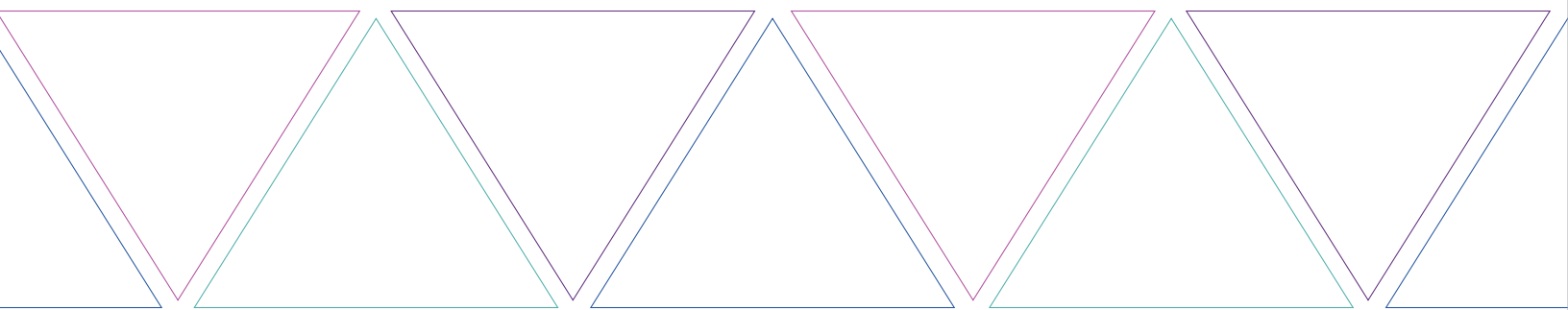# Community Violence Prevention

RESOURCE FOR ACTION

A Compilation of the Best Available Evidence for Youth and Young Adults

Community Violence Prevention

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A Compilation of the Best Available Evidence for Youth and Young Adults

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The *Community Violence Prevention Resource for Action: A Compilation of the Best Available Evidence for Youth and Young Adults* updates and expands on the 2016 *Youth Violence Prevention Resource for Action*. It is one among a suite of violence prevention resources developed by the Division of Violence Prevention in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control to help communities make use of the best available evidence. We extend our gratitude to all the authors, contributors, partners, and reviewers for their helpful feedback and support in the development of this resource.

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Overview

Community Violence Can Be Prevented

All people want to be healthy, safe, and connected to other people. We all want to have access to life opportunities, including education and employment, to become valued members of communities and society, and to live our lives free from violence.[1-4]

To support community violence prevention and promote health and safety, the Division of Violence Prevention (DVP) in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the *Community Violence Prevention Resource for Action* (or Prevention Resource, for short). DVP's vision is to have a violence-free society in which all people and all communities are safe, healthy, and thriving.[5]

Violence is preventable using a public health approach. This includes bringing together partners and community members to consider local needs and the best available evidence to implement violence prevention strategies.

Community violence happens in public places, such as streets or parks, between people who may or may not know each other.

About this Prevention Resource for Action

Community violence happens in public places, such as streets or parks, between people who may or may not know each other. Examples include assaults, fights among groups, homicides, and fatal and nonfatal shootings.[6]

This resource is informed by research and conversations with community members, people who have experienced violence, and other partners.[a] It is an update to the *Youth Violence Prevention Resource for Action*.[7] It includes evidence for preventing violence experienced by youth (ages 10-24), which is now under the larger community violence topic. In this update, we expand the evidence to include examples for preventing violence experienced by young adults (ages 25-34). Young adults ages 20-24 have the highest homicide rate. They are closely followed by young adults between the ages of 25-29, 30-34, and then teens ages 15-19.[8]

Over the past 40 years, we have learned a lot about preventing violence, but there is still more work to do. This resource is intended to help communities and states prevent violence before it starts and lessen the harms of violence that occurs by describing the best available evidence for community violence prevention. DVP looks forward to learning from communities and states about how this resource is being used and how it can be improved so that all communities are safe, healthy, and thriving.

[a] In 2021, CDC hosted a series of calls with community-based organizations engaged in the White House Community Violence Intervention Collaborative to learn more about how public health could support community violence prevention work in communities. In 2022, NCIPC, in partnership with Safe States, conducted listening sessions with an average of 30 organizations per session to inform CDC's community violence prevention work. Listening sessions were tailored for state/local health departments, technical assistance providers, youth, and non-governmental organizations. In every listening session, each organization commented individually, and no uniform consensus was sought or reached.

This Prevention Resource has three components. The first component is the **strategy**, or the direction or actions needed to prevent community violence. The second component is the **approach**, or specific ways to advance the strategy through policies, programs, or practices. The third component is the **evidence** for each approach in preventing community violence or the conditions or behaviors that increase risk for community violence. The examples provided in this resource are not intended to be a comprehensive list of evidence-based programs, policies, or practices for each approach. Rather, they illustrate models that have been shown to prevent community violence or impact conditions or behaviors that increase risk or protect against violence.

The strategies in this Prevention Resource include:

- ▶ Strengthen Economic Security
- ▶ Provide Quality Education
- ▶ Create Protective Environments
- ▶ Promote Healthy Family Relationships
- ▶ Strengthen Youths' and Young Adults' Skills
- ▶ Connect Young People to Caring Adults and Activities
- ▶ Intervene to Lessen Harms and Prevent Future Risk

This resource also describes the social and structural contexts for community violence that these strategies might help address. Throughout the document, we focus on improving the conditions that increase risk for violence.[9] We also acknowledge that many communities survive and thrive through local action, collective wisdom, and cultural practices that support intergenerational healing, promotion of health and well-being, and ultimately, the prevention of violence.[10] This resource is intended to support and build on the strengths of communities and the shared goal of all people and communities to achieve their full potential. The strategies and approaches outlined in this resource cannot be accomplished solely by the public health sector or any single agency alone. Multi-sector partnerships and community engagement are vital to prevent community violence and eliminate inequities in risk for community violence.

To help support use of this document, implementation guidance for the approaches and examples is continually added to DVP's *Violence Prevention in Practice* web resource. *Violence Prevention in Practice* contains resources communities can use when selecting and implementing the strategies outlined here. It also contains resources to support planning, partnerships, policy efforts, adaptation, implementation, and evaluation.

Informing Policy

Policies have the potential to influence conditions and behaviors related to community violence. Informing policy is a nuanced process and steps may differ depending on what sector the policy will impact (such as organizational, public, state, local). Certain restrictions may apply to federal and other funding sources. Always seek the advice of a qualified professional with any questions pertaining to your specific organization or governmental entity. This Prevention Resource is provided for informational purposes and does not recommend or advocate for the implementation of any specific policy. Note that certain restrictions apply to the use of CDC funds for impermissible lobbying or attempts to influence policy. For more information concerning such restrictions, see the Anti-Lobbying Restrictions for CDC Grantees.

"How can you allow structural and systemic injustice to persist in our environments—robbing us of our peers, exposing us to trauma, isolating us in fiscally deprived communities—and then suggest that interpersonal violence is a problem catalyzed by youths?"

– Youth Violence Prevention Center (YVPC)-engaged youth[11]

Community Violence Is an Urgent Public Health Problem that Impacts All of Us

Violence is a leading cause of death for young people in the United States. For youth ages 10-24, homicide is the second leading cause of death, and for young adults ages 25-34, it is the third leading cause of death.[8] Many more young people experience nonfatal violence or witness violence in their communities. There are approximately 800,000 visits to U.S. emergency departments by young people ages 10-34 each year for injuries resulting from violence,[8] and 1 in 5 high school students has seen someone physically attacked, beaten, stabbed, or shot in their neighborhood.[12]

Cities around the country experienced increases in homicides and aggravated assaults starting in 2020.[13] Most homicide victims are young males who are killed by other young males[14] and who die as the result of firearm injuries.[8] In 2022, 92% of youth homicide victims (10-24

years old) and 87% of young adult homicide victims (25-34 years old) were killed with a firearm.[15] Firearm homicide rates have increased substantially in the years leading up to this publication. From 2019 to 2020, the firearm homicide rate increased nearly 35% from 4.6 to 6.1 per 100,000 persons, and then increased 8% more in 2021 to 6.6 per 100,000, resulting in the highest rate since 1993.[16] The firearm homicide rate declined slightly in 2022 to 6.2, but there were still 5,000 more firearm homicides than in 2019.[15] Provisional data suggest that firearm homicide rates continued to decline in 2023 but remained above 2019 levels.[15]

Violence-related behaviors are far more common than homicides. For example, 2021 data from a national sample of high school students found that approximately 18% were in a physical fight in the past year and 15% were bullied at school.[12] Additionally, 5% of male high school students carried a firearm in the past 12 months for a reason other than hunting or sport. Studies have shown that firearm carrying is more likely among youth who are exposed to violence.[17]

Strategies and Approaches

to prevent community violence

STRATEGY	APPROACH
Strengthen Economic Security	• Tax credits • Income support policies • Social insurance programs • Investment accounts
Provide Quality Education	• Preschool enrichment with family engagement • Equitable educational attainment for youth and young adults
Create Protective Environments	• Modify the physical home environment • Modify the physical and social community environment • Reduce exposure to harmful community conditions
Promote Healthy Family Relationships	• Early childhood home visitation programs • Parenting skills and family relationship programs
Strengthen Youths' and Young Adults' Skills	• School-based skill building programs • Job training and employment programs
Connect Young People to Caring Adults and Activities	• Mentoring programs • After-school programs
Intervene to Lessen Harms and Prevent Future Risk	• Treatment to lessen the harms of violence • Treatment to prevent problem behaviors and further experiences with violence • Hospital-based violence intervention programs • Street outreach and community norm change • Community-justice partnerships

Rates of community violence vary substantially across communities. The reasons are complex and result in avoidable health inequities among some marginalized racial and ethnic groups. For example, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Hispanic or Latino males ages 10-34 are at greater risk of dying by homicide than non-Hispanic White males of this age.[8] Homicide has been the leading cause of death for young Black or African American males for decades.[8] In 2022, the homicide rate for Black or African American boys and men ages 10-34 was 20 times higher than the rate for White males in this age group.[8, 15]

Self-reported data from high school students also show variations in experiences of violence. For example, Black or African American (29.3%), Hispanic or Latino/a (26.2%), and American Indian and Alaska Native (26.0%) students are more likely to have seen someone physically attacked, beaten, stabbed or shot in their neighborhood than non-Hispanic White students (14.8%).[12] Female and LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or another diverse gender identity) high school students are more likely to experience bullying than their male or non-LGBTQ+ peers.[12, 18-20]

We can help prevent these health inequities by addressing the underlying conditions that contribute to these differences, including those that are driven by systemic inequities and discrimination—or the unfair treatment of people or groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, class, or sexual orientation. Preventing community violence involves valuing every person and their health; improving social and economic conditions that can harm people's health; and working with different groups to address health issues that affect them. This includes addressing the challenging circumstances that youth may be facing, such as harmful narratives around race and violence. Our narratives about violence can shape our solutions to it (see section on Harmful Narratives and Positive Solutions).

Youth and Young Adult Voices

The voices of diverse youth and young adults are important to our efforts to prevent community violence. Our youth and young adults (ages 10-34) are at the greatest risk of harm from community violence.[8, 15, 21] They include individuals of different races and ethnicities with a range of backgrounds and experiences who may be:

- ▶ Different ages and developmental stages
- ▶ People with a disability
- ▶ LGBTQ+
- ▶ In middle school, high school, technical school, or college, or not connected to school
- ▶ Immigrants or children of immigrants
- ▶ Employed full- or part-time, unemployed, or out of the labor force
- ▶ Parents or caregivers of children
- ▶ People formerly incarcerated who are reintegrating back into their families and communities

Youth and young adults are the experts on their lives, their experiences with violence, their strengths, their goals, and their aspirations. Their engagement as decision-makers is vital to understanding how to best prevent community violence.

Early Experiences, Relationships, and Environments Impact Violence and Health

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are defined by CDC as potentially traumatic events occurring in childhood (0-17 years) that include experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, as well as witnessing violence or having a family member attempt or die by suicide.[22] Children and adolescents who experience community violence have experienced an ACE either directly or by witnessing violence. Also included are aspects of a child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding, such as growing up in a household with substance use; mental health problems; or instability due to parental separation or incarceration of a parent, sibling or other member of the household. Importantly, these examples do not comprise an exhaustive list of all childhood adversities as there are other potentially traumatic experiences, such as bullying, experiencing racism, or the death of a parent, that can also impact their health and well-being.[22] Cumulative exposure to ACEs can lead to toxic stress that can change how the body responds to stress, including increased heart rate, blood pressure, and increases in cortisol, a stress hormone.[23-25] Toxic stress can affect a child's or adolescent's developing brain and can have negative effects on learning, mental health, physical health, and employment, as well as increase the likelihood of living in poverty as an adult.[25, 26] Toxic stress and ACEs can also increase the risk for community violence.[27, 28] Inequities in access to healthy community conditions can contribute to inequities in risk for ACEs. For example, women, American Indian and Alaska Native people, Black or African American people, and families with low incomes are more likely to experience four or more ACEs.[25, 29] ACEs are often affected by the structural, social, and economic stressors faced by families, and the impacts can extend across generations.[26, 29-32]

Other relationship issues with family or peers such as limited parental supervision, harsh or inconsistent discipline, and peer conflict or rejection can also increase risk for community violence.[33-35] School experiences are important, as well. The use of harsh discipline practices and policies can lead to suspensions and expulsions from school, which can have lasting impacts throughout children's lives.[36-38]

Toxic stress from adverse experiences in the home, school, and community can be mitigated through the positive experiences of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments.[39] Positive community conditions include access to quality, equitably funded schools so all students have the opportunity to succeed; economic opportunities; affordable and stable housing; healthy food available at home and in the community;[40] and shared trust among residents and willingness to intervene to stop crime (collective efficacy).[41, 42] Positive relationships with teachers, other caring adults, and peers, and parent-youth relationships in which parents provide consistent, developmentally appropriate guidance and limits, are associated with healthy child and adolescent development.[43-45] Individual skills are also important and include healthy problem-solving, communication, and emotional regulation skills, as well as opportunities for academic achievement that are fostered within positive school environments.[46-48]

The conditions in which we live, learn, work, and play are known as the social determinants of health. They include neighborhood and community conditions, such as access to quality education, employment opportunities that provide livable wages, affordable housing and food, safe drinking water, safe places to gather, and the ability to participate as valued members of communities.[9, 49] However, not all people and communities have equitable access to the conditions needed for health and safety.[50-52] These inequities can contribute to risk for community violence. A focus on this context can help communities develop a comprehensive approach to preventing community violence.[9, 51, 53]

The strategies and approaches in this resource have the potential to impact other types of violence, including gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, teen dating violence, sexual violence) and child abuse and neglect, as well as other public health problems such as teen pregnancy and substance use.

More information about community conditions and the contexts that increase risk for community violence is provided in the section Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence.

Comprehensive Approaches to Prevent Multiple Forms of Violence

The strategies and approaches in this Prevention Resource have the potential to prevent multiple forms of violence (such as child abuse and neglect, teen dating violence, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence) and also decrease other youth and young adult risky health conditions and behaviors that can harm the health of youth and young adults (such as substance use, suicidal behavior, and sexually transmitted infections). The interconnections between different violence types and the living, working and learning conditions that drive violence suggest that implementing a range of strategies and approaches to prevent community violence can prevent multiple forms of violence and have substantial, long-term health, social, and economic benefits.[54, 55] However, some prevention strategies and approaches may have a greater impact than others on specific forms of violence such as child abuse and neglect, teen dating violence, sexual violence, and suicide. CDC developed similar prevention resources for these other specific forms of violence to help communities identify and select additional strategies and approaches.[56]

Assessing the Evidence

This Prevention Resource includes policies, programs, and practices with evidence of impact on community violence, including conditions that increase risk or protect against community violence. It was updated from the original 2016 *Youth Violence Prevention Resource for Action* through a review of community violence prevention literature and with input from community leaders, violence prevention practitioners, and researchers. For consideration in this Prevention Resource, the policy, program, or practice selected had to meet at least one of these criteria:

- ▶ Meta-analysis or systematic review showing impact on community violence.

- ▶ Evidence from at least one rigorous evaluation (such as randomized controlled trial [RCT] or quasi-experimental design) that found significant preventive effects on community violence.

