

## Community Violence Intervention Solutions

**Community gun violence** (aka urban gun violence) is a type of interpersonal violence that takes place in cities between individuals that are typically known to each other (but not as intimate partners). It accounts for the majority of gun homicides in the U.S., and Connecticut.

Solutions to reducing community gun violence share a common insight that in urban areas with high levels of gun violence, much of it is concentrated among a relatively small number of individuals who are most likely to be perpetrators, victims—or both—of violence. Community violence intervention (CVI) programs focus on establishing relationships with these individuals responsible for most of the gun violence in their communities.

CVI programs (which actually span prevention, intervention and aftercare services) reflect the capacity of people to make better choices and pursue non-violent means for resolving conflict. If given guidance, support, resources and the opportunity to meet basic needs without resorting to socially undesirable activities, these (mostly young men) can escape cycles of violence.

The three main evidence-based models of CVI are hospital-based violence intervention (HVIP), violence interrupters (aka, street outreach, Cure Violence), and focused deterrence (aka group violence intervention, Operation Ceasefire). By intervening directly with those at highest risk for perpetrating shootings — or being shot themselves — these programs have achieved remarkable decreases in gun violence.

Hospital-based violence intervention programs provide gunshot victims admitted into hospitals with wraparound services such as educational support, job training, and culturally responsive mental health services to interrupt retaliatory cycles of violence and reduce the potential for re-injury.

One study found that individuals enrolled in these programs were six times less likely to be hospitalized again for a violent injury and four times less likely to be convicted of a violent crime than those not enrolled in the program.<sup>1</sup>

Violence interrupters, based on the Cure Violence model, is a third approach to preventing and reducing group violence. Using a public health lens, the strategy works to interrupt the next violence event, thereby stopping the transmission, spread and escalation of gun violence just as a public health approach prevents the transmission of infectious disease. This model prevents violence through a three-pronged approach starting with data-driven detection to determine where to concentrate efforts where and against whom they can have the greatest impact.

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<sup>1</sup> [Hospital-based violence intervention programs work](#), Journal of Trauma, Sep 2006

Violence interrupters who are known in the community mediate disputes between individuals and intercede in group disputes to prevent violent events and the retaliation that follows. Outreach workers counsel clients and connect them with services.

To address underlying dynamics that drive violence, the Cure Violence model also works to change community norms about the inevitability of violence as a way to resolve conflict through public education, community-building activities and counseling with those at highest risk of violence.

Like the other CVI models, violence interruption has been shown to dramatically reduce gun violence, and change cultural norms around the use of violence.

Focused deterrence/group violence intervention is the one model that explicitly involves law enforcement, together with community members, credible messengers and social service providers. The partnership brings the highest risk individuals together at a meeting known as a “call-in” to send an unambiguous message that the violence must stop, delivered by a credible messenger, often clergy, victims of gun violence and reformed perpetrators. Law enforcement lets participants know that if the community’s plea is ignored, swift collective action will be taken against any group responsible for new acts of violence.

But the threat of enforcement is balanced with the offer of social support and services to give group members meaningful alternatives, including job training, housing and physical and behavioral health treatment.

Focused deterrence has led to impressive reductions in violent crime in cities across the U.S., with documented decreases in gun homicides of 25 to 60 percent.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [Operation Ceasefire and the Safe Community Partnership](#), U.S. Attorney’s Office, Northern District of CA, May 2021