Reaffirming and Refining Your Gang Reduction Efforts

A FY2019 OJJDP Grantee Peer Sharing and Technical Assistance Resource

About This Resource

Gangs arise from a complex range of issues across communities, and it requires a comprehensive response to effectively reduce gang violence and victimization. Different challenges and pitfalls can arise in the development of a comprehensive response, including those related to multidisciplinary collaboration, access to resources, and building relationships with youth, families, and the community.

In acknowledgement of these challenges, on behalf of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the National Gang Center (NGC) conducted a series of virtual technical assistance and community of practice events from July 2020 to December 2020 to address specific topics of interest related to gang reduction for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 and FY2019 OJJDP Gang Program grantees. The events included consultation by practitioners as well as opportunities for collaboration and peer sharing among grantees on topics related to strategic partnerships, understanding gang culture, working with gang-involved youth, utilizing a team approach in response to gang violence and victimization, and trauma-informed care. In April 2021, NGC, with the unwavering support of OJJDP, hosted a follow-up Cross-Site Meeting for the FY2019 OJJDP Gang Program grantees, which allowed for more in-depth discussions, peer sharing/collaboration, and sharing of best practices.

Throughout the events, valuable insights, resources, and stories from the field were shared by the FY2019 OJJDP grantees, who are the "on-the-ground" experts, as well as expert practitioners that NGC drew upon for this event. The experiences, lessons learned, and successes of these individuals, who understand the details of day-to-day implementation of a gang-related initiative, are helpful to consider in building, implementing, and sustaining an effective and comprehensive response to gang violence. In addition to these events, OJJDP and NGC are committed to providing support to OJJDP grantees through continued technical assistance and the development of quality resources to aid their efforts.
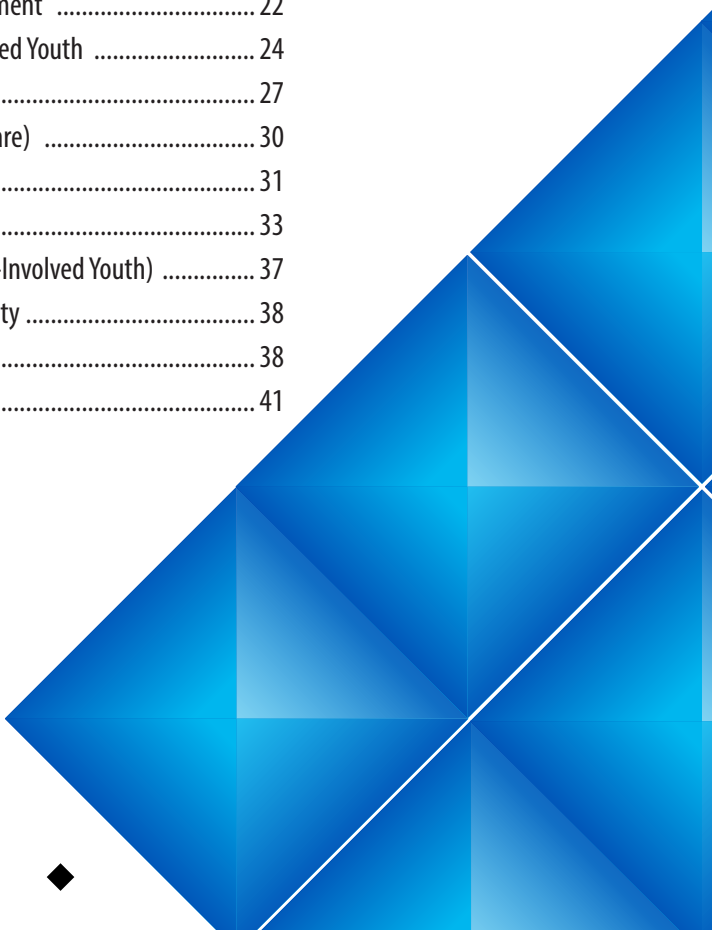
How to Use This Resource

This resource provides insight into best practices and strategies to address gang violence and victimization. It captures the valuable information shared during the events to aid OJJDP grantees in further refining or improving their efforts and avoiding potential pitfalls that other OJJDP grantees have overcome. Those who attended these NGC events as well as other grant site representatives should use this resource when they are taking into consideration any of the following questions around strategic collaboration, engaging gang-involved youth and addressing their needs, trauma-informed care, and project implementation and sustainability:

- Are we moving on the right path with our initiative?
- Have others encountered these same challenges? If so, how did they overcome them?
- Are there potential pitfalls of which we should be aware?
- What other strategies could improve our initiative or refine our efforts?

Contents

FY2019 OJJDP Gang Program Grantees

FY2019 OJJDP Youth Gang Suppression Implementation Grants Program

- Bexar County Juvenile GRANDE Program (Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department; Bexar County, Texas)
- Gang Activities Prevention Program—Young Adult (Collaborative Solutions for Communities; Washington, DC)
- Gang Reduction and Intervention Task Force (City of Yakima; Yakima, Washington)
- THE ALTERNATIVE Project (Gang Alternative, Inc.; North Miami, Florida)
- Urban Leaders (Metro Community Ministries; San Diego, California)
- Volunteers of America Los Angeles Newton Youth Gang Suppression Program (Volunteers of America Los Angeles; Los Angeles, California)

FY2019 OJJDP Youth Gang Desistance/Diversion Grant Program

- Gang Reduction Assistance for Saving Society's Youth Enhancement (University of Tennessee Health Science Center; Memphis, Tennessee)
- IGNITE Youth Alliance Desistance Grant (Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.; St. Lucie County, Florida)
- Indy HeartBeat (Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County; Marion County, Indiana)
- LINC: Leadership, Intervention & Change—OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model Implementation in King County (Center for Children and Youth Justice; Seattle, Washington)

FY2019 OJJDP Supporting Victims of Gang Violence Grant Program

- City of Fresno Support for Victims of Gang Violence (City of Fresno Police Department; Fresno, California)
- Cure Violence Model Expansion—Interventions for Youth Victims of Gang Crime (Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Atlanta, Georgia)
- Greater Trenton Outreach to Support Youth Victims of Gang Violence (PEI Kids; Trenton, New Jersey)
- IGNITE Youth Alliance—Preventing Victimization of Gang Violence (Roundtable of St. Lucie County, Inc.; St. Lucie County, Florida)
- Lompoc Youth Resiliency Project (The Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Lompoc, California)
- PROJECT SEEDS—HEALS (Social Emotional Enhance and Development for Success—Helping, Empowering, and Lifting Society) (Affirming YOUth Foundation; Liberty City, Florida)
- San Antonio Police Department Supporting Victims of Gang Violence (San Antonio Police Department; San Antonio, Texas)
- South Houston Victims of Gang Violence Support Project (Mayor's Office of Gang Prevention and Intervention; Houston, Texas)
- Supporting Victims of Gang Violence in Watts (Children's Institute, Inc.; Watts, California)
- Three Cities Nonviolence Program (Nonviolence Institute; Providence, Rhode Island)

OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model

The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model (CGM) is a set of five interrelated core strategies that offer a comprehensive, collaborative approach designed to prevent and reduce gang violence and victimization. The Model is presented as a framework for coordinating action in a community. It is intended to be adaptable to the unique needs of local communities. The information presented in this resource document, while valuable as standalone best practices, is incorporated within the framework of this Model. The five strategies are:

Core Strategies

- **Community Mobilization:** Involvement of local citizens, including former gang members and community groups and agencies, and the coordination of programs and staff functions within and across agencies.
- **Opportunities Provision:** The development of a variety of education, training, employment, and reentry programs specific to engaging gang-involved youth and young adults.
- **Social Intervention:** Youth-serving agencies, schools, street outreach workers, grassroots groups, faith-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other criminal justice organizations reaching out and acting as links between gang-involved youth and their families, the conventional world, and needed services.
- **Suppression:** Formal and informal social controls procedures and accountability measures, including law enforcement and close supervision or monitoring of gang-involved youth, by criminal justice agencies working in collaboration with community-based service providers, schools, and grassroots groups.
- **Organizational Change and Development:** Development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources to better address the gang problem.

Community Mobilization—community engagement and collaboration

Opportunities Provision—education, training, and employment programs

Social Intervention—outreach and access to provision of services for gang-involved youth and their families

Suppression—community policing with formal and informal social controls and accountability measures

Organizational Change and Development—development of policy for effective use of resources

Comprehensive and Collaborative Approach Structure

Under the Model, there is a defined structure to support strategic collaboration between partners and implementation of the core strategies.

