

UNITY Overview

Our Mission

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

Our Approach

UNITY utilizes a public health, or prevention, approach to violence. Prevention is a viable and critical component of a balanced approach that also includes intervention and enforcement/suppression. Quality prevention incorporates data collection and analysis to pinpoint the populations and locations at greatest risk, identify risk and resilience factors, and develop and utilize effective strategies to prevent violence before it occurs, and to reduce the impact of risk factors and the reoccurrence of violence. This approach engages multiple sectors working in coordination with each other and with community members.

Our efforts are two-fold—we support cities in developing, implementing and evaluating effective and sustainable prevention efforts, and we increase awareness of what is needed to prevent violence *in the first place* and build momentum for such approaches so that urban communities can have peaceful streets and thriving youth.

Our Activities

- ▷ **Coordinate the UNITY City Network:** A growing number of cities have joined our [peer network](#). Committed to preventing violence before it occurs, they share successes, learn from one another, and inform our tools and strategies. UNITY provides training and technical assistance (TA), and highlights local successes through publications, conferences and Web materials.
- ▷ **Guide Effective & Sustainable Practice:** UNITY develops tools, provides training and TA, and features national experts and model practices to enhance prevention efforts. The [UNITY RoadMap](#), for example, provides a framework for engaged communities to collaborate with high-level local leaders and multiple city government sectors to design effective prevention strategies grounded in research and practitioner wisdom. The [Guidebook to Strategy Evaluation](#) offers guidance on how to ensure that progress is on track. Our [website](#) provides free access to all of our tools and materials.
- ▷ **Make the Case:** UNITY provides information that builds the case for including prevention in urban efforts to address violence. Through developing case studies about effective approaches, highlighting the costs and benefits, and providing language for use in press releases and press conferences, UNITY has helped city and community leaders justify prevention approaches. Our commissioned paper [Moving from Them to Us: Challenges in Reframing Violence Among Youth](#) provides specific recommendations to overcome challenges associated with building political and social will for preventing violence.
- ▷ **Educate Decision-Makers & Inform National Strategies:** We provide information about what works in prevention and what will work for cities. For example, we developed [The UNITY Urban Agenda for Preventing Violence Before It Occurs](#) in partnership with the UNITY City Network. This document, summarized in [The UNITY Policy Platform](#), describes what cities need to prevent violence and to see enduring results.

Violence is not the problem of one neighborhood or group, and the response and solutions are not the responsibility of one sector of the community or of one agency, professional group, or business. Coming together and owning this problem and the solutions are central.

—Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith