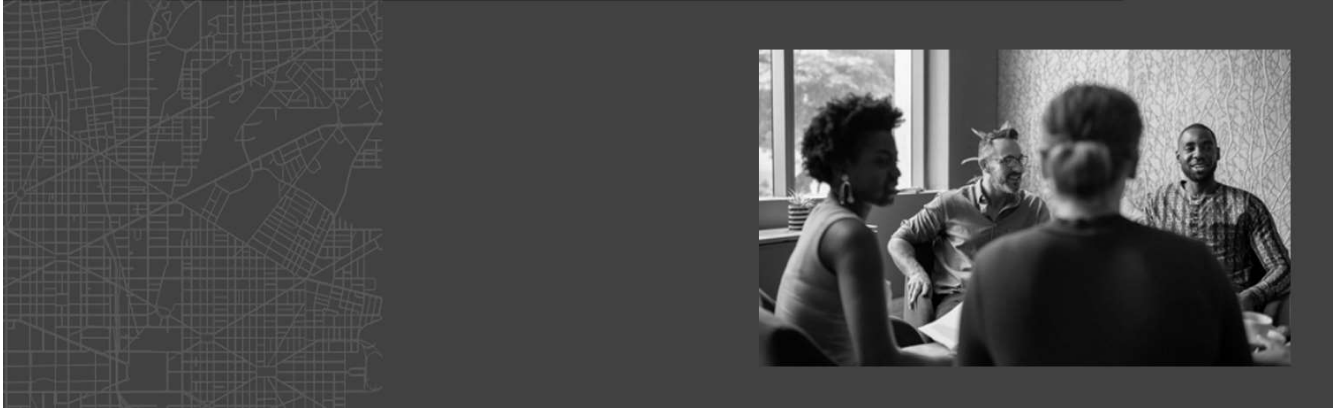




Violence Prevention

Community Violence Prevention

Community violence happens between unrelated individuals, who may or may not know each other, generally outside the home. Examples include assaults or fights among groups and shootings in public places, such as schools and on the streets. Research indicates that youth and young adults (ages 10-34), particularly those in communities of color, are disproportionately impacted.



Community violence takes lives and leaves a lasting legacy of trauma. It must be prevented.

Homicides and other violent acts are causing substantial harm in communities across the country, especially in racially segregated and high-poverty neighborhoods.

The physical, emotional, and financial pain from violence cascades from individuals to their families and communities, including children. Community violence is a critical public health problem in the United States.

Rates of some violence types are increasing

**Nearly
25,000
lives lost to
homicide in 2020**

Homicide rates are increasing. In the last year, homicide rates increased in many areas of the nation. Data show significant increases in homicide rates in 2020 compared to 2019.

Violence affects us all

Community violence affects millions of people, and their families, schools, and communities every year.

Community violence can cause significant physical injuries and mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Living in a community experiencing violence is also associated with increased risk of developing chronic diseases. Concerns about violence may prevent some people from engaging in healthy behaviors, such as walking, bicycling, using parks and recreational spaces, and accessing healthy food outlets.

Violence scares people out of participating in neighborhood activities, limits business growth and prosperity, strains education, justice, and medical systems; and slows community progress.

1.4 million people treated for assault in emergency departments

America's youth and young adults are especially vulnerable to community violence

Over half of US homicides occurred among people ages 15-34 in 2020

Violence is a leading cause of death and nonfatal injuries among adolescents and young adults – over half of US homicides in 2020 occurred among people ages 15 to 34. Young people are disproportionately impacted by violence in their communities, including firearm injuries and deaths.

Youth and young adults can be victims, perpetrators, or witnesses of violence. People with multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including exposure to violence, are more likely to have short-term and chronic physical and mental health conditions and behavioral difficulties.

Some populations experience more violence

People's health outcomes are influenced by the conditions in which they live, work, play, and learn. These conditions are called social determinants of health. Systemic racism, bias, and discrimination; economic instability; concentrated poverty; and limited housing, education, and healthcare access drive health inequities, such as violence.

Communities of color often disproportionately experience these negative conditions, placing residents at greater risk for poor health outcomes. For example, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and Hispanic or Latino persons have higher homicide rates than other racial and ethnic demographic groups.

