

These notes have been excerpted from the drafts of forthcoming resource guides on TCE's Building Healthy Communities outcomes. The notes are designed as an interim tool and meant for internal use for facilitators and site coordinators. – Planning Support Team

Outcome #5 Children and Families are Safe from Violence in their Homes & Neighborhoods

Most violence is preventable, not inevitable. There is a strong and growing evidence base, grounded in research and practitioner and community wisdom that prevention works. Violence prevention strategies are most effective when the multiple risk factors associated with violence including poverty, unemployment, discrimination, substance abuse, educational failure, fragmented families, domestic abuse, internalized shame, and feelings of powerlessness are addressed. Preventing violence requires shifting norms in communities. More than a habit, norms are often based in culture and tradition. They are our attitudes, beliefs and standards that we take for granted. Therefore, violence prevention strategies should not only address the risk factors, but should also aim to change community behaviors that contribute to empowerment, education, and improved life management skills while fostering healthy communities in which people can grow in dignity and safety.

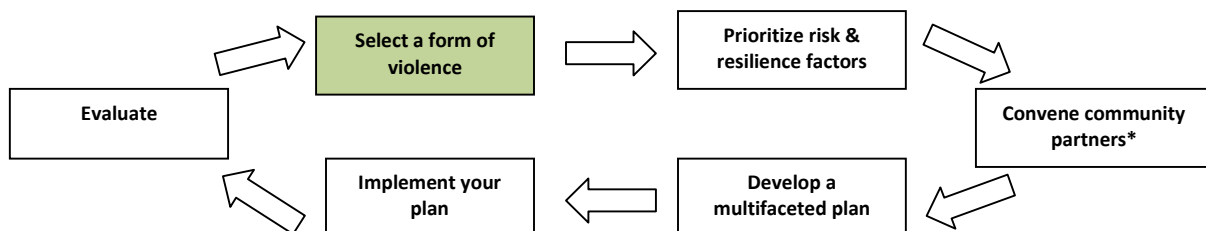
Prevention is a systematic process. Primary prevention addresses problems before they occur. Secondary prevention relies on symptoms or the presence of risk factors to determine action. Tertiary prevention focuses on longer-term responses to ameliorate future negative consequences and reduce the impact of violence.

Violence Prevention Continuum

Primary Prevention	Secondary Prevention	Tertiary Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social connections in neighborhoods • economic development • reducing the availability of firearms • quality early care and education • parenting skills • quality after-school programming • conflict resolution • youth leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • street outreach and violence interruption • family support services • mentoring • mental health services** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mental health services** • restorative justice • successful re-entry
<p><i>** e.g., therapeutic foster care, functional family therapy, multi-systemic therapy</i></p>		

PROMISING STRATEGIES & PRACTICES

Six-step Guide to Preventing Violence in Communities: Each step of the below guide is interrelated. Though the below diagram starts with *selecting a form of violence*, the order of the steps may change depending on the needs of a particular community.



**Convening community partners is appropriate at any step in the cycle.*

Prioritizing Key Risk and Resilience Factors

There is no single cause that accounts for violence. Rather, underlying risk and resilience factors contribute to violence or its prevention. Risk factors are individual, family, or community characteristics or circumstances that increase the likelihood that violence will occur. Resilience factors, on the other hand, are individual, family or community characteristics or circumstances that reduce the likelihood that violence will take place, in spite of the presence of risk factors. Synthesized from multiple sources, key risk and resilience factors are listed below.

