

T H E G R E A T E R P I T T S B U R G H

# COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE

THIRD EDITION



## STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE: Building More Peaceful Communities



In partnership with:



**Creating Long – Term Solutions to Deep – Rooted Problems**

*“Moving from Complaint to Possibility...From Planning to Implementation & Mobilization!”*





## **STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE: Building More Peaceful Communities ©**

**The Greater Pittsburgh COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE (CAV)**

**Creating Long Term Solutions to Deep Rooted Problems**

*“Moving from Complaint to Possibility...from Planning to Implementation to Mobilization”*

### **3rd Edition**

Produced 2015-2016

By the Working Group of the Coalition Against Violence

First Edition Title “Strategies for Change: The Full Document”

In partnership with the  
Black Political Empowerment Project  
c/o Freedom Unlimited, Inc.

2201 Wylie Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15219

(412) 758-7898 or (412) 212-8775

[www.b-pep.net](http://www.b-pep.net) and [www.coalitionagainstviolence.net](http://www.coalitionagainstviolence.net)

Email: [cav.pgh@gmail.com](mailto:cav.pgh@gmail.com)



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## Foreword

As the Administrative Judge of the Juvenile and Family Court of Allegheny County, I preside over a court where the common dominator among court users is trauma. For the most part, people enter the Family Division due to a traumatic event in their lives.

They come to our courthouse because their marriage is in crisis and one of them has filed for divorce. They come because they can't agree upon the custody of their children or medical, educational and religious decisions for their children. They come seeking protection from abuse. They come because Child Welfare has taken their children. They come because they are victims of juvenile crime. They come because their children are accused of crimes and they are worried about their futures. Sadly, we terminate parental rights in our courthouse.

Children come because they have been accused of committing crimes, because they are caught in the middle of their parents' divorces and custody battles; because they have been removed from their homes, their communities, their parents, siblings, families and friends due to abuse, neglect, or exposure to domestic violence.

And while a single traumatic event may bring a family to court, in reality, many of the people we serve have been exposed to repeated traumatic events. Overwhelmingly, our court users are poor; disproportionately, they are African-American. Many live in communities fraught with violence, without safe places to play or socialize, without decent housing or access to healthy food. Too many of our children are being raised by single parents, or grandparents or great-grandparents. Too many of our children have experienced the loss of a parent or loved one due to incarceration, violence, addiction, or premature illness.

All of these issues have an impact upon building and maintaining a peaceful community. The road to peace is not immediate, but I have hope that it can and will happen. I have been on the bench for more than 17 years, and I have learned so much from the children and families that I serve. Every day someone restores my faith in humanity. It is because of this that I have adopted a Servant Leadership Model in my courtroom.

"Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities" provides a resource for our community which addresses violence in every iteration. It educates; it challenges; it provides solutions. I commend the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence for undertaking this important project.

"The servant-leader is servant *first*... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and the most difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?" –Robert K. Greenleaf: *The Servant as Leader*, 1970.

Please join the Coalition Against Violence and become a Servant Leader.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "KBC Clark".

Judge Kim Berkeley Clark  
Administrative Judge—Family Division  
Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County



***Dedicated to the Youth for Whom We Do This Work***

***Dear Brother***

*I watch you prowl the lonely streets,  
blocks and blocks of broken dreams.  
While you sell drugs and waste your time,  
a little voice inside you cries.  
He screams and screams because he can see,  
the man within that you can be.  
But, for some odd reason all that you know,  
is violence, drugs, pimps, gangstas and dough.  
I observe you brother and I wonder why,  
you so willingly let your spirit die.  
Your heart is hollow, dark and cold.  
You are only your father's sad story retold.  
Right now you have the power to change,  
but you just want to stay the same.  
The same person who walks around with no life,  
and has no other place to look, but down.  
The streets are addictive, close to a drug.  
They sucked you up and stole your love.  
Took you so, so, far away,  
that night is night and night is day.  
Sometimes you sit alone,  
and wish that you had a life of your own.  
And when you do, the little boy weeps,  
because he wishes he could go to sleep.  
He wants to go back to family and love.  
And turn his head to darkness and drugs.  
Kill your heart the streets demand,  
while you walk in burning sand.  
You've done too much to go back,  
Way too much to carry on.  
So the only time you will ever be happy again  
is when you are dead, buried, forgotten...GONE!*

*Cornaya Moorefield ©2006  
City Charter High School*

**The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence dedicates this Third Edition to Faith Stenning, who wrote the Arts Community section. We fondly remember Faith for her steadfast commitment to peace and non-violence, for coming to every Coalition Working Group Meeting, and for her sense of humor, knowledge, wit and wisdom.**

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## Acknowledgements

### **We Remember!**

**Very special thanks goes to the NAACP, Pittsburgh Branch, spearheaded by Tim Stevens, along with community and religious leaders, representative from various community-based organizations, and concerned citizens who ‘produced “Strategy 95” in 1995. This comprehensive anti-violence document served as the foundation upon which the Coalition Against Violence document “*Strategies for Change: The Full Document*” (1<sup>st</sup> Edition) was originally created.**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CONVENERS

In January 2007 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had the unfortunate distinction of being identified as having the highest rate of “Black on Black homicide” in the nation. Members of the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) found this to be an unacceptable reality, and in partnership with One HOOD called for a press conference on February 8, 2007 to address this very troubling situation. This press conference hosted approximately 55 people, including ministers from various religious denominations, political and community leaders and interested citizens. Little did we know that this powerful and passionate press conference would lead to fifty-one (51) more work sessions, ending in March of 2008 which led to the unveiling at Duquesne University of the first edition of the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV) “Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities” (printed by the University of Pittsburgh) on July 8, 2008. A youth version, targeting information and resources from *Strategies for Change*, also was released, along with CAV’s first *Directory of Community Services*.

The second edition of *Strategies for Change* followed on October 18, 2013 at an event hosted by Community College of Allegheny County and its President Dr. Alex Johnson. Doubling in size, it contains thirteen new sections of content. The second edition took a few years to write and nearly doubled the length of the original document.

The CAV documents’ usefulness and relevance come from the grassroots contributions of hundreds of Pittsburgh area residents of all ages, races and socioeconomic backgrounds, including youth, social justice and religious leaders, law enforcement, and members of the LGBTQAI community.

We were honored to have the National President of the Urban League, Marc Morial, define our second edition of our CAV “Strategies for Change” document as one of the most extensive anti-violence documents in the nation. We appreciated the recognition from Mr. Morial and we knew there was more work to do, and our “CAV Working Group” continued meeting to identify additional strategies that could impact violence throughout the Pittsburgh Region and the nation. For this third edition the Working Group expanded some sections of the second edition and added two major *new pieces*, “Violence Against Women and Girls” and “Violence Against the LGBTQAI Community”. *Each* section of our strategies begin with ‘verbs’ in bold so as to emphasize that our goal is have partners, across the board, who are committed to ACT. We ask that YOU be one of our partners to assist in the implementation and mobilization of any section, or any of the hundreds of strategies, contained in this expansive document. Our work continues to expand based on our philosophy of *Moving from Complaint to Possibility...from Planning to implementation and Mobilization*. We are committed to creating more peaceful communities! We are blessed to have the financial support going forward from Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and the Pittsburgh Foundation, and are appreciative of past financial support from Vibrant Pittsburgh and resource support from the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police and the City’s Department of Public Safety.

This work, continuing our collective commitment, is dedicated to all of those who have died as a result of violence, and as a testimony that their deaths will NOT be in vain!

*Tim Stevens* and *Valerie Dixon*, Co-conveners, The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence Working Group



## The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV)

### The Vision:

***Safe, peaceful and just communities for all!***

### The Mission:

The mission of the **COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** is to create and implement a comprehensive anti-violence strategy for Pittsburgh and the nation.

### The Goals:

- To **FIND** collaborators and partners to implement the various strategies of the Coalition Against Violence throughout the Pittsburgh Region and beyond.
- To **PROVIDE** opportunities for community dialogue using the “Community Manifesto” and “The Role of the Family.”
- To **PUBLISH** an “Implementation Update” describing how the CAV document is being utilized, along with commitments made for implementation. The update will be presented periodically to the public.
- To **SEEK** financial and other resources that can expand the ability of the Coalition Against Violence to market *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities* and mobilize for the implementation of the CAV anti-violence strategies.
- To **SPONSOR** community forums or mini-summits on issue areas contained in the CAV anti-violence strategy document. Participants will develop action strategies and implement actions relevant to their particular needs



## The Purpose and Role

The purpose and the role of the **GREATER COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** is to identify and facilitate the implementation of strategies and initiatives addressing the issues of violence and crime that plague many of the neighborhoods and communities throughout the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. The coalition is committed to boldly and actively supporting as well as collaborating with organizations, agencies, initiatives, and programs already working quietly and diligently to help reduce violence.

The **GREATER COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** established a working group in February 2007 which updated and significantly expanded "Strategy 95." This particular document identified strategies to decrease the violence that was occurring at that time. To address the violence in 2007 the Coalition's working group began with two new sections -- The Community Manifesto and the Role of the Family which became the preamble to the coalition's 2008 document which contains specific strategies and actions for change.

*As a call to action*, specifically aimed at the African American Community, the "Community Manifesto" contains definitive steps to accomplish far-reaching goals for ending the violence, and challenges us to reclaim the community *by any peaceful means necessary*.

The "*Role of the Family*" contains guidelines for helping families and parents raise their children in a productive, healthy and safe, *and* peaceful environment. Because of its profound impact upon the strength and the health of families and the entire community, the violence that permeates our communities and neighborhoods is weakening that foundation.

Knowing that families cannot do it alone, the **COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** recognizes the role of the Community as the village. The *entire* village - institutions of faith, schools, businesses, the government, as well as social and educational institutions, and other caring people in the community – *must* provide the guidance, and the leadership, as well as the *will*, to end the cycle of violence that threatens both the family and the village.

In 2008 the Coalition Against Violence began its implementation phase and began forming partnerships with educational institutions, government agencies, community-based organizations, media organizations, communities of faith, and others. Moreover, in 2010, through the auspices of The Pittsburgh Foundation, the organization hired its first Community Liaison. As a result of a series of strategic meetings, the coalition changed its name to **The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence**. And most significantly, the Working Group on Implementation produced the second edition of *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities* in 2013. This

second edition of the Coalition's comprehensive anti-violence manual contained hundreds of strategic points and suggestions that could, perhaps, bring about total and lasting change, and lead to a violence-free community.

By 2014, the Coalition developed partnerships with governmental entities and community-based organizations such as the Public Safety Department of the City of Pittsburgh and A+ Schools. CAV also forged a greater relationship with the Pittsburgh Public Schools by presenting Youth Summits that provided a venue for students to seek their own solutions to the violence that affected their lives. Even though the second edition contained hundreds of strategies, suggestions, and action points covering a broad spectrum of issues and areas of concern, the Working Group continued to meet to identify additional strategies. As a result, the third edition of *Strategies for Change: Building* includes two more comprehensive sections – “Violence against the LGBTQAI Community” and, “Violence against Women and Girls.”

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### The Call to Action

Taken together “A Community Manifesto” and “The Role of the Family” sections formed the Preamble to *Strategies for Change: The Full Document*, and they were specifically written as a **Call to Action** for the African American community. Now in 2016, more than ever, **The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence** firmly believes that African Americans must boldly take ownership of this persistent problem, which has had the most devastating impact on the communities in which we live and work. As stated in the Community Manifesto, “we must seize the time to reclaim our community now.” Furthermore, as stated in the Role of the Family, the village must take the lead in healing the African American community. To significantly decrease the violence everyone living, working and worshipping in our neighborhoods and communities must come together.