More information about the Model can be found at https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Comprehensive-Gang-Model.

Acknowledgements

Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration in Addressing Gang Violence

This section captures the valuable information shared related to strategic partnerships and collaboration. It highlights specific insights, tips, best practices, and resources for engaging partners; establishing a Steering Committee; and leveraging the involvement of organizations and community groups.

Importance of Strategic Partnerships/ Collaborations

- Establish a coordinated framework for violence reduction initiatives

- Build a foundation for sustainable solutions

Role of the Steering Committee

- Under the Model, the Steering Committee manages the collaborative and serves as the brain of the project—making key decisions, setting up policies and procedures, guiding the project, determining time frames/priorities, and addressing issues that arise.

Why form a Steering Committee?

- Leadership commitment/key decision makers
- Comprehensive understanding/viewpoint
- Sets priorities
- Creates efficiencies in resource distribution
- Makes key decisions in a coordinated manner

- The Steering Committee is a forum where key stakeholders are mutually respected and valued for their diverse perspectives, experience, and influence (comprehensive understanding), which they are willing to bring (commitment) to the table.

  - It provides a structure (power) and process (authority) for joint ownership of the project.
  - It is a decision-making protocol that transforms a diverseness of opinions into a unified voice that drives the direction of the project.

- The main responsibilities of the Steering Committee are:

  - Accountability—Ensuring that the project is fulfilling the original plan and that partners are fulfilling their roles
  - Transparency—Sharing information on funding or project activities/processes with partners as well as the public and involving all partners in decision making

- Sustainability—Exploring ways to develop strategies under existing resources and future opportunities for funding after the grant ends
- Public trust—Ensuring that activities do not violate public trust and that the community is involved in all aspects of the project; establishing policies and practices in place to mitigate any potential damage to the reputation of the project

Engaging Partners and Establishing the Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee composition and size will be unique to each community and depend on the partners available. The most important aspects of the Committee composition are the quality and commitment of the partners.
- To determine who should participate, look at who is directly involved with project strategies, who is peripheral to the strategies or has access to the same clients, who could serve as potential funders for the project in the future, and who may need to provide data for the project.
  - Support could include personnel, time, space, funding, and/or knowledge/expertise.
  - As the project expands, consider bringing new partners on board to support new strategies.
- Members of the Steering Committee should be decision makers from those agencies who do not require permission to commit resources or support throughout the process.
  - If the team is unable to secure specific decision makers, the project coordinator will need to follow up on specific action items with the agency heads.
- To secure buy-in from agencies, it is important to understand the overall mission and requirements of each potential partner agency, in order to effectively articulate how they would benefit from the project.
  - For example, with probation, it may be helpful to stress how the program may impact recidivism rates.
  - For partners that are reluctant:
    - Use other Steering Committee members to connect with partners.
    - Use data to clearly illustrate the gang problem.
    - For law enforcement agencies, consider working with lower-level management first to familiarize them with the project and understand the value it will provide.

Operating the Steering Committee

- At the onset of the committee, it is critical to be clear about each agency's commitment (experience, resources, etc.), the role of the committee, and the time requirements.

    - Establish the expectations that arise from receiving grant funds and that funded activities have to align with fiscal requirements.

- There should be processes in place to introduce new members and/or new representatives from existing agencies to the project. Consider involving other agencies to bring the new individuals up to speed.

- Within the committee, there should be shared ownership but also a clear idea of who will run the meetings (chairs vs. coordinator), what will happen if any agency stops participating, what will dictate any agency's removal, how decisions will be made (voting or consensus), how to share information, etc.

    - Consider establishing bylaws to dictate these processes.
    - Consider requiring all agencies to sign a memorandum of understanding that outlines their expectations and commitments.

- During meetings, make sure each partner is engaged by asking for their feedback or creating specific agenda items. Each partner around the table is equal and of value and should be respected.

    - The consensus of the Steering Committee should determine the direction of the project. If any agency cannot agree or has issues, the coordinator or chair may need to engage them in a separate conversation.

- After the project is implemented, continue to engage the Steering Committee around data collection, evaluation, and sustainability efforts.

Shared power and authority are key elements of a successful collaboration

Voices From the Field

On Establishing a Committee
"Steering Committees will look different in different communities based on existing infrastructures. You may want to bring the program into an existing collaborative." (FY2019 OJJDP Grantee from Florida)

On Grassroot Agencies
"Grassroot agencies are good at reaching out and connecting with clients, but they may not have a structure to manage some funding requirements. If you have agencies doing good work without structure, ask how you can build their capacity. In Denver, we had a grassroots nonprofit. We went to one of our top Foundations in the city and indicated the promise that agency has; we were able to convince the Foundation to adopt that organization to mentor them and teach them how to grow." (Practitioner from Colorado)

On Importance of Value Added
"Our Steering Committee has been set for several years. Originally, [we] had two committees, but they were combined. We have invited several community partners to the table but have been unable to get them to stick . . . As far as why [they] didn't stick, they were a part of a project before that did not have value added." (FY2019 OJJDP Grantee from Washington)

On Leveraging Strategic Partnerships
"[Having] a shared mission . . . [and] relationships will allow people to come alongside one another and move forward together." (Practitioner from Washington)

On Value of the Steering Committee
"There is benefit to having layers for the program. If the Intervention Team cannot handle it or if middle management cannot, then the issue can be moved to the Steering Committee, especially when it involves system breaks." (FY2019 OJJDP Grantee from Florida)

From the Field

In this section, OJJDP grantee presentations on promising practices for establishing strategic partnerships and collaboration within their projects to address gang violence and victimization are highlighted.

IGNITE Youth Alliance—St. Lucie County, Florida
FY2019 OJJDP Gang Desistance/Diversion and FY2019 OJJDP Gang Victimization Grantee

From the Field

IGNITE Youth Alliance—St. Lucie County, Florida
FY2019 OJJDP Gang Desistance/Diversion and FY2019 OJJDP Gang Victimization Grantee

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION TO REDUCE GANG VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION

- COLLABORATIVE GANG SUPPRESSION
- MULTIAGENCY AND TEAM-BASED SERVICE PROVISION
- TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- CLOSING OF CRITICAL SYSTEM GAPS

Program Sustainability: Leveraging Funding

- Results!
- Relationships!
- Leverage funds!
- Strategic benefits!
- Public/private partnerships!

Current IGNITE Funding/In-Kind Partners

From the Field

Three Cities Nonviolence Program—Providence, Rhode Island

FY2019 OJJDP Gang Victimization Grantee

Three Cities Nonviolence Program
Working Together to Support Youth and Families in
Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls

A Grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention awarded to
the Nonviolence Institute and Family Services of Rhode Island

The Nonviolence Institute

The mission of the Nonviolence Institute is to teach, by word and example, the principles and practices of nonviolence, and to foster a community that addresses potentially violent situations with nonviolent solutions

The Three Cities Nonviolence Program

The Three Cities Nonviolence Program aims to prevent violence by providing coordinated support for youth and families in Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls

Our vision is to foster a community that promotes the health, safety, and well-being of all youth

The Time for Collaboration Is Now

Aggravated Assaults with Firearm, Providence
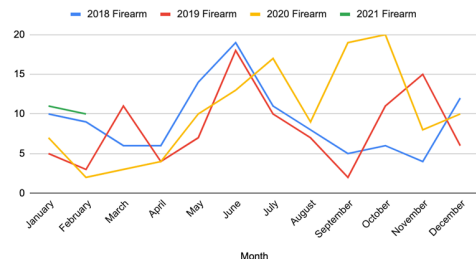
From the Field

Three Cities Nonviolence Program—Providence, Rhode Island

FY2019 OJJDP Gang Victimization Grantee
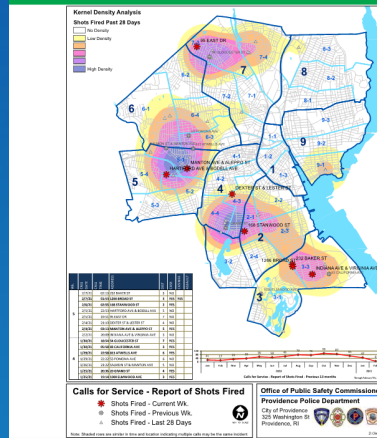
Targeting prevention and intervention support to maximize impact

Focusing on Youth

The Nonviolence Institute Outreach Team and Victim Services Team respond to every incident of violence in Rhode Island for which we receive notification

180
Total Hospital Responses

83
Hospital Responses for Youth Ages 13–24

Responses to victims of violence from Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls, January 1, 2020, to March 11, 2021

The term "youth violence," used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, refers to young people aged 10 to 24 years.

