

Evidence Base for Funded Strategies

Strategy: Group Violence

Violence Interruption

Street outreach and violence interruption services are well studied and documented as an effective component of community violence intervention work. An evaluation of 301 individuals who received violence interruption services funded by Oakland Unite following a shooting incident between 2016 and 2019 found that only 13% experienced revictimization in the 2 years following services (Mathematica, 2020). A meta-analysis of the Cure Violence model of violence interruption highlights multiple studies from Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York City that demonstrate significant decreases in gun violence in implementation areas compared to control areas (Cure Violence, 2021). For example, neighborhoods of New York City where violence interrupters were deployed from 2014 to 2016 experienced a 50% reduction in gun injuries compared to similar areas without violence interrupters (John Jay College of Justice Research and Evaluation Center, 2017). Similar to Oakland's violence interruption model, Cure Violence involves proactive outreach in communities impacted by violence to build trust and mediate conflicts before they result in violence.

Hospital-Based Intervention

Hospital-based intervention programs have been widely researched and demonstrated as effective. A longitudinal study of 459 individuals with a gunshot wound, stab wound, or blunt assault injury who participated in a hospital-based intervention program at San Francisco General Hospital found that individuals who received services were less likely to be treated again for a violent injury over 10 years compared to a historical comparison group (4.9% vs. 8.4%) (Juillard et. al., 2016). An earlier study of the same program also demonstrated lower reinjury rates compared to a historical comparison group (4.5% vs. 15%) (Smith, et. al., 2013). A quasi-experimental evaluation of 627 individuals who received hospital-based outreach and case management services through Youth ALIVE!'s Caught in the Crossfire program in Oakland from 2016 and 2019 found that only 15% of individuals served were revictimized in the two years following service delivery (Mathematica, 2020).

Life Coaching

Life coaching and similar intensive case management services delivered outside of Oakland have been shown to produce impactful results for participants. An evaluation of adults at high risk for gun violence who received life coaching services funded by Oakland Unite from 2016 to 2017 found that participants were 22% less likely to be arrested for a gun offense than similar individuals who did not receive services (Mathematica, 2021). An evaluation of 216 youth who received youth life coaching services funded through Oakland Unite between 2016 and 2017 found that the youth were 11% more likely than their peers to graduate from high school (Mathematica, 2021). Roca uses a similar model of intensive case management to engage young adults at highest risk for violence in behavior change, and an evaluation of Roca's model by Abt Associates found that participants had lower one-year, two-year, and three-year reincarceration rates compared to the state average (Abt, 2024).

Cognitive behavioral theory, (CBT) which is an important component of life coaching has also been identified by researchers as one of the most effective tools for reducing group-led violence and criminal behavior (Abt & Winship, 2016). An evaluation of 1,740 young adults who received CBT delivered by Roca practitioners from 2013 and 2020 found that while 66% of participants had a history of violent offenses, only 18% recidivated for a violent offense within 3 years following program participation (Abt, 2021). Early analysis of READI Chicago, a CBT employment readiness program that teaches participants to recognize harmful thinking, alter it,

and delete it before it leads to harmful behavior, indicates that the program reduces shooting and homicide arrests for participants by 80% (READI Chicago, 2021). Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 58 studies on CBT methods used with system-involved youth and adults found that participants in CBT programs were 1.5 times less likely to recidivate in the 12 months following program participation compared to individuals who did not participate (Lipsey et. al., 2007).

Youth Diversion

An evaluation of 102 youth who participated in Community Works West's restorative justice youth diversion program funded by Oakland Unite from 2012 to 2014 found that youth who received services were 44% less likely than their peers to be re-arrested within 12 months (Impact Justice, 2020). Additionally, a meta-analysis of 60 studies on youth diversion programs found that participating youth were significantly less likely to recidivate than youth who went through the traditional justice process (33% versus 41%) (Wilson & Hoge, 2013).

Emergency Relocation

Relocation is an area of community violence intervention work that lacks robust research. An evaluation of 35 participants who received relocation services funded by Oakland Unite from 2016 to 2019 found that recipients of relocation support were less likely to experience violent re-injury in the 2 years following services (10%) compared to the 2 years before engaging in services (67%) (Mathematica, 2020). It is also worth noting that a study on the relocation of former inmates following Hurricane Katrina found that individuals who were more geographically dispersed had lower recidivism rates than former inmates who relocated to areas with a high concentration of their peers (Kirk, 2015).

