

Best and Promising Practices- Youth Teen Prevention

Summary Overview:

Youth violence is when young people aged 10–24 years intentionally use physical force or power to threaten or harm others. Although rates of youth violence have been reducing over the last 15 years, they remain quite high. Research has identified several causes of youth violence that range from individual-level risk factors (persistent violence or violence limited to adolescent years), family-level risk factors such as child maltreatment and household environmental factors, and finally, community and social environmental risk factors that include gangs. Specific acts of violence such as homicides, tend to cluster in neighborhoods with concentrated disadvantage defined by poverty, unemployment and single-headed households. Other characteristics associated with high rates of violence are residential instability, dense population, and high concentrations of alcohol stores.

Youth violence is a national issue, and one that policy makers and service providers are seeking to address. Included in this document is a list of Evidence Based – Proven practices and Proven strategies that was prepared for the Californian Governor’s Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy. There are numerous practices with various target outcomes, costs, and approaches. A recommended approach is to identify practices and strategies that address the three levels of youth violence risk: individual, family-level, and community and social environments. Furthermore, it is important to leverage existing efforts in the community, two of which are described below.

The National Public Health Strategy to Prevent Youth Violence is a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the implementation and evaluation of evidenced-informed strategies that reduce rates of youth violence. The four themes of the strategy address in individual to environmental factors that contribute to violence:

- Strengthening youth’s skills and internal resources, including conflict resolution skills, leadership potential, and self-confidence.
- Building and supporting positive relationships between youth and adults including parents, caregivers, teachers, and community mentors.
- Promoting thriving, safer, and more connected communities by having community programs that foster academic and vocational skill development and violence prevention through environmental design.
- Creating a safer and healthier society with multi-sector and multi-disciplinary approaches and evidence informed violence prevention policy.

Evidence Base:

Program/Practice	Description	Outcomes	Benefits	Costs	Benefit - Costs
DELINQUENCY & RECIDIVISM					
Nurse Family Partnership	Prevention program administered by registered nurses to at-risk mothers in home	38.2% reduction in recidivism for mothers 15.7% reduction in recidivism for children	\$27,092	\$6,336	\$20,756
Functional Family Therapy (FFT)	Intervention administered by therapist in-home focusing on family motivation, engagement & problem-solving	18.1% reduction in recidivism	\$52,156	\$2,380	\$49,776
SUBSTANCE USE					
Life Skills Training (LST)	Prevention of substance abuse provided in middle school classrooms	50%-75% reduction in tobacco, alcohol, & marijuana use			
ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR					
Big Brothers/Big Sisters Mentoring	Prevention using volunteers as mentors for youth from single parent homes	About 33% less likely than control youth to hit someone			
Olweus Anti-Bullying Program	Prevention administered by school staff using school-wide, classroom & individual components	Reduction in reports of bullying and victimization; Reduction in general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft and truancy			
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)	Prevention promoting emotional and social competencies among elementary school children	Decreased report of conduct problems, including aggression Increased ability to tolerate frustration			
The Incredible Years	Prevention administered by parents & teachers to reduce antisocial behavior	Reductions in peer aggression in the classroom Reductions in conduct problems at home & school			

Example- Communities That Care:

Communities That Care (CTC) is different from any of the other evidence based practices (EBPs) and is itself not a program. Rather it is a community and stakeholder organizing platform that helps community leaders scientifically identify problems within their community and address them through the installation of one or more proven practices. The main focus of the CTC platform is to minimize the risk factors associated with delinquent youth behaviors and in doing so, improve protective factors associated with positive youth outcomes. Specifically, the CTC model is designed to help community stakeholders and decision makers understand and apply information about risk and protective factors, in conjunction with educating stakeholders on programs that have proven to make a difference in promoting healthy and positive youth development.