Victims by Age Group

Youth Victims 46.1%

Adult Victims 53.9%
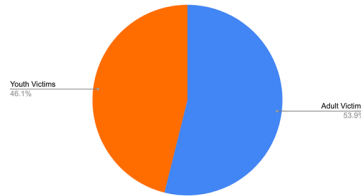
Age of Youth Victims
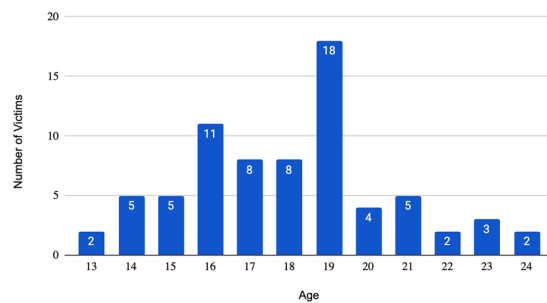
High school and post-graduation are the highest risk times → early prevention and targeted intervention

Community Collaboration

Preventing violence and supporting youth onto better paths takes the time, devotion, and supportive resources of many different agencies and organizations. It takes the Beloved Community

Reaffirming and Refining Your Gang Reduction Efforts

From the Field
Three Cities Nonviolence Program—Providence, Rhode Island
FY2019 OJJDP Gang Victimization Grantee

Building Partnerships

Schools	Juvenile Justice and Diversion	Government Leaders
Law Enforcement	Community Organizations	Youth Advocates

Project Engagement Groups

The Central Falls Project Engagement Group meets monthly with 30+ representatives from key organizations and agencies

Building momentum to replicate the collaborative framework in Pawtucket and Providence

(Youth and Families; Youth Engagement & Employment Programs; Community Leaders; Outreach Workers; Local Law Enforcement; DCYF and Probation; Health & Social Service Agencies; School District)

Our Collaborative Process

Referrals → Outreach → Service Provision

Wraparound Support → Follow-Up
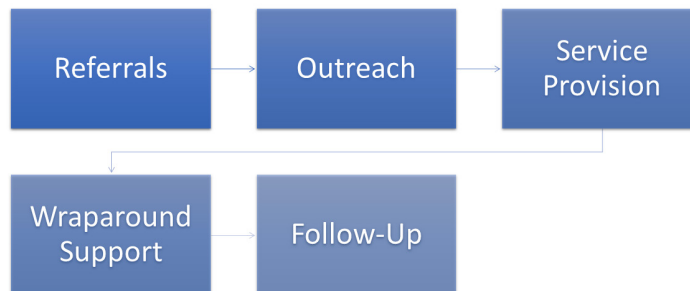
Stakeholder Buy-In

I've been working with the Nonviolence Institute for many years, and we've seen the impact it can have when we call them in. It really helps to reduce issues and resolve conflicts. This is a more enhanced version of that process

—Colonel Roberson, Central Falls Police Chief

Three Cities Nonviolence Program—Providence, Rhode Island
FY2019 OJJDP Gang Victimization Grantee

Creating a Shared Language and Culture

- Train partner agencies, organizations, and youth in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s principles, practices, and steps of nonviolence
- Provide tools for nonviolent conflict resolution
- **Build a shared commitment to the Beloved Community**

TAKE THE *first step* IN FAITH. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE THE *whole staircase*, JUST TAKE THE FIRST STEP.
by MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
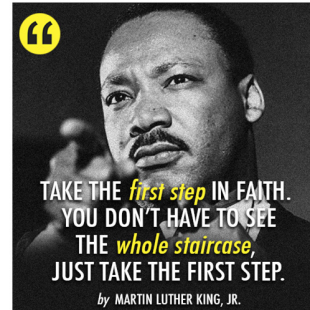
Youth Advocacy: Three Cities Youth Coalition

"We use our voices to create a transformed understanding: that every young person is essential to the growth and fabric of our community."

Youth As Leaders of The Change
The Children's Crusade
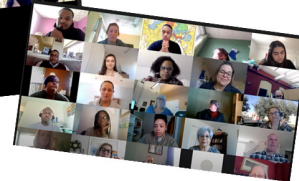
What Will Success Look Like?

We are **creating a system** among agencies for identification, opportunities provision, and service access for youth

By **sharing information**, we are able to **target prevention and intervention** resources where they can have the greatest impact

Our collaboration is **building efficiency** as we make sure that providers who work with the same population are not duplicating services, are **communicating** with each other, and have processes for **coordinated follow-up** to make sure kids don't fall through the cracks

We are **building safety networks** by **educating** partners about risk factors and how to access available programming

We are creating a **shared language and culture of nonviolence** among agencies, organizations, youth, and families in the three cities

We are creating sustainable venues for **youth leadership** and voice

Best Practices in Strategic Collaboration

Supporting the development of data-driven strategies through data sharing across partners

SUPPORT

Engaging in a coordinated, multisystem response

ENGAGE

REDUCE

Reducing barriers to support and services through strategic partnerships

Aligning partners under a common vision and goal

ALIGN

Best Practices in Strategic Collaboration

MAXIMIZE

Maximizing impact by improving efficiency of service delivery

Research, Resources, and Tools (Strategic Collaboration)

Partner Resources and Cross-System Collaboration (OJJDP, 2020): https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/media/video/10456.

Pathways for Youth: Strategic Plan for Federal Collaboration (2016): https://youth.gov/pathways-youth-strategic-plan-federal-collaboration.

Best Practices to Address Community Gang Problems (OJJDP, 2007): https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/222799.pdf.

Responding to Gangs in Schools: A Collaborative Approach to School Safety (NGC): https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Gangs-in-Schools.

Mobilizing Communities to Address Gang Problems (NGC): https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/library/publications/mobilizing-communities-address-gang-problems.

Impact of Gangs on Communities (NGC): https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/library/publications/impact-gangs-communities.

Reducing gang related crime: A systematic review of "comprehensive" interventions. Hodgkinson, J., Marshall, S., Berry, G., Newman, M., Reynolds, P., Burton, E., Dickson, K., and Anderson, J. (2009).

Conducting Street Outreach in Your Initiative

This section captures the valuable information shared related to street outreach. It highlights specific insights, tips, best practices, and resources for understanding gang culture, identify and engaging gang-involved youth, and conducting street outreach in an initiative.

Understanding Gangs and Gang Culture

Gangs, Gang Culture, and Associated Factors

- A gang is typically defined as three or more individuals with a common sign or symbol that are engaged in criminal activity.
    - Different gangs have different norms that motivate or impact how one might interact with youth involved with those gangs.
- There are several reasons that youth may be attracted to and want to join a gang.
    - Factors that may push and pull youth toward gangs exist across several domains, including the family, peer, community, school, or self. Factors, for example, could be exposure to violence, academic failure, and lack of parental supervision.
        - These risk factors will come into play when determining how the program may be able to best address the needs/issue of the youth and provide support.
    - The gang lifestyle could be ingrained in families with generational gang involvement, which drives a youth to join.
        - It may be difficult to engage with these youth, but if the family members do not want the youth to be involved, the program has an opportunity to intervene and model different behavior.
- With regard to gang culture and the gang mentality, the following elements are important to consider:
    - Respect is important to gang members, but respect equals fear; respect comes from "putting in work" (robbery, shooting, murder, etc.).
    - Gang members are attracted to consistency and discipline, which programs can also provide.
- With regard to gangs and their use of violence—
    - Gangs may resort to violence to protect a specific territory or take over other areas to establish leadership.

In One Word, Why Do Youth Join Gangs?

acceptance
protection safety
unity survival
belonging
family

- The gang assessment, referenced in the next section, will help programs to determine where these boundaries lie.
- Younger gang members also tend to escalate smaller issues (girls, social media, etc.) into larger issues (shooting, retaliation, etc.).
- Perpetrators of gang violence can easily become the next victim or victims may become perpetrators through retaliation.