But the African American Community and our families should not and must not share the burden alone. Indeed, the collaboration of *everyone* -- individual citizens, government and education entities, business corporations and agencies, social institutions, as well as philanthropic groups—is necessary. To that end, *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities* the second edition of the Coalition's comprehensive anti-violence manual is filled with hundreds of strategic points and suggestions that could, perhaps, bring about total and lasting change, and lead to a violence-free community.

Therefore, the coalition strongly encourages the *entire* community to actively, diligently and forthrightly take action to help move forth the actions and strategies listed in this document. Therefore, the **GREATER PITTSBURGH COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** urges every citizen to read and share this document with their families, friends, workmates, classmates and others within their life circles.

We are thoroughly convinced that these strategies, if implemented, can *significantly* impact the violence that has become far too common in our communities. More importantly, we ask that you do more than read this document. We ask that you *act* on the strategies identified. We ask that you be a partner to the **GREATER PITTSBURGH COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** in “moving from complaint to possibility...from planning to implementation and on to mobilization.”



## A COMMUNITY MANIFESTO

*The ruin of a nation begins in the home of its people – Ashanti Proverb*

Today our community is at a crossroads. We are appalled at the shootings and senseless deaths of our young people. After all, these are our sons and daughters, our grandchildren, our nieces and nephews, and cousins who are killing each other. These are our children, who are dying or maimed at the hands of other children! In good conscience, we can no longer sit quietly, wringing our hands and shaking our heads at the latest news accounts announcing that another life has been lost. These seemingly senseless murders, though committed by few, have created a cycle of violence and trauma experienced by everyone living, working and owning businesses in our community. This culture of violence, which has threatened the lifeblood of our community, is so pervasive that if things do not change, the community will descend into further chaos and lawlessness. Yes, we are at a very important crossroads, and it is time for a change.

Now is the time to stand up and not be afraid to say, “No More!” When mothers have to snatch up their children in fear at a public event because of a shooting, something must be done! When our elders are so fearful they cannot walk outside of their homes, something must be done! When schoolchildren witness a person wounded and bloodied outside of their school building, something must be done! We are living in a culture of violence where a few people, bent on death and destruction, have held the entire community hostage! Something must be done!

There is a multitude of underlying causes for this culture of violence that are so pervasive in our community – causes that include rage and anger, apathy and denial, under-employment, mis-education, and racism. The rise of the “prison industrial complex” and the glamorization of gangster-like activity can also be included. The roots of this culture of violence, continuing to escalate in this community, may call for further debate. This document addresses the trauma of loss and pain felt by so many people as a result of this violence—trauma and stress that have caused untold damage to our collective psyche.

From our elders to people living with disabilities, to our young school children, to every individual in the community, including the victims and their families – everyone is vulnerable. It is damaging to the health of the community when the trauma of loss and pain continue to escalate. Boldly stated, we must work diligently to heal the trauma because we have a responsibility to the life, health and vitality of the community. We can no longer afford to let a few violent people -- individuals, who seemingly operate under a law unto themselves and who are preying on their own communities -- continue to hold the rest of us hostage.

Today, we must look toward one another for answers not so easily explained. While moving forward we must look backward, inspired by our cherished brothers and sisters of the early Civil Rights Movements and the Black Power Movement, and seek guidance to continue this fight to heal and to save our community. There are many lessons that this struggles taught us about self-determination, building and uplifting the community and empowering entire generations to change. Sadly, today, not only are we still fighting our traditional enemies, we must also acknowledge the historical enemy that has always been with us, one that is getting stronger: the enemy within.

Who are some of those enemies that threaten the lifeblood of the community? Many of them are our own youth, between the ages of 12 and 25, who are responsible for the shootings and killings we see almost nightly on the evening news. They are the people selling guns, even AK-47s, to our youth. They are the ones committing drive-by shootings and gangster-like executions in front of residents, and in public places. They are the drug dealers selling in and around schools, near senior citizen buildings, on street corners, and in business areas. Indeed, all areas of the community *must* be considered drug-free zones. Furthermore, the youth are not the only people responsible for perpetuating this culture of violence. We know that many adults are also committing and supporting these violent acts against the community.

Today, we must honestly ask ourselves – why we, as the community have allowed the violence to escalate! Why does it appear that most of us sit by, wringing our hands in despair and lamenting that *somebody must do something before it's too late?*” How long are we going to let the police do it, the government do it, the social service agencies do it, and the churches do it? How long will we continue to let this fear paralyze us? How long will we allow this fear to embolden the enemy to maintain its hold on us? What can we, the community, do for ourselves to end this “madness?”

We must seize the time to reclaim our community, now!

Therefore, *everyone* living and working in the community must accept the challenge to:

**Become active!** Do not be afraid to take up the fight! We -- the citizens who live, work and worship in this community -- have a great responsibility. We must restore our own community to its original greatness. Too many of us are waiting for *someone else* to end our bondage of fear. We expect the police, our elected officials, or the leaders of organizations and agencies to clean up our streets for us. They cannot do it alone.

**Encourage** the youth to lead this struggle for the life of our community, for it is their struggle as well. When the youth took up the struggle during the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, they made great strides, as well as tremendous sacrifices for all of us. Because of their courage and commitment, the entire community was galvanized and empowered. Today, it is just as important for the new movement to come directly from the youth, who are most affected by the culture of violence pervading our communities.

**Speak** boldly and forthrightly to your own family members who are committing destructive actions against the community. Do not accept their behavior or their money.

**Join** with those courageous men and women who actually walk and talk with the “brothers and sisters” on the block. Come out to stand

alongside of those who are strongly visible at the scene of every shooting or act of violence. We serve notice that we will no longer hide. We will no longer tolerate this continued bondage of fear.

**Proclaim** that responsible reporting is not “snitching.” It is our civic duty. Responsible reporting should not only address crime and violence in the community. It should also include a platform for addressing any issues that negatively affect the community and directly contribute to the demise and degradation of the community as a whole.

**Create** a web of block watch programs that stay connected with one another in every neighborhood to enhance community engagement. Communities in Allegheny County and beyond could develop a working communication initiative such as a Community House reporting system, a vehicle through which each community directly can address any issues that confront a particular neighborhood. A community-appointed team would be responsible for deciphering, validating and forwarding information to the appropriate parties. Such a system would empower neighborhood communities to take responsibility for their

own issues, and serve as a trustworthy resource that would also support initiatives such as the City of Pittsburgh Citizen's Observer Reporting System. Furthermore, instituting such an initiative would bring pride back into the communities, and serve as a powerful "voice" for community self-reliance, accountability and empowerment.

**Establish** an open relationship with the police to curb destructive behavior in each and every community. Furthermore, we must strengthen existing relationships between the community and the police.

**Work** proactively to defuse conflicts occurring among and between families, neighborhoods, and gang members in the community. This is the source of much of the violence in the schools.

**Provide** an outlet in each community for resolving conflicts *before* they escalate into violence, by creating community-based mediation offices staffed by community residents trained in conflict management and dispute resolution. Staff must have an understanding of, and be able to utilize, ways of solving conflicts that are culturally relevant for the communities served. Furthermore, all community members must be encouraged to advocate for programs that protect victims of violent crimes, and support the notion of restorative justice for those who commit acts of violence.

**Join**, be active and support existing organizations that are working for social justice, community empowerment, economic empowerment, and violence reduction. Every eligible citizen must make a lifetime commitment to vote in *each and every election* to create, and sustain, the *political will* to support such initiatives.

**Build** bridges of understanding and cooperation as we collectively rid the community of the reckless violence that plagues us. There are many different institutions and organizations – street, grassroots, community-based, social service agencies, and communities of faith - - already doing the work of community-building. They are working diligently to bring a change in the community. No group is more or less valuable, competent, or viable than the next. Therefore, there must be greater solidarity among those groups and their leaders who are doing similar work. Everyone must take on the responsibility for working to end the culture of violence that is sucking dry the lifeblood of our community.

**Serve** notice -- collectively, loudly, and visibly -- to those who continue to escalate this culture of violence. We will no longer silently stand by and accept these devastating and vicious acts committed by our youth or by anyone else who are the perpetrators of death and destruction.

It has been said that, "all this talk of peace and love will not change things." However, to work toward peace is a courageous act of love. To be empowered for change is the result of love. Breathing life and humanity back into the community is a true demonstration of love.

Therefore, *we the community*, proclaim we will no longer be hostages to those who prey on the community through this culture of violence. Because we love our community, we *will* come back outside. We *will* take back our streets – block by block, and by any means necessary!



## THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

*“Culture mandates that one make home the primary concern of the heart. The heart creates love, support, cooperation, nurturing, and peace. Home is our first school. Let us put our hearts, minds, bodies and souls back into the home as the first step toward eliminating the violence in the streets.” (Iyanla Vanzant in Acts of Faith: Daily Meditations for People of Color)*

We must *heal* the community to end violence. **We MUST reclaim the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child.** More importantly, we must realize that it takes the *entire* village to help the family raise its children. This includes the schools, communities of faith, social institutions, and community allies. All aspects of the village must take responsibility for raising the children and supporting *all* families in our community.

Therefore, as the village we recognize the following:

- There are all kinds of families in the African American community – two-parent families, single mothers raising children, single fathers raising children, grandparents and other relatives raising children, and foster care families. The village must support families, no matter the composition or the orientation. Families need the support of the entire community. Institutions of faith, schools, businesses, and social and educational institutions *must* help them raise children, and provide relevant programs to address the diverse needs of the family, as well as those of the community.
- We have lost an understanding of how the history, cultural values, beliefs, practices, and traditions have sustained and protected the African American family. We have forgotten the significance of the role played by our elders as keepers of wisdom, as teachers of cultural values, and as role models for parenting. Today’s youth feel abandoned and disrespected by the rest of the community. We must heal the distrust and the disconnection that seemingly comes from a breakdown of the strong sense of unity once shared by everyone in the village. We must return to and accept the practice of holding youth accountable whenever we encounter unacceptable or inappropriate behavior. Therefore, to have a healthy community, we must repair the relationship between the generations to help break the cycle of violence permeating our neighborhoods. Furthermore, we must make a commitment to reclaim and institute these values, practices and traditions to save today’s families.
- Parents must see themselves as the children’s first teachers and main role models. Children often learn more from what they see their parents do than from what their parents say. We learn about values and behaviors from our parents. Parents must understand that they have responsibilities as well as rights to raise their own children. They have the *right* to raise children in a safe, healthy, productive and positive environment. Yet, they must take the *responsibility* to empower their children to become responsible and productive adults. However, they cannot do this alone. The schools, communities of faith, social service agencies, and the community *must assist* families in achieving these goals.

If we truly want to have a healthy community with healthy families, we must recognize the family as the *foundation* of the village. Protected and insulated by the entire village, *parents and families* must make a commitment to:

**Empower** children with a strong sense of self, community, culture, and spirituality to help them feel self-confident enough to avoid negative peer pressure and make the right choices. Remind our youth that the village will also take part in their individual rearing, and they should respect and listen to elders when approached regarding their appropriate *and* inappropriate behaviors.

**Instill** children with a sense of responsibility to the family, to the neighborhood in which they live as well as to the wider community. Trust and respect helps to build a healthy family, *and* a healthy community.

