



PROJECT UNLOADED

GUN VIOLENCE RISK EDUCATION: RESEARCH AND IMPACT

PURPOSE

ISG Research Advisors, an independent social issue and movement research firm, independently reviewed:

Research commissioned by Project Unloaded detailing the need for youth/teen risk education on gun ownership and/or possession, and

Firearm risk education campaigns developed by Project Unloaded and their performance in targeting teens in their decision-making years.

This review is intended to help key stakeholders, partners and supporters understand the current need for risk education and campaigns intended to increase knowledge about gun ownership/possession among teens.

RISK EDUCATION

Project Unloaded's campaigns are grounded in data showing significant risks associated with gun possession. Living in a house where a gun is present doubles the chance of dying by homicide¹ and triples the chance of dying by suicide for people in the home, and the risk for kids is even higher.² Communities with more guns have higher rates of gun violence.

Data from the Pew Research Center shows that men acquire their first gun at age 19 and women around 27.³ This underscores the need for risk education not only because of the dangers but also because teens are adopting opinions and making decisions about guns and acquiring them in their formative years. Thus, instilling fact-based knowledge and a solid understanding of the potential consequences of gun ownership and possession to oneself and others is vital during these years.

This is especially true for Black and Hispanic teens, who experience a disproportionate burden from gun violence. Research commissioned by Project Unloaded with AHZUL finds that Black and Hispanic teens (ages 13-17) do not research the reasons for or against gun possession and thus have little to no knowledge about the risks. In particular, nearly 90 percent of the Black and Hispanic teens surveyed said they had never looked into the pros and cons of guns or done only "a little" research, and close to two-thirds knew "a little" or "nothing at all" about them.⁴

1. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35377715/>.

2. <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/m13-1301>.

3. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2017/06/29/how-male-and-female-gun-owners-in-the-u-s-compare/>.

4. Research conducted by AHZUL for Project Unloaded, 2023.

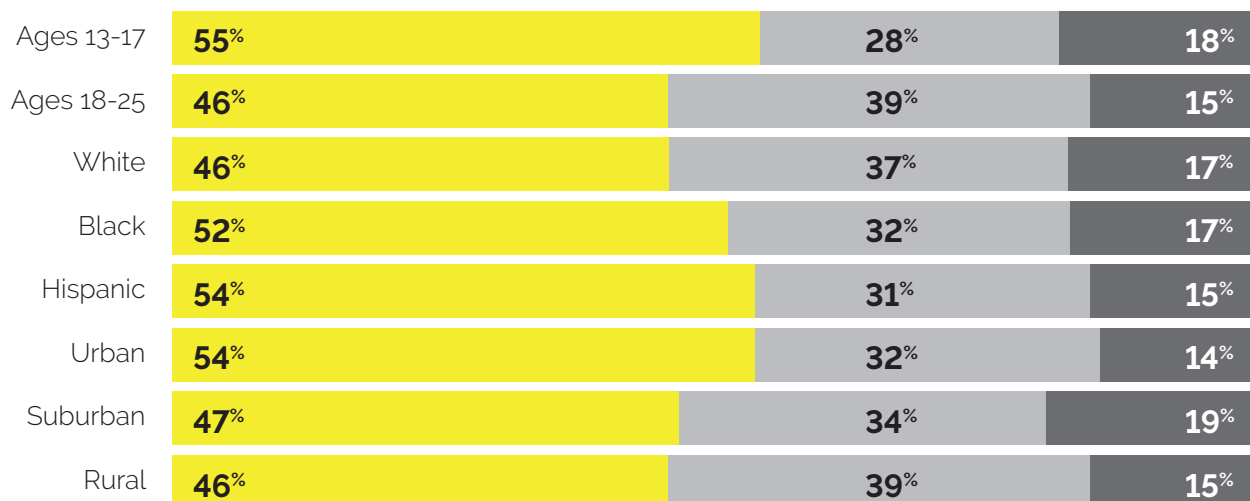
Yet, teens clearly are open to receiving information about the risks of gun possession. 2022 research showed that a third of teens were likely to seek out information about gun risks, and half believed they would benefit from knowing more.⁵

50% of teens say they'd benefit from knowing more about gun risks

Research by Global Strategy Group and commissioned by Project Unloaded found that younger teens, youth of color, and those who live in urban settings are the most open to risk education. Youth ages 13-17, Hispanic youth, and those with a high probability of gun ownership are especially receptive. The need to present fact-based information is highlighted by research showing that those individuals who already own guns are the ones most comfortable with broaching the subject to peers.⁶

Younger teens, youth of color, and those in urban areas are most open to learning more about risks and benefits of gun ownership

- I would benefit by knowing more about the benefits and risks of having a gun
- My knowledge about guns is sufficient
- I'm not interested in knowing more about the benefits and risks of have a gun



By having unbiased, factual information on the risks associated with guns, teens can better navigate the many personal, peer, social and familial influences in their lives.⁷

5. Research conducted by Global Strategy Group for Project Unloaded, July 2022, <https://projectunloaded.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Project-Unloaded-External-Memo-F092822.pdf>

