CHAPTER – 1
INTRODUCTION

Violence is the use of physical force to injure any being—human or non-human or property. Violence may cause physical pain to those who experience it directly, as well as emotional distress to those who either experience or witness it. Individuals, families, schools, workplaces, communities, society and the environment all are harmed by violence.

In order to have an adequate understanding of the meaning of the term violence it would be useful to refer to the Latin roots of the term. According to the Oxford Dictionary, ‘Violence’ is derived from two Latin terms: 1) Violentus and 2) Violare. Violentus is an adjectival term meaning forcible, vehement or impetuous and concerns itself with the state of the agent who is acting rather than consequences of the action. In this sense the term ‘Violence’ is primarily descriptive. The second term Violare is used as a verb which means to injure, to dishonour, to outrage and to violate and it looks to the consequences or the effects of an action. On the other hand, it is primarily a normative term expressing disapprobation. On the basis of these, the same dictionary defines violence as i) the exercise of physical force so as to inflict harm or injury or cause damage to persons or property; ii) to inflict harm or injury upon a person; iii) an act of infringement in the form of distortion, repudiation or irreverence to a person or a thing; iv) undue constraint applied to some natural process so as to prevent its free development or exercise. From the above remarks, it is obvious that an act involving direct physical force may not lead to infringement, e.g, to push a child to save him from the rushing automobile, and an act of infringement may
not involve the use of a direct physical force, e.g., causing death by slow poisoning. Here the term ‘violence’ is used in the manner that violence may be understood as an act of infringement which inflict injury or cause damage to persons irrespective of the fact that they involve a direct use of physical force or not.

Actually, violence thrives in the absence of democracy, respect for human rights and good governance. We often talk about how a ‘culture of violence’ can take root. This is indeed true—as a South African who has lived through apartheid and is living through its aftermath. It is also true that patterns of violence are more pervasive and widespread in societies where the authorities endorse, the use of violence through their own actions. In many societies, violence is so dominant that it thwarts hopes of economic and social development.

No community is untouched by violence. Images and accounts of violence pervade the media; it is on our streets, in our homes, schools, workplace and institutions. Violence is a universal scourge that tears at the fabric of communities and threatens the life, health and happiness of us all.

**Defining Violence:**

Violence is an extremely diffuse and complex phenomenon. Defining it is not an exact science but a matter of judgement. Notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of behaviour, and what constituted harm, are culturally influenced and constantly under review as values and social norms change and evolve. For e.g., a generation ago, the cane was a regular part of discipline in the schools, used to beat pupils in the schools, used to beat pupils on the buttocks, legs or hands. Today a teacher can be prosecuted for using physical restraint of any kind on a child.
There are many possible way to define violence, depending on who is defining it and for what purpose. A definition for the purposes of arrest and conviction, for example, will be different from one for social service interventions. However we had tried to get the general meaning of the term Violence by the following definitions.

As Glen Anderson defines -“Passive violence is the conscious ignoring of the physical, psychological, and emotional needs of a person; the conscious failure to ensure the safety of someone under one’s care; or the failure to ensure the development of well-being of someone under one’s care.”

Here’s what Marshall Rosenberg, author of Nonviolent Communication, has to say: Classifying and judging people promotes violence. He defines it as:

“At the root of much, if not all, Violence – whether verbal, psychological, or physical, whether among family members, tribes, or nations – is a kind of thinking that attributes the cause of conflict to wrongness in one’s adversaries…”

Arun Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, has written about his experiences as a child, learning about nonviolence with his grandfather:

“We often don’t acknowledge our violence because we are ignorant about it; we assume we are not violent because our vision of violence is one of fighting, killing, beating, and wars – the types of things that average individuals don’t do.”

The World Health Organisation defines “Violence” as:

“Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power,
threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”

In other words it can be said that violent acts can be defined in both positive and negative sense. In positive sense it can be defined as hurt-causing act, or non-hurt causing act but performed with the intention of causing hurt to somebody who one knows will or is likely to be hurt by it and in negative it can be defined as an act that is not performing or refraining from performing a non-violent act in the positive sense.

