



Violence Prevention Institute

TULANE UNIVERSITY

# ADDRESSING VIOLENCE THROUGH EQUITY

A violence-free future is possible when everyone has access and opportunity.

The many forms that violence takes are linked to complex social issues faced by individuals and communities every day. Limited resources to meet basic needs, lack of access to services, failing infrastructure, limited opportunities for education and employment, systemic and structural racism and oppression, and other inequities play roles in the backstory that leads to violence.

Addressing violence must extend beyond law enforcement and incarceration to permeate through the systems and structures that influence and impact us, our neighborhoods, cities, states, and country.



Communities, organizations, and policymakers can employ effective, evidence-based violence prevention approaches and interventions to write a story of a future where everyone has what they need to thrive.



**SUPPORTING ECONOMIC STABILITY**



**ENGAGING & SUPPORTING YOUTH**



**COLLABORATING ACROSS SECTORS**



**IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**



**CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS & POLICIES**



**UNDERSTANDING & CONFRONTING RACISM & OPPRESSION**



**ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH & TRAUMA**

Find sources, research, and practice information at [violenceprevention.tulane.edu/violence-prevention-through-equity](https://violenceprevention.tulane.edu/violence-prevention-through-equity).



## SUPPORTING ECONOMIC STABILITY

Research has connected violence to poverty and financial instability. Economic policy changes like raising the minimum wage and providing universal basic income, among others, improves individual well-being that allows for better support of children, families, and communities.

- Close the income gap.
- Mitigate short-term financial insecurity.
- Address food insecurity.
- Provide paid parental leave.
- Adapt microfinancing programs.
- Fund community organizations that provide skill training for higher paying jobs.
- Strengthen all forms of economic supports for parents, caregivers, and families.
- Increase wages for individuals returning home after periods of incarceration.
- Decrease state restrictions on employment for people with felony convictions.

**Paid parental leave** strengthens economic supports, reduces family discord, increases egalitarian parenting practices, and promotes child/parent bonding.

D'Inverno, A.S., et.al. (2018). Preventing intimate partner violence through paid parental leave policies. *Preventive Medicine*, 114, 18–23.

Counties with growing levels of **income inequality** are more likely to experience mass shootings.

Kwon, R., & Cabrera, J.F. (2019). Income inequality and mass shootings in the United States. *BMC Public Health* 19.

**Food insecurity** is significantly associated with firearm injury.

Ali, A., et. al. (2022). The association between food insecurity and gun violence in a major metropolitan city. *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery*, 93(1), 91–97.



## ENGAGING & SUPPORTING YOUTH

Young people deserve opportunities to grow and thrive, yet they experience barriers and risk factors that increase their exposure to violence. Research has informed practices, programs, and policies to increase protective factors for young people and their families.

- Listen to and value youth voices.
- Use youth interests to engage youth activism.
- Explore the connections between community safety and healthy child development.
- Help young people build positive connections with adults as well as understand and formulate caring peer relationships.
- Support the development of emotional intelligence (EQ) in children and teens to improve self-control, social skills, conflict resolution, and decision-making.
- Employ social norm interventions, expand positive youth development programs, and support youth serving organizations.
- Prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Provide work experience for young people.
- Implement school-based violence prevention programs.
- Expand and evaluate use of restorative approaches in schools.
- Improve school quality and connectedness through increased and equitable funding.
- Examine how juvenile incarceration perpetuates inequity and violence.



Violent crime rates increase when foreclosed homes become vacant.

Cui, L., & Walsh, R. (2015). Foreclosure, vacancy and crime. *Journal of Urban Economics* (87).

## IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Where people live, work, shop, and spend time affects them. Neighborhood improvements from green space to street lighting can provide hope and pride for communities. Investment in the physical environment can create cohesion, reducing the risk of exposure to violence.

- Apply principles of environmental design to promote positive social activity and the safe use of spaces.
- Install more street lighting.
- Invest in the greening of neighborhoods.
- Address blight.
- Prevent home foreclosure.
- Support homeowners in making repairs and improvements.
- Fund neighborhood improvement projects that develop “third places.”
- Understand the intersection of land use and violence prevention.
- Increase social connectedness among neighborhoods.



## COLLABORATING ACROSS SECTORS

Violence prevention approaches depend upon wide-spread adoption and implementation, and that responsibility does not just reside with government agencies and community organizations. Businesses, healthcare systems, schools, and other entities can play a part.

- Support extensive cross-sector collaboration with an emphasis on health.
- Build connections between equity-focused community organizations and health departments.
- Understand the role all nonprofits can play in community-wide violence prevention efforts.
- Explore community-based safety projects, including alternatives to policing.
- Offer innovative support to community-led violence prevention programs.
- Encourage grassroots leadership.
- Implement violence prevention interventions in primary care and other healthcare settings.
- Increase presence of as well as funding and training for community health workers.
- Engage gun dealers and owners in violence prevention.



Increased **access to health care**, including an expansion to Medicaid, has the potential to reduce crime.

Vogler, J. (2020). Access to Healthcare and Criminal Behavior: Evidence from the ACA Medicaid Expansions. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 39(4), 1166–1213.



## CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS & POLICIES

No matter the type of violence, change must occur at the societal level in order for prevention approaches to be long-lasting. Social norms and policies must discourage violence and instead encourage equity, fairness, and human connectedness.

- Invest in the public health approach to violence prevention.
- Understand factors that connect multiple forms of violence.
- Learn about, recognize, and intervene in the warning signs of violence.
- Implement and support street outreach and community norm change approaches.
- Expand Medicaid.
- Fund research to understand the causes of gun violence and the impacts of potential solutions.
- Organize interventions around procedural justice principles.
- Employ a civilian crisis model.
- Incorporate de-escalation tactics into police training.
- Promote safe firearm storage
- Learn about and support sensible gun laws.

## STAY INFORMED

Learn more about these and other violence prevention approaches and interventions via the Violence Prevention Institute at Tulane.

[violenceprevention.tulane.edu](http://violenceprevention.tulane.edu)  
[vpi@tulane.edu](mailto:vpi@tulane.edu)  
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## UNDERSTANDING & CONFRONTING RACISM & OPPRESSION

Discrimination, racism, and oppression are violence, which begets more violence. Centuries of marginalizing groups and blocking their access to resources has created disparities that must be addressed for a more equitable and thriving future.

- Advance health equity and racial justice.
- Confront the individual, community, and social impacts of historical racism.
- Address residential segregation and mobility.
- Acknowledge and address the role frequent policing plays in racial health and wellbeing inequities.
- Apply intersectionality to all violence prevention programs.
- Incorporate violence prevention practices that support people with disabilities and Deaf people.



## ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH & TRAUMA

The connection between mental health and violence is complex, and environmental circumstances influence an individual's risk and protective factors with regards to violence. Community-based resources are needed to improve well-being for all.

- Increase availability of and access to mental health and substance use treatment centers.
- Examine population-based approaches to mental health.
- Understand how community trauma undermines both individual and community resilience.
- Expand trauma treatment and trauma-informed practices.
- Employ harm reduction strategies in addressing substance abuse.
- Strengthen access to and delivery of suicide care.
- Learn the signs, facts, and how you can help prevent suicide.
- Reduce stigma around mental illness and increase supports for individuals in crisis.