> **This assessment will be critical in developing a response to the gang problem, improving awareness among stakeholders, and identifying criteria for program engagement.**

Understanding and Identifying the Gangs in Your Community

- When it comes to better understanding the gang problem in a specific community, the first step is to conduct a gang assessment to determine which gangs are driving the crime and where they are located as well as the history of the gangs in the community and their norms, rivals, and identifiers.
  - This assessment will be critical in developing a response to the gang problem, improving awareness among stakeholders, and identifying criteria for program engagement.
  - While only law enforcement can formally document an individual as a gang member, there are indicators to look and listen for as well as places to consider when identifying potentially gang-involved youth or those that are at risk.
    - Visual indicators: Specific bandanas, tattoos, colors, items (rosaries), etc., that youth wear or graffiti in the neighborhood
    - Names: Most gangs identify with a specific neighborhood, which can be seen through the gang names; gang member names can indicate level of gang involvement—if you take on a gang name, your name can be passed on and be an indication of status (i.e., "Bobcat" has a "Lil Bobcat")
    - Schools: Work with schools to identify gang activity and youth by talking to staff that may interact with youth (administration, custodial staff, etc.); talking to youth directly; and observing attendance/grades of students, schedules, passing periods, graffiti, and off-campus activity in the metro or neighborhood
    - Hot spots: Observe hot spots for gang activity in your area and the youth that hang out there (including wannabes or peers of gang-involved youth)
    - Social media: Gangs or cliques may use specific name(s) or hashtag(s) on social media to represent their clique or try to one-up one another and flash colors/numbers
      » It is important for programs to monitor social media to stay ahead of the gang and potential conflicts that can arise (i.e., who is cliquing up, what can be learned from rap crew videos), since gang activity online can often turn into violence in the community
- Partners, including probation, law enforcement, or other community organizations can aid in identifying and engaging gang-involved youth.
  - It will be important to educate partners about gangs in the area, what to look for, and the best way to talk to gang members (respect, consistency, keeping promises, etc.).

- Being aware of the nature of gang problems in the community and dynamics between partners will better prepare the program, especially the outreach workers, to safely work and interact with gang members.

Understanding and Navigating Gang Rivalries

- The gang assessment or information from the partners/community may indicate the presence of gang rivalries. These dynamics will be important to understand when implementing a program.

- Strategies for working with rival gangs can depend on the setting.

  - In schools, it is important to get to know the people on campus, understand who the players are, and what is going on, so outreach workers and partners can be better prepared to intervene (i.e., if rivals are in a class, have the resources in place to move one of the youths to another class).

  - In the community, it is important to know people from top-to-bottom or engage with partners that do and understand who is most influential. These connections can help the program to mediate between gangs, but this is not foolproof and requires maintenance (i.e., meeting with all of the parties regularly).

  - In programs, consider staffing youth based on where they are coming from; youth will feel more comfortable engaging if they know that staff know about their situation (i.e., rivalries).

    - As a part of program criteria, consider not involving youth that are still engaged in violent activity or not following guidelines.

Identifying and Working With Gang-Involved Youth
Implementing Street Outreach in Your Initiative

- The Model includes several key entities to support the planning, governance, and implementation of the strategies. One of the most critical components is Street Outreach. Outreach workers serve a unique purpose, identifying and engaging directly with youth and linking them and their families to necessary services and programs to aid in gang disengagement.

  - Those working with gang-involved youth should have strong relationship-building skills, follow-through on commitments to youth, in-depth knowledge of the target community, and knowledge of local gang dynamics.

  - Outreach workers encourage and reinforce positive replacements for gang behavior and activity, define success to clients and work toward success with them, and recognize positive accomplishments.

In One Word, What Do Gang-Involved Youth Need?

support accountability care
options resources
meaning stability role
hope understanding
acceptance family patience
models compassion

- The daily activities of the outreach worker could include conducting outreach to at-risk youth and assessing for gang involvement, visiting with clients and parents, working with schools and other partners to support and engage youth, scheduling alternative activities for youth, and engaging in community outreach.
- Within the Model, the outreach team provides valuable on-the-ground insight about youth, gangs, and the community and collaborates with other partners to break down barriers for clients and aid in improved service delivery.

Safety Considerations for Outreach Workers

- Since outreach workers are often on the ground, they need to take specific precautions to keep themselves and others involved safe. Part of this is being aware of critical incidents or tensions rising in the community. Partners should be prepared to share concerning information that could impact one another's work or safety (i.e., law enforcement informing on "hot" areas).
- Outreach workers should think carefully about what they wear and how they communicate while working with different youth and be aware of their surroundings and prepared in case a situation goes awry (i.e., functioning car, charged phone, know of safe places to duck/hide).
- Coordinate with and watch out for your partners during home visits or when working on school grounds to diffuse an incident.

Project Management and Supervision to Support Successful Outreach

- Leadership is key for outreach teams. Supervisors need to clearly articulate the mission, objectives, and priorities of the program and be prepared to connect with the staff and leverage their strengths and weaknesses in support of the program
- In outreach, staff may experience or witness substantial trauma. Leaders should continuously check in with their teams and talk about issues they are facing to ensure that staff are mentally/emotionally prepared to continue serving the community.
- Outreach should be treated as a profession. Remember this when advertising positions (training, lived experience, education, safety/risk, etc.) and documenting outcomes to ensure future funding.

Voices From the Field

Value of Outreach Workers
"Outreach workers can do a lot in the community to help people understand the different strategies going on." (Practitioner from Texas)

Engaging During COVID-19 Pandemic
- Practice socially distanced home visits.
- Connect with schools or agencies meeting other needs of families, where youth may be present.
- Connect via digital platforms or call/text.
- Stay connected with probation or courts who may be in contact with youth.

Addressing the Needs of Gang-Involved Youth

This section captures the valuable information shared related to addressing the needs of gang-involved youth. It highlights specific insights, tips, best practices, and resources for identify and engaging gang-involved youth, implementing a trauma-informed approach, and utilizing a collaborative (team-based) response to gang violence.

Processes for Identifying Youth for Program Engagement

- Before engaging youth, the program should take the time to establish criteria for identifying gang-involved youth/clients. This process should be driven by a formal gang assessment that confirms the gangs present in the community and identifies the main drivers of the gang violence in the community and others who may be at risk for gang involvement and should be addressed through prevention and intervention efforts. Through the assessment, outreach workers and those working with gang-involved youth can improve their understanding of the gangs and gang issues in the community. Identifying and focusing on a specific target group or area can also help the program make a bigger impact in the community.

- Once criteria are established, there are several avenues through which youth can be identified for program engagement:

  - Outreach workers can observe and outreach to youth directly in the community, visiting gang hot spots or other areas where at-risk youth frequent.
  - Schools, probation, and other partner agencies can also help to identify at-risk youth based on those that they work with and refer them to the program.
    - This may require educating partners on indicators of gang involvement and the criteria of the program.

- After youth are identified, the outreach worker may take the lead in engaging with them, since they will walk the youth through the program. The following strategies will be useful for engaging and building relationships with youth.

How do you know which youth to engage?

- Establish criteria for identifying gang-involved youth/clients
- Establish a referral procedure

How do we engage with youth?

- Understand gang-involved youth
- Role of the outreach worker
- Establishing work responsibilities and work relationships

- Clearly articulate who you are, what your role is, and how you can help them. Be honest about expectations (i.e., what program involvement looks like, non-negotiables).
- Be respectful, consistent, and accessible. This will go a long way in building trust with the youth.
- For youth that are more difficult to engage, consider forming a relationship with their family, targeting those that have a voice within the gang, or involving their partners (i.e., girlfriends) in the program.
  - It can also take time to build trust with families, but the same principles of respect and consistency apply. Be sure to not overstep boundaries; outreach should present themselves as a resource to the families.
- If a youth does not fit the criteria for program engagement, consider compiling an inventory of existing programs in the community and referring them to those best suited to meet their needs or engaging them in applicable program activities.

Strategies for Determining Intensity and Types of Services to Provide

- Once a youth is engaged, the intensity of outreach and types of services provided will vary based on the gang-involved youth's level of gang activity, behavior (are they committed to leaving the gang?), and circumstances (traumatic circumstances may require more intensive levels of service).
- To determine the youth's level of gang activity, assess the youth within the first 30 days of identifying them or receiving a referral for them. This assessment could involve looking at their history (probation, criminal history, etc.) or gang involvement, commitment to the program, and wants/needs. Once a level of involvement is determined, a tailored service plan can be designed with specific activities and expectations for the team and youth.
- To effectively utilize the time and effort of the outreach workers, it is important to establish a client-level system to guide work with youth. The following table serves as an example and highlights the type of youth (client) on each level and frequency of contact that outreach workers should try and have with the clients.

