gang members use gang colours (mostly on their clothes) to show they're in a specific gang and promote membership. They sometimes wear types of clothing in specific ways – like putting hats on sideways.

Many gangs wear a particular style of sportswear, baseball caps, jackets, belt buckles, key chains, shoes, pants or shirts. A gang logo or graffiti may be shown on clothing.

Bandannas or "rags" are a common sign of gang membership. Rags are usually folded and worn as a headband, left to hang out of a rear pocket or draped over a jacket. The colour of the rag is a key to gang identity and may also indicate rank.

Gang members sometimes have certain hairstyles, and walk or stand in a particular way. Gangs who don't want to be identified, avoid all these signs, especially when they're dealing drugs.

***Note:** Current fashion can make it difficult to identify gang members based on their style of dress. Some gangs no longer wear their colours, so they aren't as visible to families, schools and law enforcement.*

Tattoos – crude or elaborate – on any part of the body can show gang membership.

Gang weapons can be as obvious as guns or knives, but can also include pool balls wrapped in a sock, baseball bats and chemical pepper spray.

Unusual hand signs or other signals can also show gang membership. Sometimes gang members use hand signs to identify their own gang or challenge other gangs. Signs involve twisting fingers and hands to form letters or numbers and show gang symbols or initials. Gang members often use a specific handshake or even use their whole bodies to send a message. They can also use buzzwords or phrases that have a specific meaning to the gang. "Mad-dogging" and "hard looks" (glaring or staring hard at another person) are also common gang indicators. "Mad-dogging" is used to challenge an enemy to a fight.

Get involved

Prevention is the key to controlling gang activity. Anti-gang efforts begin with partnerships among families, children and youth, schools, law enforcement, spiritual leaders, community organizations and businesses. It is important to involve the entire community.

The goal is to steer children in the right direction at an early age. Laws can help, but communities must act together to increase the likelihood of success. When families can look to friends, Elders, schools, law enforcement, churches and community programs for help, the odds are more in their favour.

What can I and my community do?

- Know the signs of gang activity.
- Form a community anti-gang group including families, government, business, youth, law enforcement, service groups, schools and media.
- List community gang problems.
- Identify available gang prevention and law enforcement resources.
- Assign responsibilities and co-ordinate efforts and resources.
- Develop a community action plan.
- Advertise the community anti-gang action plan.
- Meet regularly and review progress.
- Make a long-term commitment.

Levels of gang activity and community responses

No gangs means a community has no signs of gangs.

- Keep up prevention and supportive programs.
- Support positive attitudes about family, home, community and the law.
- Promote positive relationships between schools, citizens and businesses.
- Promote positive relationships between family members. This includes adults interacting with children and children interacting with each other.

- Encourage youth and schools to work together to implement codes of conduct.
- Teach and show acceptance, respect and tolerance.
- Enforce reasonable dress codes.

Early gangs mean the community actually has active gangs, although they may not be publicly recognized or considered a major problem.

- Share information between law enforcement and/or school and communities.
- Set up school and community prevention/education programs.
- Promote and increase sport and other community activities.
- Stop vandalism and graffiti.
- Start anti-gang public information campaigns.
- Give family support and counselling.
- Mobilize the community.
- Involve children and youth in the anti-gang campaign. Listen to the youth about how they see the situation. Engage them as part of the solution – hear and act on their suggestions.

Active gangs mean there are clear, visible signs of gangs. Residents admit there is a serious problem and gangs are increasingly active in the community.

- Continue to mobilize the community.
- Hold families accountable for their children.
- Help students and youth find jobs.
- Share information in the community.
- Identify children and youth at-risk for involvement.
- Work with the school to offer re-entry programs.
- Maintain anti-gang campaigns.
- Connect with anti-gang experts and other professionals.
- Campaign to reclaim schools, parks and kids.

Young people are naturally curious about drugs. They may have heard stories about drug experiences. They may have seen others using or have friends who are using drugs. Many kids will try drugs at least once or twice. A 2001 study by the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba found that about 40 per cent of the students surveyed in Manitoba high schools reported using drugs other than alcohol and tobacco in the past year. Gangs profit from young people's curiosity about drugs.

