



College of Liberal Arts

Center for Public Safety Initiatives

A Review of CERV Data: 5/26/2022 to 5/2/2023

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Introduction

Community Engagement to Reduce Victimization (CERV) is a community-based violence intervention program that seeks to reduce retaliatory dispute related violence (Burt & Altheimer, 2021). "CERV's goals include...reducing hospital readmissions, decreasing pain and suffering for victims and their families and guiding the development of a trauma informed, public health response to urban retaliatory violence" (Burt & Altheimer, 2021, p. 2). It is pressing to address an individual's pain and trauma, both mentally and physically, as soon as possible to create a reasonable action plan they might use to make positive alterations to their life, i.e., finding employment, or continuing education. CERV is built upon numerous partnerships with local groups, including Pathways to Peace, Rochester City School District, Happy Baby Network, Rise Up Rochester (RUR), and the RIT Center for Public Safety Initiatives.

Since 2009, RUR has empowered the community to establish and maintain a nonviolent culture whilst also providing various support services to crime victims and their families (Rise Up Rochester, Inc., n.d.). Beyond engaging with victims, they also seek to engage youth in the community with programs dedicated to keeping them constructively occupied and working to better their communities. RUR holds a billboard contest where Rochester City School District Students are asked to submit artwork that promotes nonviolence, crime reporting, and making healthy decisions (Rise Up Rochester, Inc., n.d.).

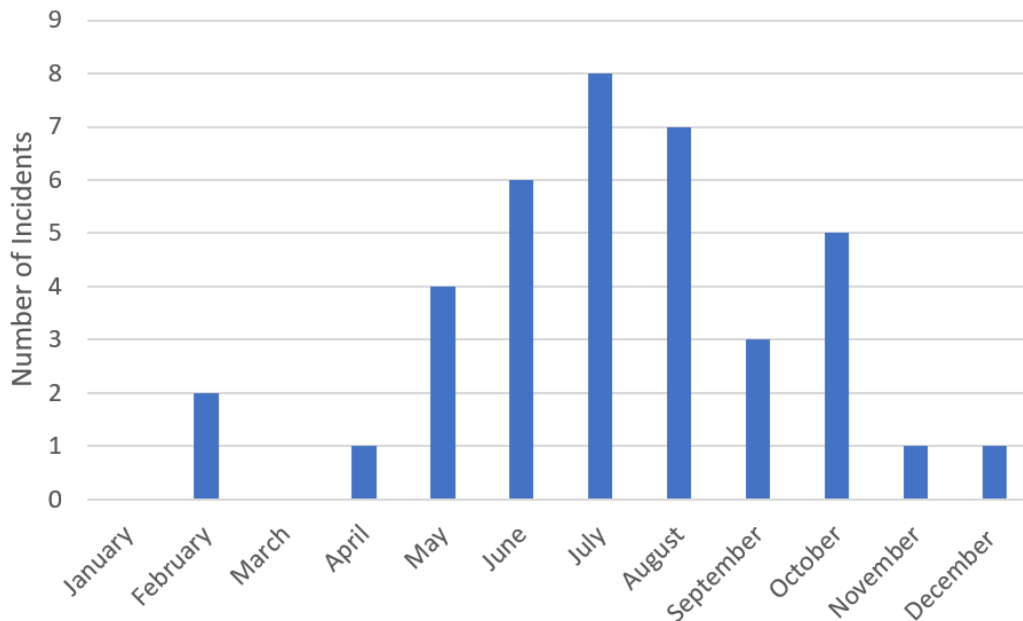
RUR primarily focuses on long term community-wide intervention where CERV seeks to provide services and connections to specific individuals in the short term. While they are not one in the same,

they do work very closely together, especially given that the CERV coordinator works out of the RUR offices. Additionally, Survivor Intervention Team (SIT) meetings occur weekly at the RUR offices. SIT meetings allow partners to come together and address active cases and their needs.