**Support** youth by allowing them to follow their dreams and not be deterred by influences of youth who engage in negative and even criminal lifestyles. Adults must encourage a *positive* mindset and perspective for all youth and must constantly be supportive of the need for young people to "do the right thing."

**Encourage** youth to only take part in *legal* money-making opportunities. Parents must not allow their children to participate in illegal activities, even when those activities have the possibility of bringing additional income into the household. Parents and guardians must realize that such behaviors can lead to the imprisonment and/or death of their children.

**Teach** children self-discipline by strongly urging them to resist engaging in unhealthy or illegal behaviors or life-styles. Help them to deal with negative peer pressure, especially regarding drugs and alcohol.

**Provide** positive role models. Children must see strong, positive men and women living, working and engaging the community. Fathers must take an active role in raising their children, whether they are in or out of the home. Men in the village must step in to "father" children when biological fathers are incarcerated, or dead, or otherwise absent. In doing so these men can provide the

nurturing such children need to be emotionally and physically healthy. Moreover, the *entire* community must serve as extended family to provide support for *all* families in the village.

**Demonstrate** at all times positive parenting skills and habits to provide a loving and caring environment for the youth under one's care. Parents and guardians should always keep open communications with their children and provide opportunities for young people to feel free to share their deepest fears, concerns, upsets and frustrations. Such an atmosphere of trust might prevent the child from resorting to negative and possibly criminal behaviors.

**Teach** children to be assertive, not aggressive, in expressing themselves. Help them to understand that they can resolve conflicts without resorting to inappropriate or violent behavior when they are at home, at school, *and* out in the community. Insist that children show respect for each other and *everyone* they encounter in the community. Monitor your children's friends or acquaintances and encourage them to develop healthy ways of communication with their peers.

**Encourage** youth to use mediation techniques when faced with conflict and emotionally devastating situations. Parents and guardians should continually discourage the use of knives, guns and other weapons by young people who might find themselves involved in human conflicts. Parents and adults should consistently demonstrate positive interpersonal behaviors and practices to the youth of our community.

**Value** the pursuit of education and raise the standard of excellence as an essential requirement for success. The academic achievement gap between African American children and the so-called "dominant" culture is widening and many of our children are failing. We cannot afford to let our children continue to buy into the mistaken notion

tbeing smart, is “acting white.” We must instill in our children that being an educated person has nothing to do with color. They should understand that education is a right we did not always have as a people, and that we must not forget the blood shed to give us this right. Education provides a path to being productive and successful citizens.

**Urge** your children to aspire to succeed in school. Insist that our youth graduate from high school, and, if they desire, seek higher education such as college, technical or trade schools. Insist that the schools give *all* children the skills to compete fully in today’s society. Advocate for the resources necessary to provide a safe environment conducive to learning, and elicit the help of the village to make certain this happens.

**Take** a strong interest in every aspect of a child’s education. Develop open relationships with teachers, principals and other school officials. Be proactive instead of reactive. Healthy and positive collaboration between the parents and the schools must occur in order for children to receive the best education possible.

**Develop** and encourage a strong work ethic in children from an early age to prepare them to become productive adults. For example, children can be responsible for chores around the home. Parents can encourage teens to obtain after-school or summer employment. Requiring children to volunteer in their schools, their community and in faith-based institutions provides excellent opportunities to learn leadership and social skills, which facilitate the development of a strong work ethic.

**Monitor** what teens and children see in the media (TV, movies, videos, games), as well as the music they listen to. We are exposing children as young as two years of age to a myriad of potentially damaging messages about gender roles, self-gratification, and the acceptability of violence.

**Talk** openly about subjects such as healthy relationships and healthy sexuality with children from an early age, and *before* they become adolescents. As a child’s primary

and most important teachers, parents are encouraged to address issues such as sexual and social responsibility before their children become adolescents.

**Urge** both boys and girls to value their virginity. Young men must understand that their manhood and masculinity are not solely defined by their ability to make children. Just as important, teen girls should not solely be defined by their sexuality.

**Encourage** youth to seek positive and healthy friendships before they decide to engage in sexual activity. While marriage is the ideal, parents must strongly encourage youth to wait until they have completed their education or have become financially and emotionally stable to have families of their own. Parents can help their children safely navigate today’s society by having positive, committed, and safe relationships.

**Gather** information about the importance of good mental, physical and emotional health, and consider adopting a healthy lifestyle, which includes proper nutrition and physical exercise for the entire family. Encourage the village to provide the necessary resources that contribute to a healthy community for all families.

**Recognize** the *necessity* of securing all firearms, *if they are in the home*, to reduce the risk of accidents, theft, or unauthorized use. Just as so much of the violence in the streets is the result of using firearms, deaths or injuries in the home are also committed with guns. Therefore, parents who choose to keep firearms in the home must insure that children and visitors do not have access to them. Moreover, they must provide age-appropriate safety instruction for all members of the family.

**Advocate** for safer communities. We must hold every school, municipality, and state and federally elected official accountable. Urge them to enact legislation that will protect the community and provide *all* of the resources necessary to make our communities safe for *everyone, including families*.

It indeed takes an *entire* village to raise a child. If *our* village does not, many more children and youth may seek another kind of *family* – a family that is fostered in violence – one that is called, “The Streets.” Therefore, the village *must* provide the guidance, and the leadership, as well as have the *will*, to raise all of our children in a productive, viable *and* safe environment.



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**A Community Prescription for Ending Violence**  
**From: Mary Young, Personnel Committee Chair, B-PEP**

Incorporate the “Values for Life” (created by Dr. Jerome Taylor for the Center for Family Excellence in Pittsburgh, PA) in all school curricula beginning with Head Start and through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This will help children internalize values such as: self-esteem, self-persistence, self-reliance, self-confidence interpersonal skills, love and respect, and love of learning, along with other positive attributes for success. Parents, community groups working with families and children, communities of faith, and schools.

Incorporate and implement Non-Violent Principles, such as those espoused by Dr. Martin Luther King and others, in schools, community groups working with families and children, communities of faith, and in families in their homes. This is an effective way to indoctrinate children into learning, internalizing and aspiring to live in a violent-free community and become “Standard Bearers against violence.

Provide true and complete Black History in all schools. This will eradicate self-hate and hate of other Blacks by instilling pride in our children and youth. Moreover, this will be an impetus for the black race to be seen as a race of “great quality and intellect, themselves coming from kings and queens.” (A child being taught that he or she comes from slaves with no further elevation in their lives can psychologically inhibit their abilities for higher aspirations in life).



**STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE: Building More Peaceful Communities**  
**The Greater Pittsburgh COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE (CAV)**  
**Creating Long Term Solutions to Deep Rooted Problems**

**Executive Summary**

It is *everyone's* responsibility to change the culture of violence. *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities* is filled with action points and ideas that could be used by any agency, organization, or individual seeking solutions to the violence that plagues many of the communities in the region. Each section of the booklet is designed to stand alone, and page numbers have been included in this Executive Summary for easy access to any section of interest. We ask that you *act* on those strategies for which you can make a commitment.

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**ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES:** Bullying has become a serious problem in our schools, as evidenced in the statistics below. This behavior takes different forms, direct and indirect, which can result in different types of bullying, i.e., physical, psychological/emotional, verbal and cyber bullying. This type of aggression can be carried out by groups or individuals. The three important contributing factors in bullying incidents are that the behavior: 1.) occurs over time; 2.) is usually repeated, and 3.) involves an imbalance of power and control. While more youth violence may occur on school grounds, strategies are needed to assure student safety no matter where it happens. Everyone can play a role in stopping bullying. (pg.22)

**THE ARTS COMMUNITY:** The power of art to move and transform human beings has been demonstrated throughout human history. Art is extremely powerful in that it works on the creator and the beholder alike. Psychologists have long recognized the sublimating effect of art whereby aggressively unacceptable impulses are changed into socially acceptable forms. So much human energy is employed in creating art – be it painting or sculpture or music or drama – that destructive behavior can be re-routed through a powerful communicative tool. Many local organizations are already developing artistic outreach programs to youth. Many of the suggestions supplement existing programs. (pg. 27)

**ATHLETES:** *Professional Athletes* are in a unique position to gain access to people in power at a level not available to the average citizen. They have an extremely powerful opportunity to impact the violence in the communities where they play. Because youth look up to athletes at all levels – high school, college and professional – athletes have the responsibility of being positive role models. Student athletes must embrace the fact that they are role models for their fellow students and the youth of the community that they represent. Because the community supports their team on the playing field, student athletes must return the gracious gift of support to the community and their school. (pg. 28)

**BLACK BUSINESS COMMUNITY:** All sectors of the community are urged to support African American business and business development throughout the region. The goal should include the development, implementation and maintenance of community-based businesses and employment initiatives that will create and establish viable businesses, as well as living wage career and employment opportunities in and around designated African American communities. (pg. 30)

**THE BUSINESS AND CORPORATE COMMUNITY:** The Business and Corporate community has a strong interest in improving the quality of life for everyone in the region. Business leaders have a responsibility to reduce the impact of community violence by providing leadership and creating economic opportunities that will improve the conditions for those who are historically disadvantaged. (pg. 33)

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: THE ROLE OF THE CITIZEN:** Civic participation is the foundation of democracy. The culture of civic participation must be brought back to a vibrant and relevant lifestyle if we are to be successful in our efforts to stop the increasing violence in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, cities and the region. Civic education helps prepare people, especially the young, to carry out their roles as citizens and to help them understand that one's vote *does* matter. Therefore, all citizens must be given the tools to fully participate in the democratic process. (pg. 35)

**COMMUNITIES OF FAITH:** The recognition and valuing of the sacred breath within each human being is essential to the building of relationships that can ultimately reduce violence, while increasing respect and tolerance for oneself and others. Indeed, practicing spiritual disciplines can help people understand the meaning of the suffering and frustrations of others, while constructively channeling their anger, thus reducing violence. Faith communities have an extremely important role to play in the transformation of communities. (pg. 36)

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:** Domestic Violence is a pattern of abuse in a relationship that is characterized by physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial control. Domestic violence is a widespread issue, affecting one in four women during their life time. When abuse occurs in a relationship, there is an impact on the community as a whole. Working together, we can help to lead victims to safety and decrease the prevalence of domestic violence in all communities. (pg. 40)

**EDUCATION: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY:** Education is the foundation for financial success and responsible citizenship. Historically, the lack of education all too frequently leads to the absence of hope, wasted lives, violence, incarceration, and even death. The entire educational system, from pre-school to university, must be held accountable to the community. It must empower students to live creative, effective contributing lives. (pg. 42)

**EDUCATION: COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:** Colleges and universities need to take advantage of the opportunities related to the multicultural diversity of their students by including courses that reflect that diversity. Colleges and universities should be at the forefront of this movement because of their unique position to educate young people from *all* backgrounds. Responsibility for the implementation of this initiative must come from the top. (pg. 46)

**FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC VIOLENCE:** Not all violence is committed with a gun. Violence was used and is still being used to prevent Blacks from fully participating in the economic system of the United States. Government and institutional policies often kill just as effectively as a nine-millimeter semiautomatic. Policies and practices that kill dreams are violent. Policies that kill hopes and aspirations are violent. Policies that allow neighborhoods to die are violent. Therefore, we believe that economic and financial violence is unethical, immoral, and, as such, it must be stopped and eradicated from our communities. (pg. 48)

