

**UNDERSTANDING**

# **YOUTH IN GANGS**

*An information guide for parents and educators*

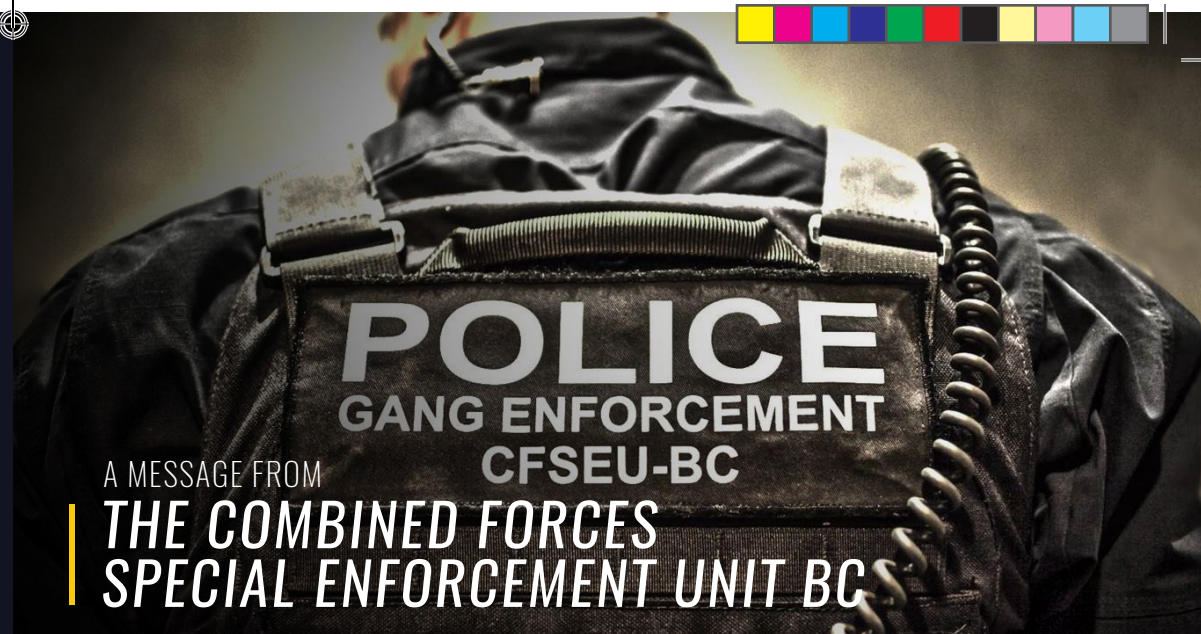


 **ENDGANGLIFE**  
WWW.ENDGANGLIFE.CA

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The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of British Columbia (CFSEU-BC) is **B.C.'s integrated anti-gang police agency**. Hundreds of police officers and civilian staff are dedicated to ensuring our communities are the safest in Canada.

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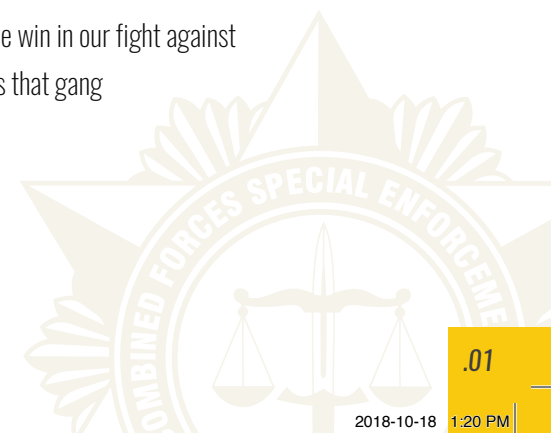
## DRUGS, GANGS, AND VIOLENCE HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR YOUTH, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES.

Those who are involved in drug dealing and gangs don't care about your safety and the safety of our communities. Hundreds of murders have shown us that there is a connection between drug dealing and gang activity in British Columbia.

Gangs and the violence that comes with them go beyond race, money, or where you live. We want to prevent young people from joining this dangerous lifestyle and their families from losing their children.

This booklet contains important information for youth and adults alike. By reading the information and visiting our End Gang Life website ([www.endganglife.ca](http://www.endganglife.ca)), you will be able to identify warning signs and where to get help. You play an important role in understanding the issues and in sharing this information with your friends and loved ones.

The gang problem affects everyone and only together will we win in our fight against gangs. We ask you to work with us to help end the tragedies that gang life leaves behind.