Overview

Between 5/26/2022 and 5/2/2023, CERV handled a total of 49 cases. Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of cases per month. According to the data, most victimization incidents occurred in July (n=8), followed by August (n=7), and June (n=6). Victimization incidents mostly occurred on Thursday (n=10), Monday (n=10), or Saturday (n=8).

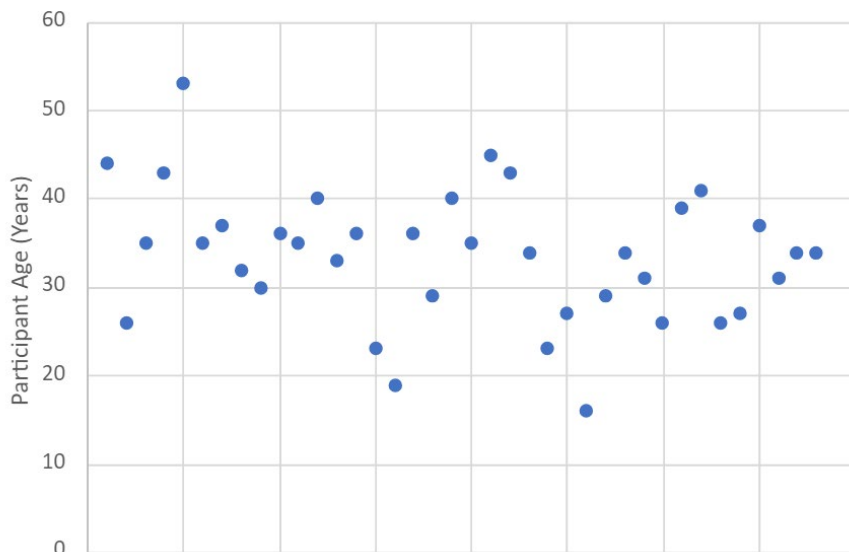
Figure 1 - Cases per month



The average participant age was 33.52 years old. Figure 2 depicts the variety in participant age. The

average age of participants was 33.75 years.

