URBAN NETWORKS TO INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH

UNITY
through Violence Prevention

Preventing Violence Before it Occurs

Overview of the UNITY RoadMap

A Framework for Effective and Sustainable Efforts

■ **SUMMARY**

■ **PARTNERSHIPS**
> High-Level Leadership
> Collaboration & Staffing
> Community Engagement

▶ **WHAT** *does it take to prevent violence before it occurs?*

PREVENTION
> Programs, Organizational Practices, & Policies
> Communication
> Training & Capacity Building

■ **STRATEGY**
> Strategic Plans
> Data & Evaluation
> Funding

UNITY *RoadMap*
PARTNERSHIPS · PREVENTION · STRATEGY

URBAN NETWORKS TO
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH

UNITY
through Violence Prevention

UNITY builds support for effective, sustainable efforts to *prevent violence before it occurs* so that urban youth can thrive in safe environments with supportive relationships and opportunities for success.

This is a summary of the *UNITY RoadMap*, a comprehensive framework for preventing violence. For complete references and a full version of the *UNITY RoadMap*, please visit our website at www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html or contact us at 510.444.7738.

Additional UNITY Resources to prevent violence
■ Information on what works
■ Tools
■ Training
■ Consultation
■ Peer networks
■ City Voices & Perspectives
■ Making the Case

Recommended citation:
Prevention Institute. *Overview of the UNITY RoadMap: A Framework for Effective and Sustainable Efforts*. UNITY RoadMap, 2008.

UNITY CO-CHAIRS

LARRY COHEN, MSW
Prevention Institute

DEBORAH PROTHROW-STITH, MD
Harvard School of Public Health

BILLIE WEISS, MPH
Southern California Injury
Prevention Research Center,
UCLA School of Public Health

UNITY PROJECT DIRECTOR

RACHEL DAVIS, MSW
Prevention Institute
221 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94607
510.444.7738
www.preventioninstitute.org
rachel@preventioninstitute.org

WHAT does it take
to prevent violence before it occurs?

Prevention

PREVENTION addresses multiple underlying contributors (risk and resilience/ protective factors) through *programs, organizational practices, and policies*. These efforts can be strengthened by clear and consistent *communication* that makes a compelling case for prevention and *training and capacity building* to ensure that people have the necessary skills to support successful implementation.

The three elements of prevention in the *UNITY RoadMap* are summarized below and followed by a detailed description for each element, including key characteristics, city examples, and tools and resources.

PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES, & POLICIES

Programs, organizational practices, and policies address the complex factors that contribute to violence by decreasing underlying risk factors and increasing resilience factors. Young people, families, and communities with increased resilience and decreased risk are more likely to thrive and be safe from violence. Combining programs with policies and practices contributes to more effective and sustainable outcomes. City representatives have prioritized a set of strategies for programs, organizational practices, and policies to prevent violence (see Appendix A).

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication can help build and sustain prevention efforts. Informed by effective framing, successful communication via channels such as the media, public officials, and others in the public sphere can convey positive messages about youth, build an understanding of effective violence prevention, make the case for prevention, and foster buy-in into prevention strategies and priorities.

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

Practitioners, service providers, program and agency directors, and elected officials need skills to prevent violence. These skills can be developed through multiple avenues including consultation and technical assistance, training, conferences, mentoring, internships, coaching, and reading or other self-paced learning opportuni-

ties. Emphasizing the kinds of skills and leadership needed to develop, implement, and sustain the various elements of the *UNITY RoadMap* can help foster traction and success. Cross-disciplinary training can help build a common language and foster understanding about different roles. A key component of training is to help the public and private sectors understand how their mandates and activities can contribute to preventing violence.

Prevention

PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES, & POLICIES

Programs, organizational practices, and policies address the complex factors that contribute to violence by decreasing underlying risk factors and increasing resilience factors. Young people, families, and communities with increased resilience and decreased risk are more likely to thrive and be safe from violence. Combining programs with policies and practices contributes to more effective and sustainable outcomes. City representatives have prioritized a set of strategies to prevent violence.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **REDUCES RISK FACTORS AND INCREASES RESILIENCE FACTORS.** There is no single cause that accounts for violence. Rather, underlying risk and resilience factors contribute to violence or its prevention. A growing body of research demonstrates the interrelationship between risk and resilience (Pollard et al. 1999), the ability of resiliency to mitigate the effect of some risks (Bradley et al. 1994; Smith et al. 1995), and the importance of focusing on both sets of factors (Smith et al. 1995).

- **STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE.** Preventing violence requires a concentrated focus on neighborhoods, families, and youth. Community-level strategies can assure appropriate services, a synergy between efforts, and achieve a tipping point at which community-wide violence levels will fall. Families are the cornerstones of communities and the place where many values, beliefs, and norms are learned and passed on. Family members need appropriate skills and support in order to be safe and nurturing — especially families living in communities with high rates of violence. Programs, organizational practices, and policies can also prepare young people with the skills and supports to negotiate potentially volatile situations, form strong attachments and relationships, participate in their schools and communities in a meaningful way, and have hope about the future.

- **ORIENTED TO CHANGING NORMS ABOUT VIOLENCE.** Violence is a learned behavior and is shaped by social norms. Norms can be defined as behavior shapers. Therefore, it is critical to not only focus on individual behav-

"And what [was] needed to prevent them from joining gangs was ample recreation for boys as well as girls, jobs and internships for training and money, and assistance to allow their families to live in decent homes."