- ▶ Meta-analysis or systematic review showing impact on behaviors or conditions that increase risk or protect against community violence.

- ▶ Evidence from at least one rigorous evaluation (such as RCT or quasi-experimental design) that found significant impacts on behaviors or conditions that increase risk or protect against community violence.

Finally, consideration was also given to the likelihood of achieving beneficial effects on multiple forms of violence; no evidence of harmful effects on specific outcomes or on any group (such as young people from marginalized racial and ethnic communities); and feasibility of implementation in the United States if the policy, program, or practice was evaluated in another country.

Limitations

Overall, the evidence base for community violence prevention is substantial and growing. It includes multiple meta-analyses and systematic reviews demonstrating the beneficial effects of these approaches. Meta-analyses or systematic reviews of programs that have demonstrated effects on community violence outcomes provide the most rigorous evidence of effectiveness. However, the evidence base is not equally strong in all areas. The inclusion of examples that demonstrated impacts on conditions or behaviors that increase risk or protect against violence reflects the nature of the approach and evidence. The nature and quality of the available evidence can vary within one approach or strategy.

Not all policies, programs, or practices that utilize the same approach (such as tax credits, home visitation, or mentoring) are equally effective, and even those that are effective may not work with all populations or in all communities. Some policies, programs, and practices are ineffective or can have harmful effects on youth and young adults. [b, 35, 57-59]

Identifying examples with evidence is only the first step. Communities can consider tailoring programs and conducting more evaluation to better understand effectiveness with different contexts and population groups. In practice, the selection of policies, programs, and practices identified in this Prevention Resource will be strongly influenced by community engagement, support from partners, and successful implementation (such as reducing barriers to access and participation).[66] Of note, the specific programs, policies, and practices provided in this Prevention Resource are not intended to be a comprehensive list for each approach, but rather examples shown to impact community violence or the conditions or behaviors that increase risk or protect against community violence.

Summary

This *Community Violence Prevention Resource for Action* contains seven strategies and their related approaches based on the best available evidence. Each strategy is described and includes a rationale, an overview of the relevant approaches, potential outcomes resulting from the strategy and approaches, and the evidence for examples of specific policies, programs, or practices.

To help the reader consider the substantial, longstanding inequities in community violence experienced by people in many marginalized racial and ethnic groups, we describe examples of the conditions or contexts that drive inequities (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence). It is important to consider prevention

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[b] Examples of ineffective or harmful approaches include shock or fear tactics[58] and unstructured, group-based programs for males.[59] Other policies, programs, and practices can have adverse effects on the educational, career, and economic opportunities of young people, particularly young people from marginalized racial and ethnic communities. For example, zero-tolerance school discipline policies tend to result in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions that can lead to lower academic achievement, low educational attainment,[60, 61] and subsequent involvement in the justice system (the school-to-prison pipeline).[62] Harsh school discipline policies are also associated with a host of adverse health outcomes including depression, substance use, injuries, and suicide, and can further exacerbate inequities in education, employment, and experiences with community violence.[63-65]

activities that align with each community's specific needs and can have immediate benefits, as well as those that address the underlying conditions that increase the risk of community violence and can have long-term benefits. Research suggests that specific geographic areas, groups, or individuals within communities are often at elevated risk for violence and can benefit from intentional supports.[67] Some examples within the resource, like street outreach programs and hospital-based violence intervention programs, can provide urgently needed support to help reduce immediate risks for violence, including escalating or retaliatory violence. These types of approaches are important to save lives and make communities safer.

Other examples address the social and economic conditions of people's everyday lives that result in inequities in risk for community violence. Examples like the Earned Income Tax Credit and school restorative justice programs promote conditions for youth and families that are linked to lower risk for community violence. These examples, and others in this resource, are complementary and can be used together as part of a comprehensive effort to prevent community violence.

Strategies that address living and learning conditions have the greatest potential for long-term, population-level public health impact[68] and are listed first followed by those that focus on the needs of individuals and reach fewer people.

Language Choices

Throughout this document, we try to avoid terms and concepts that stigmatize or label youth and young adults.[69] These include, for example, "juvenile delinquent" and "perpetrator," which can contribute to a narrative that community violence happens to or involves "bad youth" without acknowledging the systemic inequities that create harmful and unhealthy conditions where violence is more likely to occur.[70]

Below are notes about the language we intentionally use in this Prevention Resource:

► People who harm others have often previously been harmed by violence, making simple labels of "victims" or "perpetrators" inaccurate, stigmatizing, and often used without any reference to the conditions that increase risk for violence. For these reasons, we avoid use of the term "perpetrator."

► Research evidence often includes measures of how policies, programs, and practices impact aggression or delinquency and these measures are often used to label or describe individuals, especially children and youth. Instead, we refer to these research findings as behaviors, and not enduring characteristics of individuals.

► All communities have strengths and assets. Some researchers and others have described communities as a subject, intervention location, or place primarily characterized by deficits and problems. We instead chose to describe a community's people, strengths, and histories in this resource. Throughout, we strive to elevate the conditions that communities need for health and safety as opposed to using a "deficit" model, although we also discuss the historic disinvestments and injustices that people in many marginalized racial and ethnic communities have experienced for generations.

▲▲▲▲▲

Strengthen Economic Security

▶ *Tax credits*

▶ *Income support policies*

▶ *Social insurance programs*

▶ *Investment accounts*

Rationale

Policies and programs that improve the social and economic conditions of youth, young adults, families, and communities can have the largest impacts on health.[68] Strong empirical evidence consistently links low socioeconomic status to harmful impacts on young people's development, academic achievement, and health,[71] including exposure to community violence.[72-74] These impacts are inequitably experienced by people in communities that have been socially and economically marginalized through historical and ongoing policies and practices, including structural racism.[9, 75-77] As a result, many youth and young adults live in communities with limited employment opportunities and often have experiences with violence that can shape their lives for years to come (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).

Policies and programs that improve the social and economic conditions of youth, young adults, families, and communities can have the largest impacts on health.

Policies and practices that strengthen individual and household financial security and support the social and economic conditions of neighborhoods have the potential to improve mental health and community connectedness, prevent community violence by reducing financial and other stressors, and increase neighborhood safety and stability.[78-85] Potential barriers to implementing strategies to promote economic security should be considered. For example, individuals with housing instability face significant barriers to accessing public programs or other social support systems.[86] Additionally, some workers (such as seasonal workers and those without permanent residency status) often have fewer workplace protections and are more likely to be the victims of wage theft.[87]

Understanding the challenges faced by people living in poverty or with low incomes is crucial for building genuine connections with community members and organizations. People living in poverty have to allocate a larger portion of their incomes towards basic needs like housing, food, childcare, and transportation compared to those with higher incomes.[88] Also, people living in poverty often encounter additional financial burdens such as higher interest rates on loans,[89] higher costs for housing[90] and food if living far from supermarkets,[91] limited or no access to mainstream financial services leading to reliance on payday lending,[92] and various excessive fees, including those related to incarceration and parole.[93]

Approaches

Tax Credits

Tax credits help individuals and families with low incomes increase their income or incentivize developers to provide affordable housing.

The Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable credit (any monetary credit beyond one's tax liability is refunded to them) that supports workers by offsetting the impact of federal taxes on individuals and families living with low incomes.[94] The amount of the credit varies depending on income earned through work, marital status, and the number of qualifying children; as of 2022, eligible workers did not need to be married or have children to qualify for the EITC.[94] State EITCs are usually based on a percentage of the federal EITC and vary in their eligibility funding amounts, and whether they are refundable. More than half of the states, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have enacted EITCs.[95]

The Federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) is a partially refundable credit for families with low to moderate incomes that reduces their tax liability.[96] States can also offer CTCs. As of January 2024, 15 states had their own CTCs and 11 of these were refundable.[97]

The Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) was created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 and allows state and local agencies to provide tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing for people living with low incomes.[98] This program is the largest source of affordable housing in the United States. The goal of the program is to improve the availability of safe and affordable rental housing and to contribute to the social and economic sustainability of neighborhoods impacted by historical and ongoing social and economic disinvestment.[99] Tax credits are provided to each state based on population and are distributed by a designated local agency to developers and investors based on affordable housing needs.[100]

Income Support Policies

Income support policies, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), provide temporary cash assistance to families with children who are living with low incomes. The federal government funds TANF and provides block grants to states to administer their programs.[101] Federal law imposes work requirements on TANF recipients, but states have the option to modify these requirements including defining eligibility, benefit levels, and time limits. The federal government restricts eligibility for immigrants until they have been in the country for at least five years and also mandates a lifetime ban for people with drug felony convictions, although some states have lifted the lifetime ban for drug felonies through state laws.[101, 102]

Social Insurance Programs

Social insurance programs, including Unemployment Insurance (UI), provide economic supports to individuals who face unexpected, involuntary disruptions to employment. UI is a federal social insurance program that provides partial income to involuntarily unemployed workers actively seeking reemployment.[103] States administer the program and individuals must meet their states' requirements. The benefits are funded through specific payroll taxes designated for that purpose.[103]

Medicaid is a government program providing comprehensive health insurance coverage to people living with low incomes and meeting other eligibility criteria.[104] The program is administered by states in accordance with federal guidelines, and jointly funded by the federal government and states. States can apply for waivers to implement policies that differ from federal guidelines, often to test approaches to delivery of care, financing, and expansions of eligibility.[104] In 2010, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) modified the federal guidelines to raise eligibility to 138% of the federal poverty level and to include adults without dependent children, a group previously not eligible. Although expansion became optional for states following a 2012 Supreme Court ruling, as of May 2024, 40 states and the District of Columbia had expanded Medicaid coverage.[105, 106]

Investment Accounts

Investment accounts are savings account programs that are designed to increase the wealth and future life opportunities for children and families living with low incomes. Many investment accounts for children and families with low incomes are supported through states, cities, and other organizations.[107] Child development accounts establish savings or investment accounts that can begin as early as birth with the goal of promoting asset building for lifelong opportunity and development (such as college or vocational training), homeownership and/or entrepreneurial endeavors in adulthood. They often consist of a program-funded college savings account opened automatically with an initial deposit, incentives designed to encourage families to open and save in a 529 college savings account, and educational materials.[108] SEED OK is an example of a statewide child development account program in Oklahoma where the state invests $1,000 into every child's account.[109]

Potential Outcomes

Increases in:

▶ Family savings

▶ Parental educational expectations for children

Improvements in:

▶ Individual and family earnings and income

▶ Child social and emotional development

▶ Mental health

Reductions in:

▶ Violent and nonviolent crime

▶ Income inequality

▶ Family economic hardship

▶ Child behavior problems

▶ Child abuse and neglect

Understanding the challenges faced by people living in poverty or with low incomes is crucial for building genuine connections with community members and organizations.

Evidence

A growing body of evidence shows that policies and programs that provide economic supports for youth, young adults, and families can improve family financial security and prevent community violence, especially in communities that experience inequities in risk for violence.[110]

Tax Credits. A quasi-experimental study examined the relationship between states' Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) generosity (defined as a percent of the federal EITC) and physical fighting among youth.[78] An increase in EITC generosity by 10 percentage points was associated with a 3.8% decrease in physical fighting. Subgroup analyses showed that these reductions were significant for male students, but not female students. Reductions were also significant for White students and students of "other" race/ethnicity, but not for Black or African American or Hispanic or Latino/a students.[78] Another analysis of state EITC laws found that implementing a high state EITC (above the median value of EITC benefits among all states) was associated with a 10% lower rate of violent crime.[80] A separate study found that each additional $1,000 of EITC that families received before their children were 14 years old was associated with an 11% lower risk of criminal conviction during adolescence and a reduced risk of fighting at school or seriously threatening to hit someone.[111] EITCs may also have important implications for addressing racial inequities. An analysis of EITC laws over time found that the federal and state EITC were associated with a reduction in income gaps between White and Black or African American households in the bottom half of the income distribution. However, these reductions were only observed at the 50th and 25th percentile of the income distribution and not for households with very low incomes.[112] One study found that people who do not speak English were less likely to receive EITC even if they were eligible and filed taxes.[113] Research suggests that the availability of EITC information in Spanish, employer mandates to inform employees of the EITC, and the granting of driver's licenses to people with undocumented status was associated with a greater uptake of the EITC by Hispanic or Latino/a individuals.[114] Taken together, there is evidence that EITC may help reduce physical fighting among youth and violent crime, while also reducing income inequality for some groups. However, other individual and household economic supports may also be needed to fully address income gaps for households with the lowest incomes.

A quasi-experimental analysis of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) showed that the 2009 expansion of the program was associated with a lower likelihood of child injuries that required medical attention and significantly lowered child behavior problems among families eligible to receive the CTC in states where it was partially refundable.[115] Two quasi-experimental evaluations of the 2021 CTC expansion found it significantly decreased risk for community violence among adults (including young adults). The first study found that the expanded CTC reduced food insecurity and financial hardships among families with very low incomes while having no significant impact on parental employment.[83] A second study found that the expanded CTC was associated with lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms among adults with low incomes. Furthermore, Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a adults with children reported greater reductions in anxiety and depression compared to White, non-Hispanic adults with children.[116] Exposure to parental mental health problems is an ACE that can put children at an elevated risk for future poor health and social outcomes, including involvement in violence.[26, 117]

There is evidence suggesting that the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) can reduce the concentration of poverty and is also associated with reductions in violent crime and aggravated assault with no evidence that violent crime moved to a nearby neighborhood.[99, 118] LIHTC is also associated with reduced risks for community violence, as well as lower reports of substantiated child abuse and neglect and reduced intimate partner violence-related homicide.[119-121] However, additional implementation research is needed to understand how to best enhance LIHTC's effect on the availability of affordable housing.

Income Support Policies. Research on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) investigated whether state-level restrictions on benefits have an impact on violent crime. One study showed that states with more restrictions had higher rates of violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault).[81] The authors posit that states with high restrictions may not be reaching an adequate number of individuals to offset the stressors of poverty making TANF less likely to have an effect on violence.[81] Programs that pair TANF with additional economic supports in the form of a savings account, financial education, and peer support were found to be positively related to parental mental health, higher earnings, less family economic hardship, and fewer child behavioral problems.[122]

Social Insurance Programs. Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits have been associated with preventing increases in rates of violent crime. One quasi-experimental study estimated the relationship between UI benefit levels and county-level crime rates. The average UI benefits increased by $5,261 during the study period and the authors estimated that aggravated assaults would have increased by 5.4% in the absence of these increases.[82] Inequities in access to UI exist across racial groups and by sex. Two descriptive studies explored inequities in UI benefit receipt and found that unemployed Black or African American workers were less likely to receive UI compared to unemployed Hispanic or Latino/a workers and unemployed White workers.[123, 124] Unemployed White workers were more likely to receive UI benefits compared to workers in marginalized racial and ethnic groups. Unemployed female workers were also less likely to receive UI benefits than unemployed male workers. Race and sex differences in receiving UI may be due to limited uptake based on job histories (such as part-time employment) or lack of awareness about eligibility.[123, 124]

Medicaid expansion has been associated with positive outcomes, including improved economic stability, reductions in leaving school early, access to mental health services, and reductions in violent crime.[79, 84, 85] A study looking at eligibility expansions under Health Insurance Flexibility and Accountability (HIFA) waivers prior to the enactment of the ACA found that waiver expansion was associated with significant reductions in assaults, as well as larceny and robbery.[125] Subsequent studies looking at the impact of the ACA by comparing jurisdictions with Medicaid expansion to those without expansion found a 5.2-6.0% reduction in annual reported violent crime rates[85] and a 19-29% decline in police arrests for violent crimes in expansion states.[84] Reductions in violence and crime have been attributed to increased access to services, including for substance use disorders, and reductions in financial strain from unpaid or excessive medical expenses.

Investment Accounts. SEED OK, a statewide child development account program in Oklahoma, was evaluated in a randomized experiment initiated in 2007. In the study, SEED OK was available to all randomly selected participants and included both universal (all participants receive the same initial investment) and progressive (some participants with moderate or low incomes were eligible for an additional 1:1 or a 0.5:1 match on individual savings) components.[126] A summary of evidence from several studies of SEED OK found that the program increased financial assets for children and families. Specifically, the average 529 college savings account asset amounts were significantly higher for children who received the investment account ($1,130) compared to children who did not receive an investment account ($76). Children who received an investment account were also more likely to have individual savings accounts. SEED OK also had a positive impact on key behaviors and conditions that increase risk or protect against community violence including higher maternal expectations for their children's educational attainment, feeling more hopeful for their children's futures, and reduced depressive symptoms among mothers after 3.5 years.[126] Another SEED OK study found positive effects on the social-emotional development of children at age 4 and that the effects were stronger for children whose mothers had low levels of education, had low income, received welfare benefits, or rented their homes. There were no significant differences by race.[127] The additional resources that families with low incomes received have the potential to help narrow inequities in financial resources, and improve maternal mental health and children's social and emotional development.

