

# Gun Violence Perceptions Among Youth & Young Adults

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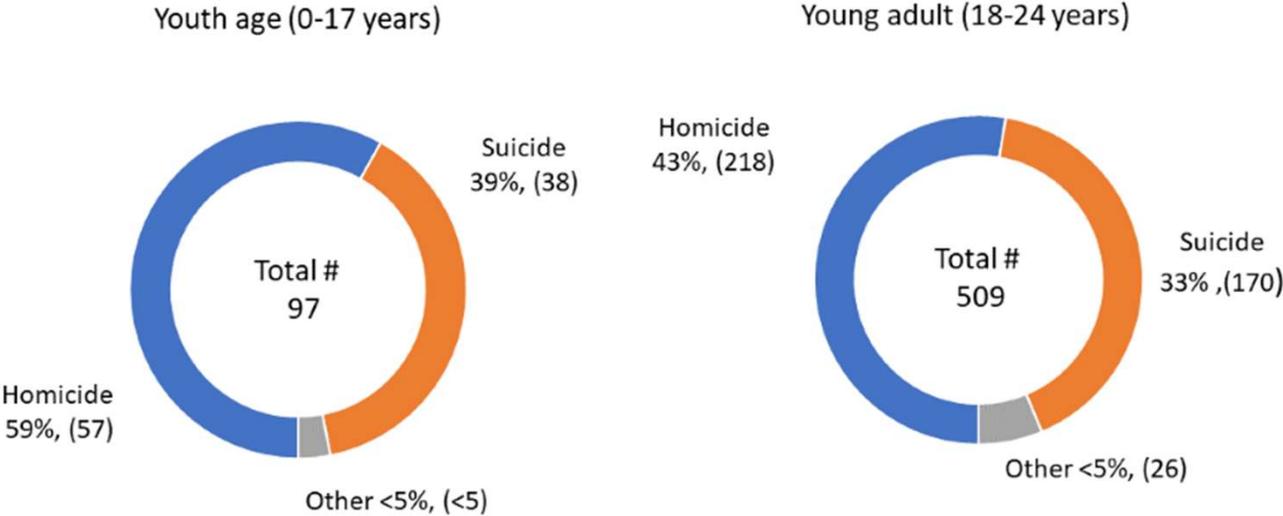
February 20, 2020

# Project Purpose

- King County Council Motion 15234 (Oct 2018)
- Discussed factors related to gun violence with **youth, young adults, families and advocates**
- Collected **recommendations for how to reduce gun violence** among youth and young adults



# Firearm deaths by intent in King County, 1999-2017



Note: Other includes unintentional deaths, deaths of undetermined intent, and deaths by legal intervention.

Source: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Data, 2010-2017, Community Health Assessment Tool (CHAT).

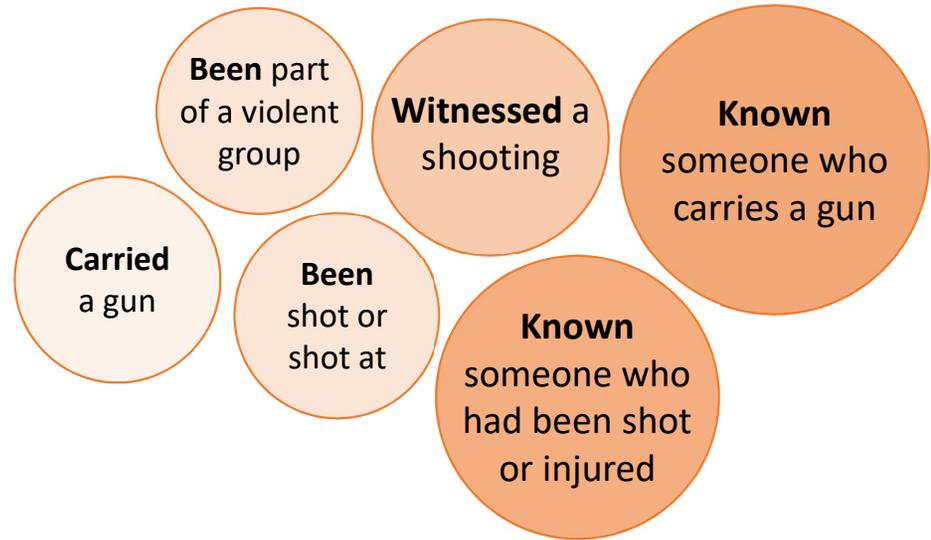
# Who we spoke with:

