

HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS PROJECT

Can We Make Communities Safer Without Relying On Police?

Yes! In November 2020, the John Jay Research & Evaluation Center published [Reducing Violence Without Police: A Review of Research Evidence](#), describing policies, programs, and research that show violence in communities can be reduced without policing, rather by investing in communities and community-serving organizations. Violence in the community should be addressed with community-level interventions that focus on the health and safety of whole populations and not only high-risk individuals.

Below are seven strategies identified as key areas for non-policing interventions and policies:



(1)
improve
the physical
environment



(2)
strengthen
anti-violence
social norms
and peer
relationships



(3)
engage
and support
youth



(4)
reduce
substance
abuse



(5)
mitigate
financial
stress



(6)
reduce the
harmful effects
of the justice
process



(7)
confront
the gun
problem

Community-level interventions, in addition to individualized treatment, can reduce substance abuse as well as community violence. Controlling where and when alcohol may be sold appears to reduce violence. Simply increasing access to substance abuse treatment also reduces violence. Efforts to lessen the legal consequences of substance use may also have benefits in violence prevention.

Below are interventions to reduce and prevent community violence by **reducing substance use**:

- 1) Maintain age limits for purchasing alcohol.
- 2) Enforce "dry laws" placing restrictions on the purchase and consumption of alcohol.
- 3) Decrease the number of establishments licensed to sell alcohol.
- 4) Implement sobriety programs (e.g., South Dakota 24/7 Sobriety).
- 5) Increase availability and access to substance abuse treatment.
- 6) Increase Health Insurance Flexibility and Accountability (HIFA) waivers.
- 7) Decriminalize small quantities of marijuana.

- 8) Introduce or expand medical marijuana laws.

EXAMPLES

- 1) [Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion \(LEAD\)](#)
- 2) [iPrevent | Odyssey House](#)
- 3) [Trystereo Collective](#)
- 4) [National Harm Reduction Coalition](#)
- 5) [Drug Policy Alliance](#)
- 6) [Black Emotional And Mental Health Collective](#)

*If you or someone you know is in a mental health, addiction or intellectual/developmental disability crisis, call the Metro Crisis Response Team: (504) 826-2675.