Provide Quality Education

▶ *Preschool enrichment with family engagement*

▶ *Equitable educational attainment for youth and young adults*

Rationale

Access to quality education is an important determinant of lifelong health and well-being. Quality education can promote social and emotional development, facilitate opportunities to learn skills, improve job readiness, and help provide a foundation for sustaining healthy relationships, raising healthy children, and participating actively in society.[128-130] Barriers to accessing quality education can lead to inequities in levels of educational attainment, limited qualifications for higher paying jobs, and inability to access living conditions that are free of violence.[131] Quality education is important starting from early childhood through adulthood. And yet, not all youth, young adults, and communities have equitable access to quality education (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).

Quality education can promote social and emotional development, facilitate opportunities to learn skills, improve job readiness, and help provide a foundation for sustaining healthy relationships, raising healthy children, and participating actively in society.

Quality early childhood education can improve long-term academic success, and result in higher wages and improved health,[132-135] as well as lower rates of behavior problems and violence.[134, 136] High-quality early education environments, such as those that are licensed and accredited, promote social skills and cognitive development, strengthen connections to school, and reduce problem behaviors at school and at home.[136-138] These benefits contribute to stronger academic achievement and less family stress and conflict throughout childhood and adolescence. Early childhood education including parental engagement can strengthen youth outcomes, family involvement in their future education, and parenting practices and attitudes.[138-140] These integrated approaches also create pathways for youth and families to access other supports, such as employment, transportation and meal assistance, and mental and physical health services, which can further address risks and protect against future violence.

Programs that keep youth in school and engaged in learning are important for higher educational attainment. Adequate funding for schools to recruit and retain experienced teachers and provide resources for students, as well as supportive measures that help youth stay in school (such as restorative justice policies and programs) can reduce risks for community violence. They can also decrease early involvement with the justice system that can result in children ending up in the "school-to-prison pipeline."[141-144]

Beyond the school setting, educational and vocational opportunities for people currently or formerly incarcerated, including programs in correctional facilities, can help individuals transition back to the community and reduce the likelihood of rearrest or reincarceration.[145] These educational and vocational programs can also help fill the learning gap created by inequities in access to high-quality education experienced by youth earlier in life,[146] reduce recidivism, and increase employment post incarceration.[147]

Approaches

Preschool Enrichment with Family Engagement

Preschool enrichment with family engagement programs provide high-quality early education and support to families that are economically marginalized to help build a strong foundation for children's future learning and healthy development and lower risks for academic and behavioral problems. Programs vary in their eligibility requirements which may include being residents in an area eligible for federal Title I funding, having demonstrated need and agreeing to participate, or having incomes at or below the federal poverty level.[148, 149]

Equitable Educational Attainment for Youth and Young Adults

Increasing educational attainment for youth and young adults can be accomplished through increasing school resources to support operating expenses such as teacher salaries, and funding to improve buildings and facilities.[150-152] Increased funding is associated with multiple indicators of improved school quality, including greater levels of teacher experience and lower student-to-teacher ratios. School restorative justice (RJ) programs and policies build relationships to avoid harm, resolve conflict, and prevent inequities in school discipline that lead to suspending or expelling students. RJ programs and policies (like peer mediation) are usually implemented as an alternative to traditional policies that are punishment-focused and that often remove or exclude students from their usual educational settings (such as zero-tolerance or exclusionary discipline practices).[141] Educational and vocational programs for individuals while incarcerated or detained—including basic adult education, career and technical education, and post-secondary education—can assist with transitioning back to the community and preparing for jobs with livable wages and other career opportunities.[145]

Potential Outcomes

Increases in:

▸ High school completion, college attendance, and number of years of education

▸ Cognitive and language development

▸ Employment opportunities

▸ Nurturing home environments supportive of learning

Reductions in:

▸ Grade retention and the need for special education

▸ Arrests, convictions, and incarceration

▸ Child abuse and neglect, referrals to child protective services, and out-of-home placements

▸ Smoking, alcohol, and drug use

▸ Parental use of harsh verbal and physical discipline

▸ Aggressive behavior

Evidence

Evidence suggests that preschool enrichment programs with family engagement and enrichment programs that extend into elementary school can enhance the foundation for a child's academic, social, and behavioral development.[153, 154] These programs can also reduce violence into young adulthood.[134] Continued access to quality education for school-age children, youth, and young adults can improve academic outcomes and reduce risk for arrests and rearrest following incarceration.[143, 145]

Preschool Enrichment with Family Engagement. High-quality preschool education programs can have long-term positive impacts on parent-child interactions and academic achievement, substance use, and experiences with violence and crime. They can also reduce problems in early childhood, including behavioral problems and

YOUTH VOICES

"When communities and organizations take steps to ensure meaningful youth engagement, youths co-lead change."

–YVPC-engaged youth[11]

child abuse and neglect. Examples of effective programs are Child Parent Centers (CPCs) and Early Head Start (EHS) which provide high-quality preschool education combined with services for parents and families living with low incomes.

CPCs have been evaluated in multiple, long-term studies and been found to have many positive effects. These include higher rates of academic achievement,[136] high school completion, attendance at four-year colleges, and postsecondary education completion.[134, 155] The effects last into young adulthood with participants more likely to have health insurance, full-time employment, and higher average annual income at age 34.[134, 156] CPC-related increases in parental involvement and reductions in behavioral problems in early childhood have resulted in reductions in arrest rates during young adulthood.[136] For instance, when followed to age 18, Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a children living with low incomes in Chicago who participated in the CPC preschool program had significantly lower rates of juvenile arrests (16.9% vs. 25.1%), violent arrests (9.0% vs. 15.3%), and multiple arrests (9.5% vs. 12.8%) relative to youth in other early childhood programs.[157] By age 24, youth who participated in the CPC preschool program had a 22% reduction in felony arrests and 20% reduction in incarceration relative to the comparison group.[134] Across studies, youth participating in CPCs also experienced numerous other benefits, including lower rates of substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect, out-of-home placements, grade retention, special education services, depression, obesity, and high body mass index in adulthood.[133, 134, 157-159]

Multiple evaluations of EHS demonstrate the short- and long-term benefits for improving conditions and behaviors that protect against risks for community violence. The EHS home-based program, when fully implemented, showed that participating families had many benefits two years after the program compared to other families, including children with fewer behavioral problems, stronger parent-child engagement, and home environments more supportive of learning.[160] Relative to families accessing other community services, or Medicaid-enrolled children of families not participating in EHS, families that participated in EHS experienced positive

early parenting behavior, reduced parenting stress over time,[138, 161] and children who had better cognitive[138] and language development.[139] Parents receiving EHS were also more emotionally supportive,[138, 162] used responsive parenting,[139] provided more language and learning stimulation, and read to their children more often compared to parents receiving community services.[162] Children in EHS also were significantly less likely to have a child welfare encounter between the ages of 5 and 9, and had reduced rates of second child welfare encounters.[163] Also, children in EHS had reductions in family conflict and parenting distress.[138]

Children in EHS had fewer substantiated report of physical or sexual abuse. However, they were more likely to have a substantiated report of neglect.[163] This finding is consistent with evaluation studies of home visitation programs and may be attributed to increased monitoring.[164] Participating families have home visitors in their homes on a regular basis. The home visitors may be reacting to the conditions and lack of resources that families with low incomes face during the preschool years. For school-age children, there are no significant differences in reports of neglect for families participating in EHS programs.[163] More research is needed to understand this finding related to neglect and whether concerns about monitoring and reporting are a deterrent to program participation for families with low incomes who may fear having their children taken away from them.[165]

Equitable Educational Attainment for Youth and Young Adults. Increases in school resources are associated with multiple indicators of improved school quality, as well as improved educational outcomes for students.[143, 150, 166, 167] A quasi-experimental study analyzed changes in Michigan's school finance policies to determine whether increases in school funding, especially in the early years, could reduce crime during adulthood.[143] Students who experienced a 10% increase in school funding from kindergarten through 3rd grade had a 15% lower chance of being arrested for any crime and a 19% lower chance of being arrested for a violent crime in adulthood.[143] These reductions in arrests were attributed to reduced risks for experiencing community violence by improving students' educational attainment, social and emotional skills, and school attendance during the elementary school years.

By focusing on building relationships and reducing exclusionary discipline, school restorative justice (RJ) programs and policies can support positive school environments and help alleviate inequities in discipline, particularly for Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a students.[168] These programs and policies also focus on having students take responsibility for actions and make reparations for harms caused in a manner that teaches conflict resolution skills, allows all voices to be heard, and strives for healing and reconciliation rather than punishment. Formal and informal practices can increase school attendance, improve school climate, improve student-teacher relationships, and teach students how to work together in proactive, respectful ways to constructively resolve conflicts.[169] A systematic review of 34 studies, including six RCTs and one quasi-experimental study, found that RJ programs and policies were associated with a range of benefits compared to traditional discipline practices. Benefits included improved school climate, improved interpersonal relationships between students and their peers and between students and teachers, improved discipline, increased conflict management skills, reduced bullying and aggressive behavior, and fewer suspensions and expulsions.[141] RJ programs and policies also have the potential to reduce the harmful consequences of zero-tolerance policies that inequitably impact students in many marginalized racial and ethnic groups, male students, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty or with low socioeconomic status.[141, 169, 170]

Educational and vocational programs have long been offered to individuals who are incarcerated or detained with positive effects on risks for violence. A meta-analysis of 57 rigorous studies found that participation in these educational programs was associated with a 28% lower rate of recidivism (defined in a number of ways, most commonly rearrest or reincarceration).[145] Another meta-analysis of 18 studies found that participating in educational or vocational programs reduced the likelihood of recidivism by one third.[147] Additional positive outcomes included the development of job readiness skills such as critical thinking, public speaking, and writing, as well as earning credits towards a college degree.[146, 171] Educational or vocational programs for individuals while incarcerated or detained may help address structural inequities in educational opportunities that contribute to lower educational attainment experienced by many people from marginalized racial and ethnic groups before incarceration.[146, 172]

Create Protective Environments

▶ *Modify the physical home environment*

▶ *Modify the physical and social community environment*

▶ *Reduce exposure to harmful community conditions*

Rationale

Creating protective environments to support healthy development is necessary for population-level reductions in community violence and eliminating inequities in risks for violence.

Youth and young adults deserve and need protective environments in which they can thrive. Creating protective environments to support healthy development is necessary for population-level reductions in community violence and eliminating inequities in risks for violence. Protective environments include physical spaces such as neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, towns, cities, youth-serving organizations or institutions, and areas (for example, streets, parks, public transportation hubs) where individuals regularly interact. These spaces can help create a sense of safety, inclusion, and belonging. Approaches that create protective environments can reduce violence-related injury and death as well as have long-term benefits by reducing young people's exposure to violence and other environmental risks.[173, 174] While the goal of protective environments is relevant for all young people and communities, some communities— especially communities where members of many marginalized racial and ethnic groups live—are negatively impacted from historical and ongoing disinvestment and other practices that have contributed to multiple, interconnected harmful community conditions (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).[9, 175]

Approaches for creating protective environments can include changes to policies or the physical and social aspects of settings. These approaches can improve perceived and actual safety and reduce risks for violence and crime. These approaches can also contribute to residents having more positive social interactions and opportunities to support youth and young adults. Reducing exposure to potential dangers in the home environment can also promote healthy development and reduce the risk for community violence. For example, lead is a recognized neurotoxin and exposure prenatally or in early childhood can harm the brain and nervous system and contribute to developmental delays, learning difficulties, and behavioral problems.[176, 177] Children can be exposed to lead from multiple sources, including in water pipe service lines and lead-based paint chips or paint dust in homes built before 1978.[177] Lead exposure has been associated with lack of self-control, poor school performance, aggressive behaviors, crime, and violence.[178-181] A historical cohort study in Milwaukee found that childhood lead levels

were strongly associated with subsequent risk for experiencing firearm violence, including victimization and causing harm, even after controlling for sex, race, and neighborhood socioeconomic status.[178] Research suggests that children living in poverty may be more at risk for having higher blood lead levels due to substandard housing, and that inequities exist for Black and African American children.[182, 183] However, given the multiple sources of exposure, broader populations of children are potentially also at risk.[184]

Another aspect of the home environment is access to firearms. Data from the 2021 National Firearm Survey indicate that an estimated 30 million children live in a home with at least one firearm, including 4.6 million children in a home with a firearm that is kept both loaded and unlocked.[185] Young people often report carrying a firearm for protection and firearm carrying is far more common among youth who have experienced violence.[17] The majority of firearms used by students in fatal school shootings were acquired from their own home or from a family member or friend.[186, 187]

Approaches

Modify the Physical Home Environment

Modifying the physical home environment may promote healthy development and reduce the risk for some types of violence and injury.[178, 181, 188] Examples include eliminating lead exposure and securely storing firearms. Lead paint hazards around the home, lead in soil from sources such as industrial processes and older deposits of formerly used leaded-based gasoline, and lead in drinking water are common sources of lead exposure for pregnant women and young children.[177] Removing lead from the environment through strategies such as lead abatement and full water service line replacement can reduce childhood exposure to lead in the home. Secure firearm storage practices can help reduce access by children, adolescents, and other unauthorized users. Such practices may include storing firearms in a gun safe or lock box.[188, 189] Providing secure storage devices may also be combined with health care provider education and counseling to enhance safe storage practices.[188, 190]

Modify the Physical and Social Community Environment

These approaches include creating safe and welcoming spaces that support positive interactions between community members and reduce exposure to community conditions that increase risks for violence. Environmental design approaches focus on enhancing and maintaining the settings where people come together to foster social interaction, strengthen connectedness, increase collective efficacy (shared trust among residents and willingness to intervene to protect the community from crime), and reduce opportunities for crime and violence.[41, 191] Examples of environmental design approaches include creating green spaces, enhancing tree cover, improving lighting and other strategies to enhance visibility, and remediating vacant lots.[192, 193] They can be implemented in neighborhoods, around businesses, inside and outside of schools, and in other community settings with partnerships that include or are led by community members and governmental and nongovernmental organizations (such as city planning, parks and recreation, transportation, public health, and businesses).[192, 194-198] Many approaches are straightforward and low-cost, and the neighborhood changes can be implemented and maintained by community residents if the necessary resources are available. Environmental design principles often include creating a welcoming environment, improving visibility, and ongoing maintenance (such as mowing grass).

Reduce Exposure to Harmful Community Conditions

Harmful community conditions, including density of alcohol outlets and exposure to neighborhood crime can contribute to risks for community violence.[199] Addressing these conditions can lead to community-wide benefits. Partnerships and community-driven identification of needs, combined with provision of services, are also important elements of these approaches that could include changing, enacting, or enforcing laws, city ordinances, and local regulations. For example, schools can work with community members and organizations to ensure that students have safe routes to walk to and from school to reduce exposure to community violence or situations that could contribute to violence.

"Are you challenging policies and practices that create toxic environments in which we feel we have no choice but to engage in violence to survive?"