Congressman Bobby Scott

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAMS, ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES, & POLICIES

- Reduces risk factors and increases resilience factors
- Strengthens communities, families and young people
- Oriented to changing norms about violence
- Place- or population-based
- Prioritizes prevention
- Balances immediate, intermediate & long-term priorities
- Brought to scale
- Culturally competent and relevant
- Developmentally appropriate

URBAN NETWORKS TO INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH

UNITY
through Violence Prevention

iors and attitudes but also the environments that shape those behaviors and attitudes. The *Spectrum of Prevention* (Cohen and Swift 1999) is a tool that enables leaders and coalitions to shape a comprehensive set of activities that can contribute to changing norms.

■ **PLACE- OR POPULATION-BASED.** Emerging models for effective violence prevention do not focus solely on individuals or individual programs. To have a greater impact, efforts are being designed to reach an entire population (e.g., young people and their families or a defined place, such as a neighborhood). In part due to limited resources, many cities are indentifying specific geographic areas that are at high risk for violence and coordinating a range of services, supports, and initiatives within those areas. For example, Oakland, CA has identified Sobrante Park and the Historic Hoover Neighborhood and has dedicated staffing to coordinate and support efforts there through a formal partnership with the county's public health department.

■ **PRIORITIZES PREVENTION.** Successful youth grow up in communities where they are allowed—even encouraged—to thrive. Yet violence in many communities is interfering with young people's ability to be successful. Young people are growing up in unsafe environments with limited opportunities. Violence is not inevitable. It is a predictable behavior in the unsafe environments where young people live. As a consequence, cities spend many resources addressing the *aftermath* of violence—in the form of criminal justice and law enforcement costs, medical and social services costs, and lost revenue—which threatens it's economic independence. Youth deserve the opportunity to grow up in strong families and thriving communities—free from violence at home, in school, and in their communities, and they need the chance to be successful. This requires attention to and prioritization of prevention.

■ **BALANCES IMMEDIATE, INTERMEDIATE & LONG-TERM PRIORITIES.** Violence creates a real and immediate danger in many neighborhoods and threatens the well-being of both youth and adults. While it is critical to take immediate and intentional steps to reduce the threat through intensive intervention efforts, it is also important to put intermediate and longer-term prevention strategies into place to reduce the threat over time. These strategies can be designed to work together for greater impact. It's also important to understand that prevention outcomes can be achieved in relatively short periods of time. For example, schools can reduce violence by as much as 15% in six months with universal, school-based prevention strategies (Hahn, et al., 2007).

■ **BROUGHT TO SCALE.** Addressing the most relevant risk and resilience factors and doing so in a way that will have the intended impact within identified neighborhoods, communities, schools, or cities requires bringing programs, practices, and policies to scale with adequate *staffing, training,* and *funding*. Too often, efforts are scattered, and precious resources are dissipated. Over time, it is critical to have enough saturation of programs, practices, and policies to have an impact on an identified population (e.g., a specific neighborhood, 14 – 19 year olds, etc.) and to be able to bring that investment to scale so outcomes can be sustained and violence will be prevented, rather than simply displaced to another location.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

■ **Spectrum of Prevention.** A tool to address broader environmental and systems-level issues and shape a comprehensive set of activities that can contribute to changing norms (Cohen and Swift, 1999).

■ *First Steps, Taking Action Early to Prevent Violence.* The *First Steps* report presents best practices and offers a comprehensive strategy to start effective violence prevention efforts at an early age.

■ **National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center.** The NYVPRC provides key leaders in communities with resources to support their efforts to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate effective youth violence prevention efforts. www.safeyouth.org

■ **Search Institute Developmental Assets.** The 40 Developmental Assets represent the relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to promote positive youth development. www.search-institute.org/content/what-are-developmental-assets

■ **Blueprints for Violence Prevention.** A national initiative that identified 11 prevention and intervention programs as effective in reducing adolescent violent crime, aggression, delinquency, and substance abuse. ww.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/

■ *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General.* The Surgeon General's report on youth violence focuses on the scope of the problem, its causes, and how to prevent it using a public health approach.

URBAN NETWORKS TO INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

- **CULTURALLY COMPETENT AND RELEVANT.** Values, customs, and priorities vary from one culture to another and these differences must be accounted for in designing and implementing programs, policies, and practices to prevent violence. Indeed, the strategies and priorities should reflect and feel relevant to those living in the community.

- **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE.** Developmental needs should be taken into account. Young children, "tweens," adolescents, and young adults have different needs and capacities will respond accordingly.

PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE BEFORE IT OCCURS

Cities can take action to prevent violence *before* it occurs, and they need help and support to be more effective. In late summer 2007, UNITY convened young people and representatives from cities across the country to prioritize strategies to prevent violence *before* it occurs. City representatives identified a set of key strategies from across the prevention continuum that would support violence prevention efforts in cities (see box below). These strategies should be prioritized nationally to strengthen violence prevention resources and policies.