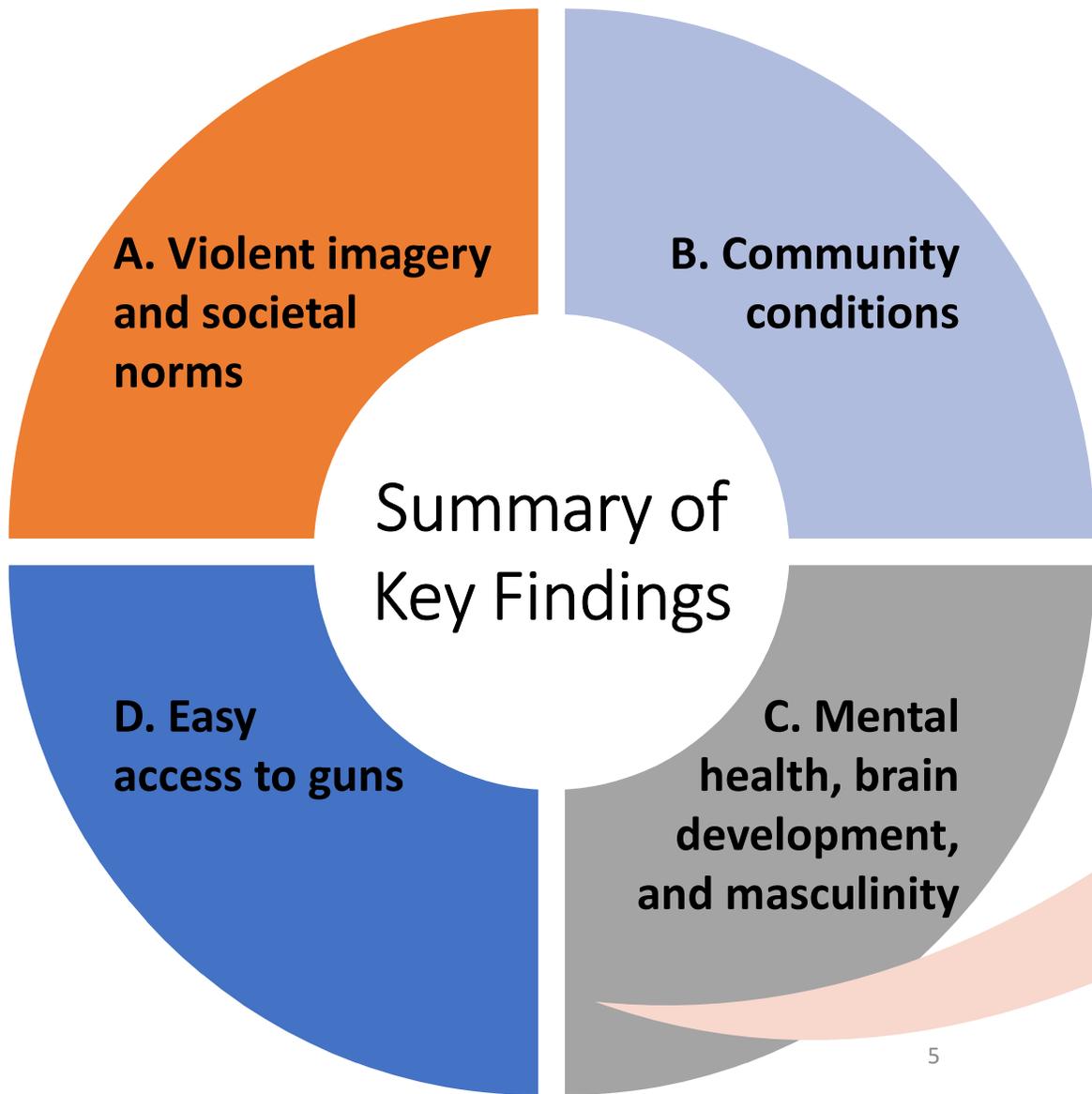
80 youth and young adults

26 family members

10 King County staff members, providers, community members, and researchers

## Youth proximity to gun violence:



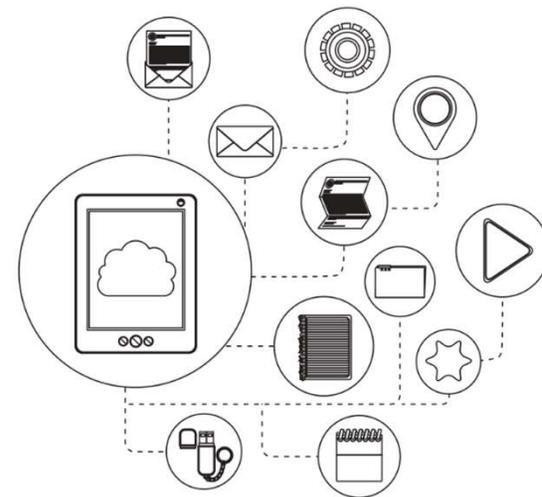


**Everyday circumstances and their environments strongly influence youth decisions to engage in gun violence**

# Violent imagery and societal norms normalize gun violence.

**“To me, it’s the frequency of images. The narrative on social media ... on the evening news. The focus on violence as a legitimate solution and violence as a construct bleeds over into guns.”**

*- Service provider*



# Community conditions impact youth engagement in gun violence.

**Racism and discrimination**

**Poor economic conditions**

**Barriers to services**

**Affluence and pressure to succeed**

**Availability of community centers**

**Youth development programming**

**Mental health supports**

## Slide 7

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**HA10** Highlight the community conditions?