**FINANCIAL LITERACY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:** Careful financial management brings peace and stability to families and communities. The majority of divorces can be traced to quarrels and accusations over money. Some professional counselors indicate that four out of five families are burdened with serious money problems. Proper money management and living within one's means are both essential to live abundantly and happily in today's world. Teaching children by example and by precept to work and to manage their income gives them confidence in their abilities, occupies their time in productive ways, builds habits that will lead to a productive life, protects them from the lure of expensive and unneeded purchases, and helps them to put money in proper perspective. (pg. 49)

**FOUNDATIONS/CHARITABLE TRUSTS:** Foundations have an important role to play in reducing violence, because of their ability to foster initiatives that are holistic, comprehensive, systematic, evidence-based and empowering. Furthermore, foundations can play an important role by providing innovative and non-traditional grants that may have a profound impact within the African American community. (pg. 51)

**GANGS/VIOLENT STREET GROUPS:** Gang-involved youth are impacted by poverty, unemployment, limited educational achievement, and a lack of positive activities and positive influences and role models. These same factors often keep young African American and minority males trapped in the gang lifestyle into their early twenties. Many communities are disproportionately impacted by poverty and social disorganization that places young people at greater risk for gang involvement, which in turn results in ongoing criminal activity. Although some resources and programs are available in many of the affected neighborhoods to address the issue of gangs and their impact, there is often a lack of coordinated resources that target and enroll violent, gang involved individuals. Even though overt gang violence of the '90's had diminished substantially, since that time there has been a rise in drug trafficking offenses, and its subsequent violence turned away from actual gang activity to criminal enterprise pursuits and apparent 'turf' or territorial disputes. The greatest impact on reducing, or eliminating gang-related activity is the collaboration among community and faith-based leaders, dedicated street organizations parents and families, students, school systems, law enforcement, and political leaders. (pg. 53)

**GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT:** The purpose of government is to engage in activities to promote the "common good," and to regulate and control social, political and economic spheres. Government policy affects the food we eat, the water we drink, where we can park our cars, and what medications we can take. Government policy determines which activities are legal or illegal and what the punishment is for said illegal activity. Government policies, at all levels of government (federal, state and local) should be written in a way that protects the rights of all citizens and to maintain an orderly society. Government entities must collaborate with local communities, businesses, and the philanthropic communities to reduce violence. (pgs. 57 and 58)

**GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION:** A civil society is based on the people and lawful authorities working cooperatively to reduce the violence in our neighborhoods. The irresponsible use of guns, especially handguns, is to blame for a great percentage of the violence and killing that occurs in our neighborhoods. In addition, guns are frequently involved in accidental injuries. (pg. 60)

**THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM:** The healthcare system has a unique and important role in reducing the physical, emotional, and social problems that contribute to violence in our communities. It includes responsibilities related to partnership with communities and health care clients to provide health-related education and employment opportunities. Members of the health care system are called on to take the specific actions aimed at healing the wounds caused by violence and reducing the incidence of violence in our communities. (pg. 63)

**INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA:** The Internet has opened up a world of opportunities for everyone. Social communication technology/social networking (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) is a part of our everyday lives since we utilize this technology to remain in touch with others. Most of society utilizes social media in the way it is intended. However, when an individual terrorizes another with words and images via the Internet, harms the entire community. Therefore, safeguards must be put into place to keep all members of the community safe and free from violence (i.e. cyber-bullying). Everyone has responsibility of preventing cyber-violence. (pg. 65)

**THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM:** Juvenile justice officials can play a significant role in the number youth impacted by violence in our communities through greater collaboration among parents, families, schools, human service organizations and other law enforcement institutions. (pg. 66)

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:** Strategies and initiatives advocating gun violence reduction must be immediately and will require unprecedented understanding and cooperation between all levels of the criminal justice system and the community. Teamwork is essential in law enforcement, as well as “community policing” environments in which citizens, community groups and the police work together as equal partners to attack and solve this problem. (pg. 69)

**THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA:** The media must understand the role they play in perpetuating negative images of African Americans and other people of color. The media have the ability *and* the responsibility to present a more balanced picture of our youth and our community, instead of solely concentrating on the violence in our community. (pg. 71)

**THE MEDIA, Part 2 -- IMPACT OF RAP MUSIC:** The entire entertainment industry, as well as a few rap stars, has reaped huge financial benefits at the expense of the “hearts and minds” of millions of youth. Everyone: the entertainment media, music artists, parents, and the community has to take responsibility for what our children and youth are seeing and hearing. (pg. 73)

**MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS AND UNIVERSITY-BASED PROFESSIONALS:** Healthcare providers and university-based professionals must attend to the full range of interventions that may prevent violence and its mental health consequences. This requires integrating research and treatment with a full understanding of the complex and important interactions between social, community, and family realities. It is critical to consider their impact on individual’s risk for: violence and self-injurious behavior. This behavior includes suicidal/homicidal behavior, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders and bereavement, difficulties in emotional, cognitive and moral development, as well as impediments to educational and vocational opportunities. (pg. 75)

**IMPACT OF MENTORING ON YOUTH VIOLENCE:** Mentors and mentoring organizations can have an impact in reducing youth violence by creating an environment where our youth are motivated to achieve by empowering them to become self-sufficient shareholders in the economic

and social fabric of the communities' in which they live. Mentors provide strong and positive role models in the lives of our youth. One-on-one or group mentoring exposes our youth to caring role models who reinforce the adage that says, "What they see is what they can be". Mentors, through their examples of leadership, dedication, and friendship, can nurture our youth and compel them to carry out the tradition of a continuous quest for educational excellence and to re-invest in our communities. Mentors act as guides for our youth in life experiences, fostering positive self-perception and self-respect, cultural enrichment, and the pursuit of positive life-long goals. (pg. 76)

**REHABILITATIVE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:** This is a community-strengthening alternative to the current prison-industrial complex that has particularly ruined the lives of too many Black youths and young adults. It is an attempt to reverse the damaging impact of a criminal justice system that traditionally relied on a policy of punitive justice resulting in lengthy incarceration and the lifelong stigma of a criminal record. Restorative justice views crime not only as breaking the law, but also as violating the relationships among in the community. The goal of restorative justice is to repair the relationships between the offender and the other members of the community. The role of the community is to create environments of understanding and work collaboratively with the Justice System support restorative justice efforts. (pg. 78)

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE --THE ROLE OF FORMER OFFENDERS:** Having recognized The devastating effects their behavior has had on the life of the African American community, persons incarcerated and formerly incarcerated in the justice system can provide invaluable service for aiding the prevention of violence within our communities. (pg.81)

**SENIOR CITIZEN CRIME PREVENTION:** Senior citizens are a rapidly growing population the United States. They are most vulnerable to fraud, burglary, phone solicitation, and various other criminal activities, and must be vigilant when it comes preventing crime and violence from happening to them. As a resolution to this problem and to alleviate any fears, senior citizens should adopt life-saving practices. (pg.83)

**SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS:** Service organizations can have a significant effect on reducing violence by offering quality programs that engage youth and adults positively, as well as provide alternatives to violence. They can also provide activities which discourage other types of destructive behavior. (pg. 85)

**STREET LEVEL OUTREACH:** Anyone who works at the street level helps reduce violence by providing outreach, activities and services. (pg.87)

**TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION:** Each year approximately one in teens report being the victim of verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual violence. Abusive relationships can impact adolescent development, and teens who experience dating violence may suffer long-term negative behavior and health consequences. Emotional abuse through digital technology, including frequent text messaging, and the circulation of embarrassing messages or photographs without consent can be devastating to young teens. It is imperative that we educate teens about dating violence through primary prevention information. Teachers, parents, and community leaders must be pro-active and understand the challenges today's adolescents face. Students must be empowered through leadership development so they can work with adults in their schools, community and government to eliminate dating violence in all its forms. (pg. 89)

**VIOLENCE AGAINST THE LGBTQAI COMMUNITY:** Violence against people who consider themselves to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning or Queer, Asexual, Intersexual (LGBTQAI) is a complex and often quite controversial issue. Yet this is also a human rights and human dignity issue that must be addressed. This is also a social justice issue, a public health issue, a safety issue, an economic issue, a mental health issue as well an issue of societal mores, cultural values, and deeply ingrained prejudices. There are several forms of violence against people who consider themselves to be part of the LGBTQAI Community, including the following: Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence; Hate Crimes; Violence from law enforcement and the justice system; Violence against LGBTQAI Youth: Bullying and other forms. In order to prevent violence in the community, we must work to end inequality and homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, etc. By ending inequality, we create spaces where LGBTQAI people are seen as equal and reduce the amount of violence they experience, including sexual violence. (pg. 92)

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS:** Women and girls all around the world have been marginalized, belittled, abused, deprived and underestimated all because of their gender. Today in the United States, this gender prejudice plays out in myriad forms, not the least of which is women earning on average 70% of what their male counterparts make for the same work. Other forms of gender discrimination take place in more violent ways such as physical and emotional abuse, rape, trafficking and female genital mutilation. Society will not flourish until women and girls thrive by means of equal treatment. (pg. 99)

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION:** Violence in the workplace has received considerable attention in the popular press and among safety and health professionals. Negative behavior encompasses untrustworthy behavior, habitual lying, a chronic bad attitude, verbal threats, history of violence, sexual harassment, domestic disputes which spill into the workplace, and many more unsolicited actions. Moreover, there are different viewpoints to what constitutes a problem in the workplace, and the approach to it may vary when it comes to men and women. However, such differences in perception seem marginal when actual violence occurs. Every employee wants to feel safe, and should, within his or her daily work environment. (pg. 106)

**YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION:** Youth are encouraged to be the change they want to see in the world. They must become leaders themselves in changing the culture of violence, particularly because they are far too often the *victims* of violence. However, it is the responsibility of the *entire* community to nurture, support, educate our youth, and become personally involved in every aspect of their lives. We must also be the change we want to see in our communities and in the world. (pg. 108)

**ZERO TOLERANCE:** The Coalition Against Violence (CAV) document has attempted to provide every part of society with a role to play in impacting violence. The implementation and mobilization of these strategies *will* make a difference in lessening the violence we all abhor. What we seek, however, is a *society-wide* commitment to *zero tolerance* for violence. Over the years the impact of violence throughout this nation has been far too wide and far too deep. In many of our communities of color the frequent reporting of death by violence has become almost expected and commonplace. That viewpoint is unacceptable. It is our stand that *everyone* must have a personal and ongoing commitment to zero tolerance. (pg. 114)

## STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

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### Anti-Bullying Strategies

Bullying has become a serious problem in our schools, as evidenced in the statistics below. This behavior takes different forms, direct and indirect which can result in different types of bullying -- i.e., physical, psychological/emotional, verbal and cyber bullying. This type of aggression can be carried out by a group or an individual. The three important contributing factors in bullying incidents are that it occurs over time, is usually repeated and involves an imbalance of power and control. While more youth violence may occur on school grounds, strategies are needed to assure student safety no matter where it happens. Everyone can play a role in stopping bullying.

Why Anti-Bullying Strategies are necessary:

- More youth violence occurs on school grounds as opposed to on the way to school. (However, youth violence can happen anywhere).
- Every 7 minutes a child is bullied on the school playground and most of the time *no one* intervenes.
- 1 out of 4 kids are bullied. An American Justice Department school bullying statistics and cyber bullying statistics studies show that this month 1 out of every 4 kids will be abused by another youth.
- School bullying statistics surveys show that 77% of students are bullied mentally, verbally and physically. Cyber bullying statistics are rapidly approaching similar numbers.
- In a recent school bullying statistics study, 77% of the students said they had been bullied. And 14% of those who were bullied said they experienced severe (bad) reactions to the abuse. Many have tried to stop cyber bullying according to cyber bullying statistics.
- 1 out of 5 kids on a school bullying statistics and cyber bullying statistics study admit to being a bully, or doing some "Bullying."
- Each day 160,000 students miss school for fear of being bullied.
- A school bullying statistics reveals that 43% of students fear harassment in the bathroom at school.
- A school bullying statistics and cyber bullying statistics poll of teens ages 12-17 proved that they think violence increased at their schools.
- The same school bullying statistics and cyber bullying statistics poll also showed that 282,000 students are physically attacked in secondary schools each month.