Figure 2 – Age of Participants



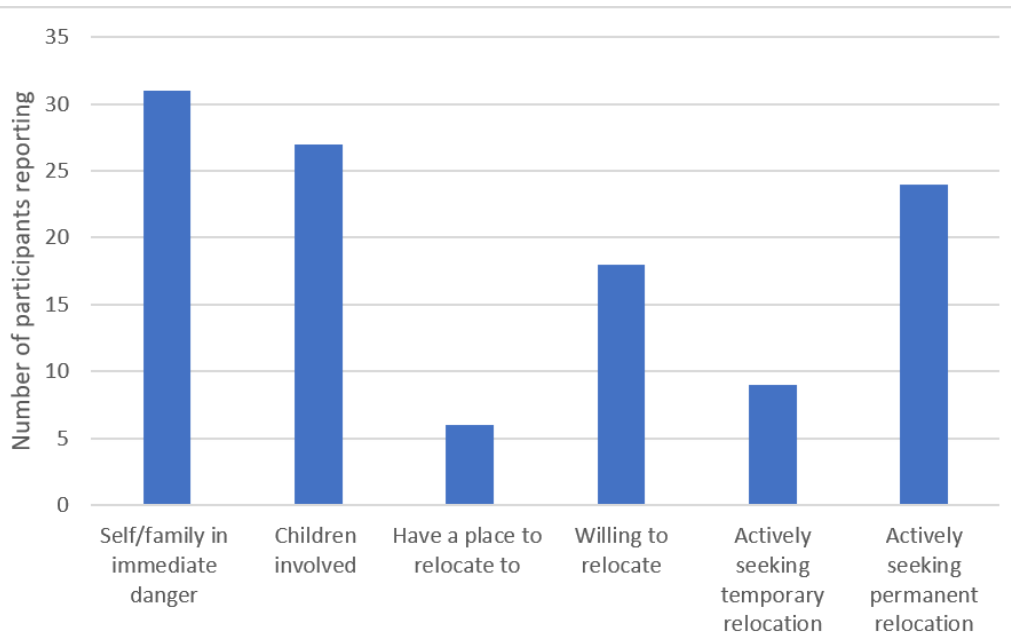
Findings

When an individual connects with CERV they participate in an intake process. During this process victims are asked a variety of questions regarding their circumstances to determine what they need in the short term to reduce their risk of revictimization. For this cohort of victims (n=49), only slightly over half of them reported having a source of income (n=25). Income sources included employment, Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSD), child support, the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS), or food stamps. Additionally, only slightly more than half of the victims reported having a place to stay (n=25). In only seven of the cases the victim reported having a case manager, and in only six of the cases the victim reported that they were already engaged with another community-based service organization. In 33 of the 49 cases, victims

shared that they had children. The total number of children had by victims was 78, generating an average of roughly two children per victim. Of the 78 total children, 72 of them were minors.

Aside from the initial intake process, data was also collected via forms. The specific forms we tracked were the Risk Assessment Form, Service Rules and Protocols Form, Participant Consent Form, and the Participant Expense Sheets. Ninety-six percent of participants (n=47) completed the Participant Consent Form. One participant did not fill out any of the forms but did have a closing sheet stating that they had avoided the initial meetings for the intake process. The other one did not have a reason for not filling out the form. Fifty-nine percent of the participants (n=29) filled out a Service Rules and Protocol Form. The Participant Expense Sheet was filled out by 53% of the participants (n=26) and the Risk Assessment Form was filled out by 84% of the participants (n=41). Figure 3 illustrates the key findings of the Risk Assessment Form.

Figure 3 – Key findings from Risk Assessment Forms



Many (n=31) of the participants indicated that they or their family, were in immediate danger. It was also common for children to be involved (n=27). Very few participants (n=6) had a place to relocate to, though many were willing to relocate out of the area (n=18). Thirty-three participants were actively seeking permanent or temporary relocation. Most of them were seeking permanent relocation (n=24) while the rest (n=9) were only seeking temporary relocation.

Most victimized individuals did not claim gang affiliation, with only 20% of the cases having someone being gang-affiliated (n=8). More were unwilling to admit any gang affiliation, at 32% (n=13). Most participants did not believe that friends or family would retaliate because of their victimization, only 15% (n=6) stated that someone close to them would likely retaliate.

Across all of the cases handled by CERV during this observation period, there were a total of 61 meetings held between a member of the RUR Rochester staff and the participants or surrogates of the participant. A surrogate is anyone directly connected to the victim who might have suffered as a result of their victimization. An average of 1.3 meetings were held per case. Some form of contact was made with a victim or family member of a victim outside of an in person meeting 19 times, with an average of 2.7 times per case. Again, it is possible that additional contact was made that was not recorded.

Conclusion

CERV is a significant asset to the city of Rochester as it allows for the potential mitigation of key risk factors that lead to individuals' revictimization. CERV reconnects victims to the larger community by

exposing them to community groups that want to support their pursuit of a nonviolent lifestyle.

Moreover, CERV illuminates other potential opportunities to support victims, i.e., more job training opportunities and relocation assistance. CERV has helped real people in the Rochester community, and it has the full potential to continue doing so.

References

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About the Center for Public Safety Initiatives

The Center for Public Safety Initiatives is a unique collaboration between RIT's [Department of Criminal Justice](#), the City of Rochester, and the criminal justice agencies of Greater Rochester including the Rochester Police Department and Monroe County Crime Lab. Its purpose is to contribute to criminal justice strategy through research, policy analysis and evaluation. Its educational goals include training graduate and undergraduate students in strategic planning and policy analysis.

The foundation of the Center is the practice of action research in which relevant data and analyses are brought to bear on the day to day decision-making processes of organizations. The Center serves the practice of policy development and implementation in real-time.

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