Sample Client Level System				
Level	Level 1 Client is actively involved in gang activity	Level 2 Client is working to reduce gang involvement	Level 3 Client has reduced gang involvement	Level 4 Client has very limited gang involvement
Minimum Contacts	3–5 per week	1–2 per week	1–2 per month	1–2 per quarter
Intervention Focus	Assessment	Stabilization	System of Support	Self-Maintenance

Voices From the Field

On Engaging Young Women With Gangs
- Keep baskets with hygiene products or other necessary items when you engage with them.
- Connect the young women with other women to discuss female-specific challenges or issues.
- Consider partnering with nail salons or hair technicians to create a space for young women in schools to hear from positive influences.

On Collecting Data
"It is so important that you collect data on 'beefs' stopped into the streets, going into the schools, etc. . . I am meeting with people to justify our program [and can show that] this program is not just direct services—there can be policy changes, de-escalation of situations in the street." (FY2019 OJJDP Grantee)

- The tailored service plan will vary based on the needs of the youth; the type of services could include anger management, substance abuse treatment, workforce development, art/sports events, and other enrichment activities.

  - It may be important to involve families in the plan or engage them through program activities.

  - The experiences and needs of male and female members within the gang might be different and require individualized responses when building a program.

- Outreach workers aid clients in moving through the plan and reducing their gang involvement, making contact with them to check in and serve as a positive support; they should have more contact with the most active gang-involved youth.

  - In the case of a crisis incident, all clients associated should be moved to a higher level with increased contact and support.

- Clients typically remain in the program for 30 days to 18 months; as they disengage and become more stable, they can move down the levels and contact can be reduced.

- As outreach workers work with the clients to carry out the plan, it is important to monitor the youth's progress.

  - The service plan should define achievable goals with specific time periods (i.e., attending school, apply to X number of jobs).

  - Outreach workers should document their contact and activity with the clients as well as any follow-up to monitor their achievement of those goals and the outcomes of the program.

  - Documenting outcomes is not only critical to showing the value of the program to the community but also to future funding of the program.

How do we help this individual?

- Intake assessment
- Establish a relationship
- Determine tailored services
- Determine benchmarks for success

Trauma-Informed Care in Working With Gang-Involved Youth

Defining and Recognizing Trauma

- At the heart of every gang-involved youth is the need for safety, connection with others, and purpose.

- Traumatic events can impact gang-involved youth on the way they see the world around them and may make it difficult for them to feel safe (i.e., always on the lookout for the next threats, feelings of tension/anxiety).

- Trauma shapes how gang-involved youth find safety, connections, and meaning for their life.

- What is a potentially traumatic event?

  - Traumatic Events = Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violation (includes secondary traumatic stress)

  - Traumatic Experiences = How a person experiences a traumatic event can vary from person to person, but with trauma, it is experienced as harmful

- Traumatic Effects = Traumatic events can have short and/or long-term adverse effects on a person's physical, social, emotional, or spiritual health that may show up immediately or later in a person's life
- Traumatic events differ from stressful events

> **93%** of juvenile justice-involved youth have experienced **at least one traumatic event**, with an average of at least **six traumatic events** experienced.

- Healing is always possible, but it takes a psychologically safe and trusting relationship with an adult that can provide sustainable support—a trauma-informed approach is about putting those tools in place.
- Traumatic loss/grief is the most common traumatic event encountered among a study of youth—these can include loss of relationships, finances, or companionship/intimacy.

What Do Traumatic Stress Reactions Look Like?				
Reexperiencing	**Avoidance**	**Hyperarousal/ Reactivity**	**Negative Alteration in Cognition/Mood**	**Dissociation**
Feeling like you are back in the traumatic experience (i.e., a soldier responding to gunshots during battle vs. a similar response when they hear fireworks)	Avoiding what reminds you of the traumatic events but also using other means to forget/or avoid pain, including using substances	Having to always be ready or on point, scanning the room, putting your back to the wall, etc. (common with juvenile justice youth)	Internalized emotions shape how people view themselves and create a barrier to redirecting behavior to restore who they really are (i.e., things will go bad because I am bad; belief pattern of worthlessness)	Mental separation from the experience in front of oneself (zoning out, etc.)

- Youth may not recognize signs of trauma, so it is important to bring awareness to these reactions and normalize how people might respond, allowing them to find new ways to deal with the reactions.

Trauma-Informed Approach/System

- Trauma serves as an explanation for behavior of gang-involved youth, not an excuse. Understanding trauma and the impact it has expands one's perspective and helps a program understand how to better serve their clients who have experienced trauma.

- A trauma-informed system is driven by the following robust principles.
    - Safety—feeling physically and psychologically safe; no matter how physically safe someone is, they will still act as if there is a threat if they do not have psychological safety
    - Trust—creating routine check-ins focused on issues that could be causing discomfort

> **Trauma serves as an explanation for behavior of gang-involved youth, not an excuse. Understanding trauma and the impact it has expands one's perspective and helps a program understand how to better serve their clients who have experienced trauma.**

- **Empowerment**—building ways to empower youth to correct the harm that has been done or that they have done; provide a space where youth do not feel a sense of helplessness (i.e., give them small choices)
- **Collaboration**—share power, do not overpower
- **Peer Support and Trauma Competence**—recruit people that have been through similar experiences
- **Cultural, Historical, Linguistic, and Gender Responsiveness**—understand the context of a client's lived experience and deliver messages in a way that resonates with them
- With a trauma-informed approach, programs should consider how to create a space for youth and families to find safety that allows them to better integrate into society.
  - Program staff should understand what a gang-involved youth does and will do to feel safe, especially when they feel as if they have limited options.

Working With Gang-Involved Youth or Victims of Gang Violence Impacted by Trauma

- It is important to ask the person what is causing the most pain from the traumatic event to provide a more targeted response.
- To truly prevent reoffending, work starts with a relationship that matters to the young person, which creates pathways for youth to engage (i.e., importance of building trust).
  - In the process of building trust, do not demonize their friends. Work with cultural humility in mind—moving away from judgement and toward curiosity. Consider asking what draws the youth to their friends in order to identify healthy ways/people to meet the same need.
- Consider helping youth expand how they express themselves when they feel justified feelings (i.e., sadness, anger). Giving more elasticity to how youth see themselves gives them other options to regulate their stress.
- In practice, there is often a problem with how something is said and the order in which something is said rather than what is actually being said.
  - Consider calming the individual down first by providing an explanation, then talk through the appropriate way to respond or make a decision in that situation (i.e., don't talk to an adult like that, here are the consequences, here is how you could express this in the future).
- If a youth does not understand or cannot explain the most painful part about a traumatic experience, consider providing them with examples and space to consider what fits for them. Be emotionally responsive to the needs of the person (attunement), communicate an understanding of their feelings, and normalize their experience, while also indicating that their response may not have been the best way to handle it.

> To promote resilience and coping skills among youth, make information and directions digestible; warn youth when transitions are coming; give simple choices; validate experiences and avoid shaming; and find prosocial outlets for frustrating feelings or responses to trauma.

- To promote resilience and coping skills among youth, make information and directions digestible; warn youth when transitions are coming; give simple choices; validate experiences and avoid shaming; and find prosocial outlets for frustrating feelings or responses to trauma.

- In the context of COVID-19 and building relationships/trust with youth, predictability, clarity, and instructions can help youth feel safe and calm. Simplifying instructions to avoid confusion can assist with building trust and increasing safety. For example, during COVID-19 social distancing protocols, a probation department could provide a virtual preview or tour of the facility that a youth will be going to, in efforts to set expectations and increase feelings of safety.

- One of the best strategies for implementing a trauma-informed approach is creating a trauma-informed safety plan, which serves as a living document and includes a brief trauma history, trauma reminders, early warning signs of losing control, and ways to create calming and regulating behaviors.

  - The plan serves as a way to ask youth about their previous experiences and gain their input on what works. It also provides staff with ways to respond and help youth.

Integrating a Trauma-Informed Approach

During this session, Dr. Isaiah Pickens, CEO and Founder of iOpening Enterprises, provided a presentation on the topic of trauma-informed care, serving as a deeper dive in follow up to the technical assistance sessions held in fall 2020 by him. Topics for this session included strategies and practical guidance for building a trauma-informed system to support gang-involved youth and victims of gang violence.