Housing Navigation

Internal data collected by the DVP indicate that 42% of individuals who received DVP-funded services related to group violence in Fiscal Year 2023-2024 were homeless or housing insecure.

Employment Navigation

Employment can play an important role in supporting individuals impacted by group violence with long-term behavior change. A randomized controlled trial involving 2,456 adults at high-risk of gun violence in Chicago found that individuals who participated in an employment program paired with cognitive behavioral therapy had 65% fewer shooting and homicide arrests in the 20 months following the program than those in the comparison group (Bhatt, et. al., 2024). A randomized controlled trial of 1,634 Chicago youth who participated in a summer employment program for 8 weeks that involved mentorship and CBT classes found that participating youth were 45% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime than those in the comparison group (Heller, et. al., 2017).

Therapeutic Support

A systematic review of psychological interventions for individuals bereaved by homicide found that therapeutic modalities including cognitive behavioral therapy, restorative retelling, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing significantly decreased post-traumatic stress disorder, complicated grief, and depressive symptoms (Alves-Costa, et. al., 2021). A preliminary study of a psychoeducational pilot intervention for African American families healing from loss due to homicide showed promising results in helping participants identify complicated grief symptoms, supports, and services to help them manage their grief (Sharpe et. al., 2018).

Gender-Based Violence

Crisis Navigation

Studies suggest that crisis response and navigation services for survivors of intimate partner violence reduce revictimization and increased knowledge of resources. A quasi-experimental study of 433 high-risk survivors of domestic violence who were connected to crisis advocates in Oklahoma in 2009 and 2010 found that they were 16% less likely to experience levels of severe revictimization compared to a comparison group (Messing, et.al, 2015). Additionally, a pre-post survey conducted with 1,440 survivors of domestic violence who received crisis services through hotline calls, counseling, and systems advocacy across the state of Illinois between 2000 and 2002 found that program participants reported improvements in their knowledge of resources, decision making, self-efficacy, coping skills, and safety following receipt of services (Bennett, et. al., 2004).

Life Coaching

Life coaching with survivors of gender-based violence is an emerging practice in need of additional research, but existing studies suggest a positive impact. A systematic review of 11 randomized-controlled trials and two quasi-experimental studies on case management and advocacy for survivors of domestic violence found that participants are less likely to experience further abuse and symptoms of depression in the 12 months following participation (Rivas, et. al., 2015). An evaluation of a prevention and intervention case management and life skills program for 54 survivors of commercial sexual exploitation in San Francisco found that participants were significantly less likely to be involved with commercial sexual exploitation after participation (Cohen, et. al., 2010). Additionally, a longitudinal study involving 41 youth in Boston who experienced commercial sexual exploitation found that youth who received 6 months of survivor-mentor services had improved coping skills and were less likely to experience future exploitation, engage in delinquent behavior, or be arrested or detained by police (Rothman, et. al., 2020).

Housing

Housing services are proven to create greater safety and stability for individuals impacted by gender-based violence. A study of 345 domestic violence survivors in the Pacific Northwest who were offered unconditional housing services through a 'housing-first' model found that participants experienced lower revictimization and greater housing stability at 6, 12, and 24 months after initial service delivery compared to participants who received support services without housing (Sullivan, et. al., 2022).

Therapeutic Support

A systematic review of five studies on trauma-informed therapeutic services, including CBT techniques adapted to intimate partner violence, found that participation led to decreases in depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms while helping survivors feel better about their lives (Warshaw, et. al., 2013). Additionally, a randomized controlled trial of 125 survivors of intimate partner violence who had been diagnosed with PTSD and received cognitive trauma therapy found that 87% of participants no longer met diagnostic criteria for PTSD following treatment (Kubany, et. al., 2004).

Legal Assistance

Legal services can be critical to maintaining a survivor's safety. A study of 298 survivors of domestic violence found that no-contact restrictions were associated with significant decreases in revictimization compared to limited restriction orders (Sullivan, et. al., 2021).

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