

# Open Your

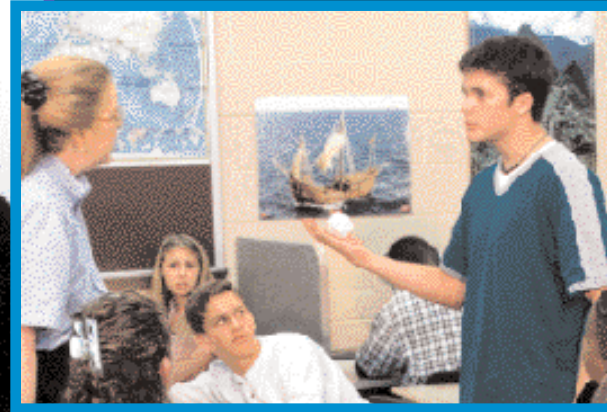
If you worry about your safety at school, you're not alone. Thousands of students across the country go to school in fear every day. Each year more than 10,000 people are attacked with weapons in schools. More than 200 students and teachers have died in the past six years. One million students brought guns to school last year. Violence isn't just an inner city problem. It happens in big cities, suburbs and even the country.



*There are some warning signs to violence. Students don't just become violent without a reason. Violence is the result of serious problems. Does anyone you know fit this profile?*

## depression

Violent students suffer from severe depression. They have difficulty dealing with the everyday problems of life. You may notice changes in their sleeping or eating habits. They might stop hanging around their friends. This depression can lead to thoughts of suicide. If you know people who talk about suicide, they have serious problems and need help. They are a threat to themselves, and they could be a threat to you. Suicidal thoughts often lead to acts of violence against other people.



## low self-esteem

Students who become violent may feel like they don't fit in. Most of the students involved in school shootings felt picked on or inferior. After years of teasing and abuse, they finally snapped. They used violence to get back at other students and to get noticed.

## behavior changes

Students who have extreme changes in behavior could become violent. Mood swings are not normal. Anyone who has a problem with self-control may need help.

## irresponsible

Do you know any students who can't take responsibility for their own actions? Violent people often try to blame others for things that are really their own fault. They find it difficult to function normally and hate rules.

## obsession

If you know someone who really gets into violence, there could be a big problem. Anyone who becomes obsessed with watching violence may find it more and more difficult to separate the violence on TV and the movies from real violence. They may begin to lose touch, and the consequences can be deadly.

## Could Someone You Know Become

### cruelty

Cruelty is one of the biggest warning signs. You should be concerned about anyone who talks about committing cruel acts. If you know someone who actually does cruel things, there's definitely a problem. Cruelty to animals can lead to violence toward people.

### threats

Take every threat of violence seriously. Never assume that a threat is just a joke or meant to scare someone. If a student says he plans to hurt people, believe him. Violent students often say that they're about to do something BIG, or that they're going to get everyone back.

# How Safe Is Your School?

BREAK the silence  
STOP the violence



Speak up

# Break the silence.



It's time to start talking. Students are the only people who can really stop violence in schools.

If you think someone at your school shows any of the warning signs of violence, talk to an adult. Talk to a teacher, a counselor, your school principal, a police officer, your parents – anyone who will listen.

Take guns and violence seriously. If someone you know has a gun, things are already out of control. It might seem like a joke. Maybe you think they're just trying to show off, but you can't take the risk. You have to speak up.

Think about the school shootings you've seen on the news. If those students' friends and classmates would have told someone what they knew, no one would have died. Speaking up can save lives.

Don't be afraid to talk. Ask your teachers about ways you can report danger anonymously. Your school has set up a system to help you. You will be protected.

*Think of the  
consequences of  
not talking.*

# Stop the violence.



BREAK  
the silence  
STOP  
the violence

PEOPLE



Students  
a guide for

SKILL  
BUILDER®



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