Strategy From the Field

Clinicians join law enforcement when they respond to the scene of an incident to assess the youth or individuals involved. Some effects of the incident may not be recognizable to others until the youth acts out. **Screening Tool Example: MAYSI-2**

Using Risks-Needs-Responsivity to Build a Trauma-Informed Agency

Identifying trauma can improve risk assessment for further offending and lead to rehabilitative services that work

Risk	Need	Responsivity
Determining the likelihood for re-offending and type of services that will rehabilitate	Targeted provision of services that are matched to specific risks for re-offending using effective and proven tools	Youth's ability to rehabilitate is maximized by tailoring services to youth needs and strengths

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

System-Induced Trauma

When systems responsible for protecting children and the public do not understand the impact of trauma . . .

. . . they may unintentionally cause further harm.
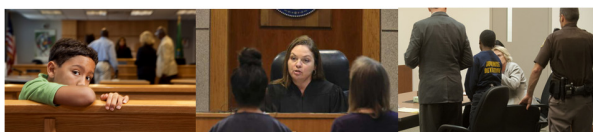
NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Integrating a Trauma-Informed Approach

System-Induced Trauma

The 4 Rs:

Realize   **R**ecognize   **R**espond   **R**esist Re-Traumatization

NCTSN — The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Historical and Intergenerational Trauma

- **Historical trauma** refers to cumulative emotional and psychological wounding as a result of group traumatic experiences

- A history of violence/prejudice toward a community can lead to distrust of institutions intending to help youth

- Impact of trauma across generations can influence parents and children expectations about safety and determine important behaviors for protection, such as distrusting institutions

NCTSN — The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Building Trauma-Informed Coping Skills

Coping strategies are responses people use to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize experiences viewed as stressful

NCTSN — The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Supporting Victims

- Communicate that you believe the victim.

- Ask whether a victim will be protected through your interaction with them, especially law enforcement.

- Be able to recognize the signs of trauma— prepare to address them proactively rather than reactively.

- Humanize the people who have been victimized or perpetrated, even if you disagree with them.

- Understand that there is a pathway to hold someone accountable and make it right.

Building Trauma-Informed Coping Skills

How coping works:

- **Appraisal**: how a person reads situations and whether the situation seems threatening

- **Review options**: thinking about which coping strategies to use and evaluating whether they will work

- **Response**: behaviors or thoughts to deal with threats, challenges, and harmful situations

NCTSN — The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Integrating a Trauma-Informed Approach

Building Healthy Coping & Promoting Resilience

- Make information and directions digestible
- Warn youth when transitions are coming up
- Give simple choices
- Validate experience and avoid shaming
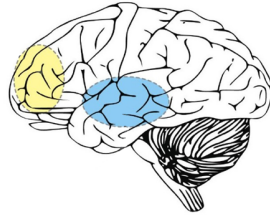- Find prosocial outlets for frustrating feelings or responses to trauma

Photo Credit: http://communityresiliencecookbook.org/your-body-brain/

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Coping in Action: Connections to Others

Understanding how youth define relationships, family, and support can guide staff to promote healthy coping strategies

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Bringing Victims Face-to-Face With Perpetrators

"Before bringing victims face-to-face with their perpetrator, both parties have to be prepared to repair the damage. Victims have to have the skills to understand the role that trauma reminders play in their recovery and be able to manage it. The perpetrator also has work to do. It can be powerful for healing, but it is not necessary. So you need to be aware if it will cause more damage." (Dr. Isaiah Pickens)

Secondary Traumatic Stress

A trauma condition caused by indirect exposure that parallels the symptoms of PTSD

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

STS Risks Factors

- Dose of exposure
- History of previous trauma exposure
- Level of support
- Sense of competence
- Individuals who are new to their job
- Tendency towards negative coping styles

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Integrating a Trauma-Informed Approach

Reflective Practice

Tips for Reflective Practice:

• Check in with co-workers when you feel stuck or contemplative

    • Ask permission first

    • Remember: venting is not helpful!

• Have conversations in private (e.g., not in front of youth or where youth can overhear)

• Refrain from one-upmanship when describing trauma or workplace stressor stories

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Reflective Practice

Guiding Questions for Reflection:

• How did you feel? What did you notice in yourself?

• Did you have any strong reactions during this interaction?

• How do you think [youth] was feeling? What was their perspective?

• What did you think was going to happen? Why do you think it did or didn't go as planned?

If co-worker gets triggered/reactive:

• What do you think was driving your stress reaction?

• Are there aspects of the interaction (with youth or staff) that remind you of your own experiences or history?

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Importance of Understanding STS

"Understanding STS is an important part of helping victims. Hearing their stories can make it hard for us to do our job and can desensitize us." (Dr. Isaiah Pickens)

Research, Resources, and Tools (Trauma-Informed Care)

Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-2 (MAYSI-2): https://www.nctsn.org/measures/massachusetts-youth-screening-instrument-2.

Trauma and Grief Components Therapy: https://www.nctsn.org/interventions/trauma-and-grief-component-therapy-adolescents.

Think Trauma: A Training for Working with Justice Involved Youth: https://www.nctsn.org/resources/think-trauma-training-working-justice-involved-youth-2nd-edition.

Secondary Traumatic Stress Core Competencies in Trauma-Informed Supervision Self-Rating Tool: https://www.nctsn.org/resources/secondary-traumatic-stress-core-competencies-in-trauma-informed-supervision-self-rating-tool.

Enhancing Police Responses to Children Exposed to Violence: A Toolkit for Law Enforcement: https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/CEVToolkit.pdf.

Utilizing a Team Approach to Reduce Gang Violence

The Need for a Team Approach and Overview of the Comprehensive Gang Model

- Gangs arise from a complex range of issues, but by engaging critical partners from a range of disciplines, programs can begin to address that complexity and develop a comprehensive response.

- The Model includes several key entities to support the planning, governance, and implementation of the team approach. The Intervention Team is one of those entities and is comprised all of the key partners and members that interact directly with the target population, include outreach workers, school personnel, social services, law enforcement, probation, etc. This on-the-ground team meets regularly to discuss the clients of the program and bridge gaps between partners. By sitting around the same table, sharing concerns and information, and considering all aspects of a client's situation, the partnerships can help to open up systems and improve processes that may normally be a barrier for the youth or forward motion of the project.

  - The team meetings provide structure, accountability, and intentionality.
  - There should be protocols and standards of operation in place for the meeting as well as activities between partners (purpose of the meeting, information sharing, etc.).
  - By having these established meetings, the team is prepared and able to respond to more time-sensitive incidents.

> **Why is a team approach necessary?**
> - Coordinating services
> - Efficient use of resources
> - Increasing safety
> - Sharing critical information that supports client success

Strategies for Engaging and Working Effectively as a Team

- Members of the Intervention Team should include those agencies that have direct contact with the target population and can include a range of disciplines. Each partner brings unique insight to the team and can play a critical role in developing the comprehensive response and providing needed support to gang-involved or at-risk youth. For each agency, it is important to find the right person that cares about the program and the youth to sit around the table. The roles of and considerations for engaging with each partner are highlighted below.

  - Schools: Since youth are the ones that push gangs, schools are critical partners to engage in collaborative programs responding to gang violence. They can provide support with client referrals, data sharing, training, and provision of services. They can also provide critical information about who the youth are spending time with and what they are wearing (important for gang identification). It can be a challenge to implement a gang prevention or intervention program in the schools, at first. To overcome this, educate the schools on what the program is about and what would be in it for them (improving school climate, getting kids to school, reducing suspensions, etc.) and how they could support the program. When considering who to involve on the team, look for personnel that are engaged directly with youth (school resource officers [SROs], counselors, those providing discipline, etc.).

- **Law Enforcement:** Agencies can share information on gang patterns to help the team better understand the needs of the community. By having direct communication channels between law enforcement and outreach partners, they can also share information about activity in the community that could impact the work or safety of one another and coordinate responses to that activity (i.e., if outreach is aware of a shooting that might take place, they can work with law enforcement to de-escalate). Working with law enforcement can be one of the biggest challenges for outreach and community-based organizations, but over time and with the right people who are committed to the youth and collaborating, they can build trust.
- **Other Partners:** Other partners could include probation/parole, court personnel, faith-based organizations, businesses, service providers, and community-based partners. The individuals on the team should be the ones working directly with or regularly engaging with youth (i.e., a judge may not be the best fit for the team). Do not forget about smaller, grassroot community agencies or community members that may have influence in the community and among the target population and be critical to championing the project, whether they provide a specific service or not. Community businesses can also provide support with opportunities provision efforts by educating people on what they are looking for when they hire people.
- Every partner should understand what the ultimate goal of the program is and where they fit in as well as what the roles of the other partners are.
    - This will help in overcoming misconceptions associated with different partners and moving forward with effective collaboration.
- Developing relationships between partners and fostering shared concern for the client is what drives the action of the team.
    - If there are issues that the Intervention Team cannot handle or problems within the team, it is beneficial to have the ability to elevate issues to the Model's Steering Committee, comprised of executive leadership, to resolve it.