All CTC models are community-based and follow the same five-phase process:

1. **Get Started:** Community leaders assess community readiness to undertake collaborative prevention efforts
2. **Get Organized:** Get a commitment to the CTC process from community leaders and form a diverse and representative prevention coalition
3. **Develop a Profile:** Use epidemiologic data to assess prevention needs
4. **Create a Plan:** Choose tested and effective prevention policies, practices, and programs based on assessment data
5. **Implement and Evaluate:** Implement the new strategies with fidelity, in a manner congruent with the program's theory, content, and methods of delivery, and evaluate progress over time.

Generally this process will take between two to three years, with the first year (steps 1–3) focused on identifying and training stakeholders, building group consensus and assessing community needs and risk factors. The next two years (steps 3-5) are generally dedicated to deciding what type of program to adopt, implementing it, and collecting evaluation data.

Another major element of CTC is its data collection efforts and the Communities That Care (CTC) Youth Survey. The youth survey is a needs-assessment tool designed to help communities plan, implement, and measure successful prevention programs. The anonymous survey was specifically designed to be administered in a school setting, within a single 50-minute class period, for students in grades 6–12. The questionnaire measures an assortment of risk and protective factors that extensive longitudinal research have proven to be effective predictors of drug use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and youth violence. The CTC Youth Survey helps communities develop an understanding of the influences that lead children toward negative behaviors and the factors that mitigate these influences, allowing communities to more effectively allocate resources for maximum benefit. An example of the CTC Youth Survey can be found at: http://rothenbach-research.com/surveys/CTCYS_Questionnaire.pdf

Coordination:

All youth violence prevention efforts must involve commitment and activity from service providers, policy makers and community members. Furthermore, successful strategies need to address the risk factors at each level: individual, family/home, and community/school.

Funding:

According to the Violence Prevention Works website, there are funding opportunities available to address youth violence in various communities. http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/funding_no_deadlines.page

Robins Foundation Educational Grants- Giving primarily in Richmond, VA to a broad causes in the Richmond, VA, area. Categories of support include, but are not limited to: cultural, charitable, scientific, environmental and educational. Currently, we are particularly interested in grants that improve the lives and opportunities of at-risk youth. Average amount for grant funds: \$5,000.00 - \$25,000.00.

Contact: 804-697-6972, jane.walker@robinsfdn.org, <http://www.robins-foundation.org/>

Capacity:

As mentioned above, it is important to build on the existing efforts that address youth violence in Richmond.

Clark-Hill Institute for Positive Youth Development's (Clark-Hill) mission is to empower youth, schools, families and other stakeholders to promote the health, safe and positive development of youth in the Richmond community from early adolescent through young adulthood. Clark-Hill is working closely with community representatives to develop an action plan to address youth violence. The action plan involves identifying factors that place youth at risk and the creation of programs that will promote positive development among the youth in Richmond. Clark-Hill is working with community partners and city agencies to coordinate and implement a set of school-based, family-focused, and community-based programs. The community-based intervention aids in: (1) building capacity of youth serving organizations to increase the availability and access to high-quality, evidence-based positive youth development resources; and (2) strengthening social capital that build parent and youth awareness and connection to these resources. Clark-Hill is utilizing an innovative quasi-experimental approach, the multiple baseline design, which will assist them in evaluating community-level changes. Clark-Hill researchers will use several administration data sources (e.g., homicides, injuries, ED visits, school discipline reports) and survey measures (e.g., self-report aggression and violence) to assess changes among the three communities chosen.

Additionally, Richmond Peace Education Center and the community percussion group Drums No Guns helped a group of Richmond teenagers create the Richmond Youth Peace Project (RYPP). RYPP's primary goal is to encourage young people to learn and apply techniques of nonviolent conflict resolution to help reduce the level of youth violence in central Virginia. Additionally the organization promotes youth leadership by involving teens throughout the planning and presentation of RYPP events, and encourages young people to express themselves positively through the arts. Specific components of the project include: the teen conflict resolution team, an annual youth peace summit, the annual generation dream educoncert, and regular monthly meetings.

<http://rypp.rpec.org/>

Resources:

CDC identified resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/prevention.html>

Collaborative Efforts to Address Youth Violence: <http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/feature-article/collaborative-efforts-address-youth-violence>