**Types of Violence:**

Violence and other forms of abuse are most commonly understood as a pattern of behaviour intended to establish and maintain control over family, household members, intimate partners, colleagues, individuals or groups. While violent offenders are most often known to their victims (intimate or estranged partners and spouses, family members, relatives, peers, colleagues, etc.), acts of violence and abuse may also be committed by strangers.

Violence and abuse may occur only once, can involve various tactics of subtle manipulation or may occur frequently while escalating over a period of months or years. In any form, violence and abuse profoundly affect individual health and well-being. The roots of all forms of violence are founded in the many types of inequality which continue to exist and grow in society.

Violence and abuse are used to establish and maintain power and control over another person, and often reflect an imbalance of power between the victim and the abuser.
Violence is a choice, and it is preventable.

There are nine distinct forms of violence and abuse:

1. Physical violence;
2. Sexual violence;
3. Emotional violence;
4. Psychological violence;
5. Spiritual violence;
6. Cultural violence;
7. Verbal Abuse;
8. Financial Abuse; and,
9. Neglect

1. **Physical Violence**

   Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person’s actions.

   Physical violence includes, but is not limited to:

   - Using physical force which results in pain, discomfort or injury;
   - Hitting, pinching, hair-pulling, arm-twisting, strangling, burning, stabbing, punching, pushing, slapping, beating, shoving, kicking, choking, biting, force-feeding, or any other rough treatment;
   - Assault with a weapon or other object;
   - Threats with a weapon or object;
   - Deliberate exposure to severe weather or inappropriate room temperatures; and,
   - Murder.
Medication abuse

- Inappropriate use of medication, including:
  - withholding medication;
  - Not complying with prescription instructions; and,
  - Over- or under-medication.

Restraints abuse

- Forcible confinement;
- Excessive, unwarranted or unnecessary use of physical restraints;
- Forcing a person to remain in bed;
- Unwarranted use of medication to control a person (also called “chemical restraint”); and,
- Tying the person to a bed or chair.

2. Sexual Violence

Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity.

Sexual violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Touching in a sexual manner without consent (i.e., kissing, grabbing, fondling);
- Forced sexual intercourse;
- Forcing a person to perform sexual acts that may be degrading or painful;
- Beating sexual parts of the body;
- Forcing a person to view pornographic material; forcing participation in pornographic filming;
• Using a weapon to force compliance;
• Exhibitionism;
• Making unwelcome sexual comments or jokes; leering behaviour;
• Withholding sexual affection;
• Denial of a person’s sexuality or privacy (watching);
• Denial of sexual information and education;
• Humiliating, criticizing or trying to control a person’s sexuality;
• Forced prostitution;
• Unfounded allegations of promiscuity and/or infidelity; and,
• Purposefully exposing the person to HIV-AIDS or other sexually transmitted infections.

3. Emotional Violence

Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless.

Emotional violence includes, but is not limited to:

• Name calling;
• Blaming all relationship problems on the person;
• Using silent treatment;
• Not allowing the person to have contact with family and friends;
• Destroying possessions;
• Jealousy;
• Humiliating or making fun of the person;
• Intimidating the person; causing fear to gain control;
• Threatening to hurt oneself if the person does not cooperate;

• Threatening to abandon the person; and,

• Threatening to have the person deported (if they are an immigrant).

4. Psychological Violence

Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in a person to gain control.

Psychological violence includes, but is not limited to:

• Threatening to harm the person or her or his family if she or he leaves;

• Threatening to harm oneself;

• Threats of violence;

• Threats of abandonment;

• Stalking / criminal harassment;

• Destruction of personal property;

• Verbal aggression;

• Socially isolating the person;

• Not allowing access to a telephone;

• Not allowing a competent person to make decisions;

• Inappropriately controlling the person’s activities;

• Treating a person like a child or a servant;

• Withholding companionship or affection;

• Use of undue pressure to:
  
  o Sign legal documents;
o Not seek legal assistance or advice;

o Move out of the home;

o Make or change a legal will or beneficiary;

o Make or change an advance health care directive;

o Give money or other possessions to relatives or other caregivers; and,

o Do things the person doesn’t want to do.