Voices From the Field

On Law Enforcement-Community Relations
"For those that have grown up in communities where their family has been imprisoned before, for some of these kids, having the SRO is the only positive relationship they can have with law enforcement. Some people treat them as friends . . . Our approach is to not arm those in schools and to make them more approachable. They want to make the kids feel like they are there for them. This soft approach has helped to foster information sharing and move the project further." (FY2018 OJJDP Grantee from Nevada)

"Trust and empowerment [are lessons learned]. Police tend to want to control everything—trust and empower your outreach workers and partners to share responsibility and participate in the reduction of gang violence." (Practitioner from Virginia)

On De-Escalating Conflict
"One guy was ranting on Facebook Live and disrespected someone in his gang. The guy was going to go and shoot him up. The outreach workers reach out and talked them down. They were not able to stop them, so we called our law enforcement contact and indicated what was going on. Within five minutes, law enforcement detained the guy and stopped it. A few days later, they found the gun. They did not alert the kid to the situation, but just randomly reached out to him. The outreach workers were able to talk them down and get him off Facebook Live, but there was some danger so they needed to bring law enforcement at that time." (FY2019 OJJDP Grantee from Florida)

- Sharing information is critical to effective intervention and ensuring safety of team members. Each partner can be impacted by an event in the community and may have critical information to share that supports safety measures of the team or an appropriate response.
    - If a homicide or shooting occurred, law enforcement may be able to share some information that outreach would need to know before going to the scene (if someone was arrested, if it occurred within a house, etc.). They can also point out potential hot spots.
    - Another partner, such as schools or social services, might be able to share information on other parties impacted by an event (i.e., families, younger sibling), so the team is able to provide needed support.
- Whenever information is shared and next steps are determined for each partner, the project coordinator should be the one to follow up and ensure that all activities are carried out.

From the Field

Addressing Needs of Gang-Involved Youth

In this section, OJJDP grantee presentations on promising practices for engaging with gang-involved youth and collaborative responses to gang violence are highlighted.

Indy HeartBeat—Marion County, Indiana
FY2019 OJJDP Gang Desistance/Diversion Grantee

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
Non-Hispanic White	64.6%
Black or African American	28.6%
Hispanic	10.5%
Asian	3.4%
Two or More Races	2.9%

954,670 residents   1,043.8 km²

History

- Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County
    - Eskenazi Health (one of America's 5 largest safety net health systems)
    - Marion County Public Health Department
    - Indianapolis Emergency Medical Services
    - Long-Term Care Division
    - Headquarters Division

From the Field

Indy HeartBeat—Marion County, Indiana

**FY2019 OJJDP Gang Desistance/Diversion Grantee**

Prescription for Hope

- Violence prevention program
- Established in 2009
- Goals
  - Reduce repeated criminal activity and arrest
  - Help individuals develop effective life skills for responsible citizenship behavior
  - Provide community education and information on violence and crime prevention
  - Create a network of community-supporting agencies and programs

Indy HeartBeat

- Community-based extension of the RxH program
- Provides services and interventions to youth (up to age 24) and their families to reduce crime
- Focused on IMPD North District 25

IMPD HOT SPOT MAP
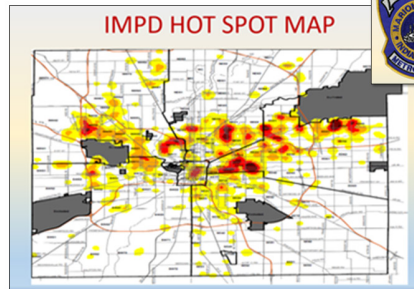
Organized and Dissolved
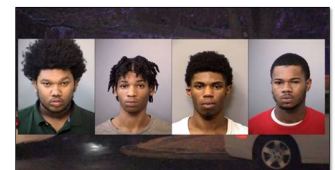
Impact of Systematic Issues

"Love myself. . .respect myself. . .be me," Tate said.
"Don't let nobody else tell me how to be me."
(Cora Tate credits Indy Heartbeat by giving her coping skills that helped her save her life)

From the Field
Indy HeartBeat—Marion County, Indiana
FY2019 OJJDP Gang Desistance/Diversion Grantee

Evidence-Based Models

**Public Health Models of Violence Prevention**

Social Ecological Model

Trauma-Informed Care Model (ACES)

OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model

Mobilization of Community Partnerships

Public Schools	Metropolitan School District	Police Department
Prosecutor's Office	Office of Public Safety & Health	Community-Based Organizations
Mental Health Center	Department of Public Health (Social Work)	Level 1 Trauma Center
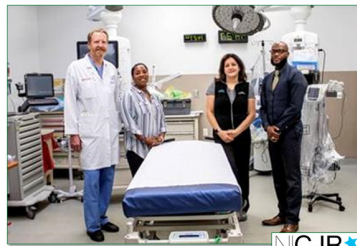
Collective Impact Approach

Provide interventions at the individual or family level ⟷ Reduce gang violence, activity, and crime through community engagement, outreach, and psychoeducation

Collective Impact Approach

- Educate individuals, families, and the public on youth violence and its negative social effects
- Reduce youth and gang violence through evidence-based approaches
- Intervene in and deter youth gun and gang violence at the individual and family levels
- Intervene in and deter youth gun and gang violence at the community level
- Analyze and share project data to identify, incorporate, and revise practices and services that relate to youth violence
- Develop a system of referral among key partners and other stakeholders to more effectively identify needs and leverage available resources that support youth violence interventions and reduce youth violence
- Identify and address gaps that can be improved through strategically expanding partnerships and policy changes to ensure sustainability

From the Field

Indy HeartBeat—Marion County, Indiana

FY2019 OJJDP Gang Desistance/Diversion Grantee

From the Field

Collaborative Solutions for Communities—Washington, DC

FY2019 OJJDP Gang Suppression Grantee

Who We Are

- **Mission:** To be the leading solution-focused resource in building strong, sustainable families and communities through family support services, innovative training, community capacity building, economic development, and social enterprise.
- **Vision:** Collaborating with youth, families, and organizations for solutions that transform their communities. (Changing lives, transforming communities.)
- **Our Work:** We provide direct services to families and help build the capacity of the target communities of Columbia Heights, as well as other neighborhoods across Washington, DC.

Violence Is Preventable

Understanding the Big Picture

Multisystem Partnerships

What Do We Do?

CSC is a solution-focused organization and has therefore implemented the tenets of solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) training. SFBT is a short-term, goal-focused, evidence-based, therapeutic approach that helps clients change by constructing solutions rather than dwelling on problems.
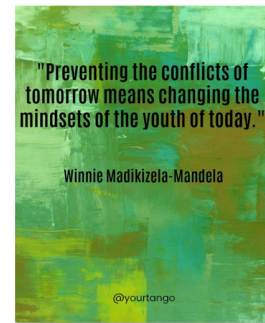
Youth Violence Services	Rapid Rehousing Youth	Family Rehousing Stabilization	Child and Family Services
Workforce Development	Sports	Truancy Prevention	Reentry

From the Field
Collaborative Solutions for Communities—Washington, DC
FY2019 OJJDP Gang Suppression Grantee

How Do We Do It?

- **Street Outreach:** Focuses on engaging high-risk youth to prevent violence in our priority areas
- **Community Engagement:** Gaining the trust of youth, creating a mentorship to steer them away from violence
- **Community Partnerships:** Building strong community partnerships with common goals of creating a safer, stronger DC
- **Critical Incident Protocols:** Protocol focusing on triage, effective incident response, and retaliation prevention
- **Mediations, Ceasefires, and Peacemaking Retreats:** This practice focuses on uniting youth to end ongoing neighborhood rivalries

"Preventing the conflicts of tomorrow means changing the mindsets of the youth of today."

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela

@yourtango

How Do We Do It?

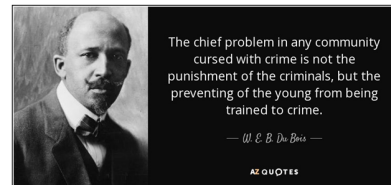|			
Partnerships/Joint "Web of Support"	Confidentiality, Mutual Trust, Shared Accountability	Teamwork	Critical Incident Intervention/ Prevention
Family Involvement	Community Organizing	Capacity Building for Community/ Partners	Support for Outreach Workers— "Cool Down"

What Makes CSC Different?