PREVENTION CONTINUUM

UPFRONT:
Strategies everyone needs to be safe and thrive

IN THE THICK:
Strategies designed for those who may be at increased risk

AFTERMATH:
Strategies dealing with the consequences of violence after it has occurred to reduce the chances it will re-occur

---

PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

Primary Prevention UPFRONT	Secondary Prevention IN THE THICK	Tertiary Prevention AFTERMATH
■ Positive early care and education ■ Positive social and emotional development ■ Parenting skills ■ Quality after-school programming ■ Youth leadership ■ Social connections in neighborhoods ■ Quality education* (including universal school-based violence prevention strategies) ■ Economic development*	■ Mental health services ■ Mentoring ■ Family support services ■ Conflict interruption/ street outreach	■ Mental health services ■ Successful re-entry

A complete version of the Prioritized Strategies is available at www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html . It includes a complete definition of strategies; the research documenting their ability to decrease risk factors and increase resilience factors; examples of local activities to implement each strategy; and links to experts, organizations, or published research. For a brief description of each Prioritized Strategy, see Appendix A.

* For broad categories which are largely under the purview and mandate of specific agencies, the focus should be on delineating the elements within that category that will specifically address violence.

URBAN NETWORKS TO
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

CITY EXAMPLES
CHICAGO, IL: CeaseFire

CeaseFire Chicago is an evidence-based public health effort designed to reverse the violence epidemic through behavior change supported by street outreach workers, public education campaigns and community mobilization. Evaluation findings show an average 45% reduction in shootings and killings CeaseFire Chicago also aims to transform communities by stimulating local economies through the creation of jobs within the CeaseFire program. The CeaseFire Chicago model has been replicated 16 times, and findings from a US Dept of Justice study showed 25-40% drops in shootings and killings in the first year of the intervention. Other benefits of the CeaseFire Chicago model show some return of businesses to highly-impacted neighborhoods, and the potential for $30 billion in savings from unnecessary costs of hospitalization, healthcare services, and criminal justice costs (www.ceasefirechicago.org).

OXNARD, CA:
City Corps Learning through Work and Service

Oxnard City Corps is a youth development program of the City of Oxnard which uses community service as a platform for work and service learning. Organized by city staff and area youth leaders in response to the community's need for employment training and the uncertainties of federal and state funding, City Corps is the result of 14 years of experimentation by youth and adults working together to develop a sustainable youth development platform that enlists the whole community to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from its projects and activities.

Since its birth in 1995, Oxnard City Corps teams have contributed over a million hours of community work and service, implementing over 12,000 projects, and engaging approximately 10,000 area youth in work training, service learning, and community- building activities (www.citycorps.org).

SALINAS, CA: Library Cards for All

Libraries are not often considered when thinking about violence prevention, however, a simple yet innovative change in practice resulted in more young people reading, engaging in meaningful opportunities, having a safe place to gather, and connecting with their community. A partnership between the library and schools was established to provide all students with library cards, free of charge and application-free. Further, the library eliminated fines and fees for the first year to enable students to learn about using the library. Since the change, the library has seen a significant increase in library usage by young people and their families. Moreover, the community feels the importance of libraries in their lives, a constituency for libraries has been built, and more young people and their families are reading and spending time together.

"The metaphor of a slot machine illustrates the way America has lined up the risk factors, resulting in an epidemic of youth violence. Just as chance determines the way the windows line up on the slot machine, chance determines how risk and resilience line up in the life of any give child. However, chance does not determine the possible option that might fill each window—public policy does. Through its public policy, a society determines the amount of services, resources, and options available to children…The interplay and relationships among risk and protective factors present many opportunities for society to help children early and prevent unnecessary tragedy."

Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith
Murder is No Accident

URBAN NETWORKS TO
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

SAN DIEGO, CA:
Fostering Sustainable Neighborhood Strategies

San Diego's Gang Prevention and Intervention Strategy delineates a goal of advancing effective and promising gang prevention and intervention programs/strategies on a neighborhood basis. This strategy is supported by an effective, coordinated, and collaborative process; data and research analysis to keep the Mayor, City Council and Commission aware of key gang trends; on-going anti-gang research; and a sustainable funding strategy.

SEATTLE, WA: Identifying Risk Factors for
the Prevention of Violence

In order to develop one united effort to address violence affecting Seattle's youth, agencies from the City of Seattle came together to establish a collaborative network across agencies. One of the initial priorities was to identify the most relevant risk factors for violence. This task was approached in three steps: first, a list of core indicators was complied from an extensive review of literature related to the relationship between violence and youth. The literature review yielded about 20 risk factors, each connected to one of four areas: community, family, school, or individual. Second, they narrowed down the list of predictors so that it would be specific to Seattle's youth population. This was accomplished through interviews with 14 network members and other experts within the field of violence. These informants identified the most relevant risk factors, narrowing the list to seven. In the last step, informants ranked the seven remaining factors in order of what they felt was the most important to address. The rankings were complied into a final list of indicators. The results were as follows: 1) low levels of parental involvement, 2) child maltreatment, 3) poor family management, 4) truancy, 5) poverty, 6) exposure to violence/prejudice, 7) early initiation of violence, and 8) poor academic achievement. This list of risk factors creates a shared understanding and focus for Seattle's efforts to prevent violence. Furthermore, this process created a clear vision for local priorities backed by academic research to be used by future programs to shape policies and to inform scope and priorities.