5. Spiritual Violence

Spiritual (or religious) violence occurs when someone uses one’s spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control the other person.

Spiritual violence includes, but is not limited to:

• Not allowing the person to follow her or his preferred spiritual or religious tradition;

• Forcing a spiritual or religious path or practice on another person;

• Belittling or making fun of a person’s spiritual or religious tradition, beliefs or practices; and,

• Using one’s spiritual or religious position, rituals or practices to manipulate, dominate or control the other person.

6. Cultural Violence

Cultural violence occurs when a person is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition.

Cultural violence includes, but is not limited to:

• Committing “honour” or other crimes against women in some parts of the world, where women especially may be physically harmed, shunned, maimed or killed for:
• Falling in love with the “wrong” person;
• Seeking divorce;
• Infidelity; committing adultery;
• Being raped;
• Practicing witchcraft; and,
• Being older.
• Cultural violence may take place in some of the following ways:
  • Lynching or stoning;
  • Banishment;
  • Abandonment of an older person at hospital by family;
  • Female circumcision;
  • Rape-marriage;
  • Sexual slavery; and,
  • Murder

7. Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to a person.

Verbal abuse includes, but is not limited to:

• Recalling a person’s past mistakes;
• Expressing negative expectations;
• Expressing distrust;
• Threatening violence against a person or her or his family members;
• Yelling;
• Lying;
• Name-calling;
• Insulting, swearing;
• Withholding important information;
• Unreasonably ordering around;
• Talking unkindly about death to a person; and,
• Telling a person she or he is worthless or nothing but trouble.

8. Financial Abuse

Financial abuse occurs when someone controls a person’s financial resources without the person’s consent or misuses those resources.

Financial abuse includes, but is not limited to:

• Not allowing the person to participate in educational programs;
• Forcing the person to work outside the home;
• Refusing to let the person work outside the home or attend school;
• Controlling the person’s choice of occupation;
• Illegally or improperly using a person’s money, assets or property;
• Acts of fraud; pulling off a scam against a person;
• Taking funds from the person without permission for one’s own use;
• Misusing funds through lies, trickery, controlling or withholding money;
• Not allowing access to bank accounts, savings, or other income;
• Giving an allowance and then requiring justification for all money spent;

• Persuading the person to buy a product or give away money;

• Selling the house, furnishings or other possessions without permission;

• Forging a signature on pension cheques or legal documents;

• Misusing a power of attorney, an enduring power of attorney or legal guardianship;

• Not paying bills;

• Opening mail without permission;

• Living in a person’s home without paying fairly for expenses; and,

• Destroying personal property.

9. Neglect

Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for you but does not.

Neglect includes, but is not limited to, the following:

• Failing to meet the needs of a person who is unable to meet those needs alone;

• Abandonment in a public setting; and,

• Not remaining with a person who needs help.

Physical neglect

• Disregarding necessities of daily living, including failing to provide adequate or necessary:
• Nutrition or fluids;
• Shelter;
• Clean clothes and linens;
• Social companionship; and,
• Failing to turn a bed-ridden person frequently to prevent stiffness and bed-sores.

Medical neglect

- Ignoring special dietary requirements;
- Not providing needed medications;
- Not calling a physician; not reporting or taking action on a medical condition, injury or problem; and,
- Not being aware of the possible negative effects of medications.