Citation: <http://www.how-to-stop-bullying.com/bullyingstatistics.html>

**Therefore**, it is everyone's responsibility to address this issue: from the educational institutions, to the parents, to the children and youth, to the entire community.

### **Educational Institutions roles:**

- **Institute** Anti-Bullying Committees or Task Forces in each school, university and college.
- **Enforce** anti-bullying legislation, rules and regulations for each school, university and college.
- **Develop** school district-wide policy statements which clearly define and accurately describe how bullying incidents are to be handled.
- **Inform** students, parents and community members of the anti-bullying policies, programs, and initiatives designed to impact bullying
- **Send** a clear message that bullying is wrong and that it is not to be tolerated. However, understand the possibly negative ramifications of adopting any strict anti-bullying policy that is overly punitive -- i.e., "No Tolerance."
- **Consider** establishing both rewards and consequences to change the culture of the school, if bullying is prevalent. To promote a caring majority of students, consider utilizing a reward system for behavior that defends students who are victimized.
- **Decide** in advance the scale of consequences for bullying behavior and communicate these consequences to parents, as well as apply discipline evenhandedly and equitably to all students.
- **Use** a scale of disciplinary approaches for inappropriate behaviors that range from being onlookers, to being active bystanders, to the students who are actually engaging in bullying behaviors. Consequences should match the infraction.
- **Acknowledge** students' concerns about *any* type of conflict among students, and be especially mindful of allegations and incidences of bullying behavior. Understand that conflict is not the same as bullying. Conflict occurs between two parties of equal power. Bullying implies the existence of an imbalance of power.
- **Create** and provide educational materials, which give accurate information about bullying and its effects on both those who are bullied and those who are accused of bullying.
- **Request** that parents and students sign an anti-bullying agreement that encourages students not to bully and to report incidents of bullying.
- **Institute** learning sessions for all students in the school, not just for students assigned to prevention or pre-intervention groups.
- **Require** that students, who are repeatedly engaged in inappropriate behavior, attend intervention training and classes.
- **Support** victims of bullying and reporters of bullying by providing counseling or encouragement to the victims
- **Consider** instituting a process for investigating the reasons behind bullying incidents and provide a mechanism for mediation and/or resolution.
- **Develop** and implement a multi-tiered warning system for students accused of bullying, including parent-school conference meetings, before making an arbitrary decision to suspend a student without investigating the problem.
- **Conduct** a survey to learn about concerns and issues of the students as it relates to bullying.
- **Recognize** and reward schools in which bullying has been minimized and eliminated.
- **Provide** training for all school district professionals and student leaders/mentors to effectively deal with and eliminate bullying in the schools. This training could be offered to interested adults, family members and parent-school groups.
- **Request** principals of each school to select at least one school employee who has regular contact with and availability to students (and whom students feel they can trust) to confidentially mediate and/or facilitate effective conversation about the negative impact of bullying behaviors.

- **Adopt** anti-bullying strategies such as no-blame, common concerns, peer support and group/school-wide discussion circles.
- **Understand** that children accused of being bullies need just as much help as those being bullied, and that bullying behavior may be connected to personal or social problems.
- **Notify** parents or guardians immediately about any bullying incidents which involve their child or children.
- **Initiate** investigations of alleged bullying incidents in a timely manner (possibly within twenty-four (24) hours).
- **Encourage** kids to not take pleasure or satisfaction in bullying and/or to not see bullying as a sense of power. Instead encourage young people to see these qualities as being negative and unacceptable.
- **Look** at bullying as emotional abuse and treat it in the same way institutions work to end physical and sexual abuse.
- **Introduce** depression screening for eighth graders before they enter their freshman year that would provide them with solid emotional support systems.
- **Provide** free counseling in the schools, universities and colleges for students who are experiencing emotional disturbances which might be the result of bullying and/or the misuse and abuse of social media/social technology.
- **Educate** young people about their peers' sensitivity to being teased or taunted due to their weight, their general appearance, their sexual orientation, their race, their religion or any other such issue. Encourage tolerance, sensitivity and understanding.
- **Strive** to develop a culture of caring, helping, inclusion and positive communication among students. Isolated students are those who are most likely to be victimized by bullying.

#### **Parent/Family/Community/Organizations roles:**

- **Collaborate** with the school district to develop an anti-bullying campaign, which would include classes and/or opportunities, for all students to learn about bullying and its prevention within schools and communities.
- **Acknowledge** students' concerns about *any* type of student conflict, including bullying.
- **Understand** the differences between conflicts (arguments, single incidents of fighting, etc.) and bullying behavior. Know that conflict is not the same as bullying. Conflict occurs between two parties of equal power. Bullying implies an imbalance of power.
- **Report** any issues of bullying to the school principal, key administrator, and/or school officials, such as a guidance counselor.
- **Volunteer** during lunch and recess to help eliminate opportunities for students to bully; provide additional adults to monitor and assist students.
- **Encourage** parents and guardians to pay close attention to sudden and/or dramatic changes in their child's behavior. Look out for children who seem to have no friends at school, or 'happy' children who suddenly become withdrawn or pretend to be ill to avoid going to school.
- **Ensure** parental involvement in every facet of their children's lives; model non-violent attitudes and behaviors and teach children appropriate social and communication skills.
- **Teach** children to respect themselves and to respect others as well. Understand and practice the Golden Rule – *“Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.”*
- **Have** workshops for parents, caregivers, and people of all ages on the detrimental effects of bullying.
- **Investigate** and apply for grants which will enable schools, religious and social organizations help address the issues of bullying.

## Youth roles:

- **Practice** appropriate social skills and interactions toward peers.
- **Participate** in open lines of communication with parents, grandparents, family members, guardians, and teachers about any conflict with peers.
- **Report** any bullying interactions to parents, grandparents, and/or family members.
- **Know** that people who bully normally require a clique or gang, and that bullying others occurs most often when there is an audience to watch.
- **Decide** not to be part of the “crowd.”
- **Don’t** encourage bullying; violence is not the answer.
- **Learn** to respect yourself and to give respect to others. Remember and practice the Golden Rule – “Do unto others what you would have them do unto you.”
- **Strive** to develop a culture of caring, helping, inclusion and positive communication among students. Isolated students are those who are most likely to be victimized by bullying.
- **Continue** to talk about the issue of bullying with other people until bullying is conquered.
- **Stop bullying!**

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## The Arts Community

The power of art to move and transform human beings has been demonstrated throughout human history. Art has a double power in that it works on the creator and the beholder alike. Psychologists have long recognized the sublimating effect of art whereby unacceptably aggressive impulses are changed into socially acceptable forms. In the excitement of searching for chords on his guitar a young man is less likely to be out in the streets looking for trouble. So much human energy is employed in creating art – be it painting or sculpture or music or drama – that destructive behavior can be re-routed through a powerful communicative tool. Many local organizations are already developing artistic outreach programs to youth. The following suggestions supplement existing programs:

**Enlist** or develop a plan to enlist the aid and talents of the diverse arts organizations in the region to develop creative activities designed to attract youth and drawing them away from violence.

**Urge** youth groups to have outreach programs that provide classes in acting and theater production. Use schools, churches and/or community organization to house the classes and productions.

**Contact** youth interested in the arts, not only from high schools, but also through social service agencies catering to at-risk youth and/or publicize to a broad audience.

**Organize** playwriting competitions to showcase new talent with their final productions.

**Encourage** music students and other student- artists, at all academic levels, to mentor other younger aspiring musicians and artists.

**Sponsor** community collections of musical instruments. Encourage music stores to rent or sell instruments at reduced prices for students who could not otherwise afford them.

**Appeal** to established music/arts groups, such as local symphonies, performing arts institutions, colleges and universities, recording studios, foundations, and others to provide funding for art-outreach and teaching.

**Encourage** the dance community to actively pursue organizations, agencies, religious facilities, schools, and community centers to open their facilities for dance education and dance experiences.

**Appeal** to organizations with music production studios to make their facilities available to youth interested in music production and performance.

**Provide** educational opportunities to interested youth; offer scholarships to support their training.

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## Athletes: Professional and Students

Historically athletes have been in a unique position to influence society. Youth continue to look up to athletes at all levels – high school, college and professional – and they will mimic or imitate what they see them do, whether their behavior is positive or negative. Therefore, these athletes have the responsibility of being good role models. To further these goal athletes should:

:

- **Speak** articulately without using profanity.
- **Dress** appropriately for all occasions.
- **Act** politely and treat everyone they encounter with respect.
- **Utilize** their unique position to reach out and share positive messages with minority communities and beyond.
- **Complete** their own education and encourage others to do the same. Persons with high school diplomas and/or college degrees are less likely to be involved with anti-social or illegal behavior. Athletes should, therefore, exercise the discipline learned within their chosen sport, off the field, in their daily lives and in the community.
- **Take** responsibility for being aware of, and sensitive to, the issues in the community in which they are employed and live in during the season and perhaps off-season as well.
- **Participate** in community events when invited to do so and develop responsible connections to the community. Use the concept of team spirit to mobilize the community. It takes the efforts of *everyone*, including athletes, to heal the community. Team spirit, therefore, becomes community spirit.
- **Demonstrate** and share that athletes have to deal with the same kinds of issues and problems faced by many other people.

### Professional Athletes

Professional Athletes are in a unique position to gain access to people in power at a level not available to the average citizen. In addition to the above stated responsibilities, professional athletes have an extremely powerful opportunity to impact the violence in the communities where they play. Therefore, professional athletes should:

- **Support**, organizations that provide needed services for children living within the various communities with their time, talents and treasures.
- **Freely** donate their time for occasions throughout the year in the various communities to demonstrate their commitment to the cities from which they gain their livelihood. Such participation could enhance the financial success of many community events.

- **Consider** forming new foundations; holding major annual fundraising events to benefit charities of their own choosing; providing funds and other resources for smaller events such as school and/or community events; repairing recreational facilities; building new facilities, such as community or wellness centers; providing recreational equipment, uniforms, books for libraries; and so on. Professional athletes could also provide scholarships for youth or others from disadvantaged communities.
- **Partner** with the business and corporate community in carrying out the action points identified in the Coalition Against Violence 2012 anti-violence document and support the anti-violence initiatives of other organizations and agencies.

## Student Athletes

Student athletes must embrace the fact that they are often considered role models for their fellow students and the youth of the community that they represent. Because the community supports their team on the playing field, student athletes must return the gracious gift of support to the community and their school.

- **Take** the lead in the classroom. Be the example to other students for appropriate classroom behavior. Fundamentals include: being on time; sitting in the front of the class; sitting up straight (no slouching, side-ways and/or leaning on chairs).
- **Actively participate** in classroom discussion (do not make yourself feel inferior). When students see their leader on the playing field also participating in the class they will probably follow.
- **Be** respectful to the teacher; offer to aid the teacher in helping her to redirect other students that seem to get off task easily.
- **Volunteer** to pass out work or to be a group leader.
- **Consider** becoming involved in other activities besides sports. High Schools offer so many extra-curricular activities that athletes often avoid. Join some clubs and bring positive notoriety to them.
- **Stop bullying incidents** when witnessed. A majority of the time, bullies will listen to a fellow peer before they listen to an adult. If you know that either another student and/or group are being bullied sit at their table during lunch. Ask them to work on school work together. Make them part of your group and avoid making other students feel isolated.