# WHAT IS A GANG?



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
 ORGANIZED CRIME GROUPS HAVE A CHAIN OF COMMAND WITH LEADERS OR BOSSES WHO HAVE A STRICT RULE FOR MEMBERSHIP

Adapted from: Preventing Youth Involvement in Gangs, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, 2011

WHAT IS A GANG?

## GENERALLY SPEAKING A GANG IS...



A group of **three or more persons** that plan and carry out crime for profit (money).

## HOW DO GANGS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES ?



Gang members may **identify through a common name, symbols, colours, hand signs, clothing brands or tattoos.**

## WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AGE OF A GANG MEMBER ?



In BC, half are under the age of 33, and some as young as 15.

## WHAT DO GANG MEMBERS LOOK LIKE ?



Gang members are from **any race, culture or social economic group.**

## WHAT IS THE GOAL OF JOINING A GANG ?



The goal of joining a gang is to **make money through illegal activities** using violence and intimidation.

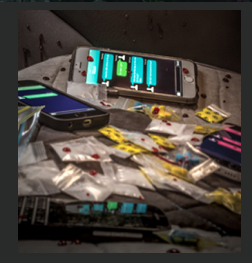
# MYTHS AND REALITIES

THE TRUTH ABOUT GANGS



## YOU'LL BE FREE TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT

You'll have no freedom at all, and you have to do whatever your gang leader wants.



## ONCE KIDS JOIN A GANG THERE'S NO HOPE FOR THEM

With early family, school, and police intervention, a youth can leave the gang without serious consequences. The key is coordinated and collaborative intervention as soon as warning signs appear.



## YOU'LL MAKE LOTS OF MONEY, HAVE EXPENSIVE CARS, COOL GADGETS AND BE POWERFUL

Most gang members don't 'own' anything. You'll either be arrested, injured, or killed. Your cars, property, drugs, and money will be taken by other gang members or seized by the police.



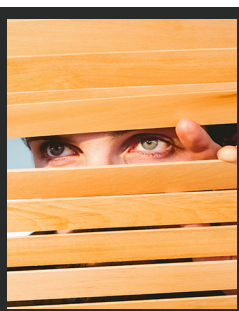
## SOMEONE WILL ALWAYS HAVE YOUR BACK AND YOU'LL BE PROTECTED

Gang members are driven by greed. Members within groups often kill each other over trivial things. Gang leaders always take the biggest cut, with junior members left to fight for the scraps.



## YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM A GANG

Other gangsters don't care where you are or who you are with when they decide to shoot you. It could be in a public place, while you're with your friends or at home when you're with your family. Gang violence puts everyone at risk.



“ In the game, your friends are the ones who kill you. It isn't your enemies.

- FORMER GANG MEMBER



“ No such thing as easy money. Working an actual job is way worth it. Because if you sell drugs this is what happens!

- FORMER GANG MEMBER



MYTH & REALITIES: THE TRUTH ABOUT GANGS

# SIGNS OF A DIAL-A-DOPER

A dial-a-doper (dialer) is an individual who delivers drugs to specific locations day or night. A dialer is typically a teenager or young adult who has access to a vehicle.

## THIS IS TYPICALLY THE FIRST STEP INTO CRIMINAL GANGS

Drug users will call a designated drug number and organize a meeting at a specific location. The dealer then sends dialers out to deliver the dope. New dialers are usually forced into debt with their suppliers, resulting in a never ending cycle of debt/threats of violence that continue to control the young dealers in the dangerous lifestyle.

### SIGNS TO WATCH FOR:

- Claims to have a legitimate job but cannot produce paystub.
- Associates with negative peers/known dial-a-dopers.
- May have a vehicle which may belong to the youth, the parents, another gang member or a rental company.



**ENDGANGLIFE** If you have questions about the CFSEU-BC and our programs email [inquiries@cfseubc.ca](mailto:inquiries@cfseubc.ca)

### DID YOU KNOW?

RECRUITING MAY BE DONE THROUGH FRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS, SOCIAL MEDIA OR OCCASIONALLY BY FORCE.

### DID YOU KNOW?

KIDS SOMETIME HIDE DRUGS, WEAPONS AND SCORESHEETS IN THEIR BEDROOM.

In B.C., criminal gangs are known to **recruit young men around the age of 16 who have their driver's licence**. Like typical teenagers, the youth are open to adventure and are willing to try out new and dangerous ways of living.

