

What are values? Values are a set of beliefs, ideas, and morals. Honesty, respect towards others, and learning to solve problems without resorting to violence are examples of values. Values help a person determine what is right from what is wrong. Values help to build a person's character and personality. Now a days, many young teenagers are growing up without values. It is not uncommon to hear of teenagers getting into trouble. The decline of values among the American youth is a serious problem. The decline of values among youth have led to an increase in crime and violence, sexual activity, and drug abuse.

Today youths are committing more crime and acts of violence more than ever. News stories of kids killing kids and students carrying guns to school are common throughout America. Since 1985, more than 28,500 of America's youth have died from gunshot wounds and today, every 90 minutes a child is killed from a firearm(). Before people used to try to solve their problems with their fists, but now kids use guns as a solution to their problems. Guns are more easily accessible today. Kids can get a gun off the street just as easy as buying candy from a store. " Each year, as many as 225,000 guns are stolen from homes, businesses and vehicles" (). Kids carries guns around because they believe that it commands respect from their peers and that no one would try to mess with them. Many crimes committed involves guns. Teenagers commit crimes towards each other and well as adults. Teenagers commit crimes for reasons ranging from needing money for drugs to needing money to buy a new pair of shoes. Teenagers wearing expensive jewelry or shoes are targets of other young offenders .

What could cause teenagers to commit more crimes and acts of violence? More and more kids are growing up exposed daily to violence on television and their own neighborhoods and with a lack of moral or religious teachings (). The violence on television helps contributes to the desensitization of the today's youth. Kids of today have less respect or no regard for human life. Children do not understand how precious life is and how wrong it is to take a life. Growing up in single parent homes also helps factor in to the increase of violence among teenagers. " Some studies suggest that 70% of juvenile offenders come from single-parent homes." () Parents often leave their kids alone to take care of themselves while they are at work. With a lack of parental guidance, children often look to the streets as their home away from home. The streets can be filled with drugs and pushers trying to sell their poison to others. Gangs and the possibility of violence lurks on the corners of the streets. The streets can be a dangerous place for a young person to learn the lessons of life.