SOUTH BRONX, NY: Green-Collar Jobs

Given the urgent need to create healthy environments and provide communities with economic opportunities, Sustainable South Bronx (SSBX) has devised a solution for multiple problems. Through the Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training Program, residents of the South Bronx receive green-collar jobs training and job placement support. The program aims to create a pathway out of poverty into living wage, green-collar jobs, through a 10-week training program that includes green-roof installation and maintenance, brownfield remediation, urban forestry design and maintenance, wetland/estuary restoration and stream bank stabilization training. Participants of the program have received some form of public assistance in their life, and about half have prison records. Further, the Sustainable South

Bronx is transforming and building healthier communities by greening the physical environment that their residents live in, while ensuring the inclusion of communities of color in the green economy (www.ssbx.org).

COMMUNICATION

C ommunication can help build and sustain prevention efforts. Informed by effective framing, successful communication via channels such as the media, public officials, and others in the public sphere can convey positive messages about youth, build an understanding of effective violence prevention, make the case for prevention, and foster buy in for prevention strategies and priorities.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

■ **GROUNDED IN STRATEGY.** Communication should be driven by an overall strategy with clear goals and objectives. This will help define intended audiences, content and messages, timing, and outlets.

■ **DELINEATES THE BENEFITS OF PREVENTION AND BUILDS A CONSTITUENCY.** Building political will for prevention efforts requires that various sectors stand behind a prevention platform. Different sectors will be responsive to different arguments. For example, the business sector and policymakers may articulate a strong, coherent case for the economic benefits of prevention. For others, benefits to quality of life, improved safety, or providing opportunities for young people may be more persuasive.

■ **CLARIFIES THE PROBLEM.** Language that criminalizes youth can lead to fear-based solutions, instead of prevention priorities. This further reinforces the prevailing notion that violence is solely a law enforcement and criminal justice issue. Often, criminal activity and violence may be seen as an individual choice deserving of punishment and restitution. The public does not see violence as a community responsibility when it is framed as a problem for law enforcement to address. Because law enforcement and criminal justice are used as the dominant frame, the resources for and emphasis on prevention *before* the onset of violence is often minimized. In fact, securing resources for on-going community programs, family supports, youth services, and other strategies that can help prevent violence is more challenging in the face of this dominant frame. The UNITY National Consortium recommended describing the problem in one of four ways: social/toxic environment, inability to meet individual needs, racialization, or structural-related issues (see Appendix B).

■ **CONVEYS VALUES.** Framing is a tool that can help shape effective communication. The concept of framing grew out of looking at political opinion among the general public. It was discovered that political messages resonate better with the public when the messages invoke their own values. Values can be defined as the beliefs of a person or social group in which they have an emotional investment (either for or against). Values inform people's default way of

"Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy, and mutual valuing."

Rollo May

URBAN NETWORKS TO INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

thinking, and understanding how to communicate in a way that resonates with their values is key. People might support or oppose the exact same policy based on the values that are deliberately brought up—or brought to mind (less consciously). Some of the work on framing from a political perspective has frequently elicited the following values: community, equity, fairness, family, freedom, independence, justice, opportunity, responsibility, self-reliance, safety, stability, success, tradition, trust.

■ **OPENS PEOPLE UP TO THE OPTION OF PREVENTION.** The framing literature asserts that the key to framing is literally to open up people's minds to a possibility that they hadn't previously been open to or that enables people to think about something in a way that they weren't previously open to. With this understanding, UNITY consciously changed its language from violence prevention to "preventing violence before it occurs." Violence prevention is an accepted term in our society. Yet, for many, it keeps us embedded within a dominant criminal justice (after the fact) framework. By slightly modifying the language, we are inviting people to consider the possibility that violence can be prevented before it occurs.

■ **CLARIFIES SOLUTIONS.** Effective frames present solutions, which "assume our nation's ability to overcome any problem and always offers positive solutions for doing so. Emphasizing solutions taps into pride and counters 'compassion fatigue,' in which people see a parade of social problems as impossible to solve" (SPIN Project and The Opportunity Agenda). As part of the solution, frames explain who is responsible. If a problem is personal then the solution is personal; if a problem is public then the solution is public. "Nothing stops a bullet like a job," a message that Father Gregory Boyle of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, CA has used to drive the point home that jobs, meaningful opportunities, and places where youth feel respected and valued for their contributions can go a long way in preventing violence. "Nothing stops a bullet like a job" effectively communicates "jobs" as a solution to violence while making an explicit case for prevention. Tucson, Arizona's framing for prevention promotes support of after school programs and safe neighborhoods. Nashville, Tennessee is focused on fostering support for positive youth development and on creating safe neighborhoods.

■ **COMMUNICATES SUCCESS.** In order to maintain political will, people have to see and understand that success is possible. This requires a commitment to measuring, monitoring, and effectively communicating successes that can lead to stronger support for prevention and/or adjusting strategies to better address issues.

■ **TAILORED FOR DIFFERENT AUDIENCES.** Different audiences will benefit from different information and therefore communication should be tailored accordingly This may include attention to municipal agencies and departments, municipal leadership, neighborhoods, businesses, the general public, and specific demographics (e.g., males 18-25, young fathers, young mothers, people on probation or parole, girls 13-18). For elected officials, the economic argument may be valuable.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNICATION

■ Grounded in strategy
■ Delineates the benefits of prevention and builds a constituency
■ Clarifies the problem
■ Conveys values
■ Opens people up to the option of prevention
■ Clarifies solutions
■ Communicates success
■ Tailored for different audiences
■ Reinforces key messages consistently and persistently
■ Is accessible
■ Is useful
■ Utilizes appropriate mechanisms for dissemination
■ Engages media in coverage

URBAN NETWORKS TO
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html

- **REINFORCES KEY MESSAGES CONSISTENTLY AND PERSISTENTLY.** Many framing researchers assert that people's brains literally change by virtue of new possibilities that are presented to them (via framing). This kind of transformation won't happen after one exposure. The key to success is consistency and persistence. Once a message is adopted, it is important that it be used widely and consistently to help reinforce the message. UNITY is using the language "preventing violence before it occurs" and encourages others to adopt this language to ensure more consistency in usage.