Drugs are a big part of gang life. Using and buying drugs supports organized crime. If children are involved in gangs, there is a good chance they are involved with drugs. Gang members are almost always required to sell drugs to make money for the gang. Young gang members are often used to sell drugs, so that the older members are not caught by law enforcement. Drugs are the main source of money for gangs. Law enforcement has observed that many drug dealers carry firearms to protect themselves and that a lot of gang violence happens because of drugs.

How do I start teaching a child about drugs?

The best time to start talking about drugs is when children first ask questions. Children begin learning about drugs very early – from television, movies and those around them. Keep in mind, they frequently see drug education as an accusation, nagging or lecturing. Find the right moment to bring up the subject, such as when the child tells you about fears or having seen others do drugs or when a television program deals with the issue. If by the age of nine or 10 children have not asked you about drugs, you should start asking them what they may have learned elsewhere.

The first step in educating children about drugs is to educate yourself. Here is some information to help you.

There are a number of drugs currently being used in Manitoba. Manitoba police say the top five most popular drugs are:

1. crack
2. meth-amphetamine
3. marijuana
4. ecstasy
5. GHB

Here are some things you should know about each of these drugs:

Crack

Crack is a form of cocaine. It produces immediate and very intense effects that include increased alertness and energy, a rapid heartbeat and breathing, dilated pupils, sweating, euphoria and a decreased appetite. Large doses can cause severe agitation, paranoid thinking, erratic or violent behaviour, tremors, unco-ordination, twitching, hallucinations, headache, pain or pressure in the chest, nausea, blurred vision, fever, muscle spasms, convulsions and death. Impurities can produce a fatal allergic reaction. Pure cocaine will kill. Chronic use results in tolerance, which means the user will need more to get high, and a very powerful psychological dependence.

Meth-amphetamine

Meth-amphetamine is a stimulant also known as speed, meth, ice, girlfriend, bitch, crank or poor man's coke. Meth is a fairly new drug gaining popularity quickly in Manitoba. It is inexpensive to make, so it makes bigger profits. Unlike cocaine that has to be imported, meth can be made anywhere. The effects of meth last anywhere from four to 12 hours and they include increased alertness and energy, a feeling of well-being, decreased appetite, rapid heartbeat and breathing, increased blood pressure, sweating, dilated pupils and dry mouth. A person may become talkative, restless, excited, feel powerful, superior, aggressive, hostile or behave in a bizarre repetitive fashion. Large doses produce flushing, pallor, very rapid or irregular heartbeat, tremors, severe paranoia, frightening hallucinations or death. Impurities injected with the drug can block or weaken small blood vessels. Chronic heavy users may develop malnutrition and amphetamine psychosis, an illness similar to paranoid schizophrenia. Like cocaine, amphetamines can produce very powerful psychological dependence leading to compulsive use.

Marijuana

Marijuana is also known as cannabis, pot, grass, weed, reefer, ganja, joint, hashish and hash oil. Experts expect this drug's popularity to increase if its use is no longer a criminal offence, because, it won't be seen as dangerous as other drugs. The effects of smoking are felt within a few minutes and last two to four hours. The person feels calm, relaxed, talkative and sometimes drowsy. Concentration and short-term memory are noticeably impaired, and sensory perception seems enhanced, colours are brighter, sounds are more distinct and the sense of

time and space is distorted. Common also is laughing. Physical effects include impaired co-ordination and balance, rapid heartbeat, red eyes, dry mouth and throat. Usual doses impair motor skills, especially when used in combination with alcohol; cannabis use before driving is particularly dangerous. Chronic users may develop a state called "reverse tolerance." Reverse tolerance occurs when the body gets saturated with THC, the chemical in marijuana that causes a person to get high. Once this occurs, a user needs only several puffs of a joint to get high again.