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## **Black Business Community**

All sectors of the community are urged to support African American business and business development throughout the region. The goal should include the development, implementation and maintenance of community-based businesses and employment initiatives that will create and establish viable businesses and living wage career and employment opportunities in and around designated African American communities. This should include the establishment of Community Business Development Centers, community commercial corridors and industrial parks. Such support will result in stronger and more viable businesses, thereby leading to additional employment opportunities for both adults and youth and giving them a viable alternative to violence.

### **Individual Community Members should:**

- **Develop** the knowledge and skills to maximize their potential for becoming financially independent through continued learning and career exploration. Financial security and the creation of wealth strengthen the economic community while generating jobs and creating new career opportunities.
- **Support** businesses in their particular neighborhoods, as business is important to the viability of any community.
- **Respect** the rights of businesses by not loitering or engaging in suspicious or illegal activities in front of those businesses. Individuals should act in a manner that encourages the community to support businesses, including helping to create a family- friendly atmosphere.
- **Report** illegal or suspicious activities around stores and other to community businesses to policing organizations and/or law enforcement.
- **Realize** that the implementation of the above stated goals will lead to a more viable and healthy atmosphere in which African American businesses can flourish.

### **The Black Business Community should:**

- **Develop** a coordinated Community Business Development Network within the African American communities most impacted by violence.
- **Create** a Resident Employment Database initiative that identifies the talents, abilities, and capabilities of each community resident. Such a database would serve as a source of prospective employees for participating businesses. Voluntary support for, and contribution to, the database will increase the success of this initiative.
- **Seek** to employ the employable, and to encourage and train community residents who have been deemed “unemployable.” Access the above-referenced resident employment database for potential employees.

- **Create** and develop African American businesses that have the capacity to hire full-time workers and provide career training and benefit packages for their employees.
- **Utilize** youth workforce initiatives sponsored by agencies, schools, community and/or faith-based organizations that provide education, training, internships, apprenticeships, and/or employment. Continued support of these initiatives could also increase the reintegration of youth who have been expelled, who have dropped out or who have graduated from school without basic skills.
- **Build** and strengthen the relationships between businesses and community youth by providing mentoring, training, and employment.
- **Provide** partnering and mentoring opportunities for existing and emerging businesses owned by African Americans and other people of color. Existing successful businesses can provide these opportunities.
- **Advocate** for new and emerging, or current, African American businesses to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by professional business organizations such as the African American Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Minority and Women Business Enterprise community and any other such entities.
- **Encourage** established business organizations, such as the African American Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Minority and Women Business Enterprise community, to aggressively pursue working relationships with current, new, and emerging businesses in the African American community. Encourage such organizations to be accountable to the communities they serve.
- **Advertise** job openings and other opportunities in media used by the Black community.
- **Establish** training for every employee to nurture professionalism and professional behavior within their business surroundings. The establishment and enforcement of such professional behavior will lead to the creation of successful black businesses that will attract not only the African American community, but other communities as well.

#### **Local Government and Foundations should:**

- **Fund** programs providing business education, leadership training and work experience directed toward area student populations.
- **Provide** opportunities for African Americans and other people of color who wish to start their own businesses including start-up information, business plan development, and funding.
- **Demand** accountability for funds distributed to new and existing grant recipients, including reports of services provided and results, including job placements and the financial status of each business venture.
- **Develop** policies and legislation that will maintain communities and prevent disenfranchisement of voting blocs, thereby strengthening the participation of African American communities to reduce the level of frustration that leads to violence
- **Provide** safety support systems that will allow African American businesses to operate successfully in an atmosphere of peace and security.

- **Encourage** and strengthen youth workforce initiatives to allow increased placement of youth with African American owned businesses. Such support will allow Black businesses to expand and become more productive.

**Educational Institutions should:**

- **Provide** more opportunities for middle and high school students to learn about the business world through both classroom learning and structured work experiences. Such support will improve their economic opportunities and give them a viable alternative to violence.
- **Continue** the institutional role in economic development by addressing the region's professional and support workforce needs through the continual development of new and expanded curriculum and training programs targeted to needed skill sets. Provide technical assistance to businesses, facilitating entrepreneurial training and creating new companies through technology transfer.

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## The Business and Corporate Community

The Business and Corporate community has a strong interest in improving the quality of life for everyone in the region. High crime rates, inadequate educational and health care systems negatively affect the corporate community's ability to attract and retain talent. Business leaders have a responsibility to impact the violence by providing leadership and creating economic opportunities that will improve the conditions for those historically disadvantaged. Therefore, local businesses and corporations are encouraged to support positive change in these communities by taking any or all of the following steps:

- **Recognize** the value of mentoring and providing positive role models by recruiting corporate employees and leaders to develop and participate in mentoring programs for schools, agencies and community-based organizations.
- **Aggressively** seek, recruit, and retain African American and other minority applicants for all corporate levels with special emphasis on hiring individuals from the metropolitan region.
- **Encourage** African American and other minority employees to develop new skills that will prepare them for promotional opportunities. Identify minority employees who show potential for career advancement and provide greater exposure to opportunities for accelerating their growth. Develop and provide support systems that foster success, such as internal mentoring programs that partner successful employees with newly hired African American employees.
- **Utilize** more African American and minority employees to facilitate outreach efforts in the minority communities. This will provide positive exposure for the company *and* the employees while providing positive role models for African American youth.
- **Recruit** more African American and other minority managers and executives to serve on corporate boards. Encourage more executives, managers and other staff to volunteer for activities that support educational and violence prevention efforts, including sitting on boards of community-based organizations and agencies. Offer such opportunities to all staff, not just to persons of color.
- **Adopt** a school or school district in areas serving the economically disadvantaged. Assist teachers and counselors by providing mentors and/or classroom visitors who can expose students to career opportunities, as well as real life experiences. Establish reward programs that recognize students and teachers who demonstrate leadership and achievement for their work in the community and in the schools.
- **Invite** teachers, school administrators, and community members to be training partners in corporate diversity training programs.
- **Provide** leadership and skills development programs and seminars to community leaders by utilizing corporate internal training staff and/or encouraging their training vendors to volunteer their services.
- **Offer** scholarships, internships and apprenticeships as well as career exploration opportunities to economically disadvantaged students.
- **Publicize** and promote the outreach programs currently being offered so that they can serve as models for other organizations.

- **Provide** business opportunities for minority owned businesses. Research has confirmed that as minority businesses grow they are more likely to hire minorities; this facilitates economic development in their communities.
- **Educate** and communicate with neighborhood citizens and community groups on the benefits of supporting African American businesses and business development.
- **Make** a commitment to accept youth into training programs, summer employment (full-time as well as part-time). Develop and provide youth employment, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs for youth throughout the year.
- **Financially** support schools that serve economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and fund neighborhood public libraries so they can provide more and diverse resources.

### **The Role of the Business and Corporate Community in Restorative and Rehabilitative Justice:**

The corporate community is in a unique position to affect the future of the high number of African Americans and Hispanics who have been incarcerated in Allegheny County and throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Crimes of the past must not dictate the future. In this regard, such individuals must be given a chance to start their lives anew which can impact significantly the recidivism rate in this region.

### **Therefore, the Business and Corporate communities should:**

- **Train**, hire and provide long-term employment for persons who have served time. Local, county and state governments are strongly encouraged to provide incentives to corporations which hire such persons.
- **Lobby** the political structure and law enforcement to change the restrictive laws that currently inhibit employment, training, and educational opportunities for individuals with criminal histories.
- **Lobby** for laws that allow the records of non-violent criminals, including drug users, to be expunged, either after completion of some requirements or after a short time period following release (one to two years).
- **Create** an atmosphere of accepting those who are re-entering society and who need to feel a sense of welcome and self-worth. African American and minority-owned businesses in particular must take the lead.
- **Support** and sponsor organizations that can, and do, hire persons who have served time.
- **Provide** training and skills development programs to those with a history of incarceration.

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## Civic Engagement: The Role of the Citizen

**Civic participation is the foundation of Democracy.** True democracy *is* government *by* the people in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system. Civic education helps prepare people, especially the young, to carry out their roles as citizens and to help them understand that one's vote *does* matter. Therefore, to give all citizens the necessary tools to fully participate in the democratic process and to politically impact violence, we should challenge and hold accountable all elected officials, governmental bodies, and encourage social service agencies, schools, community groups *and* the family to do the following:

- **Create** an enlightened community through institutions that educate, motivate, organize, and mobilize citizens in the African American community to encourage *full participation* in a barrier-free democratic process.
- **Encourage** all citizens to participate in the struggle to eliminate barriers to civic participation that will in turn promote greater social and economic justice to enhance the quality of life for all residents.
- **Develop** educational programs, leadership training and coalitions that will strengthen and empower our communities to make voting and civic participation a cultural responsibility and tradition.
- **Institute** and expand curriculum at all grade levels to include lessons about democracy that include such topics as fundamentals of constitutional government, civil and human rights and equality before the law, free and fair elections, due process of law – which should be, and are, the pillars of democracy. Teach young people the true meaning of a *fully* democratic society.
- **Provide** formal and informal opportunities for discussion and action around civic and democratic education. Provide venues for civic engagement in schools, libraries, workplaces, civic organizations, unions, communities of faith, during campaigns and elections and through the mass media.
- **Join**, be active and support organizations that are working for social justice, community empowerment, economic empowerment and violence reduction.
- **Exercise** one's right to express one's political voice *at any time* by contacting elected officials, contacting the print and broadcast media, writing petitions and participating in other forms of active engagement to hold *all* elected officials *at all levels* of government, from the local up to the federal, accountable.
- **Make** a lifetime commitment to vote in *each and every* election to exercise one's rights as a citizen of this society. Be a willing participant at *every* level of the political process. Practice and also teach children, from an early age, to practice democratic values such as mutual respect, freedom of thought, commitment to diversity and social justice.



## Communities of Faith

Recognizing and valuing of the sacred breath within each human being is essential to building relationships that ultimately can reduce violence and increase respect and tolerance for oneself and others. Indeed, practicing spiritual disciplines can help people understand the meaning of the suffering and frustrations of others, channel their anger constructively, and reduce violence. Faith communities have an extremely important role to play in the transformation of communities and are, therefore, asked to do the following:

- **Reclaim** the spirit and culture of making communities of faith welcoming to *all* people and provide opportunities, through dialogue, prayer and service to eradicate the barriers that keep people and neighborhoods divided, Communities of faith can offer a safe haven for people impacted by the violence in our communities.
- **Restore** the rich tradition of African American spirituality and faith as a strong foundation for promoting values that reestablishes the dignity of people, reconstructs relationships, and reinstates mutual respect, trust, compassion and justice.
- **Provide** opportunities among faith-based leaders for candid, truthful and continuous dialogue on how the church and community can develop and institute solutions for reducing the violence in our communities.
- **Encourage** the various faith denominations to increase advocacy and action. Hold all branches of government accountable for implementing strategies that combat violence.
- **Organize** actions at government facilities to petition and pressure our elected officials to be more responsive to community concerns, needs, and aspirations. Where possible communities of faith should partner with community-based organizations and agencies which have initiated positive actions that impact the community.
- **Connect** faith communities with community activists and representatives of social service agencies, (utilizing agencies and groups such as those listed in the Great Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence Community Services Directory).
- **Initiate** partnerships with ministerial associations and agencies such as Christian Associates of Southwestern Pennsylvania, the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence and area community service programs and agencies to reduce crime and violence.
- **Avoid** duplication of efforts by finding the strengths of each church, agency or organization; support their mission and enhance their specialties. Yet, work together by sharing information and resources.