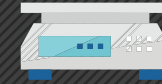
#### UNEXPLAINED CASH

LARGE SUMS OF CASH, USUALLY SMALL BILLS



#### DIGITAL SCALES

FOR WEIGHING DRUGS



#### MOBILE PHONES

USED FOR DIAL-A-DOPE OPERATIONS



#### SMALL BAGGIES

USED FOR PACKAGING THE DRUGS



SIGNS OF A DIAL-A-DOPER

# HOW **DIAL-A-DOPING** WORKS

Drug users can call a designated phone number and organize a time and a place for a drug deal to go down. Once the drug number is activated, it can operate 24 hours to facilitate distribution of drugs to a broad base of customers.

## DRUG PRODUCTION



### 01 DRUG MANUFACTURING

Illegal drugs are usually produced (grown or manufactured) for sale in the street and used mainly for recreational purposes.



### 02 DRUGS ARE CUT

'Cutting' or "buffing" refers to the means by which illicit drugs are diluted.



### 03 DRUGS ARE PACKAGED

Typically, most drugs are packed in small plastic baggies ready for distribution.

## DRUG TRAFFICKING



Drug users call to order drugs.

### DRUG USER

Some entry-level dial-a-dope drivers receive orders directly. Other calls go thru a line boss.



### LINE BOSS

Line boss relays orders to a designated vehicle to deliver drugs.



### DESIGNATED VEHICLE

Most dialers work 10-12 hour shift.

## DRUG DELIVERY



### DRUG PURCHASE

Drugs are delivered to an address or location. Payment is made.



### STASH HOUSE

Drug money is then delivered to the stash house. A stash house is where weapons, drugs and money are hidden.



### GANG LEADERSHIP

Gang leaders keep most of the money and assume the least risk.

# WARNING SIGNS

A warning sign is anything that increases the chance that a person will become involved with a gang. Generally, the greater number of warning signs present, the higher the chance of gang involvement.

## KEY WARNING SIGNS

- Spending time with criminal or gang-involved peers.
- Rule-breaking, impulsive or aggressive (sometimes violent) behaviour, leading youth to get in trouble with police.
- Attitudes and beliefs that support antisocial or criminal behaviour, or violence.
- Ineffective discipline and poor parental\* supervision or involvement.

(\*refers to the primary caregiver through the majority of the youth's life).

## OTHER WARNING SIGNS

- Poor school performance
- Low commitment to school
- Presence of neighborhood gang activity
- High crime neighborhoods/environments
- Mental or emotional difficulties (e.g., anxiety, depression, trauma)

# POSITIVE SIGNS

A positive sign is anything that decreases the chance of gang involvement.

## KEY POSITIVE SIGNS

- Consistent parenting\* (e.g., discipline) and high parental support or involvement.
- Spending time with friends who are not involved in criminal or aggressive behaviour.
- Highly involved and committed to school.

(\*refers to the primary caregiver through the majority of the youth's life).

## POSITIVE SIGNS & ACTIVITIES

- Understanding (empathy).
- Positive coping strategies.
- Involved in Positive Activities: sports, volunteering, reading clubs, community groups, etc.
- Positive family environment and friend groups.

# GIRLS AND GANGS

Female participation in gangs range from turning a blind eye, gathering info or passing messages, carrying guns and drugs in their purses or full-scale drugs & weapons trafficking. This participation may be voluntary or coerced.

## DID YOU KNOW?

UNEXPLAINED WEALTH CAN BE AN EARLY SIGN OF GANG INVOLVEMENT. YOUNG PEOPLE CANNOT AFFORD THESE THINGS WITH AN ENTRY-LEVEL SALARY AT A LEGITIMATE JOB.

### 2005

A **26-year-old woman** had recently graduated university as class valedictorian with a degree in criminology. She was shot and killed in a gang homicide a few months later.

*The gang lifestyle involves people from all walks of life.*

### 2010

A well-known **gang member was shot and killed while shopping with his pregnant wife** and their two small children.

*You or your family may be targeted anywhere, at any time.*

### 2016

A **29-year-old woman and a 24-year-old woman were shot and killed** in front of a 4-year-old child during a kidnapping at their Vancouver home.

*These women were killed because they lived with someone who was involved in gangs.*

The **23-year-old wife of a gang member** was driving her husband's Cadillac in Surrey when she was shot and killed in front of their 4 year old son.