Ecstasy

Ecstasy is a hallucinogen also known as euphoria, X, XTC, Adam. Effects include feelings of euphoria, pleasure, empathy and sociability, as well as confusion, depression, sleep problems, anxiety, panic attacks, blurred vision, nausea, muscle tension, teeth-clenching, faintness, chills, sweating and increased heart rate and blood pressure. Large doses produce distortions in perception, thinking and memory, hallucinations and, in some people, anxiety and depression. Death has also resulted from kidney or heart failure due to dehydration or hypothermia at raves or dances.

GHB

GHB is also known as liquid ecstasy, liquid X, grievous bodily harm or scoop. Effects of lower doses may include lowered inhibitions, euphoria, calmness progressing to drowsiness, dizziness and amnesia. Higher doses may produce confusion, hallucinations, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, fighting and self injury, seizures, shortness of breath, loss of consciousness and coma. GHB is currently circulating at dances and raves, and is often used with alcohol, decreases the degree of inhibitions and increases the risk of central nervous system and respiratory depression. GHB has been used in sexual assaults on women.

How can I tell if a child is selling drugs?

Finding out if a child is selling drugs can be difficult but there are a few indicators you can watch for.

They may include:

- carrying a cell phone or pager that you did not buy
- a cell phone or pager that rings constantly
- having lots of money
- sheets of paper with names and numbers or names and symbols on them (this keeps track of who they are selling to)
- possessing an electronic scale
- showing signs of gang membership

If any of these indicators apply to a child you know, you should be suspicious. If you find out that your child is selling drugs, get help. Drug dealing is extremely dangerous.

For information on signs of drug use, see the following web-sites:

www.afm.mb.ca

www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca/police/TakeActionSchools/takeaction-schools.html

COMMON STREET DRUGS AND PARAPHERNALIA



Crack Cocaine

Examples of how it is packaged and sold on the streets.



Powder Cocaine

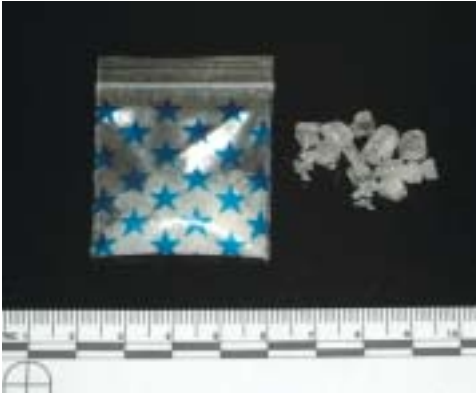


Powder Cocaine "Coke Kit"
Mirror, razor, snorting tube



Crack Pipe
Used for smoking crack cocaine

COMMON STREET DRUGS AND PARAPHERNALIA



Meth



Ecstasy comes in thousands of shapes and colors.



Gel caps

Contains Meth, P.C.B.,
Ecstasy (MMDA), M.D.A.

COMMON STREET DRUGS AND PARAPHERNALIA



Marijuana
Joints, plant, seeds



Marijuana pipe



Marijuana pipe



Roach clip to hold joints



Hot knife heated to smoke weed oil, hash oil or hashish

COMMON STREET DRUGS AND PARAPHERNALIA



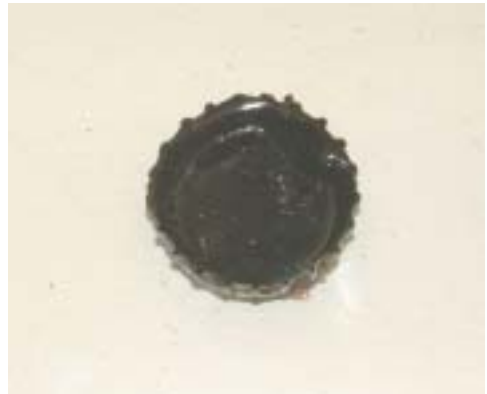
**Psilocybin, Schrooms, Mushies or
Magic Mushrooms**