–YVPC-engaged youth[11]
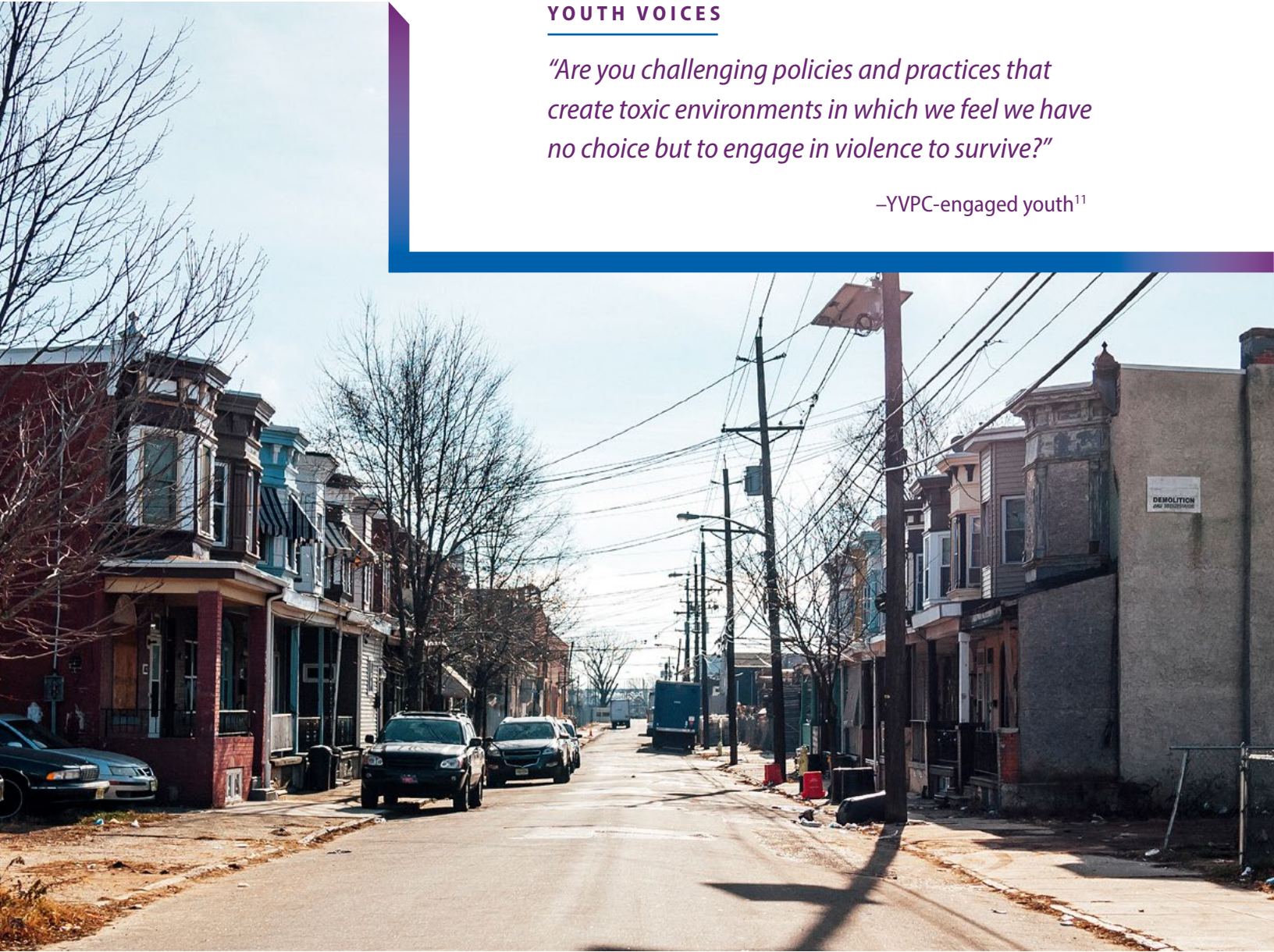
Potential Outcomes

Increases in:

▶ Safe environments

▶ Green spaces where community members can gather to foster social connections

Reductions in:

▶ Nonfatal physical assault, firearm assaults, nonfatal shootings, and homicide

▶ Violence-related injuries

▶ Nonviolent and violent crime and arrests

▶ Community conditions that increase risk for community violence

Evidence

The evidence supporting these approaches is growing and shows significant impacts on preventing community violence and reducing the conditions associated with community violence.

Modify the Physical Home Environment. Studies have shown that lead abatement can effectively reduce lead dust levels in the home over the short and long term[200-202] and fully replacing lead water service lines in homes can reduce lead levels in tap water used for drinking.[203] CDC supports removal of lead from the environment as the most effective primary prevention strategy to protect children from lead exposure.[204] Pinpointing the source of lead exposure and quantifying the effectiveness of different remediation techniques on childhood blood lead levels can be challenging and additional research is needed to understand the effects of lead abatement on blood lead levels in children.[205-208] Given the high cost of some types of remediation, it is important to consider strategies that ensure that limited resources are focused on children and families who are most at risk and may not have the financial resources to reduce lead exposures without assistance.

Secure firearm storage practices can help reduce unauthorized access to firearms. A systematic review of available research concluded that counseling and education about secure storage when combined with providing a safety device is associated with more secure firearm storage practices.[188] Child Access Prevention-Negligent Storage (CAP-NS) laws are designed to hold the firearm owner liable for the unsafe storage of the firearm. A 2023 review concluded that there is evidence for a protective association between CAP-NS laws and firearm homicides or assault injuries among young people, firearm self-injuries and suicides among young people, and unintentional firearm injuries and deaths among children.[190] Given the study designs, the results cannot be used to make definitive causal inference. It is important to note that firearm owners are often not aware of CAP-NS laws and the presence of a policy may not always be sufficient to change storage behaviors.[209] These findings suggest that raising awareness about existing policies and supporting and incentivizing secure storage might reduce unauthorized access to firearms by children and young people and related risk for injuries and deaths.

Modify the Physical and Social Community Environment. Greening is a practice that involves reclaiming and maintaining neighborhood green spaces by planting or mowing grass and trimming trees and shrubs (such as vacant lot remediation). Greening is associated with significant reductions in crime and violence in neighborhood settings.[193, 195] A meta-analysis examining the impact of vacant lot remediation on firearm violence found that greening and gardening interventions reduced firearm violence by 5.8% and 5.3%, respectively.[193] In a citywide cluster RCT of an intervention to clean and maintain vacant lots, neighborhoods that participated saw significant reductions in all crime, gun assaults, and burglaries; notably, neighborhoods where a majority of residents were living below the poverty line saw even more pronounced effects.[195] Community-led programs may be particularly effective at reducing violence. One study found that while community-led vacant lot cleaning and professional mowing were both associated with significant declines in violent crime compared to the areas without the program, areas with community-led cleaning activities saw significantly greater declines in violent crime compared to those that were professionally mowed.[210] Cleaning and maintenance

efforts that include and support community engagement and leadership may also enhance acceptability and sustainability.[210] Several cities across the United States are implementing similar vacant lot remediation and greening programs and finding benefits.[196, 211-213]

Reduce Exposure to Harmful Community Conditions. Multiple evaluations of strategies to reduce exposure to community risks have been conducted, with policies related to alcohol receiving substantial attention. Meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and evaluations show that alcohol policies (such as location and concentration of outlets, licensing regulations, pricing/taxation, and hours and days of sale) can significantly reduce or increase risks associated with violence and other health conditions, as well as violent crime (such as homicide, assault, rape, robbery).[214-219] For example, in 2012, Washington State privatized wholesale distribution and retail sales of liquor which resulted in an increase in alcohol outlets throughout the state. An evaluation of this policy change found that for each additional off-premises and on-premises alcohol outlet in a given census block, there was a significant

increase in aggravated assaults (8% and 5%, respectively), and non-aggravated assaults (6% and 5%, respectively).[217]

The risk for community violence is also experienced by students on their way to or from school, particularly in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. Chicago Safe Passage provides students safe routes to and from school by having highly visible community members along these routes to monitor and assist with students' safe travel.[220, 221] Community members are hired as safe passage workers, also referred to as guards, to be physically present on routes students usually take to and from school. Safe Passage workers are trained in conflict de-escalation strategies and reporting protocols for violent behavior. Studies using quasi-experimental methods that compare differences in crime before and after implementation of Safe Passage indicate that, in addition to the benefits for school attendance, the program is associated with significant reductions in overall crime in monitored areas compared to non-monitored areas, including 14% to 18% lower rates of violent crimes.[220, 221]

Promote Healthy Family Relationships

▶ *Early childhood home visitation programs*

▶ *Parenting skills and family relationship programs*

Rationale

The home environment and family relationships play a key role in shaping youths' and young adults' physical, emotional, social, and behavioral health.[222-225] Decades of research show that nurturing and supportive family environments where caregivers build warm and caring relationships with children, monitor children's activities and friendships, set age-appropriate expectations and rules, and use consistent and nonviolent discipline significantly lower the risk for community violence, protect youth and young adults from the negative impacts of community violence exposure, and also decrease the potential for other health risk behaviors.[34, 43, 226-229] However, not all families have access to the resources to create safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments for children and youth. Some families, especially families that have been socially and economically marginalized by racism and poverty, can have multiple added stressors that make providing a stable and healthy family environment challenging (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).[24]

Prevention activities that address underlying social drivers of poverty and health inequities are critical to ensuring all families can thrive.[230] In the shorter term, programs promoting positive family relationships throughout childhood and adolescence can increase caregivers' knowledge about healthy and age-appropriate child development, as well as the ways families can communicate, guide behavior, and resolve conflict.[43, 228, 229, 231-233] These programs can help support families amid other challenges they may face.

Programs promoting positive family relationships throughout childhood and adolescence can increase caregivers' knowledge about ways families can communicate, guide behavior, and resolve conflict.

Approaches

Early Childhood Home Visitation Programs

Early childhood home visitation programs provide caregiver support and information about child health and development to families in their homes. They also help families access services when needed. Home visitation programs may be provided by nurses, other professionals, or paraprofessionals.[234] Many programs are offered to first-time mothers and fathers, especially those living with low incomes.[234, 235] The content and structure of programs can also vary depending on the model being utilized, with some having manuals and documentation and others being more flexible in delivery.[234] Some programs begin during pregnancy, while others begin after the birth of the child, and may continue up through the child entering elementary school.

Parenting Skills and Family Relationship Programs

Parenting skills and family relationship programs provide caregivers with support and teach communication, problem-solving, and child behavior monitoring and management skills. These programs can be self-directed or facilitated with individual families or groups of families. For families living with low incomes, tailored delivery to individual families yields greater benefits than group administration.[236, 237] Some programs have sessions primarily with parents while others include parent, youth, and family sessions. Programs are typically designed for families with children in a specific age range, with some designed for preschool- and elementary-age children and others for middle- and high-school-age youth.[233, 236] Specific program content typically varies by the age of the child but often has consistent themes of child development, parental monitoring and management of children's behavior, appropriate use of rewards and discipline, parent-child communication and relationships, and interpersonal and problem-solving skills for youth.[228, 233, 236]

Potential Outcomes

Increases in:

▶ Healthy social development and behavior

▶ Following caregiver's guidance and directions

▶ Parent-child connection, communication, and relationship quality

▶ Positive parenting practices

Reductions in:

▶ Behavior problems at home and school

▶ Physical fighting and aggressive behaviors

▶ Arrests, convictions, and probation violations

▶ Alcohol and drug use by youth and parents

▶ Family conflict

▶ Child abuse and neglect

▶ Parental depression and stress

Evidence

Approaches that enhance family relationships have demonstrated effects in preventing violence and other health risk behaviors for youth and young adults.[43, 228, 229, 231-233]

Early Childhood Home Visitation Programs. Home visitation programs are effective in supporting healthy parenting behaviors and children's social and emotional development, but the evidence is mixed with some programs showing strong effects and others showing few to no effects potentially due to the varying content and delivery of these programs.[234, 238] Families participating in the Nurse Family Partnership® (NFP) program had 45% fewer childhood behavior problems and parental coping problems as recorded by physicians compared to nonparticipating families; participating youth by age 15 had significantly fewer arrests, convictions, and probation violations.[239, 240] NFP also demonstrated improved academic achievement of children involved in the program and significant reductions in factors associated with community violence, including lower substance use by parents and young people.[241-243] Preliminary evidence suggests that NFP is related to a lower likelihood of maternal and child mortality from preventable causes including homicide.[244] NFP was also adapted for American Indian mothers between the ages of 12-19 and their children.[245] The adaptation included the use of bilingual paraprofessionals who delivered the program. Mothers in the program reported significantly more parenting knowledge and fewer depressive symptoms, externalizing problems, and rates of substance use than those not in the program.[245] At age 3, the children of mothers in the program also had significantly fewer internalizing, externalizing, and dysregulation problems (such as problems with eating, sleeping).[245] The Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness Review identifies other home visitation programs that may work for communities, depending on available resources and the context in which the program is delivered.[234] Some families may be reluctant to participate in home visitation programs out of concerns about being excessively monitored and reported to child protective services, including families with undocumented status.[165] In a qualitative study, home visitor staff mention the importance of building trust with families with undocumented status to overcome the fear of being reported to child protective services or being deported.[246]

Approaches that enhance family relationships have demonstrated effects in preventing violence.

Parenting Skills and Family Relationship Programs.
Multiple systematic reviews, meta analyses, and long-term follow-up studies of various parenting skills and family relationship approaches demonstrated beneficial impacts on violence prevention as well as behaviors associated with risk for violence experienced by youth (up to age 20).[43, 228, 233, 247, 248] One example is The Incredible Years®, which is designed for families with young children up to age 12 and can be implemented with additional components for teachers to use in their classrooms. Literature reviews and meta-analyses examining the effects associated with The Incredible Years® found significant increases in prosocial behaviors and decreases in children's disruptive behaviors at home and school.[249, 250] Impacts on protective behaviors include improvements in children following parents' directions, stronger parent-child connections and communication, and improvements in positive parenting practices including monitoring, discipline, and mother-child interactions.[251] Impacts on risks include reductions in parental depression, stress, and the use of harsh and inconsistent discipline.[251] The Incredible Years® is effective with children who scored above the clinical range on behavior problems and with families with low incomes.[249, 250] Some studies suggest that behavioral benefits are broader and sustained longer when both the parent and child participate in the program.[251]

GenerationPMTO (previously known as Parent Management Training-Oregon Model™ or PMTO) is a parent training program where youth in participating families demonstrated significantly lower rates of behavior problems and arrests compared to youth who did not participate in the program.[247, 252] Cultural adaptations to GenerationPMTO have been successful,

including one adaptation with Hispanic or Latino families that included the cultural experiences of the families and showed improvements in parenting skills, child internalizing behaviors (such as anxiety), and child externalizing behaviors (such as hitting) as reported by fathers.[253, 254] Other program benefits of GenerationPMTO include reductions in coercive parenting and increases in positive parenting practices that resulted in substantial increases in positive social interactions with parents and their children.[252, 255]

Several other effective programs focus on families with youth ages 10-17. Examples of effective programs include Coping Power, a cognitive-behavioral intervention for children and young teens with behavioral problems, and Familias Unidas™, a parenting program for Hispanic or Latino families. Rigorous evaluations of Coping Power showed significantly lower rates of aggressive behavior, parents' lack of support, and youth substance use among participating families relative to those not participating in the program for one and three years after program participation.[256-258] Rigorous evaluations of Familias Unidas™ found reductions in adolescent behavior problems over time among participating families compared to families not participating in the program.[259-261] Program participants also demonstrated improvements in protective influences, including increases in parental involvement and support of youth, positive parenting practices, parent-child communication, parental monitoring, and decreases in youth substance use.[259-261] In addition, rigorous evaluations of Familias Unidas™ found reductions in youth externalizing behaviors that lead to reductions in youth depressive and anxiety symptoms 30 months after program completion.[262, 263]

Strengthen Youths' and Young Adults' Skills

▶ *School-based skill building programs*
▶ *Job training and employment programs*

Rationale

Social, emotional, and vocational skills for youth and young adults can help promote healthy relationships and economic stability throughout life. Skill-development has an extensive and robust research base, which shows that building interpersonal, emotional, and behavioral skills of children and youth can help reduce risk for violence and increase well-being.[264-267] Efforts to support youth and young adults in developing these skills may be more impactful if underlying structural barriers (such as economic insecurity and discrimination) are also addressed (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).

Enhancing skills can also reduce risks (such as substance use) or increase protective influences (such as academic success).[264, 268-270] These life skills can help youth and young adults increase their self-awareness, accuracy in understanding social situations, ability to avoid risky situations and behaviors, and capacity to resolve conflict without violence. Positive social, problem-solving, and emotional skills early in life are related to positive outcomes into young adulthood including higher educational attainment, stable employment, and lower odds of being arrested or appearing in court.[271]

Building interpersonal, emotional, and behavioral skills of children and youth can help reduce risk for violence and increase well-being.