Violence is multifaceted because there are many different forms of violence, which are exhibited in a wide range of contexts. It may, for example, be distinguished in ‘youth violence’, ‘gang violence’, ‘school violence’, ‘street violence’, ‘teen violence’, ‘dating violence’, ‘intimate violence’, ‘domestic violence’, ‘work place violence’, ‘urban violence’, ‘interpersonal violence’, ‘random violence’, ‘racial violence’, ‘media violence’, ‘mimetic violence’, ‘systemic violence’, ‘symbolic violence’, ‘structural violence’ or even ‘apocalyptic violence’. Violence can be physical (‘aggression’, ‘abuse’, or ‘assault’), but it can also be verbal (‘bullying’, ‘humiliation’, or ‘intimidation’). It can be overt but also covert like in languages and literacy, abstraction, interpretation and representation, and in the violence of ‘censure’. Violence can be individual or collective, interpersonal or institutional, national, or
international, symbolic or structural. The context may be private or public and the victims may be family members, acquaintances or strangers. Based on the offender’s motive, violence may be angry, impulsive, hostile, expressive, dispute-related, instrumental, or predatory. Some incidents occur, more or less, ‘out of the blue’, whereas other occurs within some form of relationship in which conflict escalates. Some incidents are concluded in a few moments, whereas others evolve into a long-term conflict relationships. Not physical attacks can be made against the gender, race or sexuality of the victim, or – as in some of these cases – their professional integrity. Instead of or in addition to physical injury; violence can have mental (‘psychological’), social and material consequences and there seems no simple relationship between the apparent severity of a violent act and the impact it has upon the victim.

Violence is socially constructed because who and what is considered as violent varies according to specific socio-cultural and historical conditions.

The above types of violence are mainly concerned with human beings in general but there are some other types which are concerned with non-human beings and have become a cause of major concern in recent times and these may be categorised mainly as: violence against animals, violence against embryo and fetus, violence against environment etc. We will discuss these in the following chapters.

**Causes of violence:**

There is a huge concern about violence in the world today. What causes violence? Why do some children hit or bite? And how do sweet little babies turn into gun-carrying gang members, murderers, and terrorists?
There are two basic conditions that produce violent tendencies in human beings. One condition is that the person has been hurt. A child who is spanked, hit, beaten, or threatened with violence will have tendency to become violent himself. Sexual abuse and emotional neglect are also hurts that can lead to violent tendencies. The accumulation of minor hurts (stress) can lead to violent behaviour as well. The anxieties, disappointments, and frustrations of childhood can build up and cause a child to hit or bite.

The second basic condition is less well understood. The person has not been allowed to release the emotions resulting from the hurts. He has unresolved and unexpressed feelings about what he has experienced. Only then will he have a tendency to be violent towards others. Being the victim of violence and other distressing experiences breeds violence in the child only when the emotions are blocked and repressed. When this situation occurs, violence toward self or others is almost an inevitable outcome. Violence is a distorted expression of the person's rage or terror in an environment where it is not safe to reveal or release strong feelings.

Added to these two basic conditions is the fact that violence is tolerated and glorified in the most industrialized countries, and is culturally linked to appropriate male behaviour. Children are exposed to violent male sports and to television programs, films, and electronic games with mostly violent male protagonists. Little boys are given toy soldiers, guns and other war paraphernalia with which to play. Story books and school text books often glorify war, a predominantly masculine activity, and describe great male conquerors as heroes. Many parents are pleased when their sons fight back in self-defence with playground bullies, and adults worry about boys who refuse to fight. Combined with
the fact that boys are expected to be tough and not to cry, it is not surprising that men commit more violent crimes than women. If we were to purposely design a culture with the goal of producing violent people, we would create it exactly like the culture in which most modern boys grow up.

To prevent violence, we must, first, stop perpetrating violence on children. This means no spanking or hitting. We also need to protect children from violent scenes on television or videos. We must change the messages about violence that we give to boys, and expect the same standards of non-violent behaviour from boys that we expect from girls.

Furthermore, both boys and girls must be allowed to cry or rage. Otherwise, they harbour unresolved anger, resentments, frustrations, and fears that they may act out as violence toward others or themselves. Crying can be very effective in dissipating aggressive energy. Much of the emotional pain of childhood is an inevitable part of growing and learning. Children get hurt and experience stress even with the most caring parents and teachers. It is therefore vitally important to allow the natural healing mechanisms of crying and raging.