Hashish



Weed Oil

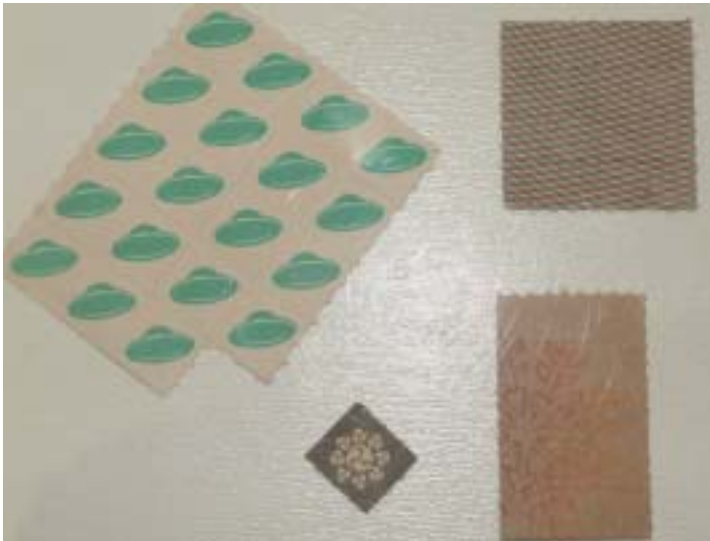


Weed Oil in a bottle cap

COMMON STREET DRUGS AND PARAPHERNALIA



Microdot L.S.D. (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide)



Blotter acid L.S.D. (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide)

COMMON STREET DRUGS AND PARAPHERNALIA



Portable digital scale



Syringe

ANTI-GANG LAWS

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Manitoba's attorney general has worked with several partners to make new laws to stop gangs. These laws help law enforcement agencies, courts, schools and communities attack and deal with the problem of gangs.

Provincial laws

Manitoba has introduced three new laws to increase public safety.

The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (SCNA), the first of its kind in Canada, was passed in February 2002. It targets properties that are used habitually by individuals and gangs involved in drugs, prostitution, solvent abuse and unlawful liquor sales.

Residents bothered by these problems can file a complaint with Manitoba's director of public safety. The director will assign investigators to look into the situation and take action when it is warranted. When property owners are made aware that a tenant is involved in these activities, the law states that the owner must ensure these activities stop and that area residents are no longer exposed to the dangers arising from them, even if it means an eviction notice.

For more information or to file a confidential complaint to the Public Safety Branch Investigation Unit at 200-379 Broadway: call 945-3475 in Winnipeg or toll free at 1-800-954-9361.

The Fortified Buildings Act came into force in May 2002. Under this act, "fortified building" refers to buildings with such barriers as bulletproof windows, barred windows or doors, or protective casings. The act allows Manitoba's director of public safety to designate a fortified building as a threat to public safety, if there are public safety concerns. Buildings are not said to be fortified if they only have reasonable security measures for residential dwellings. The act recognizes that fortified buildings are often used by people for criminal activity.

For more information or to file a confidential complaint to the Public Safety Branch Investigation Unit at 200-379 Broadway: call 945-3475 in Winnipeg or toll free at 1-800-954-9361.

The Civil Remedies Against Organized Crime Act came into force in December 2002. It enables the police to apply to the Court of Queen's Bench for three kinds of orders to address concerns about organized crime. First, if the court is satisfied the owners or managers of a business are members of a criminal organization, as defined by the *Criminal Code (Canada)*, the court could cancel or withhold provincial tax or liquor licences needed to operate the business. Second, if the court is satisfied a business is knowingly being used for an unlawful purpose, it could, among other things, issue an order to cease operations and liquidate and dissolve the business. Third, if the court is satisfied two or more people have conspired to commit unlawful acts that have or would likely cause injury to the public, the court could make any order necessary to stop those unlawful acts.

The act also makes it an offence to wear gang colours in a licensed premises to prevent potential crime and violence that may arise when gang colours are worn in drinking establishments.

The Liquor Control Amendment Act came into force in December 2002. It makes the wearing of gang colours in a beverage room or other licensed premises a provincial offence. The purpose of the legislation is to prevent crime and specifically the potential violence that can arise when gang colours are worn in situations where alcohol is being sold and consumed.

The Education Administration Act

Under section 2 of *The Education Administration Act* and section 41(y) of *The Public Schools Act*, the Minister of Education directed a ban of the wearing of gang colors, meaning those signs, symbols or other identifying representations of gangs, within schools in Manitoba.