Approaches

School-Based Skill Building Programs

School-based skill building programs work in childhood and adolescence to enhance interpersonal and emotional skills, including communication and problem-solving, empathy, emotional awareness and regulation, conflict management, and teamwork.[264, 267] These programs also give information about violence, seek to change the way youth and young adults think and feel about violence, and provide opportunities to practice and reinforce skills. The content and format of skill development programs vary depending on the program. These school-based programs often include guidance for teachers and other school personnel on ways to build youths' skills, monitor and manage behavior, and build a positive school climate to support academic success and prevent violence.[265, 272, 273] The core competencies of these programs, including self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills, can have a range of benefits that could help create positive and inclusive environments for learning.[272]

Job Training and Employment Programs

Job training and employment programs connect youth and young adults with employers to provide opportunities to gain employment experience. Participants explore interests, connect with mentors, improve confidence, gain leadership experience, and strengthen social skills such as self-efficacy and conflict resolution. These programs also provide wages, structured activities, internships, and on-the-job training. Summer youth employment programs focus on providing job training and work opportunities to middle school through college-age individuals during summer months to avoid interference with academic studies or extracurricular activities.[274] Other programs teach students high-demand technical and professional skills (such as information technology and financial services), connect them with employers, and partner with colleges to provide class credits.[275] Evaluation findings suggested that these programs may be most beneficial for youth and young people with lower incomes and weaker academic backgrounds.[275] Such approaches may improve job preparedness, employment, earnings, community engagement, and academic aspirations and reduce potential experiences with violence.

Potential Outcomes

Increases in:

▶ Positive school climate

▶ Academic proficiency

▶ Emotional regulation, understanding social situations, and developing effective and nonviolent solutions

▶ Positive bystander behavior

Reductions in:

▶ Verbal and physical aggressive behaviors

▶ Bullying, cyberbullying, and conduct problems

▶ Involvement in violent and nonviolent crime in young adulthood

▶ Smoking, alcohol, and drug use

▶ Depression and suicidal ideation

▶ Other adolescent risk behaviors (such as sex without a condom, multiple sex partners, unsafe driving)

Evidence

The evidence suggests that school-based programs can increase emotional regulation, academic proficiency, and positive school environments as well as reduce aggressive behavior, including bullying, and other risk behaviors associated with violence experienced by youth and young adults.

School-Based Skill Building Programs. Multiple systematic reviews of various school-based skill building programs demonstrate beneficial impacts on skills and behaviors, including reductions in aggressive behaviors, reduced bullying and cyberbullying, and improved bystander skills that lower the likelihood of violence and provide support for those who have been harmed by violence.[265, 273, 276-280] Positive effects of skill building programs have been observed across age groups, including a reduction of problem behaviors in preschools, with stronger effects for students at increased risk.[266] Additional benefits include increased prosocial behaviors, improved academic performance, and reduced bullying, cyberbullying, and conduct problems in K-12 schools.[264, 265, 267, 280, 281] For example, a systematic review of school-based violence prevention programs found a 15% relative reduction in violent behavior among students in pre-kindergarten through high school.[272] Using different outcome measures, the median relative reduction in aggressive and violent behavior associated with universal school-based programs varied by grade level, with a 32% reduction for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students, 18% reduction for elementary students, 7% reduction for middle school students, and 29% reduction for high school students. These programs were effective in reducing violence experienced by youth in different types of school environments, including schools in areas with large numbers of people experiencing high rates of poverty and crime.[272]

Positive social, problem-solving, and emotional skills early in life are related to positive outcomes into young adulthood.

Examples of effective school-based skill building programs are Good Behavior Game, Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies®, Life Skills® Training, Positive Action, and Dating Matters®. Good Behavior Game (GBG) demonstrated significantly lower levels of aggressive behavior and conduct problems in elementary school, as well as improved reading comprehension skills among boys.[282-284] Results vary across studies with some studies suggesting differences in outcomes by sex and baseline levels of behavioral problems.[282-285] Some studies of the long-term effects of GBG showed significantly lower prevalence of antisocial personality disorder and violent crime by age 19 to 21. These effects were for male youth with relatively higher levels of early aggressive behaviors when compared to male youth in medium- and low-risk groups.[286] Young people ages 19-21 who participated in GBG in elementary school also had lower prevalence of suicidal ideation by the time they reached young adulthood.[287]

Multiple evaluations of Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies® (PATHS) found significant impacts on a number of developmental risks for violence among students in both general and special education classrooms.[273] For instance, RCTs of PATHS found participants were better able to regulate their emotions, develop effective solutions, and decrease their use of aggressive responses to conflict.[288] At the one-year follow-up, participants also reported fewer depression symptoms and had fewer conduct problems.[288] An independent randomized evaluation replication, which tracked students from 14 schools over three years, found less self-reported aggressive problem-solving and fewer teacher-reported conduct problems among participants.[289] Participants also demonstrated greater reading and math proficiency in 4th grade and writing proficiency in 5th and 6th grade.[290] In another RCT of 45 primary schools in England, positive effects were found for student psychological well-being, although results did not persist at 24-month follow-up and improvements in social skills were not observed.[291] In this study, the effects on psychological well-being were stronger when teachers implemented the curriculum with high or medium fidelity.[292]

In multiple short- and long-term randomized trials of the Life Skills® Training (LST) program, a classroom program for the prevention of substance use, violence, and other risk behaviors for middle school-age children, participants demonstrated significant improvements in social skills, such as assertiveness and self-control, and a lower prevalence of many risk behaviors, including smoking, alcohol and drug use, HIV risk behavior, and unsafe driving.[273] A randomized trial of program benefits on violence outcomes across 41 schools found participants in a one-year LST program (relative to students receiving a standard health education curriculum) reported a 32% reduction in behaviors such as damaging property and stealing, a 36% reduction in frequency of these behaviors (≥ 3 events), and a 26% reduction in frequent fighting (≥ 3 events).[293] Youth who participated in at least half of the program showed stronger prevention benefits, including less physically and verbally aggressive behaviors and fighting.[293] Differences have been found by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status for some outcomes and implementation conditions. In one implementation study, the percentage of White students within the school district predicted higher student responsiveness and quality of delivery of the LST program.[294] In another study, Black or African American students, Hispanic or Latino/a students, and students living with low incomes had lower participant responsiveness and scored lower on social and emotional outcomes compared with White students, suggesting a need for cultural adaptations in the program or implementation to increase the benefits for all students.[295]

Positive Action is another school-based program that promotes life skills and character development with additional program components for teachers, families, and communities. Two RCTs of Positive Action in Hawaii and Chicago demonstrated improvements in academic behavior,[270, 296] and reductions in substance use and violence-related behaviors such as carrying or using a weapon.[270, 297, 298] For example, self-reported violence-related behaviors were reduced by 37% and bullying behaviors reduced by 41% among 3rd to 5th grade students in intervention schools compared to those in control schools.[298] The program was evaluated and found to be effective with students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, including students in urban elementary schools with a majority of students living in households with low incomes[296-298] and students in rural schools.[299]

Dating Matters® is a teen dating violence prevention model that teaches healthy relationship skills to youth ages 11-14 that also includes programs for parents and resources for local health departments, schools, and communities. Compared with a dating violence prevention program implemented in 8th grade only, middle school students receiving the Dating Matters® prevention model for more than two years starting in 6th grade reported lower rates of bullying and being harmed by violence (among females only), physical violence,[300] weapon carrying, and physical fighting.[301]

Job Training and Employment Programs. Summer youth employment programs provide work experience for young people (up to age 25) often with wages paid or supplemented by local government agencies. These programs can also provide adult mentoring and training related to job preparedness and life skills. The effects on academic success and future employment vary and are often small. However, several RCTs found favorable results for violence prevention. For example, an RCT in Chicago with predominantly Black or African American students in 8th-12th grades found a 43% reduction in violent crime over 16 months for high school students in the jobs program

compared to those not in the program.[302] A similar study in Boston found a 35% reduction in violent crime during the 17 months after participation in a summer youth employment program.[303] It is important for programs to provide job placement and supports for youth to overcome barriers including, if relevant, barriers due to involvement with the criminal justice system.

Year Up, a national training program, teaches students high-demand technical and professional skills, connects them with employers, and provides college credits through agreements with local colleges. The full-time program provides a range of supports, including weekly stipends to help cover transportation and other program-related expenses. An RCT of Year Up found associations between participation in the program and economic outcomes that are protective against community violence. Compared to non-participants, participating youth and young adults had higher levels of employment in professional fields such as information technology (37% vs. 4%), and business and finance (23% vs. 14%), and higher average quarterly earnings at the 18-month follow-up (53%) that largely persisted a year later (40%).[275]

Connect Young People to Caring Adults and Activities

▶ *Mentoring programs*
▶ *After-school programs*

Rationale

The risk for violence for youth and young adults can be reduced through strong connections to caring adults and involvement in activities that provide opportunities to grow and apply new skills.[304-307] Relationships with caring adults, in addition to parents or caregivers, can positively influence young people's behavior and reduce their risk for involvement in violence, reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, alcohol and other substance use, and reduce high-risk sexual behavior.[306, 308-312] Caring adults can include teachers, coaches, extended family members, neighbors, and community volunteers. Building these connections may be more meaningful to youth and young adults if their lived experiences and life circumstances are acknowledged through these relationships and activities (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).

Experiences with positive adult role models can help youth learn acceptable and appropriate behavior.[304, 305] Through positive interpersonal relationships and learning activities, youth can develop healthy life goals, improve their skills and school engagement, establish networks, and have experiences that improve their future education and employment opportunities.[307, 308, 313] These connections and experiences and the many benefits they offer, such as enhanced academic performance, are protective against involvement in crime and violence.[314-316] Access, convenience, and cost are often barriers to participation in after-school programs for children living in communities with concentrated poverty.[317] Addressing these barriers can support equitable access to these programs for all children.

Relationships with caring adults, in addition to parents or caregivers, can positively influence young people's behavior and reduce their risk for involvement in violence.

Approaches

Mentoring Programs

Mentoring programs pair youth with a volunteer from the community with the goal of fostering a relationship that will contribute to the young person's growth opportunities, skill development, and academic success.[307, 318] Mentoring programs may be delivered without any set location for mentoring activities or be implemented in a specific location, such as a community center or faith-based organization. Mentoring programs can also be implemented in school settings (for example, volunteers meet with youth on school grounds) and include academic support and enrichment activities.[307] Program models can involve one-to-one matching of an adult mentor with a young person or take a group mentoring approach. The level of training and support provided to mentors varies depending on the

program. Programs can vary in how similar mentors and youth are in their interests and how frequently they spend time together.[307, 319] Mentoring programs can support youth from early childhood through adolescence without regard to known risk behaviors or conditions, although programs more typically focus on youth perceived to be at risk due to problems in academics, behavior, or health.[307]

After-School Programs

After-school programs provide opportunities for youth to strengthen their social and academic skills and become involved in school and community activities to expand their positive social experiences and relationships. These approaches also prevent community violence by providing supervision during critical times of the day, such as from 3 to 6 p.m., when youth crime and violence peak.[320] After-school programs range from those offering tutoring and homework assistance to more formal skill-based programming and structured learning activities. Opportunities to develop and practice leadership, decision-making, self-management, and social problem-solving skills are important components of programs that work.[321, 322] After-school programs may be offered on school grounds or in community settings.[323]

Potential Outcomes

Increases in:

▶ Academic performance and perceptions of academic abilities

▶ Graduation rates

▶ Positive parent-child relationships and parental trust

▶ Positive relationships with teachers or supportive adults

Reductions in:

▶ Community and other forms of violence

▶ Physical fighting

▶ Rates of arrests for violent and nonviolent crime

▶ Drug selling

▶ Alcohol and drug use

▶ Truancy

▶ Rates of school non-completion

Evidence

Evidence suggests that mentoring and after-school approaches can benefit youth in several ways, including increasing academic performance, parental trust, and positive relationships, as well as reducing their risk for involvement in crime and violence, although the evidence of effectiveness varies by model and program.

Mentoring Programs. Multiple meta-analyses of mentoring programs show strong support for improvements in outcomes across behavioral, social, emotional, and academic domains.[305, 314, 318, 324] Big Brothers Big Sisters of America® (BBBS) is the oldest and best-known example of a one-on-one mentoring program implemented in community and school settings in the United States.[325] An evaluation of the community-based BBBS mentoring program found positive impacts on a number of problem behaviors.[312] At the 18-month follow-up, mentored youth had skipped half as many days of school as youth not involved in the program and were 46% less likely to have initiated use of illegal drugs and 27% less likely to have initiated alcohol use, which are important risks for violence. Mentored youth were also 32% less likely to have engaged in a physical fight. Other benefits included stronger academic competence and improvements in parental trust. Although the benefits were significant for both boys and girls, many of the strongest gains were among the Little Sisters.

A national evaluation of the school-based mentoring program of BBBS found that mentored youth performed better academically, had more positive perceptions of their academic abilities, and were more likely to report having a special adult in their lives for support—conditions that protect against violence—compared to non-mentored youth.[326] Higher-quality mentoring relationships were associated with improvements in parental and student-teacher relationships.[327] These, in turn, were associated with better youth outcomes, such as increased positive behavior and decreases in problem behaviors, such as getting into a physical fight in the neighborhood.[327]

In an RCT of the BBBS Community-Based Mentoring program, positive impacts at a 13-month follow-up assessment were seen for emotional symptoms, peer

problems, conduct problems reported by parents, and youth-reported depressive symptoms.[328] Findings from this study also showed reductions in arrests and substance use for participating youth at the 18-month assessment.[311]

Becoming A Man (BAM) is a school-based group mentoring and counseling program that guides 7th and 10th grade male youth to learn and practice social cognitive skills, make responsible decisions for their future, and become positive members of their school and community. BAM and similar programs work by helping youth slow down and reflect on whether their automatic thoughts and behaviors are appropriate to their situation.[329] A study describing the results of three RCTs implemented in Chicago schools between 2009 and 2015 found that BAM improved school engagement, increased graduation rates by 12-19%, and reduced total arrests by 28-35%, and violent-crime arrests by 45-50%.[330]

After-School Programs. The evidence for after-school programs varies with some programs showing significant benefits on academic, behavioral, and social outcomes and others showing few or small effects.[309, 321, 331] These mixed effects likely are due to differences in program models, duration, program structure, and staff.[322] One example with demonstrated benefits on schooling and youth involved crimes outcomes is the Los Angeles' Better Educated Students for Tomorrow (LA's BEST) program. A rigorous, longitudinal evaluation of LA's BEST found

significant positive effects on academic achievement and reductions in violent crime, sex offenses, drug offenses, and arrests for other crimes, especially among those who were most engaged with the program (for example, attended at least 10 days per month) compared to students from the same schools who attended fewer days and compared to students from matched schools.[332] The evaluation also found the program to be effective for students living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty as well as students whose parents had low levels of formal education.[332]

Another example is the After School Matters (ASM) program, which offers apprenticeship experiences in technology, science, communication, the arts, and sports to high school students in Chicago Public Schools.[333] An initial impact study of academic outcomes found that ASM students had higher graduation rates, fewer course failures, and lower school non-completion rates by age 18 than non-ASM students.[334] A rigorous RCT of the program across 10 high schools with student populations of predominantly Black or African American youth and youth living with low incomes found several additional positive outcomes. Participating youth had better attitudes toward school, higher self-regulation, fewer absences from school, and were less likely to sell drugs or participate in group-involved violence compared to youth who did not participate in the program.[335]

Intervene to Lessen Harms and Prevent Future Risks

▶ *Treatment to lessen the harms of violence*

▶ *Treatment to prevent problem behaviors and further experiences with violence*

▶ *Hospital-based violence intervention programs*

▶ *Street outreach and community norm change*

▶ *Community-justice partnerships*

Rationale

Many youth and young adults at risk for violence have experienced multiple ACEs and other challenges. Stress from early or prolonged exposure to adversity, such as experiencing, witnessing, and living with chronic exposures to violence and in segregated and historically disinvested community environments,[336] can contribute to behavioral and mental health problems, including substance use and academic problems.[337-340] Young people treated in emergency departments for assault-related injuries are approximately twice as likely to be treated for a subsequent violent injury within two years compared to those who did not have a violent injury.[341] Youth and young adults experiencing inequities in risk for violence may have additional stressors and challenges unique to their lived experiences (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).

Approaches

Treatment to Lessen the Harms of Violence

Trauma-informed therapeutic treatment can mitigate the behavioral, mental, and physical health consequences of witnessing or experiencing violence in the home or community.[342-345] Treatments are designed to help youth and young adults process traumatic experiences, manage trauma-related distress and grief, and develop effective coping strategies and skills. These treatments are typically provided by trained professionals in a one-on-one or group setting and over the course of 12 or more sessions. Referrals may come from social services, schools, or other community organizations. Treatment is often provided to young people at varying ages and stages of development and may engage both the child and parent or caregiver in the treatment process.

