

Violence Action Plan

Background: Violence is considered a major public health issue, not only due to the number of deaths directly resulting from violence each year, but because of the trauma to those living in neighborhoods affected by high levels of violence. Both unintentional injuries and those caused by acts of violence are among the top 15 killers for Americans of all ages (Healthy People 2020 Injury and Violence Prevention, 2014). Research on violence has increased our understanding of factors that make some populations more vulnerable to victimization and perpetration. African American adolescents and youth who reside in urban areas are disproportionately affected by community violence as victims and witnesses (The National Center for Victims of Crime, 2012). In addition to the risk of victimization, for many African American adolescents, as well as youth in urban areas, witnessing acts of violence is commonplace (The National Center for Victims of Crime, 2012). The direct causes of violence stretch into complex societal conditions such as poverty, racism, lack of economic opportunity, poor housing conditions, and diminished sense of belonging to the community (CDC, 2016). A comprehensive public health response to violence prevention addresses policies targeting the social and economic conditions that often give rise to violence, as well as focuses on the individual, familial, school, and community-level risk factors for violence to allow for a multidisciplinary approach to violence prevention.

Key goals and objectives of Healthy People 2020 supported by this action plan:

- **Violence Prevention:** Reduce physical assaults
 - Decrease the number of physical assaults per 1,000 population among ages 12 and older from 21.3 in 2008 to 19.2 in 2020 (Objective IVP-33)
- **Violence Prevention:** Reduce homicides
 - Decrease the number of homicides per 100,000 population from 6.1 in 2007 to 5.5 in 2020 (Objective IVP-29).
- **Violence Prevention:** Reduce children's exposure to violence
 - Decrease the percent of children who were exposed to any form of violence, crime, and abuse from 58.9% in 2008 to 53% in 2020 (Objective IVP-42).

Outcome Objectives EPLAN 2016-2021 Violence

- Decrease the incidence of violent crimes from baseline (2.1 crimes per 1,000 residents).

Impact Objectives EPLAN 2016-2021 Violence

- By 2017, identify violence hotspots and establish baseline data in collaboration the Evanston Police Department.
- By 2018, create a tool to screen for early violence exposure and establish baseline information for youth exposure to violence and trauma.

- By 2021, hold 5 town hall meetings in the community (1 per year) as a venue for community members and leaders to come together to express the rejection of violent behaviors and norms, as well as share evidence-based solutions for violence prevention.

Intervention Strategies

- The Evanston Police Department Problem Solving Team (PST) serves as a community policing mechanism by making personal contacts with area residents and merchants as well as providing a broad spectrum of proactive and preventive community services. As we move forward with intervention strategies, the PST will be pivotal in maintaining positive relationships and open communication between the community and the Police Department.
- The Evanston Police Department Armored Surveillance Vehicle advances departmental efforts to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods by reducing crime and disorder. The department has utilized this surveillance vehicle to reduce crime in areas characterized by thefts, habitual disturbances, and complaints of drug-related activity. Identifying violence hotspots will assist in further reducing crime through deploying this vehicle in target areas.
- The Youth Engagement Initiative provides opportunities for all Evanston youth and young adults to become active and productive citizens of the community through strengthening existing youth services, establishing a network of service partnerships, increasing participation within the available opportunities, creating marketable job training and placement and increasing the opportunities for social and recreational outlets for disengaged youth.
- Cuyahoga County's Defending Childhood Initiative includes the creation of an integrated, county-wide screening, assessment, and service system for children ages 0-18 who have experienced violence and trauma. The City of Evanston plans to utilize this tool to screen children for early exposure to violence.
- Philadelphia's Strategic Plan to Prevent Youth Violence contains strategies for addressing a number of violence-related priorities and ideas for data measurement that can be carried out by the City of Evanston.
- Ceasefire Illinois includes the Cure Violence Health Model and steps for implementation in communities. The model includes a public awareness campaign and strategies will be incorporated into the City of Evanston's Plan.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Study provides a research-based foundation for linkage of early exposure to violence and other traumatic events to risk of adverse outcomes and negative behaviors later in life.

Partners

- ETHS/School District 65
- Erie Family Health Center
- Oakton Community College
- Evanston Childcare Centers
- Evanston Cradle to Career
- Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program
- Family Focus
- Fellowship of African American Men
- McGaw YMCA
- Youth & Opportunity United (Y.O.U.)
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Faith-based organizations such as churches and houses of worship

Table 1. Violence Action Plan (VAP)

Health Issue	Prevalence of violence	
Risk Factors Addressed by the VAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High concentrations of poverty • Socially disorganized neighborhoods 	
Contributing Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low educational attainment • Diminished economic opportunities • Neighborhood segregation by race and class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture/social norms related to violence • Poor housing conditions • Lack of ownership or sense of belonging to the community
Focus Areas and Objectives	<i>See accompanying Table 2</i>	
Intervention Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evanston PD: Problem Solving Team • Armored Surveillance Vehicle • Youth Engagement Initiative • Cuyahoga County's Defending Childhood Initiative • Philadelphia's Strategic Plan to Prevent Youth Violence • Ceasefire Illinois • Adverse Childhood Experiences Study 	
Barriers/ Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community norms • Spreading awareness of available resources 	
Resources Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETHS/School District 65 • Erie Family Health Center • Oakton Community College • Evanston Childcare Centers • Evanston Cradle to Career • Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program • Family Focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellowship of African American Men • McGaw YMCA • Youth Organizations Umbrella (Y.O.U.) • Big Brothers, Big Sisters • Faith-based organizations such as churches and houses of worship • Evanston Police Department

Table 2. Focus Areas and Objectives

Focus Area	Outcome Objectives	Impact Objectives	Tools to Utilize
Incidence of Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the incidence of violent crimes from baseline (2.1 crimes per 1,000 residents). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2017, identify violence hotspots and establish baseline data in collaboration the Evanston Police Department. • By 2018, create a tool to screen for early violence exposure and establish baseline information for youth exposure to violence and trauma • By 2021, hold 5 town hall meetings in the community (1 per year) as a venue for community members and leaders to come together to express the rejection of violent behaviors and norms, as well as share evidence-based solutions for violence prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informant interviews • Response Team • Philadelphia's Strategic Plan to Prevent Youth Violence • Cuyahoga County's Defending Childhood Initiative • Philadelphia's Strategic Plan to Prevent Youth Violence • Adverse Childhood Experiences Study • Ceasefire Illinois