Violence Prevention:
A Public Health Mandate

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A Public Health Concern

• Why interpersonal violence became a public health concern
  – Magnitude of the problem
  – Characteristics of violence
  – Contact health professionals have w/victims and perpetrators
  – Application of public health strategies to understanding and preventing it
Violence and Health Equity

Making the Case

Violence and Health Equity

Violence is a health equity issue, and preventing violence is an important component of achieving equity in health and in communities. Health inequities are related to a legacy of race discriminatory actions on the part of government and the larger society, as well as to present-day institutional practices and policies that perpetuate a system of disadvantage for certain populations. An overwhelming number of risk factors for violence have been concentrated in some communities, without sufficient measures to protect against violence. Some communities and groups are far more exposed to the poor neighborhood conditions that give rise to violence and other health inequities. Preventing violence has tremendous value, not just in saving lives and time, but also as a means to promote wellbeing, promote health equity, and strengthen communities. This fact sheet describes violence and link of safety in a health equity issue, and demonstrates how preventing violence is an important component of achieving equity in health and in communities.

Introduction

Parent, nation, and lack of institutional and economic investment in preventive strategies and public health interventions are interlinked. Rates of violence among minority and economically disadvantaged groups, and socioeconomic segregation reflect the impact of economic policies and institutional practices that perpetuate a system of disadvantage for certain populations

We know how to prevent violence. Young people need connectedness, identity, opportunity, and hope.

Health disparities are differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of disease and injuries between different population groups. Health disparities are products of poverty, racism, and structural inequality. Poverty and racism are major contributors to violence. Poverty and racism have devastating effects on health and wellbeing. The state of the majority of African Americans and other minority groups in the United States is characterized by high poverty, limited access to education and social mobility, economic hardship, and social isolation. The lack of economic resources and discrimination limit the opportunities for economic success and economic independence. Violence is a form of social injustice. The prevention of violence and the promotion of connectedness, identity, opportunity, and hope are strategies to reduce violence and promote health equity.

Preventing violence has tremendous value, not just in saving lives and time, but also as a means to promote wellbeing, promote health equity, and strengthen communities. This fact sheet describes violence and link of safety in a health equity issue, and demonstrates how preventing violence is an important component of achieving equity in health and in communities.

Links Between Violence and Health

Making the Case

Violence and Chronic Illness

Violence and Mental Health

Violence and Learning

Asthma

Exposure to violence can increase risk for asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Violence and Learning

Children who experience violence are more likely to have learning disabilities and other behavioral problems than children who do not experience violence. Children who experience violence are more likely to have learning disabilities and other behavioral problems than children who do not experience violence.

At the individual level, violence:

1. Affects the emotional health of parents, influencing their ability to attend to children's needs.
2. Creates stress and anxiety among children, affecting their ability to concentrate and learn.
3. Can lead to depression and other mental health disorders.
4. Leads to decreased academic achievement.
Criminal Justice and Public Health

- **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
  - Deeply, morally rooted in "justice"
  - Charged by society to determine guilt and institute punishment

- **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
  - Does not discriminate between victim and offender
  - Not professionally committed to punishment, but to risk reduction

The Relationship Between Public Health & Criminal Justice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Prevention</th>
<th>Secondary Prevention</th>
<th>Tertiary Prevention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UPFRONT</strong></td>
<td><strong>IN THE THICK</strong></td>
<td><strong>AFTER THE FACT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Behavior Modification</td>
<td>Punishment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
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</table>

Three Intervention Levels
A Preventable Problem

- Other Countries
- Boston’s Remarkable Success
- Girls and Violence
- Duelling

International Homicide Comparisons

International comparisons of homicide rate per 100,000 population (males, aged 15-24) in the years 1986 or 1987
Murder Is No Accident: 
The Boston Violence Prevention Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Violence Prevention Programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Friends for Life-PSA Campaign Ad Council of Boston</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>South Boston Boys and Girls Club - Friends for Life Clubs and Violence Prevention Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>(1985) Ten Point Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents Published for Distribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>South Boston Boys and Girls Club - Friends for Life Clubs and Violence Prevention Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>(1990) Teens Against Gang Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>(1990) Mayor's Safe Neighborhood Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>(1992) Stop the Violence Campaign</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>(1992) Ten Point Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Community Policing in Boston</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Strike Force</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Boston Police Department

Community Empowerment: 
Violence Prevention and Health Promotion

Harvard Youth Violence Prevention Center
Risk Factors for Violence

- Poverty and Income Inequality
- Access to Guns
- Alcohol and Other Drug Use
- Witnessing Violence and Victimization
- Biologic/Organic Abnormalities
- Culture of Violence
CAUTION!!

COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and
advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston,
For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR &
ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as
KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,
And they have already been actually employed in
KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING
SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY,
and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, Show
them in every possible manner, as many HOUNDS
on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.

Keep a Sharp Look Out for
KIDNAPPERS, and have
TOP EYE open.