**Create** sustainable "Street Ministries" in high-risk areas of communities that provide creative, non-traditional, interactive and experiential approaches to reaching youth and

young adults. Gather youth of various faith communities and backgrounds to be in continual discussion concerning violence and faith.

- **Institute** a communication system to share emergency and other important information to mobilize the faith community quickly in the event of violent incidents such as homicides.
- **Consider** the possibility of creating “healing centers” that provide assistance to trauma victims, especially when trauma and/or community crises occur.
- **Give** support to families who have experienced trauma or loss due to violence and crime, letting them know that the faith community cares; assist them in attending court hearings, write letters of support; provide transportation, etc.
- **Build** community by establishing a shared treasury for community empowerment. The community must be the first “Mission Responsibility.” Tithe back to the community chest and give according to the size, strength, and portfolio of the organization and church.
- **Acknowledge** that unity of a communal mind is a model for action. Establish a unified mission and vision involving ministers who are committed, involved and visible in the community.
- **Open** and expand facilities to the community. Support the establishment of safe zone initiatives. Actively communicate the availability of programs for families and youth in the community.
- **Provide** support and facilities for youth with the goal of keeping youth in school and helping them achieve higher educational success. Establish study centers that would supplement the educational system, with topics such as African American history and civic leadership. With special emphasis on the African American community and its experiences, such centers also should encourage the creation of multicultural non-sectarian youth group activities.
- **Advocate** for youth and families at all levels of government for legislation, regulations and programs, which promote the health of the community.
- **Collaborate** (across geographic areas and faith groups) with street level workers, school personnel, city and county police departments, etc., to teach and practice peaceful conflict management and resolution.
- **Partner** with schools to conduct/teach anger management, mediation, conflict resolution, negotiation skills and for community rebuilding initiatives.
- **Seek** assistance from foundations and local and national faith organizations to obtain consulting services and leadership training to address violence in the community.
- **Initiate** forums and trainings within the religious community related to violence prevention and intervention that can be shared with and implemented within the community.

## Reaching out to the Youth and Young Adults:

- **Admit** to our children that we, as a community, have not had a stronger presence in providing nurturing, guidance, safety, and protection.
- **Seek** to reach youth and build their spirituality. Provide safe places for youth to explore their faith and learn ways to apply that faith to daily living. Interact with youth rather than “preach at” them.
- **Create and cultivate** relationships with youth who are “outside of the church” and create neighboring relationships throughout the community.
- **Form** prayer groups with youth to pray for peace and renounce violence.
- **Gather** youth of various faith communities and backgrounds to be in continual discussion concerning violence and faith. Encourage cross-community interactions and relationships between youth to build love, respect for self and others, and to provide opportunities for future interaction.
- **Develop** projects that engage youth in dialogue *and* in action.
- **Institute** a “youth outreach day” at least once per month in which communities of faith open their facilities to encourage their members to meet and interact with youth. Acknowledge the spiritual gifts of young people and their ability to lead.
- **Train** youth to be servant leaders within their communities from a faith perspective, to re-affirm the value of humanity.
- **Institute** and promote mentoring programs that provide direct one-on-one positive influences for all youth, especially males. The Church should see itself as “Extended Family” in mentoring relationships.
- **Support** mentoring programs for all youth, especially including those of incarcerated parents.
- **Provide** support and facilities for youth with the goal of keeping youth in school and helping them achieve higher educational success.
- **Talk** with youth about the negative effects of rap music and video games which advocate and promote violent behavior such as drug use, drug dealing, robbery, promiscuousness, prostitution, rape, torture and even murder. Help youth to disengage themselves from the psychological effects of violent images. Extend these conversations to parents, guardians, and members of support groups.
- **Lift** up youth and help them to create positive images of self and life through the arts such as poetry, music, dance, hip hop, spoken word, and videography.
- **Play** a key role with and for youth in redefining what is considered “cool.” Encourage, support and promote positive and healthy youth activities, some of which may be nontraditional sports such as gymnastics, fencing or jujitsu.

- **Create** opportunities for youth and others to participate in community beautification projects.

#### **Ways Communities of Faith Can Help Families:**

- **Provide** a venue for family life skills. “Knowledge is Power” to build on existing skill and strengths of families and communities.
- **Teach** marriage enhancement skills to help reduce the risks and stresses that all couples and families deal with on a daily basis. Knowledge and information can provide tools for individuals that would show them how to negotiate, resolve conflicts and to grow and work together to create loving and successful families.
- **Teach** parenting skills to help parents model and teach love and respect. Help couples and singles to find support and/or learn to support each other in working with their children and teens to keep them safe and to succeed as a family.
- **Give** teens and young adults the skills to develop healthy relationship and conflict resolution skills.
- **Help** individuals and families most likely to be involved with crime and violence to educate themselves in existing strategies and opportunities to reduce violence and make communities safe. Encourage them, as well, to take advantage of opportunities to pursue education and jobs.
- **Respect** and encourage Elders to take an active and visible role in their communities. Elders in the church and the community are essential role models for family members. They are also valuable resources of wisdom, knowledge, information, life experience, talent and skills any many areas. Communities of Faith can provide a platform for giving and receiving honor and visibility of our Elders.
- **Consider** establishing safe-havens for youth and families where they can discuss issues they may be facing and receive culturally relevant treatment or find solutions for the causes that can lead to violence.

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## Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of abuse in a relationship that is characterized by physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial control. Domestic violence is a widespread issue, affecting 1 in 4 women during their lifetime. When abuse occurs in a relationship, there is an impact on the community as a whole. Working together, we can help victims to safety and decrease the prevalence of domestic violence in all communities.

### Role of Employers:

Ninety-four percent of corporate security directors report domestic violence as being a problem in their companies. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the annual cost of lost productivity due to domestic violence equals \$727.8 million, with more than 7.9 million paid workdays lost each year. There are several ways that employers can play a key role in stopping domestic violence:

- **Create** a company policy to address domestic violence.
- **Establish** a domestic violence task force, composed of both managers and employees, to regularly review policies to ensure that they are up to date with current laws.
- **Invite** your local domestic violence agency in to train staff members and to provide assistance in creating a safer workplace.
- **Know** the signs of an abusive relationship in your employees.

### Role of School Districts:

Forty percent of teens between the ages of 14 and 17 report knowing someone their age that has been physically abused by a dating partner. Academic performance is greatly impacted when a teen is experiencing dating violence. In the following ways schools can take an active role in preventing abuse among students, thereby increasing the safety of the entire school system:

- **Model** respectful behavior to students.
- **Create** a school wide policy to define dating violence and to outline consequences and resources for students affected by this issue.
- **Train** Student Assistance Programs on a referral system for teen victims.
- **Give** students a voice on dating violence – help them to create awareness projects.
- **Implement** school-based “stay away” agreements which would outline specific behaviors that the alleged perpetrators must avoid. Behaviors may include talking to the victim, following the victim in the hallway, or harassing the victim in any way. This agreement may also include changing the schedule of the alleged perpetrator.
- **Hold** educational nights for parents on how to recognize the warning signs that teens may be in abusive relationships.
- **Offer** awareness lessons in school as a routine part of the curriculum.

### Role of Family and Friends:

With statistics related to domestic violence as high as they are, it is very likely that you will know someone involved in an abusive relationship. Friends and family are often at a loss of what to

do to help their loved ones, but they can often be the people in a victim's life that have the greatest impact.

- **Affirm** that you are concerned about him or her. Too often, people believe that domestic violence is “none of my business” and this can prolong an abusive relationship.
- **Be supportive.** Avoid telling someone to “just leave” an abusive partner. Instead, tell them that they do not deserve to be abused, no matter what. The reasons why someone may stay in an abusive relationship are varied and complex. It can sometimes take several attempts at leaving before someone ends the relationship for good.
- **Encourage** your loved one to get in contact with a domestic violence counselor to create a safety plan.
- **Listen;** listen; listen!

#### **Role of the Community:**

- **Learn** the facts about domestic violence.
- **Be familiar** with your local domestic violence agency. Volunteer your time or organize a fundraising campaign. Cell phone drives are usually an effective way of raising money for domestic violence shelters. Find your local domestic violence agency through the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org).
- **Break** the silence! Talking about domestic violence lets others know this is a serious issue and one that you will not tolerate in your community.

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## Education: Primary and Secondary

Education is the foundation for financial success and responsible citizenship. Historically, the lack of education has led to the absence of hope, wasted lives, violence, incarceration, and even death. The entire educational system, from pre-school to university, must be held accountable to the community. It must empower students to live creative, effective and contributing lives. We therefore challenge the education community from Kindergarten through Grade 12 to do the following:

- **Increase** efforts to assure African American students achieve educational success within all learning environments at *all* levels.
- **Increase** family participation and support for school districts' Student Assistance Programs (S.A.P.). Families should be encouraged to have input into the school's efforts to maintain S.A.P. funds.
- **Be accountable** for educating all students. Work with community advisory boards and student advisory boards to identify unsound educational practices and develop curriculum changes that will improve outcomes for African American children.
- **Commit** to develop and implement an expanded black history curriculum that establishes links to the past and that makes connections with the present, regardless of the racial mix in the school. Ensure that this curriculum will be taught throughout the year, not just during Black History Month. Make an ongoing commitment to include information that reflects the life achievements and struggles of people of color, both past and present, who can serve as positive role models for all youth. Provide appropriate library resources to support the curriculum.
- **Incorporate** classes that teach the values, cultural principles and belief systems of African, African American and other cultures. Utilize them as a tool to empower students, their families and the community to heal from the violence that prevails today. Investigate local, national, and international approaches.
- **Institute** and expand curriculum at all grade levels to include lessons about democracy that include such topics as fundamentals of constitutional government, civil and human rights and equality before the law, free and fair elections, due process of law – which should be, and are, the pillars of democracy. Teach young people the true meaning of a *fully* democratic society.
- **Review** current textbooks and resources, replacing them with those that provide a multicultural approach, and develop a curriculum that addresses the needs of African American students.
- **Include** courses that assist the student in becoming competent with technology. It is not enough to "teach to the test" in order to meet minimum educational requirements.

- **Require** students to participate in community service opportunities as a requisite to high school graduation. Service provides opportunities to learn important life skills and explore potential career options.
- **Require** guidance counselors to provide individualized career counseling and track the student's progress toward meeting educational goals.
- **Require** parents, administrators, guidance counselors and teachers to review the student's progress toward meeting educational goals on a monthly basis.
- **Ensure** that community-based organizations have a thorough knowledge of graduation requirements so that they can offer an action plan to parents and students for completing graduation requirements from high school. This resource should be available in the community for all school age youth to assist them in furthering their post high school education.
- **Provide** information regarding financial assistance for students wishing to obtain further education and training after high school.
- **Encourage** students planning to attend college after graduation to take college courses while still in high school. These courses should be affordable and scholarship discounts should be offered to students with strong grade point averages (GPA).
- **Hire** school principals and other administrators who set high achievement standards for their staff and for the students who exhibit abilities to inspire -- not just those who technically meet the bottom-line requirements.
- **Hire** more teachers throughout all grade levels, who reflect the diverse cultures and races of the community, particularly, more African American male teachers. Increase the number of people of color in managerial and administrative positions.
- **Encourage** teachers' unions to do more to recruit and provide a supportive work environment for African American teachers.
- **Provide** effective cultural sensitivity training to all teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff.
- **Open** school buildings for community use during non-school hours.
- **Advocate** for meaningful parental, family, and caregiver involvement by providing opportunities for *everyone* to get involved, including working parents and caregivers. Implement programming to encourage parents to support parent/ teacher/student organizations.
- **Encourage** more organizations and agencies to sponsor mentoring programs and provide in-school facilities for them. Expand existing in-school programs that successfully serve youth.
- **Invite** social service providers, including mental health professionals, to speak to teachers, parents and the community on various issues that have an impact on students' learning and development.