*You may be at risk if you get involved with a gang member.*

The **21-year-old niece of a ranking Outlaw Motorcycle Gang (OMG) member** was vacationing with 3 prominent gang members in Kelowna when she was shot and paralyzed.

*No matter how "connected" they are, they can't protect you.*

### 2009

### 2011

## DO YOU HAVE A WAY OUT ?

It is estimated that **1/3 of Canadian women will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.\***

Your risk is greatest when you try to leave him.

Please call **604-897-6023**.

## GANGS MAY OFFER INCENTIVES TO LURE YOUTH INTO THE LIFESTYLE.

Gifts such as **designer purses, clothes, and cosmetics**. Paying for **expensive hairdos, surgical enhancements, or tattoos**.

Providing **phones, luxury vacations**.

## MULTIPLE PARTNERS

Studies show that **gang members are more likely to have sex-related health issues than non-gang members**.

(Little, Gonzales, Snell, & Molitor; Brooks, Lee, & Stover, 2009)

\*Cohen & MacLean, as cited by Department of Justice, 2012



# DRUG TRENDS AND SAFETY

Harm reduction aims to keep people safe and minimize death, disease, and injury from high risk behavior.

Young people who sell drugs may also use drugs themselves. To avoid getting caught, they may do this wherever they feel they have the most privacy in your home. This means they are at risk of overdosing while alone, which can be fatal.

Also, some street drugs look like candy, prescription medications, or household ingredients, and can be accidentally misused by other members of your household.

An overdose is a medical emergency, and seconds count. Make sure you plan ahead, learn the signs of an overdose, and know the steps you will need to take to keep your child alive until help arrives. The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control's "Toward the Heart" program offers a simple, user-friendly website where you can learn everything you need to know in an overdose emergency.

## WHAT IS TOWARD THE HEART?

Visit [www.towardtheheart.com](http://www.towardtheheart.com) for free training, videos, illustrations, and easy-to-follow steps that could save your child's life.



### DID YOU KNOW?

NALOXONE IS A MEDICATION THAT TEMPORARILY REVERSES CERTAIN TYPES OF OVERDOSES. THIS CAN KEEP SOMEONE ALIVE UNTIL THE AMBULANCE ARRIVES.

VISIT TOWARD THE HEART TO LEARN WHERE TO PICK UP A THN KIT, AND HOW TO GIVE NALOXONE IN AN EMERGENCY.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU THINK YOU HAVE FOUND DRUGS

Do not try to dispose of the substance yourself.

When drugs are diluted (or "cut") to a concentration that is ready to be sold, it is unlikely that simply touching it will cause an overdose; however, you cannot know the concentration or composition of a substance just by looking at it.



There are safe disposal procedures which must be followed, and police are qualified to deal with this.

**Please do not throw the drugs in your garbage or dumpster.**

Keep children and pets away from the unknown substance.

**Contact Your Local Police or Call 911** – explain to them what you have found, and where it is located.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU FIND A GUN OR OTHER WEAPON

If you find a gun or explosives, **call 911 and ask for police.** Do not try to disable firearms yourself.



Illegal firearms are often kept loaded, they may have been tampered with or altered, and you cannot guarantee the weapon will function normally. Keep others (especially children) away from the weapon.

# GANG INTERVENTION

## GET IN TOUCH

GET IN TOUCH WITH CFSEU-BC'S GANG INTERVENTION TEAM TODAY FOR SUPPORT.

604-897-6023

### WHAT IS GANG INTERVENTION ?

The Gang Intervention Team works with other police agencies where gang violence persists. The team conducts assessments, provides emergency gang intervention and enforcement against high risk individuals who are a threat to public safety.

- ✓ We work with high risk individuals who are either engaged or at-risk of engaging in gang activities
- ✓ The team conducts outreach and intervenes with those involved in the gang lifestyle
- ✓ We have the capacity to use enforcement tactics to disrupt criminal behavior

If you think your child or someone you know is at risk or involved in gangs or drug trafficking, there is help available.

Get in touch with *CFSEU-BC's Gang Intervention Team today for support.*

PH: 604-897-6023

EMAIL: gangintervention@cfseu.bc.ca

 **ENDGANGLIFE** If you have questions about the CFSEU-BC and our programs email inquiries@cfseubc.ca

# GANG EXITING AND OUTREACH

### WHAT IS GANG EXITING & OUTREACH ?

Operated by the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit – B.C., the Gang Exiting and Outreach Team uses an evidenced-based case management approach to provide exiting support to adult gang members (18+) currently in the Lower Mainland.

**DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET OUT ?** At some point you will want out of the lifestyle. It won't be easy but here is how we can help you help yourself.

#### Support includes (but not limited to):

- ✓ Clinical counselling
- ✓ Employment skills training
- ✓ Mental health and addictions support
- ✓ Tattoo removal
- ✓ Outreach is also extended to the gang members' family and friends

For more information, please visit [www.endganglife.ca](http://www.endganglife.ca) or call **604-897-6023**

## DO YOU WANT OUT?

GET IN TOUCH WITH CFSEU-BC'S GANG EXITING & OUTREACH TEAM TODAY.

604-897-6023

# A STORY OF HOPE AND SURVIVAL

INTRODUCED TO THE LIFESTYLE BY SELLING DRUGS & FELL DEEPER INTO THE GANG WORLD.

**Donny is 14 years old when he joins a gang. Constant battles in a dysfunctional household lead to the divorce of his parents.** With his father out of the house, he begins to disconnect from his family and act out. His mother, unable to control his escalating behaviour, sends him to live with his father. After a tense two months his father, an alcoholic, kicks him out of the home. With nowhere to go, Donny is welcomed by family members who participate in gang activities.



A few weeks short of his 15th birthday, he is given a van to live in and his cousins introduce him to the criminal lifestyle by forcing him to sell a little bit of dope. As he falls deeper into the gang world, Donny is promoted by his gang leaders to manage a stash house and a local drug line.

At 18, Donny meets Maria, a young woman also involved in the lifestyle through trafficking drugs and escort work. During their intense and at times violent relationship, Donny and Maria have a boy together but split soon after as she develops a drug addiction. After their separation, she takes to the company of a rival gang member. The split of his intimate relationship leaves Donny emotionally destroyed, particularly as he is no longer able to see his son, and he begins using the product he sells.

After he starts to use, Donny convinces his best friend Tyler to sell dope, promising Tyler he will make lots of money and nothing bad will happen to him. One night on a dial-a-dope shift Donny & Tyler are pulled over by the cops, who seize their drugs and cash, and they spend the night in jail. Upon telling their boss what happened, Tyler is severely beaten in Donny's

presence. Shortly after, Tyler ends their friendship, which causes Donny to fall into a deep depression.

Donny's drug habit becomes more severe and one day while high, he steals from his suppliers. After finding out, his suppliers beat him up and leave him for dead at the side of the road. Released after a few months at the hospital, Donny's only option is to live in the local shelter. By the time he moves into the shelter it has been 2 years since he last saw his son. While thinking about his son, Donny decides that he doesn't want the same fate for his boy and resolves to exit the gang life.

Exiting the gang life isn't easy. Donny is referred to the Gang Exiting team, who help him rebuild his life, piece by piece. After months of trying to kick his habit, he is finally admitted to rehab. As part of his rehab, Donny takes up boxing and volunteers twice a month at the Boys and Girls club to share his story.

A short time later, an Outreach worker from the Gang Exiting Team helps Donny land a job at the community centre as a janitor and enroll in night school to complete his high school diploma. After a grueling year, he earns his diploma and enrolls at the local college to pursue a certificate in Subdivision Planning. Determined not to fail, Donny works hard to earn that certificate, allowing him to pursue his dream of becoming a civil engineer. None of this was easy for Donny as he had to work long hours, take out loans, and build up credit – but he determined that none of this was harder than what he went through while in the gang life.

Clean, sober and enrolled in university he meets Ally, his future wife, and they start the process to gain custody of his son. With his life back on track, Donny is working on reconciling with his parents. He recently took a new job working for the city as an assistant on the Urban and Regional Planning team. He continues to volunteer at the Boys and Girls club.



