

Community Planning Models To Reduce Violence

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Introduction

Though community violence has continued to be a serious issue, so much that it was declared a public health issue in the eighties and continues to be considered a public health issue through the present, most communities across the United States have struggled to organize around the reduction of violence. There are a few cities nationally and internationally that have managed to not only organize around violence reduction, but to sustain the organization, evolve as necessary, and, in some cases, to demonstrate an impact on the reduction of community violence. This paper aims to identify a few of these communities and some of the key components that have kept them afloat.

Simi Valley, CA

- In 1995, the Community Gang Task Force was formed in response to increased gang-related homicide, graffiti, and violence in the city.
- The committee developed a 22-page report issued in 1996 that contained a set of recommendations to reduce gang activity in the area.
- The Task Force is comprised of 21 regular members and one alternate member. The members include: two City Council members, one recreation and park board member, one school district board member, one member from neighborhood councils, one member from the council on aging, one member representing local youth organizations, one member from the local religious community, one member representing the Chamber of Commerce, one member representing the Youth Council, one member representing the Chief of Police, one member representing the Sheriff's Office, one member representing the DA's Office, one member representing the Probation Department, and six regular and one alternate community members representing the community at large.
- Community members serve a 2-year term and those community members who wish to sit on the task force must go through an application process
- Meets quarterly and discusses ideas to address gang, graffiti, and at-risk youth issues and then makes appropriate recommendations. Further, the group reviews crime statistics and trends and makes recommendations
- This is a prevention effort as Simi Valley has consistently been rated one of the top 5 safest cities by the FBI
- In July 2008 the task force was renamed the Community Crime Prevention Task Force in order to address other crimes other than those related to gang activity; mayor mentioned this in 2009 state of the city
- As of 2011 group still meets regularly and runs similar as previously but with a larger scope
- <http://www.govlive.com/us/ca/ventura/city-of-simi-valley-ca>

Cayuga County, NY

Partnership for Results model:

- Model of local governance

- Created in 1999, initial funding through federal monies – Departments of Education and Health & Human Services and Justice
- Replicable
- Now 501(c)(3)
- Quasi-governmental
- Board consists of directors of public agencies: education, law enforcement, human services
- Core areas of activity: to integrate evidence-based programs (EBPs) into the community and across the entire age spectrum of children; developed interagency databases to facilitate data sharing amongst service agencies; and facilitated an information collection system at the County level
- The hope is that this design leads to system-wide change, including: maximizing available resources (through ending duplication of services), improving effectiveness of services (through incorporating sustainability), and promoting collaboration with the community-based organizations and public entities.
- Elements:
 - 1) Multidisciplinary screening and assessment of youth (2-tiered process)
 - 2) Local governance
 - 3) MOU on sharing children and family data
 - 4) Interagency database
 - 5) Single point of integration
 - 6) Public health spectrum of prevention, intervention
 - 7) Ongoing training and technical assistance
 - 8) Sustainability
- To replicate, need the following:
 - champions from three sectors (human services, education, and law enforcement)
 - written legislative framework
 - discuss source of problems; NOT just problems
 - change way measure effectiveness
 - small staff in order to ensure data-driven; strict criteria for EBPs
- <http://www.partnershipforresults.org/>

Minneapolis

Blueprint for Action model:

- In November 2006, the Mayor and City Council adopted the following resolution: Recognizing youth violence as a public health problem and establishing a youth violence prevention steering committee.
- Therefore, in January 2007 a Steering Committee (17 members) on youth violence was created to oversee *Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence* (members of the committee include representatives from the following: Mayor's Office, Board of Education, local high schools, City Council, local Violence prevention organizations, Probation, Ministries, Business Partnership, Urban League, health centers, and community foundations). During 2007 the Committee reviewed best practices research, met with youth, consulted national experts, assessed existing youth violence programs, and engaged in discussions surrounding the issues facing the youth. From this, four goals and 34 action items were created.
- Goals and Action Items: The targeted population are all youth in Minneapolis from birth to age 22, with an emphasis on youth ages 8 to 17.
 - (1) Connect every youth with a trusted adult

- (2) Intervene at the first sign that youth are at risk for violence
- (3) Restore youth who have gone down the wrong path
- (4) Unlearn the culture of violence in our community
- Simultaneous with this initiative is the focus on improving the educational success in Minneapolis' schools.
- The current Executive Committee serves through 12/31/12 and includes: a youth representative and the Mayor, as well as representatives from the Search Institute, City Council, Parks and Recreation, School Board, family liaison from the schools, faith community, and community agencies.
- Use public health model to address violence
- Funding: funded by both the City and County which totals \$895,000 of which \$610,000 is designated to create a new juvenile curfew and truancy center in City Hall; funding also supports a Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator who will work with the Steering Committee to establish implementation steps.
- Evaluation: nine measures selected to assess the results.
- Strong philanthropic support in the community
- The Minneapolis foundation is a major funder and when agencies apply for grants under youth or youth violence, it really directs the requestor to follow one of the goals or objectives of the Blueprint
- Quarterly reports are generated sharing where the action items stand and the most recently report available on the website is from December 2010 (encourages accountability)
- <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/yv.asp>

