

Researcher lays groundwork for new ways to prevent youth violence in Caribbean

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A study by an Indiana University School of Social Work associate professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis has laid the groundwork for new strategies dealing with youth violence in five Caribbean countries.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty was selected by the Caribbean Community organization to lead a team of researchers who assessed [violence](#)-related behaviors in Jamaica, Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The researchers looked at whether youths engaged in violence; were victimized by violence; witnessed violence; or reported any of 15 types of violence, including weapon-carrying, fighting or wounding, gang fights, drug use, domestic violence, and sexual abuse.

The research team examined how those behaviors differed by gender and age to better inform the development of gender- and age-appropriate prevention programs.

One key finding discovered by the researchers was that male youths are more likely to engage in violence than their female counterparts but less likely to report it, even when they are a victim of the violence, Gentle-Genitty said.

"That was very significant, simply because if we understand violence within that context, we need to put more mechanisms in schools that

support males but also support an easy process of reporting violence that doesn't look like snitching or lead to males being further victimized if they do report violence," she said.

The study focused on [youth](#)-on-youth violence from severity and intensity perspectives. It centered largely on family and school, because those are the two locations where youths spend most of their time and where there is the greatest impact on crime and violence, Gentle-Genitty said.

Female youths were more likely than males to have experienced [domestic violence](#) or abuse, according to the study.

In general, older youth tended to have higher levels of risk factors, particularly at school, while they have lower levels of protective factors both at home and at [school](#).

The results of the study suggest that a comprehensive approach to preventing and reducing youth violence needs to target risk and [protective factors](#) not only in schools but also within the families of the youths.

The study, "Comprehensive assessment of [youth violence](#) in five Caribbean countries: Gender and age differences," was published in the *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*. The project was developed, with funding from Spain, out of concern for the escalation of [gang violence](#) and other related forms of violence in schools and the surrounding communities.

More information: Carolyn Gentle-Genitty et al. Comprehensive assessment of youth violence in five Caribbean countries: Gender and age differences, *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* (2017). [DOI: 10.1080/10911359.2016.1273811](https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2016.1273811)

Provided by Indiana University

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