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

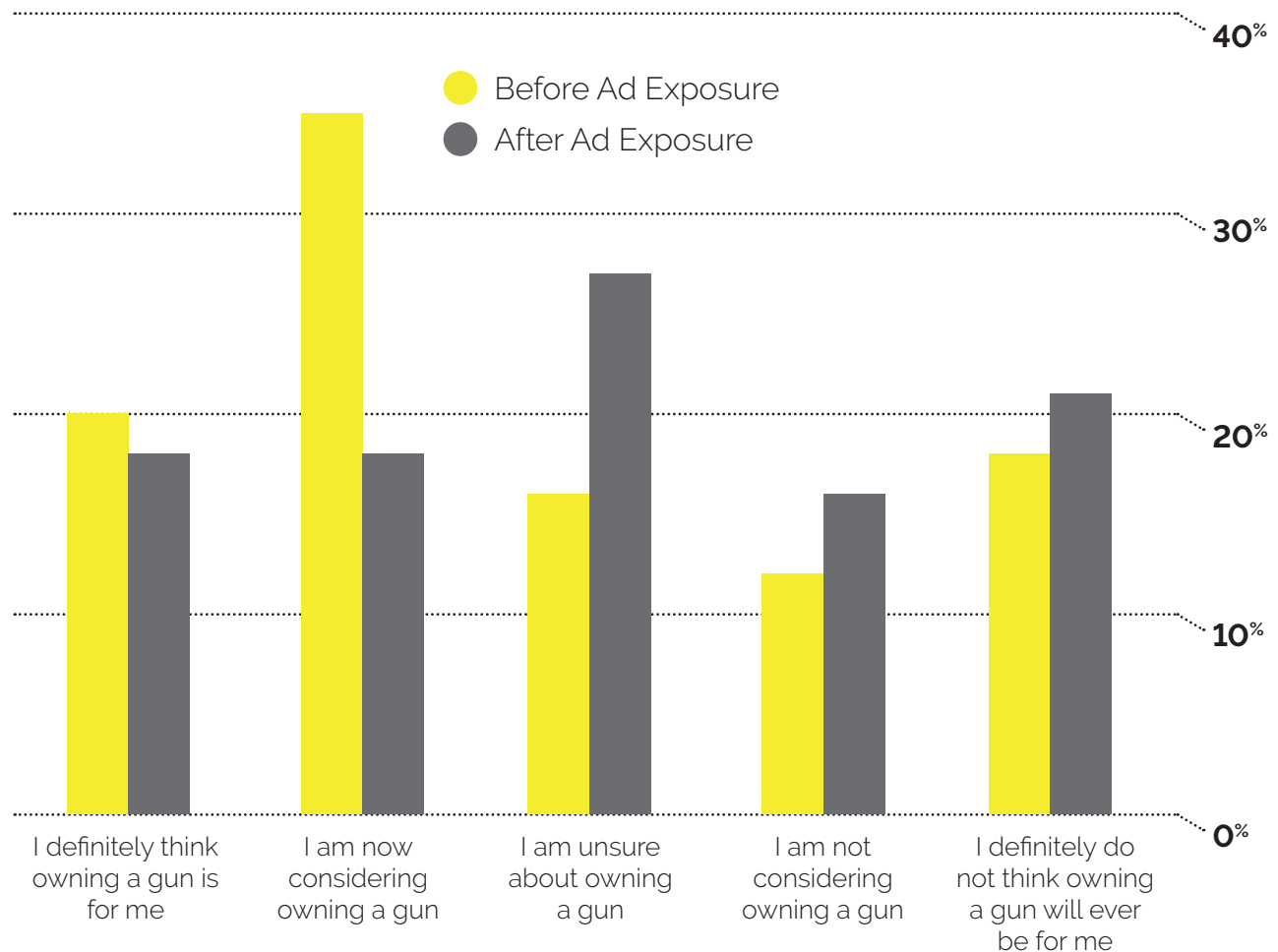
RISK EDUCATION CAMPAIGN: SNUG

Project Unloaded developed the SNUG (Safer Not Using Guns) campaign to educate teens via social platforms with facts about gun violence so they can make their own individual decisions about gun ownership, use and proximity. SNUG content features educational messaging in native content, influencer campaigns and targeted ads on TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat.

After exposure to the SNUG campaign in pre-market tests, research reflected a 15% change in attitude by teens who formerly thought guns made them safer. In addition, the percentage who initially said a gun at home made them feel safe/very safe decreased by 10% after the SNUG campaign message, and 16% of teens moved from being interested in gun ownership to being unsure of whether they wanted to own a gun.



Please indicate where you stand on owning a gun



Following the pre-market tests, Project Unloaded launched the SNUG campaign over three phases:

PHASE 1

PURPOSE: Encourage undecided teens to begin the SNUG journey by visiting YouSnug.com.

INTENT: Drive engagement with website claims and education content.

PHASE 2

PURPOSE: Expand the SNUG campaign to additional markets throughout the U.S.

INTENT: Recruit teens in select DMAs to receive SNUG ads about gun violence and risks of gun use.

PHASE 3

PURPOSE: Test various creative concepts alongside existing creative assets for message optimizations.

INTENT: Understand which formats and styles perform best on each social platform.

Key Campaign Performance Indicators

(Teen Audience Ages 13-17, January 2022 – August 2023)

Exposures to SNUG ads	3 million
SNUG video views	148 million
Click-throughs to website	186,000
Video completion rate	15.22%

Gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children and teens—surpassing even car accidents. Risk education is necessary to help teens fully understand the risks prior to first-time acquisition. Campaigns like SNUG and others that Project Unloaded is producing are vital to ensuring teens fully grasp the consequences involved in the gun ownership/possession decision and the risks to themselves, others around them and their communities.