Philadelphia

The Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP):

- Targets the highest risk youth who are at the greatest risk of killing or being killed and provides them with comprehensive supervision.
- Funded through in-kind support (from the agencies involved with the partnership i.e. William Penn Foundation) and from the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG).
- Almost all the youth involved are on probation. The youth partner (what the youth are referred to as) has both a probation officer and a street worker assigned to their case. Street worker and PO work closely together
- The planning meetings were conducted by an unbiased person with a vested interest in reducing youth violence. The planning meetings were held weekly and included city agencies and community agencies. From the city side, the planning group included senior executives from: the DA's office, juvenile probation, adult probation, the police department, the court that hears juvenile cases, and the court that hears adult cases (other city agencies could be involved as well – the school district, recreation department). Community organizations were involved in the planning process in order to provide and supervise the street workers, to identify and manage the resources in the community, to manage the ongoing data collection and analysis, and to provide job preparation and placement services for participants.
- There are three ongoing meetings for the following committees:
 - (1) Operations (review day to day details of the project; meets weekly; first-level supervisors of the probation officers and street workers, police officer liaisons of each district, and representatives from partner agencies attend)

- (2) Management (focus on operational policy, reviewing progress, writing new protocols; meets monthly; first-level supervisors of the probation officers and streetworkers and the representatives from partner agencies attend)
- (3) Steering (makes policy decisions and sets the project's broad direction; meets quarterly; senior-level executives from the partner agencies and organizations and chairpersons of the Operations and Management committees attend)
- The judges play an integral role in that if a youth violates probation, the youth will face immediate consequences, such as graduated sanctions or a swift hearing before the judge (within a few days). The best case scenario is to have a judge who specifically hears YVRP cases.
- The data are collected and analyzed and the data are reviewed at the regularly scheduled meetings of the partners. This provides ongoing self-evaluation as well as data collection.
- Evaluation: The goal of the project was to reduce violence among the youth. In order to evaluate the program, success was based on the reduction of homicides in certain districts. The study compared 10 years worth of homicide data in comparison with the homicide data after the introduction of the YVRP. Raw averages showed a decrease in homicides in the 25th district from an average of 5.8 homicides per quarter to 3.4 after the introduction of the YVRP and in the 24th district, youth homicides declined by an average of 1 per quarter or 4 a year.
- Unclear if this Partnership is still active at this time; cannot find current data and information on the Partnership.

Chicago

- Ceasefire is an interdisciplinary public health approach to violence reduction
- Evidence-based method that began with working at reducing shootings on one block and slowly moved to encompass blocks in entire neighborhoods
- Formed in 1995 under a different name (Chicago Project) and was guided by a Steering Committee and Advisory Board's recommendations; originally meant to be an organizational structure at reducing violence, but after further discussion there was the development of the 8-Point Plan to directly reduce violence in Chicago, this resulted in the creation of the Ceasefire model
- There are five core components: youth outreach, community mobilization, public awareness, faith-based leader involvement, and criminal justice participation
- Works very closely at identifying conflicts between residents in the community through the use of outreach workers and violence interrupters work to mediate the conflict before it results in potential violence
- The violence interrupters and outreach workers are individuals who are familiar with gang life in the communities they serve and have often previously been incarcerated
- The Advisory Board consists of the Mayor, the Archbishop, Director of community relations for a local TV station, and representatives from: chamber of commerce, clear channel, an international law firm, a technology consulting firm, a marketing communications agency, a consulting firm, a health insurance company, and an energy service provider, to name a few
- The ceasefire model has been replicated in a number of cities nationally (And even internationally), including Rochester
- <http://www.ceasefirechicago.org/index.shtml>

Baltimore

Baltimore City Gang Violence Reduction Plan:

- The Plan was created in 2006 with the support of the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP). This plan uses the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model. Both public health and law enforcement strategies are integrated within the plan and the plan is a citywide collaborative.
- There are the following components: a Steering Committee, a Steering Committee Staff Workgroup, a Prevention and Intervention committee, and a Suppression and Technology Development Committee. There are two pre-existing multi-agency groups that facilitated the plan: The Criminal Justice Council and the Family League of Baltimore City, Inc. The Steering Committee has the responsibility of achieving the goals and the Staff Workgroup and two working committees provide regular reports to the Family League and Criminal Justice Council.
- The Baltimore Police Department provides a gang databases for effective targeting of areas and people. These databases include known gang members, maps of territory, crime maps, and deployment areas.
- The Gang Reduction Plan will measure its success by monitoring gun violence and other violent crime indicators. The Steering Committee will collaborate with academic institutions and the Data Collaborative to develop a citywide survey monitoring gang involvement and violence.
- In order to get the youth perspective, three focus groups were held throughout the development of the Prevention and Intervention strategy. There were youth involved from elementary, middle, and high schools. Further, the Youth Commission of Baltimore held a hearing on youth violence and the Chair of this Commission was also a part of the Steering Committee. The Youth Commission is made up of youth ages 14-24 appointed by the mayor.
- There are five interrelated strategies that will be used to reduce violence and gang activity in the city. They are the following:
 - (1) To increase community mobilization.
 - (2) To have readily available opportunity provisions.
 - (3) An increase in social awareness in order to have stronger, more successful intervention.
 - (4) To suppress the gang violence problem and lower homicide rates.
 - (5) Promote structured change in order to ensure healthy development for individuals and the community.
- http://www.jhsph.edu/preventyouthviolence/research/gang_violence_plan.html