- **IS ACCESSIBLE.** Different audiences will find information accessible in different forms and in different places. There are many outlets, and the appropriateness of each should be considered. Examples include: website, training, conferences, press conferences/press coverage, department head meetings, HR materials (info with paychecks, postings, mailings, emails, etc.), podcasts/webcasts, bBillboards/bus stops. Further, choosing language that is appropriate and accessible to a general audience is crucial to communicating your message. Based on the work of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania youth, UNITY has adopted the language of "upfront," "in the thick," and "aftermath" to describe primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention priorities. The language is more accessible to a wider audience and conveys the essence of the strategies.

- **IS USEFUL.** Service providers and members of the community need information about what is going on across the county, best practices, and where to go for specific violence prevention–related information and services. There should be a mechanism for various jurisdictions to share information and resources; and relevant county agencies, departments, and community-based organizations can help ensure that the appropriate information is available and disseminated.

- **UTILIZES APPROPRIATE MECHANISMS FOR DISSEMINATION.** Having a message is important. Having mechanisms and venues for dissemination is equally important so that your message will reach as many people as possible. These outlets can include the media and public campaigns. The messages should reinforce key principles and goals of the overall effort.

- **ENGAGES MEDIA IN COVERAGE.** The media plays a critical role in setting the public agenda and in doing so, influences what the public and city leaders choose to address. Getting the media to cover violence as a preventable issue for which we are all responsible can be important in building political will. The media is considered to be an influential sector (Dusenbury et al., 1997).

CITY EXAMPLES

COLUMBUS, OH:
Strategies Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)

SAVE was founded in 1994 and is a Columbus, Ohio nonprofit organization confronting the challenging issue of youth violence. SAVE offers three different programs to promote anti-violence and peace education, including the Media Violence Education Project (MVEP), an interactive workshop to develop critical thinking skills about the media and media violence in youth.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

- **Berkeley Media Studies Group.** Works with community groups, journalists and public health professionals to use the power of the media to advance healthy public policy. www.bmsg.org

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Violence prevention fact sheets can be found at www.cdc.gov/ncipc/cmprfact.htm .

- **Frameworks Institute.** FrameWorks conducts communications research to prepare non-profits to expand their constituency base, build public will, and further public understanding of specific social issues. www.frameworksinstitute.org

- **If we treated violence as a disease, would that help us find a cure?** Article in Cleveland's *Plain Dealer*, April 28, 2008.

- **Making the Case.** UNITY tools to make the case for preventing violence using a public health approach and social norms change. www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html

- **MEE Productions Inc.** MEE provides communication strategies to reach and influence urban populations. www.meeproductions.com

- **Preventviolence.org** . Provides policy updates and links to resources and archived materials, including statistics and fact sheets, polling data and reports, and multimedia materials. www.preventviolence.org

- **Where's the Prevention Frame? Seizing Opportunities to Advance Violence Against Women Prevention.** An archive of this web-based training and related materials are available at Prevention Connection. www.preventconnect.org/display/displayTextItems.cfm?itemID=47&sectionID=248

- **Vera Institute of Justice.** Cost benefit analysis information on costs associated with LA's gang problem. www.advanceproj.org/

LOS ANGELES, CA:
Making the Economic Case for Prevention

As part of Los Angeles' effort to develop a comprehensive gang violence reduction strategy for the city of Los Angeles, the Vera Institute of Justice analyzed the costs of gang violence to government and potential savings that can result from investing in programs that have been empirically shown to reduce gang crime. Their analysis suggests that gang violence in the city of Los Angeles is costing the city, county, and state approximately $1.145 billon per year in criminal justice system costs. Broken down more specifically, gang-related crime costs city agencies approximately $246,880,524 per year; county agencies approximately $304,785,871 per year; and state agencies approximately $593,905,502 per year. They also roughly calculated that medical costs resulting from gunshot wounds to victims of gang members in the city of LA is costing the government approximately $45,296,446 annually. The program array they outlined in their analysis would save state and local taxpayers $59 million over the lives of the program participants, and would save victims an additional $112 million. The full report is available at www.advanceproj.org .

PHILADELPHIA, PA:
The Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia Campaign

The campaign has produced an array of materials in a variety of media formats. Campaign media and materials include: video documentary and focus group report, print materials, transit advertisements, radio advertisements, and television advertisements. These materials are available at www.phillyblueprint.com/index. cfm?page=Materials .

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

Practitioners, service providers, program and agency directors, and elected officials need skills to prevent violence. These skills can be developed through multiple avenues including consultation and technical assistance, training, conferences, mentoring, internships, coaching, and reading or other self–paced learning opportunities. Emphasizing the kinds of skills and leadership need–ed to develop, implement, and sustain the various elements of the *UNITY RoadMap* can help foster traction and success. Cross–disciplinary training can help build a common language and foster understanding about different roles. A key component of training is to help all sectors understand how their mandates and activities can contribute to preventing violence.