Federal Laws

In December 2001, the *Criminal Code (Canada)* was amended to give police and prosecutors new tools to combat criminal organizations. It introduced three new offences and tough sentences. The new offences apply to anyone who:

- participates in or contributes to activities that help a criminal organization achieve its criminal objectives

- is involved in committing indictable offences for the benefit of criminal organizations
- is a leader of a criminal organization

The act also deals with intimidation by organized crime used against law enforcement personnel, government agencies or individual citizens.

For more information, visit Department of Justice, Canada at: www.canada.justice.gc.ca.

A final word...

Keeping kids out of gangs is difficult but necessary. It is not just a job for law enforcement. It is a job for families and communities. If we build strong, healthy families and communities and keep them that way, gangs will not survive.

Whether you're a parent, guardian, Elder or teacher – the time, interest and affection you share with the children in your life to make them feel loved and important is critical. Recognize and celebrate the children around you. You'll never know the difference you can make.

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MANITOBA RESOURCES

MANITOBA JUSTICE

PROJECT GANG-PROOF RESOURCE LINE

Manitoba 1-800-691-4264

The line is a resource to combat youth crime and gangs to make Manitoba communities safe. The line will help youth, parents and others deal with gang-related issues. Callers will be referred to the appropriate resources.

SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

PUBLIC SAFETY BRANCH INVESTIGATION UNIT

Winnipeg 945-3475

Manitoba 1-800-954-9361

The Public Safety Branch Investigation Unit (PSBIU) investigates and inspects properties under the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* and *The Fortified Buildings Act*. You can call the unit if you suspect properties are used by individuals and or gangs involved in drugs, prostitution, solvent abuse and unlawful liquor sales. All calls are confidential and your identity will never be revealed.

LIGHTHOUSES

Winnipeg 945-1549

Manitoba 1-800-626-4862

This is a community-based crime prevention program designed to develop partnerships among youth, police, justice personnel and the community to promote opportunities for youth to get involved in pro-social, recreational and crime prevention activities.

TURNABOUT

Winnipeg 945-5601

Manitoba 1-866-276-5081

The Turnabout program is a partnership between provincial agencies, community groups and local police services. Turnabout assists children under 12 who have come into conflict with the law.

HEALTHY CHILD MANITOBA

Gang and crime prevention initiative

Winnipeg 945-2266

Toll-free 1-888-848-0140

They link teens with opportunities to show their talents and passions by increasing leadership skills, academics, social skills, employment skills and overall health and wellness.

WINNIPEG POLICE SERVICES

Community Services

Winnipeg 986-6322

They provide an all-inclusive crime prevention education program that will allow all citizens of Winnipeg to TAKE ACTION against crime in their community.

Graffiti

Winnipeg only 986-1234

If you see graffiti in progress, call the Winnipeg Police Service at 986-6222. The Winnipeg Police Service also actively works with the community to prevent graffiti. This is achieved through enforcement, prevention, education and awareness programs.

Organized Crime Unit

Winnipeg 986-6048

This Winnipeg Police Service enforcement unit, deals with all forms of gang suppression against street gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs and other groups or criminal organizations.

RCMP MANITOBA

GANG PREVENTION & INTERVENTION UNIT

Winnipeg 983-2778

Thompson 677-6955

The RCMP Prevention and Intervention Unit serves areas of Manitoba outside of Winnipeg with offices located in Winnipeg and Thompson.

OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE GANG HOT LINE CANADA

1-877-660-4321

This 24-hour hot line is designed to receive information on outlaw motorcycle gang activity throughout Canada. The line does not subscribe to any call display service and all calls are confidential.

BRANDON POLICE SERVICE

Brandon 729-2345

They offer public education presentations to the public and schools upon request.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

TEEN TOUCH

Winnipeg 783-1116

Manitoba 1-800-563-8336

They operate a confidential, non-judgmental, 24-hour, distress line for teenagers and their families. It is staffed by trained volunteers who are there to listen, offer options and make referrals.