However, violence cannot be attributed to a single factor. Its causes are complex and occur at different levels. To represent this complexity, the ecological, or social ecological model is often used. The following four-level version of the ecological model is often used in the study of violence:

The first level identifies biological and personal factors that influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence: demographic characteristics (age, education, income), genetics, brain lesions, personality disorders,
substance abuse, and a history of experiencing, witnessing, or engaging in violent behaviour.

The second level focuses on close relationships, such as those with family and friends. In youth violence, for example, having friends who engage in or encourage violence can increase a young person’s risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence. For intimate partner violence, a consistent marker at this level of the model is marital conflict or discord in the relationship. In elder abuse, important factors are stress due to the nature of the past relationship between the abused person and the caregiver.

The third level explores the community context—i.e., schools, workplaces, and neighbourhoods. Risk at this level may be affected by factors such as the existence of a local drug trade, the absence of social networks, and concentrated poverty. All these factors have been shown to be important in several types of violence.

Finally, the fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help to create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited: the responsiveness of the criminal justice system, social and cultural norms regarding gender roles or parent-child relationships, income inequality, the strength of the social welfare system, the social acceptability of violence, the availability of weapons, the exposure to violence in mass media, and political instability.

**Violence: A Complex Phenomenon:**

There is no single factor to explain why one person and not another behaves in a violent manner, nor why one community will be torn apart by violence while a neighbouring community lives in peace. Violence is
an extremely complex phenomenon that has its roots in the interaction of many factors biological, social, cultural, economic and political.

While some risk factors may be unique to a particular type of violence, more often the various types of violence share a number of risk factors. Fragmentation of the field into different areas of expertise and interest, and lack of collaboration between the various groups tends to obscure this fact and to encourage a piecemeal approach to violence prevention. This is at odds with the requirements of public health, which needs to see the different types of violence in their broader context and to be aware of the common patterns.

The world report on violence and health uses an ecological model to try to understand the multi faceted nature of violence. First introduced in the late 1970s for the study of child abuse and subsequently used in other fields of violence research, the ecological model is still being developed and refined as a concept tool. Its strength is that it helps to distinguish between the myriad influences on violence while at the same time providing a framework for understanding how they interact.

The model assists in examining factors that influences behaviour which increase the risk of community or being a community or being a victim of violence – by dividing them into four levels.

The first level identifies biological and personal history factors that influence how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Examples of factors that can be measured or traced include demographic characteristics (age, education, income), psychological or personality disorders, substance abuse and a history of behaving aggressively or experiencing abuse.
The second level looks at close relationships such as those with family, friends, intimate partners and peers, and explores how these relationships increase the risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence. In youth violence, for example, having friends who engage in or encourage violence may increase a young person’s risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence.

The third level explores as the community contexts in which social relationships occur, such as schools, workplace, and neighbourhoods, and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that increase the risk for violence. Risk at this level may be influenced by factors such as residential mobility (for example, whether people in a neighbourhood tend to stay for a long time or move frequently), population density, high levels of unemployment, or existence of a local drug trade.

The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help to create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These include the availability of weapons and social & cultural norms. Such norms include that those give priority to parental rights over child welfare, that those regard suicide as a matter of individual choice instead of preventable act of violence, those that entrench male dominance over women and children, those that support the use of excessive force by police against citizens, and those that support political conflict. Larger societal factors also include the health, economic, educational and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequality between groups in society.

The overlapping rings in the model illustrate how factors at each level are strengthened or modified by factors at another. Thus, for example, a person with an aggressive personality is more likely to act
violently in a family or community that habitually resolves conflict through violence than if he or she were in a more peaceable environment. Social isolation, which is widely found community factor in the mistreatment of the elderly, may be influenced both by the societal factors (for example, less respect for elders) and relationship factors (the loss of friends and family members).