	Risk Factors	Resilience Factors
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diminished economic opportunities • Low levels of community participation • Discrimination and oppression • Firearms • Availability of alcohol and other drugs • Community deterioration • Housing • Incarceration/reentry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic capital • Social capital • Meaningful opportunities for participation • Positive ethnic, racial, and intergroup relations • Built environment • Artistic and creative opportunities
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiteracy • School system failure • Truancy • Bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High graduation rates • Positive school climate • School connectedness • High expectations
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative family dynamics • Poor discipline practices • Parental substance abuse or mental illness • Parental criminality • Unengaged parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive parenting skills • Engaged family members • Strong attachments • Structured home environments
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental illness and trauma • Substance use/abuse • Peer relations • Lack of involvement in conventional activities • School problems • Antisocial beliefs and attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Positive attachments and relationships • Emotional and cognitive competence • Involvement in social activities • Religiosity

Developing a Multifaceted Plan

Because violence is complex, it requires a comprehensive approach. A critical aspect of developing an integrated strategy for action is ensuring that there exists multiple, complimentary activities that influence individuals, communities, organizations/institutions, and policies. To that end, practitioners have used the tool, [Spectrum of Prevention](#), which enables people and coalitions to develop a comprehensive plan while building on existing efforts. When the six levels of the *Spectrum* are used together, they produce a more effective strategy that would be possible through implementation of a single initiative or program in isolation. Use of the *Spectrum* is demonstrated in: [Cultivating Peace in Salinas: A Framework for Preventing Violence](#).

Implementing Your Plan

Once a community has a plan, implementation and sustainability are critical. Success depends on having the right supports, structures, and systems in place. The [UNITY RoadMap](#) is a resource for identifying these elements. The *UNITY RoadMap* is made up of nine elements, each selected for its importance in affecting sustaining efforts to prevent violence. The Prevention Institute publishes a *UNITY RoadMap*, which describes these elements in more detail and provides a [UNITY RoadMap Gauge](#) for assessing efforts.

Evaluating Your Plan

Ongoing evaluation of the overall approaches and of individual activities will provide the information needed to make adjustments as the strategies are implemented. The overarching goal of strategy evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of community collaborations in implementing strategies. Indicators to measure progress most often include changes in risk and resilience factors, community development, youth engagement, and decreases in violence crimes and death. See below for a sampling of indicators or [measures of progress](#).

Resource: [A Guidebook to Strategy Evaluation: Evaluating Your City's Approach to Community Safety and Youth Violence Prevention](#)

Neighborhood/community level sample indicators

- Increased positive feelings about living in specific neighborhoods
- Increased/developed family re-entry services
- Decreased number of alcohol and drug outlets
- Increased job placement for formerly incarcerated individuals
- Decreased patterns of gun ownership/usage
- Increased the number receiving job training/placement
- Increased perception of the community's ability to make change for the common good
- Decreased violence, arrests, and crime rates
- Improved community/police relations

School Level Sample Indicators

- Increased school attachment and achievement.
- Decreased bullying
- Improved skills to prevent violence among students
- Improved ratings of school climate measures.
- Increased graduation rates
- Decreased truancy rates

Family level sample indicators

- Improved understanding of child developmental needs among caregivers; improved understanding of child-rearing and disciplinary practices for families
- Increased community supports for parents/families

- Increased utilization of family support services
- Increased pro-social attitudes related to gender roles
- Decreased substance abuse rates
- Increased access to mental health services

Individual level sample indicators

- Increased school attachment and achievement
- Increased civic/community participation
- Improved/developed quality relationships with adults
- Increased/developed pro-social values
- Increased perceptions of safety
- Increased feeling of efficacy
- Decreased time spent on the street

Systems/structural sample indicators

- Local leadership is engaged and supportive
- Formal structure for multi-sectoral collaboration/coordination
- Members of the community are actively engaged in setting priorities and ongoing activities.
- Training and skill building in place so all community members/partners know their roles
- Community knows and supports strategies in place
- Strategic plan in place
- Efforts driven by data and evaluation
- Adequate funding; sustainable sources identified

STRATEGY EXAMPLES

Public Health Approaches to Preventing Violence

- [Blueprint for Action: Preventing Youth Violence in Minneapolis](#)
- [Ceasefire: The Campaign to STOP the Shooting – Chicago, IL](#)

Coordinated Approaches to Prevention, Intervention, and Enforcement

- [San Jose Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force](#)
- [Oxnard City Corps: Learning through Work and Services - Oxnard, CA](#)
- [Los Angeles Mayor's Gang Prevention Strategy](#)