Framing Violence as a Public Health Issue

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STRYVE Grantee Meeting
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Portrait to Landscape
Life in the killing zone

By Anastasia Hendrix
Chronicle Staff Writer

This is a place dozens of murders were committed last year within walking distance of an 11-year-old's doorstep.

Violence is the most pervasive part of growing up in East Oakland.

This is a place eighth-graders learn about percentages and averages by studying homicide statistics from the streets that surround their classroom — numbers that represent gunned-down neighbors, victims and even friends.

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In America's cities, kids are killing kids over sneakers and other sports apparel favored by drug dealers. Who's to blame?

BY RICK TELANDER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MIRKO ILIC

Is it the shoes?...
Money, it's gotta be the shoes!
— BABS BLACKWELL,
TO MICHAEL JORDAN, IN A NIKE COMMERCIAL

For 15-year-old Michael Eugene Thomas, it definitely was the shoes. A ninth-grader at Meade Senior High School in Anne Arundel County, Md., Thomas was found strangled on May 2, 1989. Charged with first-degree murder was James David Martin, 17, a basketball buddy who allegedly took Thomas's two-week-old Air Jordan basketball shoes and left Thomas's barefoot body in the woods near school.

Thomas loved Michael Jordan, as well as the shoes Jordan endorses, and he cleaned his own pair each evening. He kept the cardboard shoe box with Jordan's silhouette on it in a place of honor in his room. Inside the box was the sales ticket for the shoes. It showed he paid $115.50, the price of a product touched by deity.

"We told him not to wear the shoes to school," said Michael's grandmother, Birdie Thomas. "We said somebody might like them, and he said, 'Grammy, before I let anyone take those shoes, they'll have to kill me.'"

Michael Jordan sits in the locked press room before a workout at the Chicago Bulls' practice facility in suburban Deerfield, Ill. He is wearing his practice uniform and a pair of black Air Jordans similar to the ones young Thomas wore, except that these have Jordan's number, 23, stitched on the sides. On the shoelaces Jordan wears plastic toggles.
Other victims

In a city wracked with violence, children carry their pain to school, hampering their ability to focus. Chicago Public Schools leadership wants to help, but too often obstacles stand in the way.

A Publication of the Community Renewal Society
URBAN VIOLENCE:

Can We End the Epidemic?

IS URBAN VIOLENCE A VIRUS?

Gang killing persists like a terrible infectious disease in our cities. Maybe it should be treated like a disease. BY ALEX KOTLOWITZ
Links Between Violence and Health

MAKING THE CASE

FACT SHEET

Violence and Chronic Illness

Asthma
- Adults with asthma who had witnessed violence in their neighborhoods were twice as likely to be hospitalized for asthma than those without violence exposure (6).

Violence and Mental Health

- Youth with past exposure to interpersonal violence (as a victim or witness) have significantly increased risk for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) major depressive episodes, and substance abuse/dependence (1).
- Women who experience Intimate Partner Violence are 3 times more likely to display symptoms of depression, 4 times more likely to have PTSD, and 6 times more likely to have substance use disorder (2).

Violence and Learning

- One in four middle and high school students from around the country report being a victim of violence at or around school (2).
- Fear of danger at school and in the community has measurable effects on school attendance, behavior, and grades (3, 4).
- Children in early elementary school with a history of exposure to violence and/or are victims of violence are significantly more likely (3, 4, 5).

At the individual level, violence:
- Affects the emotional health of parents, influencing their ability to attend to school issues (9).
- Creates stress and anxiety among children, affecting their ability to concentrate and focus on learning (in some cases related to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD) (2, 3, 10-14).
- Leads to decreased attendance related to fear.
“We are still standing on the bank of the river, rescuing people who are drowning. We have not gone to the head of the river to keep them from falling in. That is the 21st century task.”

Gloria Steinem
Simple Approach
Socio-Ecological Model

CDC Model

http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html
Public Health Model

CDC Model

[Image of the Public Health Model diagram]

http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/overview/publichealthapproach.html
The STRYVE Online Training is designed to help individuals, groups, organizations, and communities become acquainted with the key concepts and strategies of youth violence prevention.

IN LESSON 2, YOU’LL LEARN:

- The benefits of the public health approach
- How to effectively use the public health approach
- How to leverage the social ecological model
- How to use knowledge about risk and protective factors in different societal layers

Click the play button to begin.

http://www.vetoviolence.org/stryve/training.html
Making the Case

Violence as a Public Health Issue

- Violence is a leading cause of injury, disability and premature death.