Thus, we can say that life and relationship are very essential to each other. Human life is completely based on relationship. Life is an experience and relationship is an action. Action has meaning only in relationship; without understanding relationship, action on any level will only breed conflict. The understanding of relationship is infinitely more important the search for any plan of action. The ideology, the pattern for action, prevents action. Action based on ideology hinders the understanding of relationship between man and man. Ideology may of the right or of the left, religious or secular; but it is invariably destructive of relationship. The understanding of relationship is true action. Without understanding relationship, strife and aggression, war and confusion are inevitable. Relationship means not only communion with people but intimacy with things and ideas. Life is relationship, which is expressed through contact with things, with people and with ideas. In understanding relationship we shall have capacity to meet life fully, adequately. So our problem is not capacity – because capacity is not independent of relationship. If we properly understand our relationship, which will naturally produce the capacity for quick softness, for quick adjustment, for quick response.

**Preventable Measures of Violence:**

Many who live with violence day in and day out assume that it is an intrinsic part of the human condition. But this is not so. Violence can
be prevented. Violent cultures can be turned around. In our own country and around the world, we have shining examples of how violence has been countered. Governments, communities and individuals can make difference. Safety and security are the results of collective consensus and public investment.

Seeing an image of a violent adult, it’s hard to imagine the innocent baby they once were. Is there such thing as being born violent? Are there really “bad seeds” when it comes to a human life? Like so many qualities, violence involves a real interaction between genetics and environment. We may not be able to alter the DNA we are born with, but we can strongly influence how these genes are expressed. With all the factors proven to contribute to violence risk, we can no longer say that violent individuals are just “born that way.” There is a lot we can do to prevent violence, and hardly anyone at any age is hopeless or beyond help.

Violence is the result of a combination of biological, social, and psychological factors, especially those that increase exposure to vulnerability, shame, and humiliation. Preventing violence must involve the opposite: making sure people feel safe, cared about, and connected, while ensuring they have a healthy and realistic sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

So how can we prevent children from becoming violent? And how can we treat people who’ve already demonstrated violent tendencies? Here are some of the Do’s of stopping violence among children, adolescents, and adults. This list is addressed to parents, but it truly applies to any influential figure in a child’s life.
• **Forming an Attachment**

Make sure children have caring adults in their lives. Research has shown that kids need a minimum of five caring adults to help them grow up happy and healthy. It isn’t just parents who have an impact on their kids. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, counsellors, and family friends can serve as positive role models to our kids. Parents can hurt themselves and their children by creating an isolated environment around them. Encourage kind, compassionate, and ethical people to be involved in your child’s lives from the get go.

For both children and adults who show violent tendencies, it is important to help them form attachments. Attaching to someone, whether from their family or a rehabilitation program, has been proven to help even highly violent individuals to make a real change. Research shows that facilitating violent prisoners develop attachment is violence preventative.

• **Developing a Conscience**

Help your children develop a conscience by A) Being attuned to them, B) Not being violent toward or in front of them, C) Providing a secure, safe base for them, and D) Repairing when you slip up. We all make mistakes as parents, but openly admitting and apologizing for these mistakes shows your kids that you are human, that they are not to blame, and that they too, should demonstrate care and concern.

• **Developing Empathy**

Help your child develop empathy. Imagine the scene of your child hitting another child in the park. In that moment, you’d probably insist they say “sorry,” but what do you do to make them feel empathetic?
Saying sorry can be meaningless if a child doesn’t mean it. At these times, ask your child to describe how he/she would feel from being hit. This helps the child to feel compassion and sympathy, while understanding what it really means to hurt someone.

Prisoners can be taught empathy through effective intervention programs like victim impact groups, where victims of violence speak to prisoners about their experience. The San Francisco prison system embraced this technique and employed a treatment strategy that reduced recidivism (criminal re-offences of released prisoner) by 80 percent.

• **Getting Attention**

  Give attention to kids; never give them the silent or avoidant treatment. Adolescents acting up need more attention, not less. In juvenile correction facilities, they’ve found that solitary confinement is the worst thing for a teen who is behaving badly. Depriving a kid in need of services and contact hurts them; their behaviour indicates they need more adult contact. By isolating them, when their acting out is to seek attention, albeit negative attention, we continue the punishment cycle. Intensifying treatment when adolescents act out breaks the punishment cycle, while reducing their likelihood of becoming violent. This has proven to be effective even in adolescents with psychopathic tendencies.

