



Snapshots on Safety

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Special points of interest:

- Violence is a significant problem throughout the U.S.
- Each year, more than 50,000 people die in the U.S as a result of Violence.
- The Centers for Disease Control identified violent behavior as a key public health issue.

Inside this issue:

CDC endorses PH model	2
Prevention Institute	2
Prevention Strategies	2
Spectrum of Prevention	3
Department of Health	3
Promising Practices	3
Our Journey begins	4

To get us started

St. Joseph's Area Health Services received a year-long planning grant from Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) to do violence-prevention planning. A comprehensive plan for primary prevention programming will be developed to address an issue of violence. *To get the initiative started*, we are offering this document, "Snapshots on Safety." to focus on what is known about violence and about prevention efforts.

The World Health Organization offers this definition of violence.

"Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation."



CHI is committed to Violence Prevention. Person by person, family by family, neighborhood by neighborhood, we must take back our communities from the evil and fear that comes with violence.

Time to Move Upstream

Walking along a river, you notice someone is drowning. You pull them on shore, but then notice another. Soon, the river is filled with drowning people and more rescuers are needed. Unfortunately, some are not saved. While

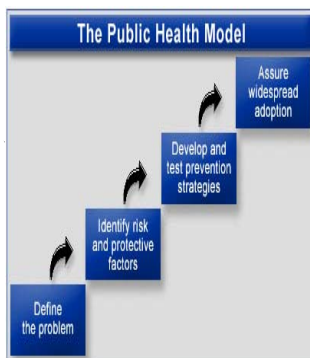
others remain to pull people out of the water, you decide to walk upstream to see "why people keep falling into the river." In doing so, you find a hole in the bridge through which people were falling. The hole is fixed& people

no longer fall in. The act of "moving upstream" and taking action before a problem arises in order to avoid it entirely is primary prevention. The proactive efforts are most successful when aimed at populations.

The CDC endorses the Public Health Model

The CDC endorses primary prevention in their violence prevention efforts and has chosen the Public Health Approach Model. It is a 4-step process that is rooted in scientific methodology and can be applied to violence and other health problems that affect populations.

Step 1: Define and Monitor the Problem. The first step in preventing violence is to understand the "who", "what", "when", "where" and "how" associated with it. Grasping the magnitude of



the problem involves analyzing data such as the number of violence-related behaviors, injuries, and deaths.

Step 2: Identify Risk and Protective Factors. It is important to understand what factors protect people or put them at risk for experiencing or perpetrating violence. Why are risk and protective factors useful? They help identify where prevention efforts need to be focused.

Step 3: Develop and

Test Prevention Strategies. Research data and findings from needs assessments, community surveys, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups are useful for designing prevention programs. This is known as an evidence-based approach to program planning.

Step 4: Assure Widespread Adoption. After proven to be effective, they must be implemented and adopted more broadly.

Communities are encouraged in implement evidence-based programs and to evaluate the program's success. To promote widespread adoption include training, networking, and evaluation.

The Prevention Institute

CHI has endorsed the work of the Prevention Institute as a model for their violence prevention efforts. Founded in 1997, they work to address complex health and social issues. They believe in moving beyond approaches that target individuals, one person at a time, to creating systematic, comprehensive strategies that change the conditions that impact community

health. The Prevention Institute stresses that a prevention approach that draws on all the necessary stakeholders is needed to ensure that prevention efforts are systematic and comprehensive.

The organization

"We believe in moving beyond approaches that target individuals, one at a time, to create systematic, comprehensive strategies"

builds on the successes of a variety of fields, such as public health and urban planning and applies them to new challenges, such as violence prevention.

In doing so, communities can create conditions for healthier living.

Violence Prevention Strategies and Programs

The Prevention Institute offers a "Creating Safe Environments: Violence Prevention Strategies and Programs" report. The Executive Summary states, "Violence is in fact preventable, but its prevention requires an in-



vestment of resources, people, leadership, and commitment....It is a complex problem than requires a comprehensive solution and participation from multiple sectors and stakeholders."

Violence is a learned behavior. When root causes are present, powerlessness and isolation increase the likelihood of violence. Two issues to be addressed in violence prevention are risk and resilience factors and social norms.

The entire report can be accessed at <http://preventioninstitute.org>.

The Spectrum of Prevention

The Prevention Institute offers a framework to be used in the prevention efforts. It is a proven model for primary prevention and includes six levels in which prevention activities can be implemented.

Level 1: Strengthening individual knowledge and skills. This will enhance an individual's capability of preventing vio-

The Spectrum of Prevention



lence and promoting safety. Level 2: Promoting Community Education. You will reach groups of people with

information and resources. Level 3: Educating Providers. Informing providers who will transmit skills and knowledge to others and model positive norms will occur. Level 4.

Fostering Coalitions and Networks. This involves bringing together groups and individuals for broader goals and greater impact. Level 5. Changing Organizational Practices. This level will involve adopting regulations and shaping norms to prevent violence and improve safety. Level 6. Influencing Policies and Legislation. At this level, laws and policies are enacted to support healthy community norms and a violence free society.

Towards an Injury-free and Violence-free Minnesota

In 2008, Minnesota Department of Health offered their "Toward an Injury-free and Violence-free Minnesota: A Working Plan for 2010" to reduce injury and violence in Minnesota. Dianne Mandernach, the serving Commission of Health, wrote, "This plan reflects the best

thinking of many people in our state and throughout the nation."

They recently released "The Promise of Primary Prevention of Sexual Abuse: A five year

"This plan reflects the best thinking of many people in our state and throughout our nation"

plan to prevent sexual violence and exploitation in Minnesota. These reports can be accessed at <http://health.state.mn.us>. Type the name of the report into the Search engine.

Promising Practices

The Prevention Institute offers 9 Promising Practices in the primary prevention of violence. The programs are:

- Comprehensive government-led initiatives
- Gang Violence



- Youth development
- Youth driven/led
- School Based
- Mental Health
- Intimate Partner violence/sexual assault
- Coalitions and Collaboration
- Training and leadership

To read on these promising practices see <http://preventioninstitute.org/documents/CreatingSafeEnvironmentsfinal62206.pdf>.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLANNING

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Dedicated to the Health of our Communities.

Visit us at
www.sjahs.org

St. Joseph's Area Health Services is dedicated to the health of our communities. Through our core values of reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence we live our mission statement. The mission of St. Joseph's Area Health Services is to nurture the healing ministry of the Church by bringing it to new life, energy, and viability in the 21st century. Fidelity to the Gospel urges us to emphasize human dignity and social justice as it moves toward the creation of healthier communities. To fulfill this mission as a values-based organization and in partnership with laity and others, we will assure the integrity of the ministry in both current and developing organizations and activities; research and develop new ministries that integrate health, education, pastoral, and social services; promote leadership development throughout the entire organization; advocate for systemic changes with specific concerns for persons who are poor, alienated, and underserved, and steward resources by general oversight of the organization.

It is time to fix the metaphorical holes in the bridge that leads to violence.

As we move forward, the Prevention Institute offers these considerations for violence prevention programs.

- Programs should focus on settings where young people develop (e.g. home, school, community) and not just on individuals.
- Youth engagement is critical and some programs should be youth driven and/or youth led. Interactive and multimedia



emphasis can be of great help and importance in reaching youth.

- Programs should be developmentally appropriate. The right program must be targeted for the right age, and rooted in the early stages of childhood through adolescence with an understanding of child development.
- Programs should be culturally appropri-

ate, or at least culturally competent.

- Primary Prevention programs should focus both on decreasing risk factors and increasing resilience factors.
- Programs should fit as part of a broader set of coordinated efforts and fill priority gaps, based on the needs of the community.
- Programs should foster the support of the community.