- Affluence
- Poor economic conditions
- Racism/discrimination
- Community Supports & Centers

Herman, Augusta, 1/10/2020

Regardless of economic conditions, youth experience stressors that contribute to engagement in gun violence.

**“The pressure in King County is directly related to economic pressure on the family. [...] They simply have to fight back against that by taking the situation and circumstances of their lives into their own hands – the easiest way they know how, which is to access guns.”**

*- Key Informant*

**“The kids experience high school as if there are sparse resources—because the perception is that they are going for the top place at Harvard [...] So they actually have the same level of stress—as crazy as it might sound—as some kids in really high-poverty regions.”**

*- Parent*

While youth development resources may be available, they are not always accessible.

**“... the one time [my mother] came [to my game] I thought I was [Michael] Jordan... you can see that as a loss and harp on it but my mom’s gotta work. [...] If my mom wasn’t there, (names adult mentor) was there.”**

*- Youth*

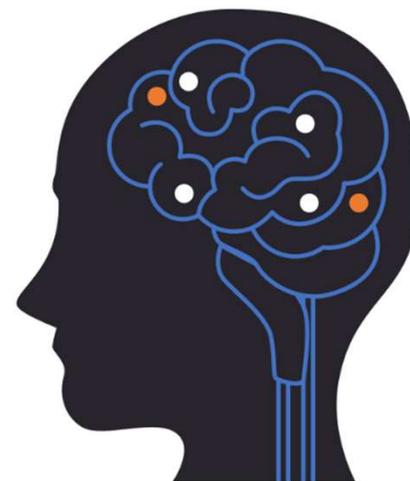
**“There’s a lot [of resources] available. [...] but sometimes the resource that I’m giving is really far away, so it’s not like an easy option if they don’t have a good transportation system to get there.”**

*- Youth Peer Leader*

Mental health, adolescent brain development and messages about masculinity influence youth's decisions to engage in gun violence.

**“People not feeling like they have another solution to their problems. Feeling powerless in a situation. Not knowing what to do, not having support. And maybe they grew up in an environment where they have seen a lot of guns. When people are portraying themselves with guns, they are showing off a lot of power, and they seem like powerful figures.”**

*- Youth*

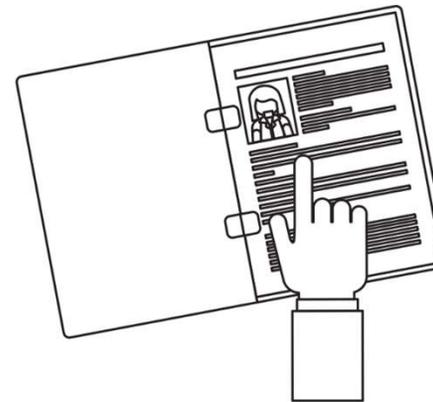


# Ease of access to guns is a driving factor of gun violence.

“The settings are different for interpersonal and self-directed, but access to guns, whether inside or outside the home, is something that fuels it [gun violence].”

- Key Informant

***It is easier to get a gun than to get a job.***



- Several participants

# Community Recommendations

-  Increase **education about gun violence** for youth, families, and community members
-  Increase range and scope of **community centers**
-  Increase youth access to **mental health services**
-  Provide social and emotional **skills training** to youth
-  Increase youth **employment and educational opportunities**
-  Examine and address youth's ability to **easily access guns**
-  Develop and increase **system's alignment** between government and community supports

# Executive Recommendations

 Broadly **disseminate report findings** to stakeholders

 Help community-based organizations **obtain funding** to support existing youth programs

 Zero Youth Detention should consider and **address report findings**

 Use and strengthen **trauma-informed approaches** with youth involved in gun violence

 Generate data reports with community and provider input to **inform gun violence policy and programming**

 Disseminate accurate, **accessible information** to community members

 Increase **internship and employment opportunities** for youth

 Support a regional **network of leaders** committed to reducing gun violence

# Youth Voices



# For more information

## **Contact us:**

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## **For more information:**

Report on Gun Violence Among Youth and Young Adults (December 2019)

The impact of firearms in King County: [www.kingcounty.gov/firearms](http://www.kingcounty.gov/firearms)