CSC's process includes
- Comprehensive intake process
- Internal programming
- Trauma-informed care training
- Thinking for a change-integrated curriculum
- Intensive case management
- Progressive employment program
- Effective parenting training
- Emergency mental health services
- Family group conferencing (restorative justice)
- Healing circles (restorative justice)

The chief problem in any community cursed with crime is not the punishment of the criminals, but the preventing of the young from being trained to crime.

— W. E. B. Du Bois —

AZ QUOTES

Research, Resources, and Tools (Working With Gang-Involved Youth)

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Reducing Minority Youth Violence: https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/library/publications/interdisciplinary-approach-reducing-minority-youth-violence.

Preventing Minority Youth Violence: Lessons from Law Enforcement–Public Health Collaborations: https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/library/publications/preventing-minority-youth-violence-lessons-law-enforcement-public-health.

Outreach Worker Safety Tips: https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/library/publications/outreach-worker-safety-tips.

Street Outreach and the OJJDP CGM: https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/library/publications/street-outreach-and-ojjdp-comprehensive-gang-model.

Multidisciplinary Gang Intervention Teams: https://nationalgangcenter.ojp.gov/library/publications/multidisciplinary-gang-intervention-teams.

Project Management, Implementation, and Sustainability

This section captures the valuable information shared and/or presented related to project implementation. It highlights specific insights, tips, best practices, and resources around project management and planning, overcoming implementation challenges, and sustainability.

Project Management and Planning

Key Strategic Planning Challenges

- Tension between comprehensiveness and manageability
- Gap between expectation and authority
- Matching the right response to the identified problem
- Data collection and analysis
- Implementation

Voices From the Field

Importance of the Project Coordinator/ Director
"Part of the job of the Director [or Coordinator] is to meet with partners every day to discuss the project with them, mediate between agencies, assess whether partners feel engaged, etc. Project leaders can be critical to a successful project (vision, championing the project, anticipating challenges, etc.)." (Practitioner from Colorado)

"What really works is having a coordinator. This is a key position for you. It is important to have someone that can build relationships." (Practitioner from Virginia)

Data Collection and Information Sharing
"There are two steps to confidentiality and information sharing—getting permission within your agency to share information on specific youth and families between team members and getting permission to share information between other agencies. In Denver, we had a cross-sector information sharing document that all agencies signed. It went down to the individual meeting level (i.e., how to handle sharing information, if someone invited external partners to the meeting)." (Practitioner from Colorado)

Toward Effective Project Implementation

- Gang issue in the community is clearly understood
    - Has a gang assessment been completed?
- Project scope is specifically designed
    - Is the project scope in line with the gang assessment?
- Target population and area are agreed upon
    - Who, where, and why?
- OJJDP benchmarks and program objectives are aligned
    - Do project objectives meet or exceed OJJDP benchmarks?

Implementation Challenges

- Lack of participation
- Poorly defined strategies
- Poor communication
- Failure to hold each member accountable

Keys to Implementation Success

- Collaboration is key
- Time is a critical issue for successful implementation
- Initial training alone is insufficient
- Do not underestimate the complexity and difficulty of implementation
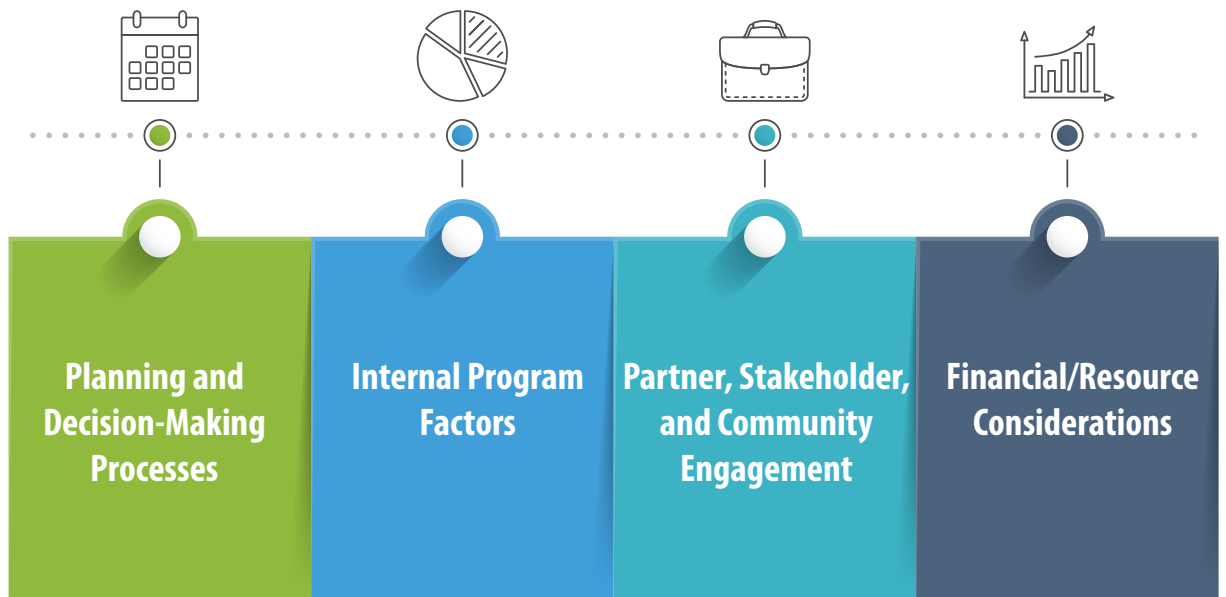- Dedicate active, purposeful effort to implementation
- Measurement is essential

Challenges Identified by OJJDP Grantees

- Responsive not preventive
- Lack of commitment
- Housing
- Lack of quality services
- Limited team capacity
- Ineffective partners
- Dollars
- Ego
- Turf
- City hall support
- Building a culture of data collection

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

- One-on-one meetings with partners to dissect the issue and problem solve
- With school closures being a big concern, train staff to get more involved with school culture to stay connected
- Gather other stakeholders that support your work and mission to bring in less willing stakeholders
- Showing partners the benefits brought to their agencies through street outreach intervention (increase in school attendance, mediation of gang conflicts, etc.)
- Striving to do away with silos and continuing to build relationships and trust
- Ability to speak with a partner regarding their challenges or inconsistencies through the relationship built
- Not criticizing, condemning, or complaining about your partner's shortcomings
- Seeking ways to connect to your partners without fear, ignorance, or prejudice

What to Consider When Sustaining Your Program Efforts After Grant Funding Ends

Planning and Decision-Making Processes	Internal Program Factors	Partner, Stakeholder, and Community Engagement	Financial/Resource Considerations

Voices From the Field

Value of the Comprehensive Gang Model

"[On lessons learned], keep going back to the Comprehensive Gang Model. That is your guiding light. If you wonder whether you are doing the right thing or who you are serving, if you go back to the core strategies, it will guide you to the right answer and keep you on track. Those core strategies should be your mission statement." (Practitioner from Washington)

Important for a Sustainable Program

- Stakeholder feedback loop
- Building relationships/collaboration
- Resilience
- Trust within the community
- Strong leadership/managers that support staff
- Continuous learning
- Support
- Clear goals and implementation strategy
- Relevance
- Consistency
- Results

Success and Sustainability

"[On approaching agencies for sustainability funding when COVID-19 has hampered efforts to obtain needed data], it all depends on how you define the success of your program. Is it that you moved the person away from gang life? Is it that they completed probation or the program itself?" (Practitioner from Colorado)

TAKEAWAYS

DATA	COMMUNICATE	PARTNERS	FUNDING	ESSENTIALS
Importance of ongoing data collection and monitoring	Provide and communicate program's value to the community	Leverage strategic partners to support sustainment	Explore traditional and nontraditional funding sources	Institutionalize essential functions of the program

Research, Resources, and Tools (Sustainability)

Sustaining Your Gang Prevention Efforts: http://archive.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/gangs/11788-NCPC-Gang-FactSheet.pdf.

A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework: https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf.

Taking Action to Prevent Youth Violence: https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/23500.

Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action: https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/23501.

Youth Program Sustainability: https://youthmovenational.org/sustainability/.

Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool: https://youth.gov/youth-topics/preventing-youth-violence/sustainability.

Strategic Planning Tool: https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/What-Works/#strategic.

Notes

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