

**deal.org talks about Gang violence  
activity 2**

**Title:** *Gang role-playing*

**Curriculum Relevance:**

- *Health and Physical Education, Grade 9 and 10* (Substance use and abuse, Personal Safety and Injury prevention, Decision Making, Conflict resolution, Social skills)
- *Health and Physical Education, Grade 11 and 12* (Substance use and abuse, Personal Safety and Injury prevention, Decision Making, Conflict resolution, Social skills)
- *Dramatic Arts, Grade 9 and 10* (Role, Elements and Principles, Dramatic Forms and Sources, Constructing, Communicating and Performing)
- *Dramatic Arts, Grade 11 and 12* (Role/Character, Elements, Principles and Techniques, Dramatic Forms, Creating, Presenting)

**Format:** role-playing game

**Target Audience:** students grades 9-12

**Length:** 60 min.

**Goals:**

- Promote awareness of the gang phenomenon.
- Put critical thinking abilities to the test when confronted with delicate or difficult situations.
- Encourage creativity through role-playing.
- Promote healthy decision making.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Arrange the classroom for a role-playing game. You can place the desks in an arena shape, for example.
- Divide the group into 4 teams. Each team will perform one scenario. The group can choose how many of them will act out the scenario, but all members should participate in brainstorming their ideas about the skit.
- It is important that the participants know that their skits must revolve around gangs and situations of conflict that might occur in such an environment. Suggest that they ask themselves, “*What would you do?*” when considering the topic.

**Scenario 1:**

A group of six friends has a ritual according to which they all get together on Friday nights and do something as a group. Sometimes they'll graffiti public property or break the windows of cars that are parked in the street. Recently, one of the friends has gotten bored with the group's normal activities. He/she suggests that they all go to the nearby bridge and drop rocks off of it while traffic is passing underneath. How do the other members respond?

*Presenter notes: After the skit is completed, you may want to have a brief discussion about if this group would be considered a gang. Remind the class that there is no single definition of gang, but in general, a gang is a group of at least 3 people engaging in criminal activities.*

**Scenario 2:**

Joe has been hanging out with gang members recently, and one day the gang tells him that he can become a member. The catch is that Joe has to fight T-Bone, the toughest member of the gang. What should he do?

*Presenter notes: After the skit is completed, you may want to discuss the different hazing rituals that are common to gangs (forced alcohol/drug consumption or forced fighting for boys; forced sexual acts for girls). Remind the class that once a person decides to join a gang, it's a lot harder to get out of it than if they decide not to join in the first place. You may also want to bring up people Joe could talk to about his problem and to ensure his safety.*

**Scenario 3:**

Jenny is concerned that her close friend is becoming involved with a gang. Lately, her friend has been skipping class, carrying a knife and always seems to be wearing a certain colour of clothing. Jenny decides to talk to her friend about her concerns. What should she say?

*Presenter notes: After the skit, you may want to brainstorm some common signs that someone is in a gang: (wearing a certain type/colour of clothing, having belongings marked with the logos or slogans of a gang, the sudden appearance of several unfamiliar names in the person's address book, he/she begins skipping classes, etc.) You may also want to discuss what Jenny could say in such a situation:*

- *Stress the importance of Jenny presenting her point of view without judging/preaching and that she should respect her friend's feelings about the gang.*
- *Emphasize that Jenny should focus on presenting positive alternatives to gang activity and that she can ask her friend if he/she wants help finding a professional or counsellor.*
- *It is also important to emphasize that Jenny must recognize her limits: if her friend does not want help, nothing Jenny does will make a difference. Ultimately, it is not her responsibility to take on the task of getting her friend out of the gang – all she can do is provide support.*

**Scenario 4:**

Jamie is a member of a gang. Recently, he/she has becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the gang's activities and decides that he/she want to leave the gang. What should Jamie consider in making his/her decision and who can he/she turn to for help?

*Presenter notes: After the skit, you may want to discuss the concerns Jamie may have about leaving the gang:*

- *Does he/she owe anyone money? Has he/she committed any crimes while part of the gang? Jamie may need to come clean before leaving the gang in order to get the help he/she needs.*
- *Other considerations may be if Jamie has become addicted to drugs while part of the gang or if he/she is involved with a boyfriend/girlfriend. Emphasize that all ties to the gang must be cut if Jamie truly wishes to move on.*
- *Stress the importance of talking to a parent or guidance counsellor. Jamie may also wish to consider what community programs exist that can help keep him away from gang activity in the future.*
- *Discuss people Jamie could turn to for help and to keep him/herself safe when leaving the gang.*