Provider and community resident training has been a major part of violence prevention strategies in the United States for over 20 years. Training is recognized as a tool for program implementation, advocacy, social movement building, and as a strategy for institutionalizing programmatic activities.

Partnerships for Preventing Violence, American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 2008

URBAN NETWORKS TO
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **REACHES MULTIPLE AUDIENCES WITH APPROPRIATE INFORMATION AND SKILL-BUILDING.** In order to implement a comprehensive plan, multiple audiences need information and skills. What each needs will vary from person to person and sector to sector. Ensuring that all of those players and partners have the appropriate skills is critical. It is important not only to include the "usual suspects" such as law enforcement professionals, social workers, and teachers, but also to think outside the box by including such groups as city agencies (e.g., planning and economic development), community providers (community-based and grassroots organizations), community services and businesses (e.g., the faith community and beauty salons), and community members (e.g., adults and youth).

- **ENHANCES ABILITY TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION AND ENFORCEMENT/SUPPRESSION APPROACHES.** While all elements of this continuum are important, frequently, elected officials, practitioners, and the general public may have less of an understanding about what kinds of strategies fall under prevention or mistake intervention and enforcement/suppression strategies as prevention. One consequence is the current focus on intervention and enforcement/suppression which shifts investment from quality prevention.

- **FOSTERS UNDERSTANDING OF RISK AND RESILIENCE FACTORS FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE.** Effectively preventing violence requires getting at the underlying factors that contribute to violence in the first place. These underlying factors are called risk and resilience factors. They can either put individuals, families, and communities at risk of more violence or be protective against it.

- **ESTABLISHES CAPACITY TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE.** Beyond understanding what underlies violence, it is critical to develop strategies that will be effective in reducing risk factors and bolstering resilience factors. The upfront, in the thick, and aftermath strategies that city representatives prioritized are a good starting place. Also, tools such as the *Spectrum of Prevention* can help forge comprehensive strategies.

- **ENABLES IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES.** Due to different factors, some locales have struggled with implementation of strategic plans and violence prevention strategies. In many cases, assessing the needed skills and capacities and seeking appropriate training and technical assistance may be of value.

- **FOSTERS LEADERSHIP IN ADVANCING VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS AND OUTCOMES.** Given the challenges of getting traction on and maintaining support for preventing violence before it occurs, it is valuable to foster and enhance leadership skills among those who are striving to advance outcomes.

- **STRENGTHENS ABILITY TO COLLABORATE ACROSS SECTORS, JURISDICTIONS, AND DISCIPLINES.** Often people in one sector, jurisdiction, or discipline may have only a general idea or a misinformed notion of what happens in other areas. Don Blevins, Chief of Probation in Alameda County, Cal-

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

- Reaches multiple audiences with appropriate information and skill-building
- Enhances ability to differentiate between prevention and intervention and enforcement/suppression approaches
- Fosters understanding of risk and resilience factors for preventing violence
- Establishes capacity to develop effective strategies to prevent violence
- Enables implementation of effective strategies
- Fosters leadership in advancing violence prevention efforts and outcomes
- Strengthens ability to collaborate across sectors, jurisdictions, and disciplines

URBAN NETWORKS TO INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

ifornia stated: "We didn't actually know what other agencies were doing. Having that information has been very helpful." Training can help ensure that people know what others actually do. It can foster a common language, a shared understanding of problems and solutions, and a recognition that the contribution of other partners can strengthen the capacity to collaborate and achieve outcomes.

CITY EXAMPLES

DENVER, CO: Youth Leadership Training

Created by the Denver Department of Public Safety, the Denver Safe City Office (SCO) aims to promote positive youth development and to encourage the development and implementation of youth-led, community solutions to violence. Led by the Safe City Youth Leadership Team (SCYPLT), over 40 youth participate in year-round leadership training centered on youth employment, community service, peer-mentoring, and peer-centered activities. Participants are taught problem-solving skills and also meet with the Mayor, City Council and other local and national leaders to exchange ideas on anti-violence issues selected by the youth. Additionally, the youth organize an annual Youth Summit, which provides a vehicle for young people to express their concerns and solutions to city leaders.

NATIONAL: Partnerships for Preventing Violence

Partnerships for Preventing Violence (PPV) is a training model which incorporates both in-person leadership development and national skill-building in violence prevention. Co-funded by the US Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services, and developed by the Harvard School of Public Health, Prevention Institute, and the Education Development Center, the three-year initiative successfully trained over 15,000 local leaders, catalyzed efforts to prevent youth violence across the country, and fostered a national cadre of prevention leaders working to reduce youth violence. The initiative trained local leaders who facilitated community "downlink sites" where a live training was presented via satellite. The training featured in-studio guests, highlighted models of what's working around the country, and encouraged email and call-in questions and comments. See www. ajpm-online.net/article/S0749-3797(07)00749-0/abstract .

