ESOURCE NEWSLETTER

About Violence Prevention

Decades of research, prevention, and services have provided valuable insights into various forms of violence and effective ways to prevent and respond to them. One consistent finding is the strong interconnection between different forms of violence.

Research has shown that people who experience one form of violence are more likely to experience other forms.

Additionally, people who engage in violence in one context (e.g., towards peers) are also likely to be violent in other contexts (e.g., towards dating partners).

Research has also shown that various forms of violence share common consequences that can negatively impact mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being. These consequences may contribute to chronic health conditions like cancer, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, or diabetes. Lastly, the research has found that different forms of violence also share common risk and protective factors.

Understanding the overlapping causes of violence and the things that can protect people and communities can help us better prevent violence in all its forms.

A framework for prevention

YCDC uses a four-level social-ecological model to better understand violence and the effect of potential prevention strategies. This model considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. It allows us to understand the various factors that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence. The overlapping rings in the model illustrate how factors at one level influence factors at another level.

The model also suggests that preventing violence requires simultaneous action across multiple levels. This approach is more likely to sustain prevention efforts over time and achieve impact on the population as a whole.

Individual | Relationship | Community | Societal

The Social-Ecological Model

Individual
The first level identifies biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Some of these factors are age, education, income, substance use, or history of abuse. Prevention strategies at this level promote attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that prevent violence. Specific approaches may include conflict resolution and life skills training, social-emotional learning, and safe dating and healthy relationship skill programs.

Relationship
The second level examines close relationships that may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. A person's closest social circle-peers, partners and family members-influences their behavior and contribute to their experience. Prevention strategies at this level may include parenting or family-focused prevention programs and mentoring and peer programs designed to strengthen parent-child communication, promote positive peer norms, problem-solving skills and promote healthy relationships.

Community
The third level explores the settings, such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Prevention strategies at this level focus on improving the physical and social environment in these settings (e.g., by creating safe places where people live, learn, work, and play) and by addressing other conditions that give rise to violence in communities (e.g., neighborhood poverty, residential segregation, and instability, high density of alcohol outlets).

Societal
The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural norms that support violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts. Other large societal factors include the health, economic, educational, and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society.

Prevention strategies at this level include efforts to promote societal norms that protect against violence as well as efforts to strengthen household financial security, education and employment opportunities, and other policies that affect the structural determinants of health.

What is community violence?

Community violence happens between unrelated individuals, who may or may not know each other, generally outside the home. Examples include assaults or fights among groups and shootings in public places, such as schools and on the streets.

Research indicates that youth and young adults (ages 10-34), particularly those in Black and Latino communities, are disproportionately impacted.[1]

Community violence affects millions of people and their families, schools, and communities every year.

Outcomes

Community violence can cause significant physical injuries, including death, of community members.

Living in a community experiencing violence is also associated with increased risk of developing chronic diseases. Concerns about violence may prevent some people from engaging in healthy behaviors, such as walking, bicycling, using parks, and accessing healthy food.

Violence scares people out of participating in neighborhood activities, limits business growth, strains education, justice, and medical systems, and slows community progress.

Youth and young adults can be victims, perpetrators, or witnesses of violence. People with multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including exposure to violence, are more likely to have physical and mental health conditions and behavioral difficulties.

People at increased risk

People's health outcomes are influenced by the conditions in which they live, work, play, and learn. These conditions are called social determinants of health. Systemic racism, bias and discrimination, economic instability, concentrated poverty, and limited housing, education, and healthcare access drive health inequities.

Prevention

Efforts to prevent community violence can include improving the conditions that increase the risk for violence. Addressing the social and economic conditions of people's everyday lives may prevent community violence experienced by today's youth and future generations. Street outreach programs and hospital-based violence intervention programs, can provide urgently needed support to help reduce immediate risks for violence, including escalating or retaliatory violence. These types of approaches are important to save lives and make communities safer.

A comprehensive approach that includes strategies addressing societal factors such as economic security and quality education, as well as strategies intervening to lessen immediate harms can have the greatest short and long-term impact.

To prevent community violence, it is important to collaborate with different sectors, including government, justice, housing, public health, community-led organizations, and others. Everyone can play a role in putting the evidence into action as we work together towards communities free from violence. ———

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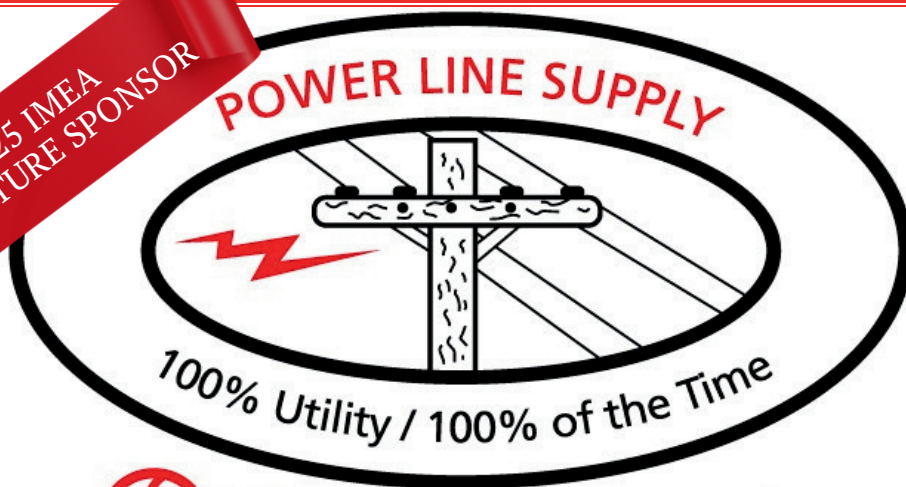**WELCOME THE HOST OF THE 2025 IMEA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING & VENDOR EXPO**

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