APRIL 24, 1851.
American Dueling

Dueling Pistols
Timeline

- 16th Century – Dueling documented in Europe
- 1620 – First American duel documented and only a handful noted until 1760
- 1640 – Race based ban – no free Mulattoes, Negroes or Indians could own guns
- 1718, 1728 – Duels in Boston - laws passed –punishment - sit in the gallows
- 1775 – 1783 American Revolutionary War
- 1775 – VA –can’t hold an office if you duel
- 1778 – Generals in the “new” US army dueled
- 1802 – NC
- 1804 – former Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton and Vice-President Aaron Burr duel
- 1809 – TN
- 1810 – VA –Anti-dueling Act – made “fighting words’ libel, an offense
- 1815 – Illinois
- 1816 – GA
- 1819 – AL
- 1822 – Miss.
- 1822 – SC elected Governor John Lyde Wilson, a dueler and author of the Code
- 1832 – Law in FL – offense to call a man a coward for refusing a duel

Timeline

- 1838 - The Code of Honor, or Rules for the Government of Principals and second in Dueling printed
- 1839 – Miss. Includes attending surgeons in the list of those who can be charged
- 1842 – the only person convicted under NY anti-dueling law - two years and pardoned
- 1844 – GA Supreme Court race-based gun laws are upheld because – not citizens
- 1858 – Miss. Granted amnesty to 15 duelers
- 1860 – CA interpretation of a law indicates that killing in a duel is NOT murder
- 1861 – 1865 – Civil War
- 1866 – Kentucky’s last duel
- 1880 –Challenged “gentleman Senator Mahone – simply refused to fight
- 1990 – New Mexico State vs. Romero – last reported case with charges of dueling
Bloody Island

TO THE PUBLIC.

The object of this placard is to inform the Public that Gen. Leigh Read has declined giving to me an apology for the insult offered me at St. Marks, on the 5th inst. That he has also refused to me that satisfaction, which as an honorable man, (refusing to apologise,) he was bound to give. I therefore pronounce him a Coward and a Scoundrel.

WILLIAM TRADEWELL.

Tallahassee, Oct. 26, 1839.
How many Duels were there?  
How Common a Practice was It?

Jack K. Williams, *Dueling in the Old South*:

In Mississippi in the 1840s, duels were said to be “as plenty as blackberries.”

Fox Butterfield, *All God’s Children: The Boskett Family*

An “undercount” yields a rate in Edgefield, SC from 1844-1858 of 18/100,000 per year with a 1991 Louisiana rate of 17.4/100,000

Harriet Martineau, famous authoress and traveler, wrote:

"It is understood that in New Orleans there were fought, in 1834, more duels than there are days in the year, fifteen in one Sunday morning; that in 1835, there were 102 duels fought in that city between the 1st of January and the end of April and no notice is taken of shooting in a quarrel..."

Hamilton’s Pros and Cons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Pros</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wife and Children</td>
<td>• Pressing necessity not to decline the call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deeply in debt</td>
<td>• Cost him political support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bore Burr no ill-will</td>
<td>• Essential to his ability to be useful in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illegal in NY</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Condemned by Christianity</td>
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SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

- A fundamental change in the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of a society such that the laws, practices, policies and activities reflect a new and different cultural norm.

Source: Gibbs et al
Gran Marcha 2006
http://blogging.la/archives/2006/03/largest_protest_even_in_los_angeles.html

Current Social Transformation Efforts

- Social transformation requires activism that connects diverse people and converts them from spectators to activists.

- The outcome is improvement in the health, social, and political environment of a community.
Successful Violence Prevention Efforts: Minneapolis

Minneapolis Blueprint for Action

- Description: The Minneapolis blueprint for action is a violence prevention plan implemented by the Mayor’s “Youth Violence Prevention Committee”. The plan consists of four core goals:
  - Connect youth to trusted adults
  - Intervene at the first sight of risk
  - Restore youth who have gone down the wrong path
  - Unlearn the culture of violence

The city implements various programs and strategies for each of the four goals. The initiative is successful because of its coordinated collaborations across departments and with community stakeholders.

- Outcomes after three years:
  - 64 percent decrease in homicides of young people aged 15 to 24 years
  - Number of youth suspects in violent crimes dropped by 62 percent.

Source: http://www.preventioninstitute.org/component/jlibrary/article/id-314/127.html

Successful Violence Prevention Efforts: Seattle

- Seattle Violence Prevention Initiative

- Description: This initiative enacted by the City of Seattle implements a strong intervention component. It expands intervention services to middle schools and establishes neighborhood networks that connect youth to needed services.

- Outcomes:
  - Violent offenses fell 20.5% in SYVPI areas from 2008-2010.
  - The number of youth from SYVPI neighborhoods referred for violent offenses fell 19.3% from 2008-2011.
Successful Violence Prevention Efforts: Los Angeles

Los Angeles Gang Reduction and Youth Development Program

- **Description:** The Mayor consolidated the delivery of gang prevention and intervention services in the Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development.
- **The comprehensive approach supports establishing safe, clearly identified places where at risk-youth and their families can receive unconditional support, services and counseling. Targeting communities with high levels of gang crime with a strategy that is equally tough on crime as it is on the root causes of crime, the innovative approach is complementing suppression with data driven prevention and intervention services aimed at ending cycles of gang violence.

- **Outcomes:**
  - Gang crimes have fallen by 21.6%, faster than crime overall in the city.
  - Young people enrolled in the program were 29% less likely to skip class; while those from the same neighborhoods not in the program increased the amount they cut class by 53%.


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The Power Struggle

Example: Boxing Out the Violence

![Boxing Gloves](image)
Thank You

![Book Cover: Sugar & Spice and No Longer Nice](image1)

![Book Cover: Murder Is No Accident](image2)