TOOLS & RESOURCES

- **National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (NYVPRC).** Provides dynamic resources to help support efforts to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate effective youth violence prevention efforts. Includes an updated list of training opportunities. www.safeyouth.org

- **PREVENT: Preventing Violence through Education, Networking, and Technical Assistance.** The PREVENT Program is designed to facilitate the change process by providing education, networking and technical assistance nationwide to help individuals and organizations reduce violence through local, state, tribal, and national approaches. www.prevent.unc.edu/

- **Prevention Connection.** A national online project dedicated to the primary prevention of violence against women by facilitating information through web conferences, a moderated email list, and other forms of online media (such as podcasts and flash presentations). www.preventconnect.org

- **Prevention Institute.** Provides consultation and training on violence prevention to community, city, county, state, and national entities. www.preventioninstitute.org

- **WHO: Violence and Injury Prevention.** TEACH-VIP is a comprehensive injury prevention and control curriculum developed through the efforts of World Health Organization and a network of global injury prevention experts. www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/capacitybuilding/teachvip/en/index.html

URBAN NETWORKS TO
INCREASE THRIVING YOUTH
UNITY
through Violence Prevention

www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY.html

The UNITY RoadMap Gauge: *How is your city doing?*

THIS UNITY ROADMAP GAUGE can provide a snapshot of your city's efforts, gauge your city's level of effort and effectiveness, and prioritize areas of focus for a city committed to preventing violence. For each characteristic associated with PREVENTION, please rate how well your city is doing as follows:

1. EXISTING: Is this in place at all? Use a check [✓] next to the items that are in place in your city.

2. EFFORT: How hard is your city trying? From 0% to 100%, rate how much effort your city is putting into accomplishing each item.

3. EFFECTIVENESS: How well is your city doing? Use a grading scale of A-F, (A=successful, F=failing).

4. PRIORITIZATION: What is most important to focus on? Use high (H), medium (M), and low (L) to rate how important it is for your city to focus on improving that particular issue.

WHAT? PREVENTION	1. Existing? (✓ if yes)	2. Effort? (0-100%)	3. Effective? (A-F)	4. Priority? (H,M,L)
ORG'L PRACTICES				
Reduces risk factors & increases resilience factors	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strengthens communities, families, & young people	_____	_____	_____	_____
Comprehensive	_____	_____	_____	_____
Prioritizes prevention	_____	_____	_____	_____
Balances immediate, intermediate & long-term priorities	_____	_____	_____	_____
Brought to scale	_____	_____	_____	_____
Culturally competent & relevant	_____	_____	_____	_____
Developmentally appropriate	_____	_____	_____	_____
Programs, Organizational Practices & Policy	_____	_____	_____	_____
COMMUNICATION				
Grounded in strategy	_____	_____	_____	_____
Delineates the benefits of prevention; builds a constituency	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clarifies the problem	_____	_____	_____	_____
Conveys values	_____	_____	_____	_____
Opens people up to the option of prevention	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clarifies solutions	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communicates success	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tailored for different audiences	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reinforces key messages consistently & persistently	_____	_____	_____	_____
Is accessible	_____	_____	_____	_____
Is useful	_____	_____	_____	_____
Utilizes appropriate mechanisms for dissemination	_____	_____	_____	_____
Engages media in coverage	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____
TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING				
Reaches multiple audiences with appropriate information and skill-building	_____	_____	_____	_____
Enhances ability to differentiate between prevention & intervention & enforcement/suppression approaches	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fosters understanding of risk & resilience factors for preventing violence	_____	_____	_____	_____
Establishes capacity to develop effective strategies to prevent violence	_____	_____	_____	_____
Enables implementation of effective strategies	_____	_____	_____	_____
Fosters leadership in advancing violence prevention efforts & outcomes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Strengthens ability to collaborate across sectors, jurisdictions, & disciplines	_____	_____	_____	_____
Training & Capacity building	_____	_____	_____	_____

PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES:
Programs, Organizational Practices, and Policies

UNITY asked young people and representatives from cities across the country to prioritize strategies to prevent violence before it occurs. The identified strategies span the prevention continuum (primary, secondary, and tertiary), and were reframed by Philadelphia youth as *Upfront*, *In the Thick*, and *Aftermath*, respectively. These labels were adopted by participating cities and young people at the UNITY City Representatives Meeting.

Although efforts to prevent violence at each point on the continuum are important, city representatives and young people purposely prioritized more upfront strategies. They asserted that these are the strategies that can support positive attitudes and behaviors before the threat or onset of violence, and are the kinds of strategies that cities typically have the least resources to put in place and bring to scale. These prevention strategies are meant to complement existing intervention and enforcement/suppression strategies and can be put in place alongside them. To maximize success, the following strategies should be reflected in programs, organizational practices, and policies.

UPFRONT:
Strategies everyone needs to be safe and thrive

POSITIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION. Foster age-appropriate social, emotional, and cognitive skill development within the context of strong attachments and relationships.

POSITIVE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Support a process of growing self-awareness and self-regulation, often measured by an ability to pay attention, make transitions from one activity to another, control impulses, and cooperate with others.

PARENTING SKILLS. Train parents and other caregivers on developmental milestones and culturally appropriate, effective parenting practices to support a nurturing, safe, structured environment.

QUALITY AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING. Provide safe and enriching activities with structure and supervision during non-school hours.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP. Support and engage young people in decision making and give them age-appropriate authority.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS IN NEIGHBORHOODS. Strengthen ties (characterized by trust, concern for one another, willingness to take collective action for the community good, and increased social sanctions against violent behaviors) among neighbors and community members.

QUALITY EDUCATION (including universal, school-based violence prevention strategies). Foster a positive and safe school climate in which young people learn violence prevention skills (e.g., conflict resolution, impulse control, anger management, problem solving, empathy, bystander, and anti-bullying)—all in support of improved academic achievement.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Improve economic conditions and viable non-criminal economic opportunities with training and support for communities, families, and youth most at risk for violence.

