

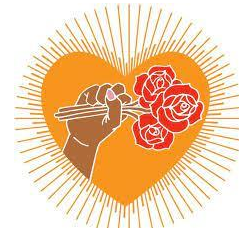
Safety Through Connection Learning Community 2022

Safety Through Connection is a California project launched in 2018 with support from Blue Shield of California Foundation to sustain and grow collaborative community-driven, place-based, culture and systems change for health equity, safe relationships, and prevention of domestic violence (also referred to as intimate partner violence, relationship violence, and other terms).

- **[The Center at McKinleyville](#)**, led by the [McKinleyville Family Resource Center](#) in Humboldt County, is a one-stop location for services, information, and activities for community members that was created to address disparities in access to health and social services in rural and Tribal communities. Through Safety Through Connect, the Center is engaging families who have been marginalized through community meetings, a Community Advisory Committee, and other events to increase social connections, promote a sense of agency, and increase participation in prevention activities. Depending on community preferences and drawing on evidence-informed approaches for DV prevention, The Center develops trainings and other activities that focus on topics such as parenting, social-emotional learning, communication, social support building, mentorship, and life skills. They also build community capacity to affect policy changes that address community-level drivers of DV and other forms of community violence. Through these strategies, The Center cultivates inclusion and trust among community members and Center partners, increases healthy relationship skills, strengthens community beliefs that support safe relationships, mitigates the impacts of racism and social isolation, and initiates changes within multiple systems in the community.



- **[Mujeres Poderosas Amorosas \(MPA\)](#)**, led by [Cultiva La Salud](#) in Fresno County, brings together leaders with a long history of implementing culturally-rooted policy, systems, and environmental change strategies to promote healthy eating and active living. Through Safety Through Connection, MPA has established a network driven by Latina immigrants to serve as a space for emotional wellness, resource sharing, community organizing, and building influence and power. The collaborative creates spaces for Latinas to counter isolation, and promote emotional wellness, healing, and self-esteem. This is because trust and inclusion in communities is known to support safe relationships. To improve neighborhood conditions like housing, employment, and education, MPA advocates for policy, system, and environmental changes that promote healthy and safe relationships and family stability. MPA also plans to counter toxic social norms that reinforce machismo culture and minimize the worth of Latina immigrants through communications campaigns and educational programs.



- **[East African Youth Collaborative](#)** is led by [United Women of East Africa Support Team \(UWEAST\)](#). UWEAST is a San Diego community-based organization comprised of approximately 100 East African women, providing health services, education, and advocacy for the well-being of the East African community, women, and families. UWEAST's mission is to be the force for culturally competent health services, education, and advocacy for the well-being of the East African community. UWEAST operates the East African Cultural and Community Center in City Heights and leads the East African Youth Collaborative. The collaborative is a network that supports the holistic health, safety, and well-being of East African refugee and immigrant youth and families through culturally and spiritually rooted personal and leadership development activities, and advocacy within multiple agencies and systems. Through the STC program, UWEAST and the collaborative engage the community in building healthy relationship skills to change community conditions and support a culture of safety. Addressing



community conditions and complex cultural dynamics is one way the collaborative engages the community in conversations around health equity, safe relationships, and DV. The collaborative supports the East African refugee community, including adolescent youth who are transitioning to adulthood and seeking guidance in navigating careers and relationships as well as supporting their mental health and wellbeing. UWEAST and the collaborative are also engaged in related work through the San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition and its Young Leaders to strengthen local leadership and participation in the decision-making activities of employment, educational, and economic development institutions. Through these strategies, UWEAST and the collaborative will cultivate youth leadership and a coalition of champions for refugee health, safe relationships, and DV prevention. They will also strengthen community norms and culture, and plant seeds for changes within multiple agencies and systems.

- [Blue Shield of California Foundation](#)** supports lasting and equitable solutions to make California the healthiest state and end DV. When we work together to remove the barriers to health and well-being, especially for Californians most affected, we can create a more just and equitable future. The Foundation is funded entirely by contributions from Blue Shield of California, a mission-based, not-for-profit health plan founded by physicians in 1939. Funding for Safety Through Connection is provided by Blue Shield of California Foundation through the Foundation’s “Align Systems with Community Priorities,” approach area.



- [Prevention Institute](#)** is a national nonprofit with offices in Oakland, Los Angeles, Houston, and Washington, D.C. Our mission is to build prevention and health equity into key policies and actions at the federal, state, local, and organizational level to ensure that the places where all people live, work, play and learn to foster health, safety and wellbeing. Since 1997, Prevention Institute has partnered with communities, local government entities, foundations, multiple sectors, and public health agencies to bring cutting-edge research, practice, strategy, and analysis to the pressing health and safety concerns of the day. Prevention Institute has applied our approach to injury and violence prevention, healthy eating and active living, land use, health systems transformation, and mental health and wellbeing, among other issues. With support from Blue Shield of California Foundation, Prevention Institute developed foundational materials to support a community-driven multi-sector approach to preventing DV. With deep experience facilitating Learning Communities and providing tailored consultations and trainings across various sectors, Prevention Institute stewards the Safety Through Connection project, administers the grants, facilitates the Learning Community, supports capacity building with each of the collaboratives, shares learning and experiences with key partners and related initiatives in California and beyond, and uplifts the collaboratives’ local priorities in state-level policy and systems change advocacy.



- [Strategic Prevention Solutions](#)** is the project evaluator contracted by Blue Shield of California Foundation. SPS is a research firm that works with national, state, community, and tribal entities to address and prevent social and health problems. SPS specializes in intimate partner and sexual violence prevention and services evaluation, bullying and violence prevention in schools, and substance abuse prevention and treatment among diverse communities, including Native, women and youth populations. SPS staff are community psychologists, researchers, empowerment evaluators, public health practitioners, practicing professionals, and experts in the field of behavioral health and wellness. SPS is well-versed in industry best practices and experienced in implementing and improving programs and policy efforts in communities.