- Violence is a significant disparity, disproportionately affecting young people and people of color.

- Violence increases the risk of other poor health outcomes.
What Is Needed?

A Public Health Approach to Prevent Violence:

- **Population-based**
- Works to **increase** protective factors
- Works to **reduce risks**
- Focuses on **prevention**
The Prevention Continuum

Up Front

Approaches that take place
BEFORE violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimization

In The Thick

Immediate responses
AFTER violence has occurred to deal with the consequences in the short-term

Aftermath

Long-term responses
AFTER violence to deal with the lasting consequences and treatment interventions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up Front</th>
<th>In The Thick</th>
<th>Aftermath</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting skills, quality after-school programs, youth leadership, conflict resolution, social connections in neighborhoods, economic development</td>
<td>Mentoring, family support services, violence interruption</td>
<td>Mental health services, successful re-entry</td>
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Relationship Between Public Health & Criminal Justice

Three Intervention Levels

Primary Prevention
UPFRONT

Secondary Prevention
IN THE THICK

Tertiary Prevention
AFTER THE FACT

Public Health

Education

Behavior Modification

Punishment

Criminal Justice

Responsibility
### Criminal Justice
- More reactive than preventive
- Primary focus is identifying the clues and indication of blame
- **Expertise with predatory violence among strangers on the streets (bad guy vs. innocent victim paradigm)**
- Considers external factors to be unimportant to judgment of guilt/innocence
- **Charged by society to determine guilt and institute punishment**
- Deeply, morally rooted in “justice”

### Public Health
- More preventive than reactive
- Primary focus is identifying causality, intervening to control/reduce risk factors
- **Expertise with investigating epidemics/populations to reduce illness and death**
- Little interest in assigning blame or punishment; focus on eliminating risk factors
- Not professionally committed to punishment, but to risk reduction
- Does not discriminate between victim and offender
Prevention Works
Schools can reduce violence by **15%** in as little as **6 months** through universal school-based violence prevention efforts.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The public health department led:
- community-strengthening efforts
- neighbor-to-neighbor bartering
- youth economic development programs

More than 40% reduction in violent crime in the neighborhood.
Street Outreach

Baltimore, MD

- Street outreach and violence interruption, based on the Chicago CeaseFire model
- Number of homicides cut by half, with no violent deaths in nearly two years at one site
Los Angeles, CA

- Zoning ordinances shut down 200 liquor stores in three years.
- An average 27-percent reduction in crime within a four-block radius of each closed liquor outlet.
64 percent decrease in homicides of young people aged 15 to 24 years.

Number of youth suspects in violent crimes dropped by 62 percent.
Share Your Prevention Success

Communities in Action

Read more about how community groups form a partnership to prevent violence and how community leaders were able to apply their collective knowledge and lessons learned to prevent the epidemic of youth violence.

Waimānalo Youth and Family Collaborative: Multisector Collaboration Built on Cultural Strengths

Waimanalo is one of several communities that are home to a large number of Native Hawaiians on the most populated Hawaiian island, O‘ahu. Waimanalo’s rich history of native settlement and the continuation of strong cultural values and practices make it a unique place.

Sectors Connect to Prevent Youth Violence in Boston, Massachusetts

Grassroots groups in many of Boston’s tightly knit neighborhoods worked hard to protect youth from harm. At the same time, city agencies did their best to promote the health and safety of city residents. There was just one problem. These grassroots groups rarely spoke to each other. And they didn’t always communicate well with government agencies.

Teaming up to Prevent Youth Violence in San Diego

For years, gang violence was on the rise in San Diego. It seemed that every Monday morning the papers reported another gang-related death. City and community organizations had each launched efforts to prevent violence and to help youth achieve their full potential and make a successful transition to adulthood (positive youth development).

http://www.vetoviolence.org/stryve/communities.html
How to get Involved
Participate in UNITY

- **Sign up for UNITY e-alerts:**
  - Receive information on new violence prevention-related activities, resources and events
  - Get the latest updates on UNITY

- **Visit**
  - [www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY](http://www.preventioninstitute.org/UNITY)

- **Email** unity@preventioninstitute.org
Summary-Making the Case

Violence as a Public Health Issue

- Portrait to landscape
- Simple approach
- Prevention works
- How to get involved