Treatment to Prevent Problem Behaviors and Further Experiences with Violence

Treatment to prevent problem behaviors and further experiences with violence simultaneously addresses multiple risks for violence and builds support at home and in the community. These approaches support the development of social and problem-solving skills, provide therapeutic services to address behavioral and emotional issues, offer families therapeutic services to improve communication, reduce conflict, and enhance parental guidance and supervision of youth.[233, 346-348] The goal of these supports is to assist youth, young adults, and families in making behavioral changes to prevent future acts of violence. Referrals may come from the juvenile justice system, schools, or other community organizations working with young people and families

Stress from early or prolonged exposure to adversity can contribute to behavioral and mental health problems, including substance use and academic problems.

who experience inequities in risk for violence. Programs are often delivered by trained clinicians in the home or in a clinic setting and can be provided to individual families or groups of families. Programs typically include multiple components, such as individual counseling, family counseling, parent training, and school consultations.

Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs

Hospital-based violence intervention programs are intended to strengthen connections between the acute treatment of violence-related injuries and community assistance to prevent future injuries and health risk behaviors.[349] Hospital-based violence intervention programs often bring together medical staff and community-based partners to provide safety planning, services, and trauma-informed care to people who are being treated for violence-related injuries at a time when the person is often accepting of changes.[350] The implementation of hospital-based violence intervention programs is expanding across the United States.[350, 351] The people served by these approaches and the length and content of the program vary based on the model used. The patients are often young men from marginalized racial and ethnic groups who are at risk of repeated violence-related harms. Typically, these programs involve brief interventions to develop skills and risk awareness, needs assessments, and strategies to navigate personal and community stressors and situations, and can include mentoring, home visits, and ongoing case-management services.[350-352]

Street Outreach and Community Norm Change

Street outreach approaches train staff—including outreach workers and violence interrupters, who have credibility in the community and can establish relationships with young people at greatest risk for violence—to mediate conflicts and provide connections to community supports.[353] The ways in which these connections occur can vary depending on the model used, outreach staff training and expertise, and available community resources. Staff typically connect with community members who are at highest risk for violence

or retaliation (for example, had a recent argument or a family member or friend recently harmed by violence). This approach can also use public education and neighborhood events to facilitate community members' actions to reduce violence.

Community-Justice Partnerships

Community-justice partnerships are being implemented in communities to prevent violence by providing services and supports to youth and young adults at risk for community violence. Researchers have emphasized the importance of acknowledging that trust of law enforcement is low in many communities due to longstanding difficult relationships and concerns about both abuse and neglect by law enforcement.[354] These partnerships might not be appropriate for all communities because of these concerns. An intentional process for rebuilding trust might be necessary.[355] Some programs involve partnerships between community members, organizations, and law enforcement. These programs combine accountability for criminal behavior (i.e., focused deterrence) with social services such as access to education, housing, employment, and job training opportunities that help decrease the risks associated with community violence.[356] Other programs divert individuals from the justice system and often provide them with community-based services. Community-justice partnerships can offer programs and services that are built on collaboration, mutual respect, trust and accountability between communities, state and local law enforcement agencies, and the judicial system. It is critical that community partners have the resources necessary to meet the additional demands of community-justice partnerships.

Potential Outcomes

Increases in:

▶ School attendance and homework completion

▶ Positive parenting and family management practices

▶ Employment, housing, and income

Improvements in:

▶ Family relationships and communication

Reductions in:

- ▶ Violence
- ▶ Nonviolent and violent crime
- ▶ Arrests and recidivism
- ▶ Group-involved violence
- ▶ Out-of-home placements
- ▶ Siblings' criminal behavior
- ▶ Teen dating violence
- ▶ Child abuse, neglect, and ACEs
- ▶ Substance use
- ▶ Symptoms of PTSD, depression, and behavioral problems
- ▶ Acceptability of using guns to resolve disputes

Evidence

A large body of evidence highlights the importance and benefits of supporting youth and young adults who have histories of violence or crime to provide them with opportunities for healing, healthy development, and hopefulness about their futures.

Treatment to Lessen the Harms of Violence. Programs such as Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy® (TF-CBT) are effective in strengthening positive parenting practices as well as reducing symptoms of PTSD, depression, and behavioral problems.[342, 344, 357, 358] TF-CBT was originally designed to address symptoms associated with sexual abuse and has since been adapted to treat other traumas including witnessing community or domestic violence.[359] Another example, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS), is designed for school-engaged youth ages 10-15.[360] This program addresses treatment barriers, such as stigma and access to services. It has been implemented in both school and community settings for diverse populations, including children who have undocumented status, and Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, and American Indian or Alaska Native youth.[361, 362] The program is associated with improvements in school performance and reductions in symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety.[345, 363, 364]

Treatment to Prevent Problem Behaviors and Further Experiences with Violence. The benefits of therapeutic interventions for young people with histories of experiences with violence or crime have been documented in numerous reviews.[233, 346, 347] One meta-analysis of interventions for youth with a history of criminal offenses found that those who received treatment had an average 12% decrease in future violence and crime.[347] Across studies, larger effects were found for youth involved in more serious offenses (for example, history of both person and property offenses) than those with histories of less serious offenses and when the treatments were sustained over time. However, the effects of individual programs varied with some programs having more substantial impacts (40% reduction in recidivism, such as arrest or law enforcement contact) and others associated with no effects or an increase in recidivism.[347] Examples of programs demonstrating benefits include Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) and Multisystemic Therapy® (MST).

MTFC, renamed Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO), includes short-term placements of youth who have been involved in criminal behavior with extensively trained foster parents, family therapy, and behavioral and academic supports for youth. Studies have found that, compared to youth in usual care services, TFCO participants had significantly lower self-reported experiences with violence and fewer referrals for violent crime (5% vs. 24%) two years post intervention.[365] A meta-analysis of eight controlled studies found TFCO was associated with lower risk of future criminal behavior.[348]

MST is an intensive multi-component home and community-based program for youth with histories of serious offenses and conduct problems. It engages the youth's entire social network (such as family, school and teachers, neighborhood, and friends) to reduce risks and improve behaviors and conditions that protect against violence. MST was evaluated in numerous trials with adolescents with social, emotional, and behavioral problems.[366] Some evaluations of MST demonstrated significant long-term reductions in rearrests and out-of-home placements, as well as reductions in re-incarceration, probation violations,[367] youth substance use, behavioral and mental health, and sibling's criminal behavior.[368-370]

However, studies suggest that effects can vary by population group.[367, 371] For example, an international meta-analysis found effects on out-of-home placements and arrests in the United States, but not in other countries where more services and support were provided to youth who did not participate in the program.[371]

Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs.
Some hospital-based interventions have been evaluated to assess their effects on revictimization, substance use, further involvement in crime and violence, and rates of entry or re-entry into the criminal justice system.[372-375] A systematic review of emergency department-based violence intervention programs concluded that nine of the 13 publications found significant benefits on one or more violence-related outcomes.[373] For instance, SafERteens uses motivational interviewing techniques to increase problem recognition and skills, including conflict resolution, alcohol refusal, and anger management. Evaluations of SafERteens demonstrate that participating youth had significant reductions in violence that were maintained one year following the intervention.[376] Additional program benefits include reductions in alcohol use, dating violence victimization, and depressive symptoms.[374, 377, 378] SafERteens has been adapted for use in the primary care setting and as remote therapy.[379] In the primary care context, youth have shown greater reductions in severe aggressive behaviors, anxiety, and substance use consequences relative to the comparison group at three-month follow-up.[379] The nature of hospital-based violence intervention programs and the outcomes vary widely. One example of a hospital-based intervention is Caught in the Crossfire which provides crisis intervention, peer mentoring, and ongoing case management, including home visits and referrals to community services for youth and young adults. Researchers concluded that during the six-month post-injury evaluation period, youth in the intervention were 70% less likely to be arrested for any offense and 60% less likely to have any involvement in the criminal justice system compared with youth not involved in the program.[372]

While promising results exist, the effects are often mixed across studies.[380] Researchers have suggested that certain implementation components may help enhance success, including hiring, training, and adequately supporting staff who are credible and have relevant lived experience; appropriate partnerships and referral options to reduce immediate risks, such as street outreach to reduce retaliatory violence; referrals for relocation services when necessary; and increased use of evidence-based behavior change strategies like cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), including by trained frontline staff.[380]

Street Outreach and Community Norm Change. Several types of street outreach programs exist, and some have evidence to support their effectiveness in preventing violence. The Cure Violence program from Chicago was adapted and evaluated in several communities such as Safe Streets in Baltimore and CeaseFire in Philadelphia.[381-383] These programs are associated with promotion of nonviolent social norms and reductions in firearm violence, homicides, and nonfatal assault-related injuries in some but not all implementation areas where studied.[353, 381-383] An early evaluation of Chicago's Cure Violence program (formerly CeaseFire) found that four of seven implementation communities had significant reductions in shootings.[353,382] The other communities had no significant decline or no difference in the decline compared to communities that did not participate in the program. Effects on other violence outcomes also varied across communities. Research in Baltimore neighborhoods found considerable variability in effects on firearm violence with some evidence of both positive and negative effects.[384] An evaluation examining the effects in Baltimore's longer-running sites estimated that homicides were 22% lower over the study period than would be expected without the program.[383]

The Chicago CRED (Create Real Economic Destiny) program's outreach staff provide group-level mediation and connect men at greatest risk for firearm violence with mental health, mentoring, educational assistance, and job training programs. A two-year follow-up study found significant reductions in rates of violent crime arrests among men who completed the program compared with non-participating men, but no difference for violent victimization.[385]

Evaluators of street outreach programs suggest that mixed effects may be related to variations in exposure to the program, level of surrounding community violence, the support for staff (such as financial resources, mental health, and training), who are impacted by violence themselves and how well the program is managed and implemented, including collaboration with other community organizations and the services available to participants.[353, 384, 385]

Community-Justice Partnerships. These programs can vary substantially, making it important to consider the evidence for the specific approach being considered. For example, results from studies, including a systematic review, suggest that focused deterrence strategies, particularly those designed to reduce ongoing conflicts and violence between groups, have shown mixed but promising effects for reducing crime and violence.[354, 356] Researchers have noted challenges with engaging communities, including concerns about abuse and harassment by law enforcement, particularly in communities where people from marginalized racial and ethnic groups and people with low incomes live.[354] Residents in these communities can have concerns about both over-policing and under-policing.[354] These concerns underscore the importance of involving community partners in developing and implementing focused deterrence strategies.[354]

LEAD is a pre-arrest diversion program that was implemented in Seattle, with the goal of diverting adults with drug offenses to case management and community-based services.[386] One study estimated the effect of LEAD on subsequent arrests and charges and found LEAD participants had 60% lower odds of being arrested and 39% lower odds of being charged with a felony compared to those who did not receive LEAD supports.[386] Using a pre-post design, researchers found that LEAD participants experienced improvements in outcomes related to housing, employment, and income/benefits over time. For example, participants were twice as likely to be sheltered and 33% more likely to be connected to income/benefits like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) six months after the program.[387]

Deferred adjudication is a diversion program where adults charged with a crime admit guilt, do not receive a formal criminal conviction, and complete a period of community supervision.[388] One study estimated the impacts of deferred adjudication in Harris County, Texas and found that diversion was associated with lower reconviction rates (reductions of 26-30 percentage points) compared to individuals with similar convictions before and after the policy changes.[388] Furthermore, diversion was related to long-term increases in employment 10 years after individuals entered the diversion program. Those at the highest risk of reconviction—young Black or African American males with one or more misdemeanor convictions—gained the most from the program in terms of reductions in reconvictions and improvements in employment.[388]

Harmful Narratives and Positive Alternatives

Narratives About Community Violence

Public narratives about the causes of community violence shape our solutions to it.[389] Narratives about violence are created and perpetuated by people. But people can also change them. Exposing harmful narratives and lifting up new, positive narratives that value all youth and young adults—no matter their race, income, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, or ZIP code—are important steps toward increasing understanding and preventing violence.[70, 130, 390]

Positive narratives that respect all communities can be used to build support for creating the conditions in which all youth can thrive.

Narratives are more than stories—they are ideas communicated through language, images, culture, and media.[70] While not limited to the words used to convey messages and ideas, language and words do matter. They demonstrate respect for or bias against individuals and communities that may be different from our own.[391, 392] Some terms or concepts can be stigmatizing while others can be neutral or positive. For example, some violence prevention researchers and practitioners have historically used stigmatizing terms to characterize youth and young adults who are exposed to violence or described violence outcomes without acknowledging the broader conditions driving the risk for violence.[70]

Dominant public narratives around race and community violence in the United States can be harmful for young people, particularly for Black or African American youth and young adults. For example, studies about race and crime in media have found that local television news often overrepresents Black or African American people as criminal suspects and underrepresents White people as criminal suspects.[393, 394] News media coverage can also extend harmful narratives to entire communities through normalizing an over-emphasis on crime in racially segregated neighborhoods without discussion of the historical and ongoing conditions that increase risk for crime and violence.[395] This media

Creating the conditions for health and well-being for all youth and young adults is essential to preventing violence.

coverage can perpetuate harmful narratives around race and violence that are very familiar to people in racially and ethnically marginalized communities but often are largely invisible to those not directly impacted.[389] These narratives and images are biased and inaccurate and can rob youth and young adults of their humanity by failing to see them as complete people and valued members of communities.[70] They also often do not acknowledge that many youth and young adults have experienced and been adversely impacted by extensive or prolonged stress.[25, 396] Stressors can include growing up in racially segregated

communities with limited opportunities that contribute to food and housing insecurity, family and neighborhood poverty, and under-funded schools (see Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence).[22, 396]

Narratives can be changed. Positive narratives that respect all communities can be used to build support for creating the conditions in which all youth can thrive. Some examples of positive transformational narratives around supporting youth and their health and safety are included on the next page.

Transformational Narratives

All youth and young adults are valued members of our communities.
Each individual is worthy of love and respect, regardless of differences
in race, ethnicity, ability (such as physical abilities or neurodivergence),
sexuality, or gender identity. Our society's youth and young adults have
answers, and it is important that we listen to them to help them achieve
their goals and become actively engaged members of our communities.

Youth are still developing. Brain architecture, which affects reasoning
skills and impulse control, is developing through at least a person's mid-
20s.[397] Making mistakes is a normal part of growing up. By providing
children and youth opportunities to make mistakes with appropriate
consequences and opportunities to learn from them we can support their
continued growth and development.

Breaking the cycles of violence is possible. All youth and young adults
are shaped by their social, economic, and physical environments, which, in
turn, shape behaviors. Creating the conditions for health and well-being
for all youth and young adults is essential to preventing violence.

**Children, adolescents, and young adults thrive and are less likely
to experience violence when the adults in their families and
communities create safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and
environments.** Positive social connections support healthy families and
communities, and lay the foundation for young peoples' physical health,
mental health, healthy behavior, and future success and prosperity. That
solid foundation promotes safe communities and reduces the risk of
violence. Every person and every sector can work to support families and
communities to help prevent violence.

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

Community Conditions Can Impact Risk for Violence

Community Conditions and Risk for Violence

Many inequities in rates of community violence are long-standing and rooted in social and economic systems that have been made by people and can, in turn, be changed by people. By understanding these systems and how they impact the community conditions that affect risk for violence, we can begin to take the necessary steps to reduce risk, prevent violence, and build thriving, healthy communities.

By understanding social and economic systems and how they affect risk for violence, we can begin to take the necessary steps to reduce risk, prevent violence, and build thriving, healthy communities.

Existing systems, policies, and practices such as interstate highway construction through neighborhoods that are primarily comprised of people from marginalized racial and ethnic groups or people living with low incomes, or illegal practices such as redlining (the denial of mortgages for housing in certain areas to people based on their race or ethnicity), can have lasting impacts that reverberate across generations.[398-401] In addition, mass incarceration, which disproportionately impacts Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a people and their communities, has significant impacts on family and community economic security.[53, 402] For example, children of currently or formerly incarcerated parents not only are at increased risk of living in poverty as children but also have lower incomes as adults.[403, 404] Mass incarceration of Black or African American people can also inequitably reduce the availability of family members and caring adults in the home and community to connect with youth and young adults.[405]

The impacts of systems, policies, and practices can contribute to residential instability, increased density of alcohol-related businesses, abandoned buildings, poor economic growth, unemployment, underemployment, concentrated poverty, neighborhood violence and crime, and have negative impacts on relationships among community members.[9] Following are examples of some systems, policies, and practices that impact many communities.