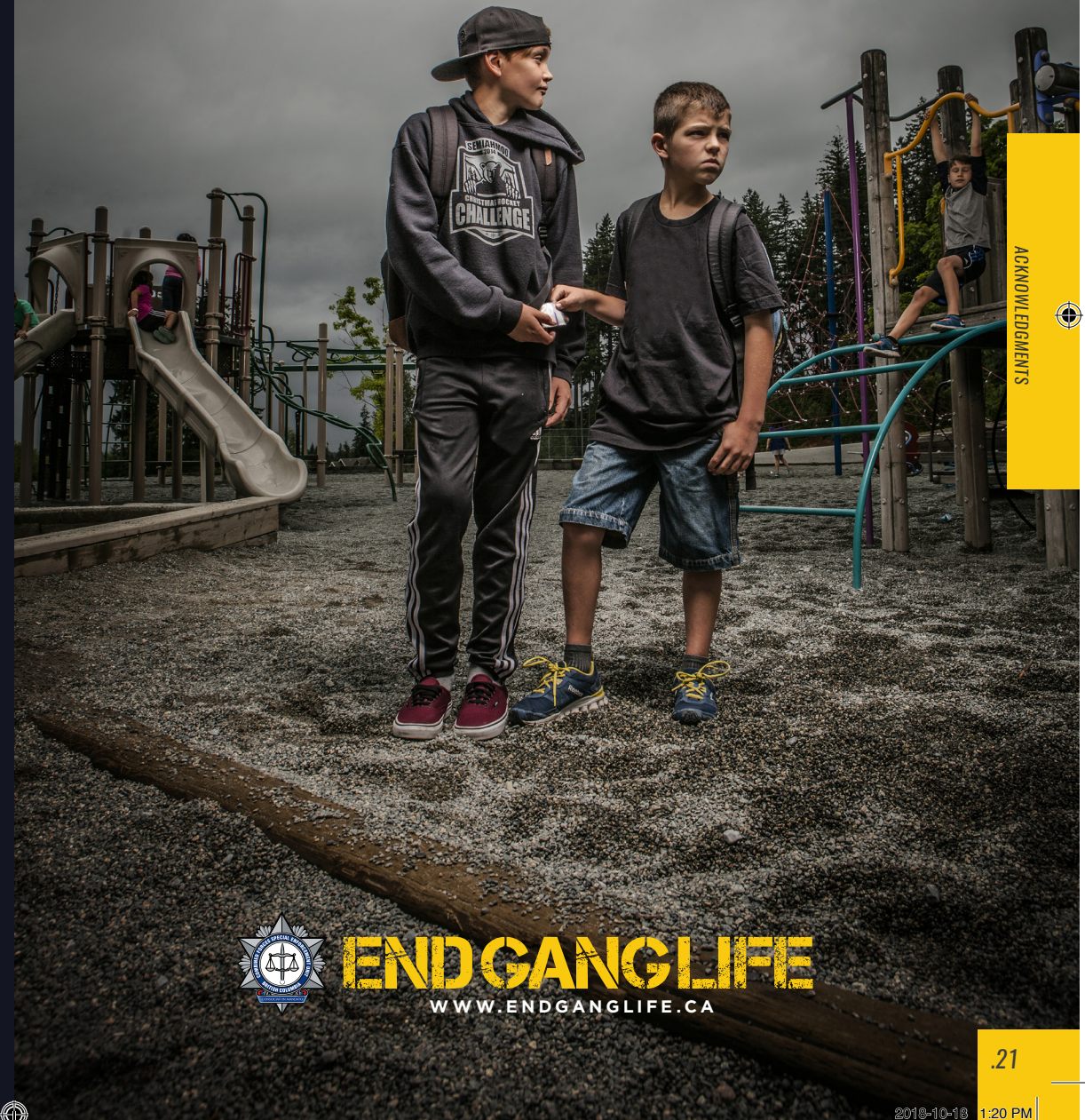
# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The CFSEU-BC would like to recognize and thank the following individuals and partners for their contributions and partnerships. We would like to recognize and acknowledge everyone who has reached out for help, either for themselves or for someone they know. We would like to thank those of you who were involved in gang-related activity but have made the commitment to end gang life.

- Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Dr. Gira Bhatt and Dr. Roger Tweed, and the AT-CURA project team
- South Asian Community Coalition Against Youth Violence (SACCAYV) Simon
- Fraser University's Departments of Psychology and Criminology University of the
- Fraser Valley's School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
- The many community partners and community members around the province who are working hard to positively impact the lives of youths and adults



## DO YOU **REALLY** KNOW WHAT YOUR KIDS ARE UP TO?



UNDERSTANDING

# YOUTH IN GANGS

The *CFSEU-BC's Community & Public Affairs Team* develops bold, emotional and visually impactful messaging for the End Gang Life initiative.

Launched in December 2013, End Gang Life is a comprehensive gang education, prevention, and awareness initiative with goals to:

- Engage the public about gangs
- Provide material that educates the public about gangs
- Prevent youth and young adults from joining gangs
- Encourage those involved in gang life to exit



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