• **Building Self-Esteem**

  Help your child find something they are good at and offer real praise for those achievements. False praise and build up inflates a person’s vanity but does little to enhance their real sense of self-worth or self-esteem. Yet, acknowledging children for honest accomplishments and true abilities helps them to know their value.
Vanity has actually been found to contribute to violence. Conversely, prisoners given the opportunity to gain a sense of value by helping other people has highly positive results.

- **Avoiding Harsh Punishment**

  Don’t punish a child harshly. When we are violent, abusive, or insensitive to our children, we lead by example. We teach them to be unsympathetic, out of control, and at the whim of their anger. We must be attuned in how we discipline our children. Make sure our punishment comes out of care and concern for how they feel and behave, and not from our own emotional issues.

  Harsh punishment in prisons turns these institutions into what James Gilligan has called “graduate schools for crime.” By focusing our efforts on education and treatment instead of punishment, we prevent many prisoners from becoming violent upon release; we save potential victims of future violence; and we save taxpayers the money they would spend toward re-imprisoning repeat offenders.

- **Learning Calming Techniques**

  Teach your children good ways to calm down when they’re upset. The best way to do this is to lead by example. It’s important to demonstrate your own resilience, problem solving, and coping strategies in front of your children. This does not mean acting tough or hiding your feelings. It means demonstrating healthy techniques for handling conflict and emotion in your own life and encouraging them to do the same.

  On a societal and political level, we must not overlook those struggling and work harder to provide services to help educate this population. We know that in the case of prisoners who’ve been jailed for
violent crimes, the factors proven to reduce recidivism include therapy, education, the building of job skills, and substance abuse treatment. On a personal level, whether we are aiming to prevent a child from becoming violent or to steer a person away from a life already touched by violence, we must foster our own compassion and faith in a human being’s goodness and potential.

Dr. James Gilligan wrote in his book *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, “The self cannot survive without love. The self starved of love dies. That is how violence can cause the death of the self even when it does not kill the body. The two possible sources of love for the self are love from others, and one’s own love for oneself. Children who fail to receive sufficient love from others fail to build those reserves of self-love, and the capacity for self-love, which enable them to survive the inevitable rejections and humiliations which even the most fortunate of people cannot avoid.”

The solution to the problem of violence is never to turn our backs, but to keep our hearts and minds open to how we can individually affect change. And that change starts with how we raise our children from the day they are born.

The wide variety of moral codes throughout the world makes the topic of violence one of the most challenging and sensitive to address in a global forum. But the need to do so is urgent. An effort must be made to reach consensus and set universal standards of behaviour through the elaboration of human rights in order to protect human life and dignity in the present day environment.

Violence has far-reaching consequences for young people, families and neighbourhoods, beyond serious physical injury and death.
violence affects other health problems and community concerns, such as chronic diseases, mental illness and poor learning. Children who are scared at school cannot focus on learning, for example, and people are less likely to be active if the local park isn’t safe. These fact sheets were designed to persuade educators and those in health, public health and mental health that violence can undermine the work of all sectors, and that everyone should include preventing violence in their efforts. Preventing violence is a key aspect of any vibrant community, one where young people enjoy every opportunity to learn, thrive and excel.

Violence is among the most serious health threats in the nation today, jeopardizing the health and safety of the public. The health consequences for those who are victimized or exposed to violence are severe and can include serious physical injuries, post traumatic stress syndrome, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and other longer-term health problems. In addition, the social impacts of violence-diminished academic achievement and worker productivity, the deterioration of families and communities- are substantial and costly. For all these reasons, understanding and approaching violence as a preventive/public health issue can have added value. Further, such an approach emphasizes prevention in the first place, community-wide solutions rather than one individual or family at a time, and public health practitioners have experience as a neutral facilitator of collaboration. Recognizing that law enforcement alone cannot solve the problem of violence; practitioners have increasingly turned toward a broader, more comprehensive approach. This work also describes framework that incorporates public health, law enforcement, social service, and education perspectives.