As community leaders develop plans to prevent and reduce community violence, addressing underlying conditions that affect health and quality of life is important. These plans can use local data, include young people with lived experience in the process, and address social, economic, structural, and physical conditions that contribute to violence. Starting today, communities can implement a comprehensive approach with programs, policies, and practices based on the best available evidence to prevent violence.



Engage community members in prevention efforts

Community leaders can work collaboratively with community residents and those impacted by violence, such as young people with lived experience of violence, to develop violence prevention efforts. Partnering with community members to select, implement, and monitor prevention activities helps ensure that the efforts are community driven and effective at preventing and reducing community violence.

We can prevent community violence

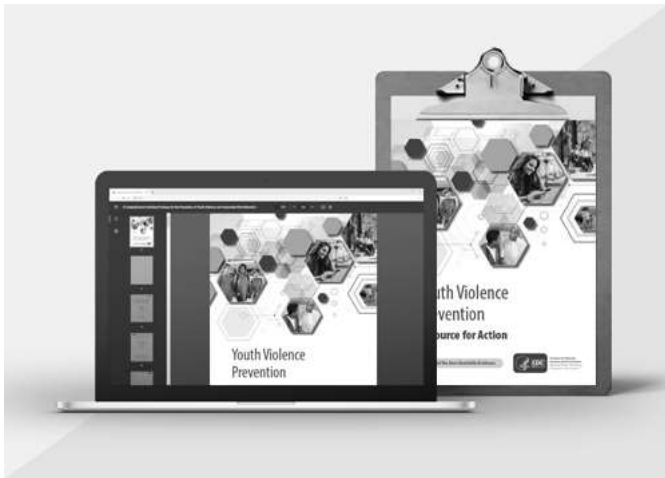
Community violence is preventable, and the Division of Violence Prevention (DVP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is uniquely positioned for this work.



DVP was the first government group to apply a public health model to violence prevention. We are widely implementing science-based programs, policies, and practices with partners and communities to disseminate, implement, and scale-up strategies based on the best available evidence to create safer communities.



DVP has the experts, knowledge, vision, strategy, and solutions to stop violence before it starts.


Resource for Action



See the best available evidence for youth and community violence prevention in Youth Violence Prevention Resource for Action  [4 MB, 64 Pages]. This Resource for Action, formerly known as, “technical package,” helps communities and states sharpen their focus on prevention activities with the greatest potential to prevent youth and community violence and its consequences. Also available in Spanish  [3.89 MB, 68 Pages]. More information on updated strategies, approaches and examples of programs and policies to prevent community violence will be added to the site soon.

Use data to inform action

Timely, local data from multiple sources can help community leaders understand community violence patterns and the most affected groups and locations. Multiple local data sources are available to communities, including surveys and information from emergency departments, law enforcement, emergency medical services (EMS), and schools. Communities can consider using one or more data-to-action and community engagement models in their efforts to reduce and prevent community violence. Examples include:

(1) Homicide Review Commissions  engage multiple disciplines (such as law enforcement and community service providers) to regularly share homicide and violent crime information to identify prevention opportunities.

(2) The Cardiff Violence Prevention Model combines and maps both hospital and law enforcement data on violence, allowing communities to more clearly see where violence occurs to better focus prevention activities.

(3) Community-based participatory research (CBPR) [\[4\]](#) and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) [\[5\]](#) models provide collaborative community-driven approaches that combine knowledge, expertise, and capacity-building strategies with research to better prevent violence, improve community conditions, and eliminate health inequities.

We must continue building the evidence

Youth Violence Prevention Resource for Action [\[6\]](#) [4 MB, 64 Pages] and updated Community Violence Prevention Strategies contain programs, policies, and practices to prevent and reduce youth and community violence. Communities can act now to implement the prevention approaches that best meet their needs. However, it is important to acknowledge that this evidence does have limitations. Prior research and evidence were often not designed to address structural racism and the social determinants of health that drive inequities in community violence. We must continue to build the evidence for innovative strategies that address these inequities. One of DVP's guiding principles is to advance economic, gender, and racial equity. DVP's current research funding focuses on addressing the social and structural conditions that contribute to inequities in violence so that all communities can thrive.

Last Reviewed: June 8, 2022