Economic conditions, such as equitable access to employment opportunities and earnings, have the potential to reduce the long-standing earnings gaps experienced by Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a people compared to White people.[76, 406] Inequities in access to economic resources to adequately support basic needs (such as food, housing, and transportation) are experienced by many marginalized racial and ethnic families.[9] These inequities can result in high levels of stress, can have negative impacts on the home and family environment,[407-409] and can lead to exposure to community violence.[410]

Educational conditions, such as equitable funding, have the potential to influence the association between racial segregation and academic achievement.[411] Gaps in academic achievement between students based on race, ethnicity, and/or income start as early as 3rd grade.[412, 413] In a 2018 analysis, school districts serving the largest populations of Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, or American Indian students received roughly $1,800 less per student in state and local funding than those serving the fewest students of color. For a school district with 5,000 students that means a funding gap of $9 million per year.[414] Increased

school funding is associated with improvements in educational outcomes and in school quality including greater levels of teacher experience and lower student-to-teacher ratios.[150, 167] A government report in 2022 found that more than a third of students (about 18.5 million) attend a school where 75% or more of the student population represented a single race or ethnic group.[413] School segregation is highly associated with educational achievement gaps experienced by students from marginalized racial and ethnic groups and students living in poverty.[415, 416] Research suggests that higher educational achievement might help mitigate some risks for homicide among youth.[417]

Housing conditions, such as home ownership, can be a pathway to economic security, family and community wealth, and other advantages that can take generations to build. Yet, inequities exist. Currently, due to continued illegal redlining,[400, 401] gentrification, and other practices, the gap between White and Black or African American homeownership is even wider now than it was in 1960.[75] More American Indian and Alaska Native people are living unhoused, especially those in urban environments, possibly due to high housing costs, disproportionate levels of poverty, discrimination, and historical trauma.[418]

Conditions of the built environment can be enhanced to promote safety in all communities. For example, alcohol outlet retailers often are concentrated in geographic areas with higher rates of people living in poverty and higher proportions of Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a people and are associated with a range of negative health outcomes.[419-421] Public spaces, including parks, are important for social and health promoting activities, yet many racially segregated communities experience limited availability of or access to these spaces.[422]

Social conditions such as fairness in hiring practices and authentic relationships with adult leaders in the community are important for the development and success of young people but are not always available to all youth. Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a youth and young adults are more likely to face employment discrimination and, when employed, to receive lower pay than White youth and young adults.[423] Youth have described the importance of developing authentic relationships with adults, including when implementing strategies to prevent violence.[11] Adult mentors can develop more authentic relationships with young people by acknowledging the structural drivers of the adversities that they face (such as systemic racism) and letting them know that these challenges are not the fault of young people.

Community Violence Is Costly

An entire community is impacted by the burden of violence. Violence can discourage people from participating in neighborhood activities and limit access to life opportunities such as education and employment.[424] It can also limit economic prosperity and business growth, strain education, justice, and medical systems, and slow community progress.[424] Among those ages 10-34 in the United States, homicides and nonfatal injuries from assaults treated in emergency departments resulted in an estimated annual economic cost of $257 billion (2021 dollars), including medical care, lost work, reduced quality of life, and lives lost.[8] This estimate is a fraction of the full economic consequence of violence because it does not include justice system costs (such as arrest, prosecution), or supports for justice system-involved youth and community re-entry. It also does not include the substantial costs incurred by families and communities that experience violence (such as physical and mental health care, property damage) or the economic impacts on health care and social services systems.[424-426]

Additional economic burdens impact communities most affected by violence. These include impacts on learning due to stressful community environments; lack of access to safe, affordable housing; unpaid lost work time for healing after exposure to violence; the costs of mental and physical health care; or stress related to unjustified use of force by police officers.[427]

Collaboration and Partnerships

The Role of Public Health

Public health plays an important and unique role in preventing community violence. Public health agencies, which typically place prevention at the forefront of efforts to improve population-level health, bring critical data, partnership, and resources to bear on this problem. For example, these agencies can serve as a convener, bringing together partners to plan, prioritize, and coordinate community violence prevention activities. Public health agencies are well-positioned to collect and disseminate data, implement preventive measures, evaluate programs and policies, and track progress. Public health along with other departments in local, state, and federal governments (such as community development, parks and recreation, transportation) can work together to establish policies and practices that create protective environments for youth and young adults, including addressing social and economic conditions that drive inequities in risk for community violence.[428] Government agencies can implement policies and programs that address inequities in access to stable and affordable housing, economic security, and health care services.

Although public health has an important role in preventing community violence, the strategies and approaches outlined in this resource cannot be implemented by the public health sector alone.

Partners and People with Vested Interests in Preventing Community Violence

Although public health has an important role in preventing community violence, the strategies and approaches outlined in this resource cannot be implemented by the public health sector alone. The work is more likely to be impactful when guided by partnerships that include multiple sectors and groups. Included below are examples of the types of roles different people, organizations, and sectors can have in preventing community violence:

▶ **Community members, representatives, and leaders, including individuals with lived experience**, are essential at every stage of the planning, implementation, assessment, and sense-making/evaluation processes. Those who are directly impacted by community violence have firsthand experience and can contribute important information for understanding the drivers of community violence and ideas for how to prevent it.

▶ **Faith communities and religious leaders** can have significant roles in partnerships to prevent community violence. They frequently are anchors in their communities and are often trusted leaders who have a sense of ethical obligation and concern for the safety of their communities.

▶ **Non-governmental and community-based organizations** can help identify youth and young adults at increased risk for violence, including those living in poverty or experiencing educational, behavioral, or family challenges. They can also help tailor strategies to best meet their needs.

▶ **Education systems** can implement and evaluate policies and practices geared toward creating safe, healthy, and supportive school environments. It is also important that they provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their maximum education potential and to close educational achievement gaps. Schools can implement restorative justice programs and policies that address inequities in school discipline, foster positive school climates, and teach coping and problem-solving skills. They can promote positive connections through healthy peer relationships, family involvement, and community engagement activities.

▶ **Health care and behavioral health** can implement policies and programs in health care settings to lessen the trauma and harms from violence and prevent future risk. They can assure staff and leadership have trainings to increase understanding about systemic racism and the importance of healing-centered practices. Community health workers (CHWs), for example, are important partners in violence prevention work. CHWs have close relationships with community members, understand local contexts, and can be integral to championing community-level violence prevention activities.

▶ **Social services** can help to ensure that families and communities receive the skills and services necessary to promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children, youth, and young adults.

▶ **Justice sector** (such as law enforcement) can engage in partnerships with community organizations to support youth, young adults, and their families. This can help prevent and address the harms of violence exposures, decrease recidivism, and reduce the potential for the escalation of crime, violence, and serious violence-related injury or death.

▶ **Businesses** can implement policies and programs that strengthen family and community economic security.

▶ **Housing authorities and agencies** can support access to affordable and stable housing and adopt policies that prevent homelessness and minimize eviction and foreclosure.

▶ **Philanthropic organizations** can support comprehensive action across strategies and fund evaluation efforts to expand the evidence base, with flexibility in funded approaches to encourage cultural responsiveness and adaptation. Funders can structure initiatives to include time for thorough planning and partnership building to foster equitable collaboration.

The summary table in the Appendix B notes sectors that may be well-positioned to lead implementation efforts within the strategies and approaches described in this document. Action by many sectors will be necessary for the successful implementation of the strategies and approaches in this Prevention Resource. All sectors can play an important and influential role in helping to prevent community violence.

Selecting and Implementing Community Violence Prevention Efforts

Community Engagement

The specific policies, programs, and practices communities implement will be more effective and sustainable if they are informed and driven by community interests, assets, and conditions.[429] It is important to equitably engage with community members, including youth and young adults, as respected and culturally knowledgeable partners and leaders who understand their community's needs. Sustained relationships and trust-building with communities are essential as members of some communities may distrust the government, including public health officials and law enforcement. Building and strengthening relationships with communities at risk and the community-based organizations that support them as equitable partners is critical to understanding the

problem, setting relevant goals, and achieving outcomes that prevent violence and advance health equity. Below are two potential approaches for engaging community members. There may be benefits from combining both approaches to address long-standing inequities.[430]

Community Resident Leadership Models build community resident skills to engage and lead others in change efforts to improve the conditions where people live, work, play, and worship.[431] Practices used by community residents working together to act on mutually concerning social issues have long been used by people in marginalized racial and ethnic communities and people living with low incomes. Residents often participate as members of faith-based or neighborhood-based organizations who work together to build leadership and influence to remove barriers that exclude some groups from local decision-making processes.[432] Community members and organizations both lead and participate in multi-sector, multi-racial collaborations addressing issues of common concern. Examples of successful community-led initiatives to prevent community violence through addressing social and economic conditions that increase risk include school restorative justice programs,[433] increased funding for resource-poor schools,[434-436] job opportunities for people and communities with low incomes,[437] and access to affordable housing.[438]

Multi-sectoral Community Coalitions are collaborations among various community organizations and interested groups (such as government, civil society, and the private sector) as well as health, environment, law enforcement,

and economic development groups to collectively change policy and systems. Engaging multiple sectors can leverage knowledge, reach, and resources, benefiting from varied strengths as everyone works toward the shared goal of producing better health outcomes.[439-441]

Data Are Important for Informing Action

Communities can decide what data are needed to broaden their understanding of community violence, community conditions that might be driving it, and the people it affects. Communities can use diverse, local data from multiple sources to help community leaders understand community violence patterns, the most affected groups and locations, and community conditions. When reviewing data, it is important to acknowledge that youth and young adults from many marginalized racial and ethnic communities are often over-represented in both traditional and more recent justice system data sources. Researchers have suggested that this is because they are more frequently being reported to police compared to White youth and young adults, and have increased exposure to police due to patrolling, profiling, and processing by law enforcement officials, courts, and correctional systems.[442-444] For example, a multisite study of adolescent males after their first arrest found that Black or African American youth committed fewer offenses prior to arrest than White youth. They were also more likely to be formally charged and rearrested than White youth, even after adjusting for offending and several other potential explanatory factors.[444]

Community data can include:

- Surveys and qualitative data from community residents, youth, and young adults on their lived experiences with violence, their strengths, and their aspirations for themselves and their communities.

- Information about community conditions that may drive risk including inequitable access to employment and educational opportunities, housing, and family and neighborhood income.

- Information from organizational and governmental data visualization tools and data systems including the U.S. Census Bureau, emergency departments, law enforcement, and schools.

- Information from online spaces such as news media or social media content analyses. The online environment can contribute to risk for escalation of violence and also provide an opportunity to intervene.

Data can be used to prioritize the policies, programs, and practices that will be implemented to prevent community violence and to describe progress over time. It is important to be intentional about the early, consistent inclusion of community members, youth, and young adults with lived experience of violence when selecting and using data to ensure that their needs and experiences are reflected in the data that will be used. This includes involvement in data interpretation and presentation to provide context for findings and to avoid stigmatization or invoking harmful narratives.

Planning Models and Methods Can Be a Resource

Prevention planning models and methods can help communities assess local conditions to inform the violence prevention strategy selection and ongoing evaluation. Examples of available models and methods include Communities That Care (CTC), PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Encourage Resiliency (PROSPER), the Cardiff Violence Prevention

Model, Homicide Review Commissions, Project Safe Neighborhoods, and Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). These models often build partnerships with local organizations and governmental agencies, including public health, and use information about local violence prevalence and risks to inform prevention activities.[445-454] These models can benefit from engaging organizations that include community members impacted by violence to enhance understanding of the local context for violence and to inform the selection of relevant prevention strategies. For example, the CTC prevention system, which supports community coalitions to select and implement relevant evidence-based programs, has shown long-term preventive effects on violence.[455] The Cardiff Violence Prevention Model merges emergency department data about the location, time, date, and mechanism of injury with law enforcement data to provide more complete information about where violence occurs to guide prevention efforts. An evaluation in the United Kingdom found the model was associated with substantial reductions in violent injuries and significant cost savings.[456, 457]

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) can help build collective capacity of community, academic and other institutions to transform community conditions and promote racial and economic justice that can lead to reductions in violence.[458-460] Examples of CBPR and YPAR initiatives to prevent community violence, respectively, include guiding the development of surveys and other measures of violence,[461] and Photovoice, a method that uses community photos taken by youth and young adults to encourage group discussion, build youth leadership, and identify root causes and racially informed prevention strategies.[462-464] Community violence prevention activities conducted through Youth Violence Prevention Centers (YVPC) in multiple cities across the United States are examples of interventions that focus on community engagement that can help address underlying drivers of inequities in risk for violence.[439]

"Generally, youths like us understand that violence does not solve conflict; it only makes it worse. Yet, we may feel the need to resort to violence to prove—and protect—ourselves. If you are truly interested in violence prevention, you must listen to us and consider this reality."

–YVPC-engaged youth[11]

Evaluation

Continuous evaluation is a necessary component of the public health approach to prevention. It is important at all levels (national, state, and community) to track progress of prevention efforts and evaluate the impact of those efforts, including the impact of strategies in this Prevention Resource.

Qualitative and quantitative evaluation data, produced through program and policy implementation and monitoring, are essential to knowing what does and does not work to affect rates of community violence, and whether these changes are closing or, potentially, widening inequities in risk for community violence. Theories of change and logic models describe the structural and social conditions driving community violence to inform the selection of short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes and are important aspects of program and policy evaluation. Discussing and monitoring for potential unintended consequences are also important.

Sharing evaluation results on an ongoing basis with community members is a best practice and facilitates interpretation of findings based on local knowledge and expertise.

In addition, building and strengthening relationships with community members and the organizations that support them are important components of evaluation activities. Community members, including youth and young adults, have firsthand knowledge of community needs and lived experiences which makes them vital partners in making sense of the data and in assessing the impact of community violence prevention programs. For example, the evaluation focus, methods, data collection, analysis and reporting can be informed by a diverse group of community members that include the voices of young people. Participatory models (such as CBPR and YPAR) provide collaborative, community-driven approaches that combine knowledge, expertise, and capacity-building strategies with research. It is important that team members have explicit training in community engagement techniques to build effective, trusting relationships with partners in communities.

Sharing evaluation results on an ongoing basis with community members is a best practice and facilitates interpretation of findings based on local knowledge and expertise. The causes of community violence may change over time and communities may need to shift their policies, programs, and practices to address these changes. This type of comprehensive approach to evaluation helps communities better understand how strategies are being implemented and what implementation conditions result in the best outcomes to inform the refinement of a community's prevention activities over time.

Conclusion

All individuals strive to be healthy, safe, and connected to others, have equitable access to life opportunities, and be valued members of communities and society. Community violence is a significant and preventable public health problem that results in the loss of thousands of young people and people of all ages each year.[6] Additionally, about 800,000 visits to emergency departments each year are for assaults to young people, which can have significant impacts on their health and well-being, and that of their families and communities.[8]

The strategies and approaches in this Prevention Resource are intended to be used in combination and in a community-engaged, multi-sectoral way to prevent community violence.

Violence directly or indirectly harms entire communities by the injuries and deaths of community members, contributing to fear of engaging in neighborhood activities, and impairing the ability of communities and businesses to grow and prosper.[424] These harms create financial strain on education, justice, and medical systems that leave communities with limited resources to achieve other community goals.[424] Many people in marginalized racial and ethnic communities experience greater risk for violence due to inequities in community conditions.[9, 405, 465] Engaging with community members, including youth and young adults, as knowledgeable, respected, and culturally competent partners and leaders in community violence prevention efforts is important.

Comprehensive approaches to address the underlying drivers of violence, while also reducing the immediate risks, will have the greatest impact now and in the future. While additional research is necessary to continue building the evidence for effective solutions, we can act now based on the best available evidence. Implementing one strategy may have benefits but may not result in long-term and widespread changes in an entire community's level of violence. Implementing complementary strategies and approaches that address the multiple drivers of violence is likely to have greater impact.

The scientifically-supported strategies and approaches described in this Prevention Resource can be critical tools for communities in their violence prevention efforts and have the potential to achieve substantial health and cost benefits. The strategies and approaches are intended to be used in combination and in a community-engaged, multi-sectoral way to prevent community violence. The hope is that everyone can play a role in putting the evidence into action as we work together to have a violence-free society in which all people and communities are safe, healthy, and thriving.

Appendices

Future Directions

Additional research is necessary to expand the evidence base in ways that support communities working to effectively prevent violence and eliminate inequities in risk for violence.