KIDS HELP PHONE

Manitoba 1-800-668-6868

They operate a 24-hour, toll free, bilingual, telephone counselling service for troubled children and youth. Provides emotional support, counselling, information and referral.

BLACK YOUTH HELP LINE

Winnipeg 253-7475

They provide culturally appropriate services to youth, families, schools and agencies that work with youth. Offers a stay-in-school program, child & family support programs, newcomer support and a telephone help line.

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF WINNIPEG

Winnipeg 943-7954

They serve as an information centre for immigrants and refugees, and offers counselling and referrals. Sponsors community outreach programs including a youth drop-in location and a community kitchen.

THE FAMILY CENTRE

Winnipeg 947-1401

They provide individual, couple and family counselling. Offers parenting education courses and workshops on many family related issues. Provides family support services for families in crisis.

YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE

Winnipeg 477-1804

The centre's services include information, referral, informal counselling, support services and guidance for youth aged 13-20. Also provides short-term shelter, food and clothing for youth aged 12-17. The resource centre is open 24 hours.

CONTACT COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Winnipeg 287-8827

Manitoba 1-866-266-4636

This community information centre links people with the required agency or service that can assist them. They maintain a provincial database on health, welfare, social services, educational, cultural and recreational resources throughout Manitoba.

MA MAWI WI CHI ITATA CENTRE

Winnipeg 925-0300

Manitoba 1-800-962-6294

The centre provides community-based advocacy, counselling and support for Aboriginal families or youth involved with child caring agencies, the criminal justice system or crisis situations. Counselling programs available include services for individuals, families, adolescents and children. Support groups are also available.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES:

Services are provided to communities, families and children. Services include counseling; education; emergency assistance; practical support; treatment; and temporary care, including foster care or residential care, while issues are being resolved, or appropriate permanent care, including adoption, when reunification is no longer possible.

First Nations of Southern Manitoba

Child and Family Services Authority

100 – 696 Portage Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0M6

Phone: (204) 783-9190

Toll-free: 1-800-665-5762

First Nations of Northern Manitoba

Child and Family Services Authority

6th Floor, 338 Broadway Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0T1

Phone: (204) 927-7516

Fax: (204) 927-7509

Metis Child and Family Services Authority

3rd Floor – 150 Henry Avenue

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0J5

Phone: (204) 949-0220

Fax: (204) 984-9487

General Child and Family Services Authority

730 – 215 Garry Street

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3Z1

Phone: (204) 984-9363

Fax: (204) 984-9366

MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

Winnipeg 942-6299

www.mac.mb.ca

They protect and promote its member centres by empowering them to deliver quality programs and services through unity, accountability, commitment and preservation of Aboriginal integrity. Call to inquire about the nearest centre in your community.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE OF WINNIPEG

Winnipeg 925-3700

They provide a range of primary health services that combine a blend of traditional and contemporary practices. They provide regular access to Aboriginal Elders.

ADDICTIONS FOUNDATION OF MANITOBA

Winnipeg 944-6235

They provide assessments and a range of addiction programs.

NATIVE ADDICTIONS COUNCIL OF MANITOBA

Winnipeg 586-8395

They provide counselling, information and referral for Aboriginal people on alcohol and drug abuse, gambling and other addictions.

ANDREWS STREET FAMILY CENTRE

Winnipeg 589-1721

They provide a resource centre for area families, offering programs such as a community kitchen, food buying club, support group for mothers and educational workshops.

WOLSELEY FAMILY PLACE

Winnipeg 788-8052

They are a community-based family resource centre that provides holistic health and social services to families.

STREET CONNECTIONS**Winnipeg 940-3687**

They offer harm reduction programs for street kids, including drug users, street youth and youth exploited through prostitution.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**Winnipeg 786-7051****www.newdirections.mb.ca**

This agency is concerned with the developmental potential of children, youth and families which offers family therapy, crisis intervention, residential care and educational programs.

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For more information or to make
comments or suggestions
call or e-mail:

Manitoba Justice
Public Safety Branch
1-800-691-4264
crimeprevention@gov.mb.ca

or visit us at:
www.gov.mb.ca/justice/gangproof