



Safety Through Connection: Engaging Multisector Collaboratives in Promoting Safe Relationships

Years Two and Three Approach, Activities, and Outcomes
November 2019-October 2021

Overview

With funding from the Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF), Prevention Institute launched Safety Through Connection in 2018, a program that supports community-based groups in preventing intimate partner violence (IPV). The program includes organizations that work on other issues—from nutrition and physical activity to worker rights to mental health—to become leaders in preventing IPV and promoting safe relationships. Each collaborative had come to recognize that promoting safe relationships and preventing IPV were priorities for their communities, and that progress in these areas would enhance their progress on other issues of focus. The collaboratives are The Center at McKinleyville (McKinleyville), Allies Against Violence (Oakland), Mujeres Poderosas Amorosas (Fresno), LA Worker Center Network (Los Angeles), and the East African Men and Boys Collaborative (San Diego).

Safety Through Connection is a learning program that will help increase understanding of how existing community collaboratives can enhance their capacity and partnerships, and implement, evaluate, and sustain IPV prevention as a priority within a broader community agenda.

Approach

Preventing IPV involves changing policies, practices, power dynamics, resource flows, and other community conditions. Safety Through Connection collaboratives use a broad range of strategies to build community cultures that support equitable relationships and nonviolent problem-solving. These strategies include: leadership development; civic engagement; power building; norms and culture change; culturally rooted intergenerational healing, education, and organizing; strategic communications and narrative change; systems change; policy change; and others.

Safety Through Connection applies the five components of Prevention Institute’s [Sectors Acting for Equity \(SAFE\) approach](#) including: 1) leading with health equity and social justice; 2) changing community conditions; 3) promoting community resilience; 4) collaborating across fields and social movements; and, 5) attending to prevention and healing. The program emphasizes [culturally-rooted strategies](#) developed by and for community members who face oppression and systemic inequities, and who experience disproportionate rates of IPV. The program also draws on research about IPV prevention, such as the [CDC’s technical package for IPV prevention](#), [BSCF’s life course framework for IPV prevention](#), and evidence from communities of practice like [PreventConnect](#).

Activities

During the first year of the Safety Through Connection program (2018-2019), each of the collaboratives learned about IPV and prevention strategies, conducted community assessments, and broadened their engagement of local partners. Informed by their community assessments, each collaborative developed plans to implement strategies that leverage their existing strengths and ongoing efforts.

During years two and three, each collaborative will engage in activities related to four core components:

Collaborative capacity building:

- Nurture the relationships, capacities, systems, skills, and will to work together effectively and sustainably to promote safe relationships and prevent IPV.
- Cultivate a shared understanding of IPV as a relationship and community issue.
- Build understanding of community-level contributors to IPV (e.g., norms that support gender inequities in relationships, lack of community sanctions against IPV, harmful media practices, etc.), and community-level contributors safe relationships (e.g., norms that support community engagement in family matter engagement, social inclusion and cohesion, housing and economic security, etc.).
- Build capacity to implement specific IPV strategies, e.g., leadership development, policy change, and others.

Strategy implementation:

- Address the community conditions identified during the year one community assessment.
- Build on the existing assets and activities of the collaborative and its members.
- Build on the opportunities and mitigate the challenges in the community landscape identified during the year one community assessment.
- Are consistent with the elements described in the Approach section of this document.

Documentation and Evaluation:

- Share lessons and insights about “what happened,” including challenges, course corrections and successes.
- Understand the value proposition, successes, challenges, benefits, and trade-offs for collaborating to prevent IPV, specifically among organizations and leaders that had not deeply prioritized IPV prevention in their collaborative work in the past.
- Understand the factors that encourage and support change across multiple sectors working together;
- Assess which capacity-building and community-of-practice activities are most needed and helpful.

Sustainability:

- Build community support to ensure that residents and those with lived experience continue to engage in and shape the work;
- Build political support to drive policy changes that facilitate or institutionalize the collaboratives’ work.
- Formalize commitments to the work through integration into mission and vision statements, strategic plans, job descriptions, etc.
- Secure financial resources to cover the cost of staffing and operations for the long-term.
- Ensure that the collaboratives can continue to serve as vehicles to drive change in their communities on IPV prevention and other priority issues for years to come.

Outcomes

Intended outcomes for all collaboratives are that, by the end of the program:

- Collaboratives and partners will have greater capacity to promote safe relationships and prevent IPV.
- Collaboratives will have implemented IPV prevention strategies and achieved short-term outcomes in alignment with a longer-term theory of change to promote safe relationships and prevent IPV.
- The multiple sectors involved in each collaborative have experienced value, benefit, and positive outcomes as a result of their participation.
- Collaboratives can continue to drive change in their communities on IPV prevention as part of a broader community agenda.

Program-wide outcomes for collaboratives and Prevention Institute are that, by the end of the program:

- Prevention Institute and the collaboratives will identify lessons and implications to inform and scale future efforts.
- Prevention Institute will share lessons learned and suggestions for how to approach this work in the future.
- There will be greater understanding of how existing collaboratives can enhance their partnerships, and implement, evaluate, and sustain multi-sector IPV prevention as a priority.