IN THE THICK:
Strategies designed for those who may be at increased risk for violence

MENTORING. Provide supportive, non-judgmental role models who can form a strong and enduring bond with young people who are at risk.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES. Ensure early identification and provision of quality, affordable, therapy and support to address trauma and anxiety and to enhance coping skills.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES. Provide integrated family services (e.g., therapy, case management, home visiting, income support, employment services and support) to families in need so that they are able to achieve self-sufficiency and foster nurturing and trusting relationships within the family.

CONFLICT INTERRUPTION/STREET OUTREACH. Reduce violence, injury, and lethality through detection, interruption and de-escalation with street outreach workers in highly impacted neighborhoods and change the thinking and behaviors of the highest risk persons.

AFTERMATH:
Strategies to help individuals, families, and communities heal from violence and move forward in positive ways

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES. Ensure provision of quality, affordable mental health and substance abuse treatment (including individual, group, and/or family therapy) and ongoing support for young people who have already demonstrated violent or seriously delinquent behavior to reduce the risk of future violence and crime.

SUCCESSFUL REENTRY. Support a successful transition from incarceration/detention to the community and reduce recidivism with services during incarceration (e.g., GED attainment, job training, substance abuse treatment, mental health services) and extend to post-release (e.g., housing assistance, job placement and support, education support, case management, income support, restorative justice, family support, substance abuse and mental health services, tattoo removal).

DESCRIBING THE PROBLEM

When asked to describe the problem of violence and urban youth based on their own experience and the needs they were aware of, the UNITY National Consortium's input clustered into several areas—some distinct and some overlapping. They are: 1) social/toxic environment, 2) inability to meet individual needs, 3) racial equity lens, and 4) structural and systems-related issues.

Social/toxic environment

In this cluster, the problem is characterized by the fact that young people are growing up in unsafe and often impoverished environments, where there are too few opportunities. Young people learn vioelnt behavior from what they see around them and in some cases violence is a means of survival. In too many cases, violence is being promoted, indeed marketed, to youth. In effect, violence is the product of the social/toxic environment. This characterization of the problem is reflected in the following quotes from members of the National Consortium:

■ "Violence is perpetuated by toxic environments."

■ "Too many children are in environments that are not safe and [violence] is how they learn to communicate."

■ "Distressed communities breed distressed people—including children. Unless we change the conditions on the street, we can expect the people from these communities will continue to be distressed, resulting in violence. The communities are victims of systematic economic, political, and social exclusion."

■ "I'm seeing young men who dreamt of being astronauts, fire fighters, etc. and then I am seeing another picture of an adolescent male who wants to be a gang-banger or pimp—what went wrong? It gets at the social environment."

■ "Youth are too often denied opportunities—for high quality education; for safe communities; for involvement in pro-social activities; to grow up to lead healthy, connected, productive lives..."

■ "Adolescence is a difficult time for many youth in the best of circumstances. In inner cities, teenagers have to negotiate violence at home and in the community with few educational and employment opportunities. They shape their lives not around the question of how to succeed but rather how to stay safe and stay alive."

Inability to meet individual needs

In this cluster, the problem is characterized by the fact that the needs of young people, and in some cases their families, are not being met either by the system or in other ways. These include basic developmental needs, such as positive role models and mental health services. This characterization of the problem is reflected in the following quotes from members of the National Consortium:

■ "Young men and women…need someone to care about them."

■ "A lot of issues with children involved in criminal behavior are those who have some mental health issues. The services simply are not there in our juvenile courts...[and] they are not available through the schools. While some parents simply do not have interest in the actions of their children, many simply do not have the knowledge or resources available to correct behavioral issues in their children. We often hear that they just don't know where to turn. These issues are especially true with those who have runaway histories...and then move from delinquent to criminal behavior."

■ "[There are] traumatized children with few family or community resources to handle their pain—children who get very little protection from the adults around them."

■ "Hurt children hurt other children and hurt people hurt other people."

Racial equity lens

In this cluster, the problem is characterized by racism, racial segregation, and a racial divide. In effect, the face of violence in the US is young men of color and this is a group that historically has been disenfranchised. While these issues relate to previously noted clusters of social/toxic environment and an inability to meet individual needs, it is worth noting the added racial dimension of the problem. This characterization of the problem is reflected in the following quotes from members of the National Consortium:

■ "Immense racial divide, segregation, and the effects of living in racially divided neighborhoods on tolerance."

■ "Linked with the fear is the racialization of violence. Racism is a major barrier to any framing messages."

■ "I totally agree that racism comes into it, too. Young men of color are objectified."

Structural and systems-related issues

In this cluster, the problem is characterized by structural and systems–related issues such as a lack of credibility in, ability to make the case for, and understanding of, prevention. In effect, prevention is neither prioritized nor understood, and there is a need for better strategy, evaluation, and effective communication. This characterization of the problem is reflected in the following quotes from members of the National Consortium:

■ "I think most communities can identify youth violence as a problem, but...it may not be seen as the priority."

■ "We have made significant progress in getting state corrections money redirected to family therapy programs that have been proven to keep youth from reoffending. However, it's much more difficult to make a case for investments in prevention."

■ "I think people think 'public health' approach may sound interesting but a lot of folks think the reason there's less violence now (at least in NYC) is due to better policing."

■ "We could do a better job of linking a variety of efforts into a comprehensive strategy."