Scotland

- In 2005, the Violence Reduction unit was created to use best practices to reduce violence in Strathclyde. Then, in 2006 it took on a national role. And, in 2007 Scotland created a strategic plan to reduce violence. According to the plan, there are six aims:
 1. Violence reduction as a national priority
 2. enforcement
 3. attitudinal change
 4. primary prevention
 5. secondary prevention
 6. tertiary prevention
- This is an example of a national plan that identifies violence as being an issue, and creating and implementing a strategic plan on a national level; this plan continues today with constant

updates as to tasks completed; one of the major hopes is that there is a cultural shift in thinking about violence with the understanding that it will take generations to see long-term change.

- Completed tasks include: violence becomes high priority in police control strategies, Cross Departmental Violence Working Group established, injury surveillance begins in two hospitals, an ad campaign to reduce gun violence created, violence counseling begins in hospitals in Glasgow, mapped gang territories, reduced gang violence among clients who participated in CIRV initiative, sent attitudinal change pamphlets to parents with kids in specific programs, launched an injury surveillance pilot, set up gangs helpline, and other tasks have been completed as well
- Some of the plans for the future include: working with criminal justice Authorities in developing plans to tackle violent offenders, establish dedicated funding for Violence Reduction, to have reduced incidence of knife related assaults, to establish data sharing of police information with other agencies, to have sustained multimedia public health campaigns aimed at changing cultural norms surrounding interpersonal violence, develop range of teaching materials aimed at violence reduction, citywide evaluation of parenting and early years support, establish a highly trained staff of school based officers involved in violence prevention, engage with agencies dealing with at risk children and youth, have a range of victim support services, and encourage the establishment of groups in community to mentor and support those seeking to change their behavior.
- <http://www.actiononviolence.com/>

New Zealand

Action Plan to Reduce Community Violence & Sexual Violence:

- Created in 2004, this is part of the Government's overall Crime Reduction Strategy (CRS). The CRS identifies the following priority areas:
 - (1) to reduce family violence and child abuse
 - (2) to reduce other violence and sexual violence
 - (3) to reduce serious traffic offending
 - (4) to reduce youth offending and reoffending
 - (5) to reduce burglary
 - (6) to reduce theft of and from cars
 - (7) to reduce organized crime
- Developed through consulting with various agencies (governmental and non-governmental) around violence reduction. An initial discussion document was created in 2002 and from the discussion, the four focus action areas were identified and it was determined that a specific Action Plan was more appropriate than a 'General Violence Strategy.' While the Action Plan was being drafted, an inter-sectoral workshop was held to ensure the direction of the Plan.
- The two goals are: to achieve reduction in community violence and to achieve reduction in sexual violence.
- The goals will be met by addressing gaps in four action areas: (1) attitudes to violence, (2) alcohol related violence, (3) violence in public places, and (4) sexual violence.
- Three coordinating groups will manage the actions. These groups are:
 - (1) Interagency Programme Management Group (develop public education and communication program for violence reduction)
 - (2) National Task Force for Community Violence Reduction (coordinate actions on violence)

(3) Interagency Steering Group on Sexual Violence (develop, monitor, and review coordinated approach on sexual violence)

Each coordinating group is responsible for collecting and analyzing data and reporting the progress every 6 months to the Crime Reduction Strategy Joint Ministers' Group.

- The Plan emphasizes that there is no single factor that causes violence and, likewise, there is no single solution to violence. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is important and contains the following:
 - Promotion of non-violence as a cultural norm;
 - Changing the conditions that may give rise to violence;
 - Strategies to prevent reoffending;
 - Support and protection to victims;
 - Multi-sectoral partnerships at local and national levels.
- Some important pieces to this plan include: developing an Internet tool box that contains violence reduction resources, best practice, etc.; an education and enforcement package which informs a range of audiences about new initiatives; encouraging the incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED); promoting and extending school-based educational programs on sexual violence; and a pilot study on data collection from hospitals will be undertaken to enhance assault data.
- Plan reviewed and updated (as appropriate) annually.

It is important to recognize there are numerous community planning initiatives that began in other communities that started similar to many of the above examples, but diffused in less than two years. Community planning around violence reduction is not an easy task and it requires the drive and determination and continued interest of at least one key person. Two components that are in all of the above models are: addressing violence as a public health issue and organized collaboration.