This Prevention Resource provides examples of policies, programs, and practices that reflect the best available evidence for preventing community violence. Research related to the strategies in this resource is ongoing and continually improving. Additional research is necessary to expand the evidence base in ways that support communities working to effectively prevent violence and eliminate inequities in risk for violence. It is important to acknowledge that some existing studies missed opportunities to engage communities and people with lived experiences in the design, implementation, and interpretation of the research. Community leadership is essential for ensuring that the research questions are relevant, the methodology is appropriate, and the findings benefit those most affected by community violence. There are important research gaps related to:

▶ Evaluating innovative strategies that communities are using but have not been rigorously evaluated.

▶ Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention efforts to address the inequities in risk for violence.

▶ Expanding the range of outcomes and populations assessed in evaluation research.

▶ Understanding how to maximize the reach, effectiveness, and sustainability of prevention efforts.

Strategies Communities Use That Are Not Yet Rigorously Evaluated

Many communities are implementing policies, programs, or practices to address community violence that have not yet been evaluated. Additional research is needed to understand whether these are effective at preventing violence and inequities in risk for violence. Some may benefit from an evaluability assessment, which is a systematic evaluation process that describes the extent to which the evaluation of an existing program will provide useful results.[466] Others are ready for outcome evaluations. To this end, it is important for communities and researchers to partner to evaluate these programs, policies, and practices to build the evidence base for preventing violence. Some examples of opportunities to continue to build the evidence base include, but are not limited to, the following:

Community Programs. Communities are implementing innovative and promising prevention programs that can benefit from rigorous evaluation to understand their effects. One example is the Rapid Employment and Development Initiative (READI) Chicago Program. READI is a one-year program that connects individuals who were formerly incarcerated with cognitive behavioral therapy and employment support.[467] There is emerging evidence for some violence outcomes examined, particularly shooting and homicide arrests for men referred by outreach workers.[468] Additional research is needed to understand whether READI Chicago is effective at preventing community violence. Another example is the Roca program being implemented in Massachusetts with support from the U.S. Department of Labor. The program engages young males who are on parole and probation and includes cognitive-behavioral therapy and employment supports. The evaluation of the program experienced challenges with random assignment that might have led to a lack of program impacts.[469] Additional research on Roca is warranted to gauge its effectiveness at preventing community violence. A third example is the Advance Peace (AP) program. It combines street outreach with fellowships for youth and young adults. AP recruits young people ages 14-34 who have experienced violence or are at risk for future violence and are highly influential among their peers to participate in an 18-month Peacemaker Fellowship.[470] AP outreach workers (known as Neighborhood Change Agents) help to diffuse community conflicts and provide the fellows with mentorship, healing-centered support from social services, and life skills classes. The program is based on Operation Peacemaker Fellowship, which showed reductions in firearm violence, but some increases in non-firearm violence.[470] AP was implemented in multiple cities in California and was associated with promising pre-post reductions in the percentage of firearm homicides occurring in AP Zones in each city (5% reduction in Sacramento, 12% reduction in Richmond, and 52% reduction in Stockton), with particular benefits noted in racially segregated communities with a high proportion of Black or African American residents.[471] Additional research is needed to rigorously evaluate the effects of AP on firearm and non-firearm homicides and assaults.

State and Local Policies to Prevent Firearm-Related Violence. Another area where additional research is needed is evaluation of policies that states and communities are implementing to prevent firearm-related injuries and deaths to see if they have the intended benefits. For example, the RAND Corporation released a comprehensive review of the evidence for 18 firearm policies (for example, policies related to who can purchase, own, and possess firearms; sales and transfer regulations; use, storage, and carrying laws) on eight outcomes, including violent crime, suicide, mass shootings, and defensive gun use.[190] While the authors note that evidence is accumulating and continuing to grow for specific policies, most of the outcomes examined had few or no studies that examined their effects, highlighting the need for more research. Given the high toll of firearm-related injuries and deaths in many communities and the effects on family, friends, the health system, and the justice system, state and local policies are being implemented and this provides an opportunity for research to better understand their effects. Key gaps include effects on inequities in firearm violence, school shootings, and mass homicides, as well as research on the secondary effects of policies, including the potential for harms or benefits for firearm owners. Research can also inform efforts to enhance awareness about, and effective implementation of, existing policies and strategies, including those to enhance secure storage practices.[190]

Housing Supports. Few studies have examined the association between housing supports (such as permanent supportive housing, affordable housing options, foreclosure prevention) and community violence. Studies that examined the association often had mixed or inconsistent findings. For example, tenant-based housing subsidy programs, typically in the form of a voucher, are intended to help households with very low incomes afford housing by providing a substantial portion of rent.[472] The impacts of tenant-based housing subsidies that require neighborhood relocation as a condition of receiving the subsidies is mixed.[472] Additional research can examine the effects of equity-focused housing programs (such as land trusts, public housing, access to home ownership), housing stability and equity, and rates of community violence.

Educational Attainment. Given the association between educational attainment and risk for involvement with violence, including homicide,[417, 473] additional research is needed on policies, programs, and practices that advance educational equity and attainment and contribute to eliminating inequities in risk for community violence. This includes strategies that decrease school segregation and inequities in school funding, as well as those that examine the impacts of school curricula on community violence outcomes. Investigating challenges to remaining in school until graduation and also facilitators to accessing adult education programs for people who may have left school before graduating can help ensure equity in higher educational attainment.[474] Also, additional research is needed on universal preschool programs which have positive effects on some educational outcomes, including years of schooling and highest degree completed, but mixed findings for other outcomes such as test scores, well-being, and behavior.[475]

Prevention Efforts to Eliminate Inequities in Risk for Violence

Much of the available evidence does not explicitly consider whether the policies, programs, or practices decreased inequities in community violence and/or inequities in the community conditions that may cause community violence. Some examples of gaps related to understanding effects on inequities include the following:

Policies, Programs, and Practices

Strengthen Economic Security. There is need for additional research on examples related to the strengthen economic security strategy. For example, additional research could shed light on the effects of minimum wage policies, livable wage policies, universal basic income, and policies that address food and housing insecurity on reducing individual and family economic

stress, income inequities, and risk for community violence (such as eviction policies that disproportionately affect Black or African American people living in communities predominantly occupied by people living with low incomes). In addition, the evidence for Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) showed that it may help reduce community violence while also reducing income gaps for some groups.[112] However, additional individual and household economic supports may be needed to fully address income gaps for households with the lowest incomes. For example, additional research is needed to better understand how to address the barriers to accessing economic supports for some groups (such as families with housing or residency insecurity). Additional research that examines the impact of these policies on violence, economic inequities, and other inequities in the risk for violence is also needed. Similarly, there is mixed evidence about the impact of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) on the availability of affordable housing and community racial segregation. Some studies suggest that LIHTC is related to more affordable housing and less segregated communities within metropolitan areas.[476] However, other evidence suggests that LIHTC housing projects are more costly to build and program requirements also increase their administrative costs.[477] Research also suggests that additional efforts are needed (such as how benefits are configured) to promote communities with mixed incomes.[478]

Environmental Design. There are concerns about the potential for environmental design approaches (such as vacant lot remediation) that may lead to neighborhood gentrification or displacement of residents with low incomes.[479] To reduce the likelihood of this outcome, current research is exploring strategies to mitigate displacement including affordable housing development and preservation; equitably engaging community members; and ensuring green spaces and programs are welcoming to all community residents.[480] In addition, a review identified 141 anti-displacement strategies that are currently being used in communities.[479] Additional research is needed to examine the extent to which environmental design and anti-displacement strategies are effective for preventing inequities in risk for community violence.

Lead Exposure. The negative health and behavioral consequences of environmental lead exposure are confirmed in the scientific literature. However, additional evidence is required to identify the extent of risk from the growing list of potential lead hazards in the environment, which include exposure in food, consumer products, soil, and paint and pipes in homes built before 1978, and how those exposures may contribute to the risk for violent behavior. In addition, resource-poor communities are at more risk for lead exposure.[183] The lead abatement process can be hazardous if not conducted properly and by professionals.[481] Barriers to achieving equity in lead exposure prevention include disproportionate costs of unfunded remediation for localities and residents with low incomes. Avoiding stigmatization of affected families and children also requires attention when addressing this complex issue.[482]

Populations

Better understanding the experiences of people from all marginalized groups disproportionately affected by community violence is important in eliminating inequities in risk for violence. Further research is needed to understand the impact of violence and various prevention approaches for people from other marginalized populations. For example:

American Indian and Alaska Native Youth and Young Adults. A high proportion of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people experience violence during their lifetimes,[483] and there are inequities in risk for community violence. This risk for violence is compounded by historical and ongoing structural inequities that influence the community conditions associated with violence.[10] Addressing gaps in research on strategies to reduce risk for community violence experienced by AI/AN people is important, including research on the ongoing impacts of historical trauma and discrimination. Research on implementation and cultural adaptations of the strategies in this Prevention Resource with AI/AN populations is also needed.[484]

Individuals Experiencing Inequities in Risk. Additional research is needed on the impacts of policies, programs, and practices for specific groups who are at higher risk for community violence. For example, people immigrating to the United States may experience unique risks, such as discrimination based on language, customs, or other factors[485, 486] that may contribute to risk for experiencing violence.[487-489] Further research is also needed to assess the effects of programs like Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD), Life Set, and the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative on community violence.[490-494] Additional research is also needed on the impacts of transferring juveniles to the adult prison system on future risk of community violence. This is particularly important given the potential for the transfer to have impacts on adolescent brain and behavioral development that may disproportionately impact youth who have experienced ACEs and those from most marginalized racial and ethnic groups.[495, 496]

Range of Outcomes Assessed in Evaluation Research

To prevent homicides, it is important to examine the effects of prevention efforts on the most serious injuries and outcomes associated with death, including firearm-related violence. More than 80% of homicides in the United States are the result of firearm injuries and the highest firearm homicide rates are among young adults ages 20-34.[8] While some studies have specifically examined firearm-related violence outcomes and/or effects on young adults, additional research is needed to assess effects of community violence prevention efforts on deaths, shootings, and medically treated injuries from violence. For example, reviews of hospital-based intervention programs have noted promising but mixed effects, particularly for violence outcomes and for adults.[373, 380, 497] Evaluations of hospital-based violence intervention studies are often small and not powered to detect significant differences in firearm injuries or deaths.[380] As these programs continue to expand and strengthen (for example, enhancing staffing supports, connections with community partners, and referrals) there is an opportunity and need to address important research challenges that might be driving the mixed effects. This includes full reporting on eligible patients, randomized experimental designs with intent-to-treat analyses, and larger sample sizes to detect changes in less common outcomes like firearm injuries and homicides.[380]

Implementation Research to Maximize the Reach, Effectiveness, and Sustainability of Prevention Efforts

Implementation research can shed light on the conditions that lead to successful implementation of community violence prevention policies, programs, and practices. More implementation research is needed as indicated in the examples included in this Prevention Resource. These include whether different methods of community engagement have differential impacts on preventing

violence. Examples of opportunities to advance implementation research include the following:

Community Engagement Strategies. Additional research is needed to better understand whether various methods for engaging with communities are effective at helping to eliminate economic and social inequities that drive violence. For example, participatory budgeting is being implemented in some communities in ways that provide community members with decision-making power over how money is spent in their communities.[498] Implementation research could examine the effects of participatory budgeting and similar strategies on the selection, implementation, and sustainability of effective prevention strategies.

Policy Implementation Research. Research on how policies are implemented within states and localities is also needed. Many of the policy evaluations included in this Prevention Resource did not examine whether differences in how policies are implemented within states or localities might lead to differential effects on community violence or inequities in risk. Implementation science offers several strategies that might explain the drivers of the effectiveness of policies, programs, and practices.[499] These include multi-sectoral partnerships, educational meetings, ongoing training, enforcement of policies, and forming an implementation blueprint.[499, 500] For example, many of the examples included in the strengthen economic security strategy require partnerships with a diverse array of sectors (such as treasury, banking). It is important to understand what implementation strategies, supports, and enforcement mechanisms increase the likelihood that the approach effectively prevents community violence.

Parenting and Home Visitation Programs. Additional research is needed to better understand some of the findings for parenting and home visitation programs. For example, research on Early Head Start (EHS) showed that children in the program were more likely to have a substantiated report of neglect which is likely not due to EHS. Families may have concerns about the potential to be reported to child protective services and this could be a deterrent to program participation.[165] These concerns may be especially strong for families with members who have undocumented status and thus may fear deportation or feel uncomfortable due to language barriers or cultural differences.[501-503]

Street Outreach and Community Norm Change. Street outreach workers have often experienced and continue to experience the same traumas and adverse living conditions as the youth and young adults they are working to engage in violence prevention activities. Often working for low wages, their job-related chronic exposure to community violence, including witnessing violent deaths, can impact their emotional, behavioral, and social well-being.[504-506] Additional efforts are important for providing support for outreach workers to ensure their health and safety and to enhance retention and effectiveness. Implementation research can compare different models for selecting, training, and supporting outreach workers.

We can prevent community violence by using the best available evidence and working to pursue these and other future directions with robust, community-centered research and evaluation.

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Summary of Strategies and Approaches to Prevent Community Violence

STRATEGY: STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC SECURITY

Approach	Policy, Program, or Practice	Lead Sectors*
Tax credits	Earned Income Tax Credit	Government Housing
	Child Tax Credit	
	Low-Income Housing Tax Credit	
Income support policies	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Government
Social insurance programs	Unemployment Insurance	Government
	Medicaid expansion	
Investment accounts	SEED OK	Government

STRATEGY: PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION

Approach	Policy, Program, or Practice	Lead Sectors*
Preschool enrichment with family engagement	Child Parent Centers	Education Public health Social services
	Early Head Start	
Equitable educational attainment for youth and young adults	Increases in school resources	Education Government
	School restorative justice	
	Educational and vocational programs for individuals while incarcerated or detained	

STRATEGY: **CREATE PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS**

Approach	Policy, Program, or Practice	Lead Sectors*
Modify the physical home environment	Lead exposure prevention	Housing Government Health care
	Secure firearm storage	
Modify the physical and social community environment	Environmental design (vacant lot remediation)	Business Government Community organizations
Reduce exposure to harmful community conditions	Alcohol policies	Business Government
	Chicago Safe Passage	

STRATEGY: **PROMOTE HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Approach	Policy, Program, or Practice	Lead Sectors*
Early childhood home visitation programs	Nurse Family Partnership®	Public health Health care Social services
Parenting skills and family relationship programs	The Incredible Years®	Public health Education
	GenerationPMTO (previously known as Parent Management Training-Oregon Model™ or PMTO)	
	Coping Power	
	Familias Unidas™	

STRATEGY: **STRENGTHEN YOUTHS' AND YOUNG ADULTS' SKILLS**

Approach	Policy, Program, or Practice	Lead Sectors*
School-based skill building programs	Good Behavior Game	Public health Education
	Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies®	
	Life Skills® Training	
	Positive Action	
	Dating Matters®	
Job training and employment programs	Summer Youth Employment Programs	Business Education Community organizations
	Year Up	

STRATEGY: **CONNECT YOUNG PEOPLE TO CARING ADULTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Approach	Policy, Program, or Practice	Lead Sectors*
Mentoring programs	Big Brothers Big Sisters of America®	Community organizations Education
	Becoming A Man®	
After-school programs	Los Angeles' Better Educated Students for Tomorrow	Community organizations Education
	After School Matters	

STRATEGY: **INTERVENE TO LESSEN HARMS AND PREVENT FUTURE RISK**

Approach	Policy, Program, or Practice	Lead Sectors*
Treatment to lessen the harms of violence	Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy®	Health care Social services Community organizations
	Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools	
Treatment to prevent problem behaviors and further experiences with violence	Treatment Foster Care Oregon (formerly known as Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care)	Health care Social services Justice
	Multisystemic Therapy®	
Hospital-based violence intervention programs	Caught in the Crossfire	Health care Community organizations Public health
	SafERteens	
Street outreach and community norm change	Chicago's Cure Violence	Public health Community organizations
	Philadelphia's CeaseFire	
	Safe Streets in Baltimore	
	Chicago CRED	
Community-justice partnerships	Focused deterrence	Community organizations Justice
	LEAD pre-arrest diversion program	
	Deferred adjudication	

* This column refers to the lead sectors well positioned to bring leadership and resources to implementation efforts. For each strategy, there are many other sectors, such as non-governmental organizations, that are instrumental to prevention planning and implementing the specific programmatic activities.

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