- **Ensure** that all school activities, including career days, talent shows, and clubs, reflect the diversity of the community.
- **Provide** separate meeting space for speak-out sessions, lectures and assemblies related to issues addressed by the Coalition Against Violence in this document.
- **Be** more responsive to community outcries concerning expelling and suspending African American children for trivial and unnecessary reasons. Examine the negative effect oppressive school policies have on student morale and mental well-being. Such oppressive policies undermine learning and provide opportunities for other negative behaviors.
- **Examine** the fairness and effectiveness of the suspension/expulsion policy. Discipline measures should be corrective, yet supportive, to help students without having to disrupt their education.
- **Advocate** for redefining discipline as a movement away from interpreting misbehaviors or wrongdoings as acts of defiance or opposition to authority. Disruptive behavior may simply be a declaration of frustration, rather than defiance to the school system.
- **Decrease** punishment inequities across race, gender and socio-economic lines. Practice more sincere and effective ways to decrease suspension or expulsion rates which disproportionately affect African American students.
- **Increase** utilization of diverse cultural-values models, which can be incorporated with the current school's discipline processes. Provide training and/or additional training for teachers on how to handle disruptive students. Also, incorporate social-emotional learning programs that teach students how to manage their own emotions and behaviors throughout their school experience.
- **Make** better effort to inform and educate students and families about the school system's expectations for acceptable behavior. Provide public awareness announcements in area newspapers and other media, or post policies on school websites.
- **Provide** parents and the community with information about appropriate corrective services (whether school- or court-ordered) that are not punitive. Such service must be meaningful and relevant for the purpose of challenging students to understand their responsibility to school and to society.
- **Re-examine** the truancy policies currently in place with regards to African American girls and boys. Give parents assistance in keeping students in school and decrease truancy through more effective case management.
- **Utilize** families, concerned community members, and business owners to assist in identifying students who are not in school.
- **Ensure** that school staff persons make every effort to contact parents and caregivers when students have been designated absent by the beginning of classes, for the protection of all students.
- **Require** parents and other caregivers, in the interest of children's safety, to provide the schools with working phone numbers.

- **Make** schools and areas surrounding school safe zones, specifically with regard to drugs, gangs, and violence. This may include enforcing existing policies around these issues, and/or creating new ones.
- **Identify** and implement age and grade appropriate methodologies that address issues of drugs and alcohol and their impact on education, as well as violence in the community.
- **Utilize** peer education programs to address drug and alcohol abuse and factors which can lead to violent behavior.
- **Welcome** parent-community-teacher involvement in improving employment prospects and developing training programs.
- **Disseminate** resource lists that offer youth information about career paths, existing youth employment programs, apprenticeship programs, and training.
- **Provide** information to parents and caregivers so they know what counseling and training programs are available to their families.

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## Education: Colleges and Universities

Universities and colleges need to take advantage of the opportunities related to the multicultural diversity of its students by including courses that reflect that diversity. Colleges and universities should be at the forefront of this movement because of their unique position to educate young people from *all* backgrounds. Responsibility for the implementation of this initiative must come from the top. Therefore, colleges and universities should:

- **Develop** early admissions projects that identify students in their junior year of high school and encourage them to take introductory or remedial courses that lead to guaranteed admission to a college or university.
- **Develop** mentoring programs that pair inner-city youth with faculty and administrative staff who will mentor the youth, at least through the crucial first year of college. The mentors must help the students realize that they too have value.
- **Provide** summer programs that allow youth the opportunity to visit a college so that they become familiar with college life. Require content in freshman level core courses that gives students an understanding of the nature of violence in America, and their ability to impact necessary and positive change.
- **Collaborate** with high schools to develop and expand courses for students to complete college courses while still in high school, or to accelerate completion of education that leads to a career.
- **Provide** and expand scholarship programs for needy students.
- **Develop** and implement programming aimed at strengthening academically challenged students in order to increase their level of success and rate of graduation.
- **Provide** additional support for such students to help raise literacy, increase comprehension, and develop critical thinking skills, all of which are important for academic success.
- **Support** student organizations that provide mentoring, tutoring, and other services designed to increase the academic achievement of at-risk youth.
- **Require** academic experiences including courses that cultivate awareness and respect for people of diverse cultures. Make certain that the contributions of African Americans and other people of color are included throughout the curricula offered in colleges and universities. Require that all students take a comparative history course that includes the contributions of people of color.
- **Establish** and/or expand consortiums of local college and university departments and schools of social work, mental health, minority health, psychology, child care, drug and alcohol, child development, child and family studies to provide experts to counsel, mentor and provide recovery programs for individual and family victims of violence.

- **Increase** the number of internships and co-op education placements for college students with community organizations and church social action programs that provide services to victims of violence.
- **Provide** scholarships for heads of households and children of those families who have a history of committing or being victims of violence to break generational cycles.
- **Sponsor** after school programs and conduct summer camps/retreats for children who have been victims of violence or who come from families experiencing violence. Discuss topics such as how to handle grief, how *not* to be a victim, and how to resolve conflict.
- **Conduct** parent workshops on topics such as the grieving process; how not to transmit violence to their children; and the recognition of the potentials for violence for parents who have either been victims of violence or who themselves have lost children to violence.
- **Provide** free access to college and university plays, concerts, and sporting events, as well as to facilities with basketball, tennis courts and swimming pools for members of the community who have experienced violence.
- **Expand** opportunities for college instruction to those presently incarcerated for committing acts of violence and provide pathways for degrees and employment upon their release to create new life opportunities.
- **Build** relationships with communities by developing collaborative efforts and leadership programs; by establishing service learning programs that provide students and faculty the opportunity to build meaningful community relationships; and by providing learning opportunities in local neighborhoods for problem solving, personal growth and leadership development.
- **Utilize** and strengthen resources for higher education institutions to provide periodic forums for government and community leaders to engage in open and candid discussion about the findings of any research that impact communities plagued by violence. Target outcomes would be the development of specific community action plans with identified strategies, tactics, and goals.
- **Utilize** peer mentoring and professional support to address abuse of alcohol and other drugs.
- **Continue** the institutional role in economic development by addressing the region's workforce needs through the development of new curriculum and training programs targeted to needed skills; by providing technical assistance to businesses; by facilitating entrepreneurial training; and by creating new companies through technology transfer.
- **Actively solicit** significant participation by MBE/WBE (Minority and Women's Business Enterprises) for both construction and goods and services contractual opportunities. Effective monitoring policies and procedures must be in place to guarantee implementation. Universities and colleges should be vigilant in their efforts to ensure that African American men are included in the process.

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## Financial and Economic Violence

All violence is not committed with a gun. Violence was used and is still being used to prevent Blacks from fully participating in the economic system of the United States. Often it is government and institutional policies that often kill just as effectively as a nine-millimeter semiautomatic. Policies and practices that kill dreams are violent. Policies that kill hopes and aspirations are violent. Policies that allow neighborhoods to die are violent. Therefore, we believe that economic and financial violence is unethical, immoral, unjustified and that it must be stopped and eradicated from our communities:

- **Stop** predatory lending practices that charge minorities more than whites for loans.
- **End** practices employed by payday lenders and check-cashing businesses that charge 400% interest on short term loans.
- **Prevent** mortgage companies and banks from making loans to people who clearly cannot afford them and then foreclose on the loans, which cause homelessness.
- **Prevent** real estate companies from denying Blacks the opportunity to gain appreciation and increased value on their home by steering them away from communities where their homes will appreciate in value.
- **Hold** accountable government bodies and financial institutions who contribute to the downward social and economic spiral of struggling communities by refusing to make necessary investments in minority communities. Such practices often lead to despair and violent anti-social behavior.
- **End** job discrimination that results in Blacks bearing a disproportionate share of unemployment.
- **Close** the large achievement gap in education that makes finding gainful employment almost impossible for Black youth and young adults. This often leads to violent gang and other criminal activities.

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## Financial Literacy and Financial Management

Careful financial management brings peace and stability to families and communities. The majority of divorces can be traced to quarrels and accusations over money. Some professional counselors indicate that four out of five families are burdened with serious money problems. One wise man said, “It is not the amount of money an individual earns that brings peace of mind as much as it is having control of his money. Money can be an obedient servant, but a harsh taskmaster.”

Proper money management and living within one’s means are essential to live abundantly and happily in today’s world. Teaching children by example and by precept to work and to manage their income gives them confidence in their abilities, occupies their time in productive ways, builds habits that will lead to a productive life, protects them from the lure of expensive and unneeded purchases, and helps them to put money in proper perspective. Therefore, parents, families and individuals should:

- **Live** within their means. Learn and teach self-discipline and self-restraint. There is a difference between needs and wants. We live in a “me” oriented, materialistic society. Advertisements entice us with how easy it is to get credit and buy on time. They never say how long and hard it is to pay the money back, particularly with the exorbitant interest rates added on by credit card companies and other lending institutions
- **Avoid** debt and the resulting finance charges. Spending less money than we make is essential to financial security. While debt is most often necessary to buy a home, pay for an education, or meet other vital needs, it is best to avoid debt for purchases of clothing, electronics and other consumer goods. Instead, save the money before making the purchase.
- **Pay off** debt as quickly as possible.
- **Use** a budget. Keep a record of your expenditures. Use this information to establish a family budget. Plan how much you will give as church donations, how much you will save, and what you will spend for food, housing, utilities, transportation, clothing, insurance, and so on. Discipline yourself to live within your budget plan.
- **Build** a store of food goods and family needs to meet emergencies. Start by building a week’s supply of canned and packaged foods which your family regularly eats. Take advantage of items on sale, utilize coupons and bulk purchases for future needs. Then increase your supply gradually to provide for up to three months. Rotate your supply. If unemployment or emergencies hit, the family will be able to eat without worry.
- **Build** a financial reserve. Save and invest a specific percentage of your income. Set a goal to build enough in savings to cover at least three months of essential family obligations. Then think about adding to that amount to use toward a home, education, emergency purchases and retirement. Save for the holidays to avoid getting into debt.
- **Make** education a continuing process. Complete as much education as possible. Then continue training so that skills stay sharp and up to date. Acquire some skill or ability that

could be used to avoid prolonged unemployment. Learn to do basic home and auto repairs.

- **Purchase** appropriate insurance to protect against unforeseen disasters. Consider medical, automobile, life, and homeowners' or renters' insurance. Costs associated with illness, accident, or death can burden families financially for many years.
- **Avoid** get-rich-quick schemes. Gambling, including the lottery, make far more people poor than rich. Wherever there is the promise of tremendous return there is tremendous risk.
- **File** honest and timely tax returns.
- **Be** honest in all financial dealings. Spouses and partners should work together in a spirit of openness and unity. Honesty with employers, customers, suppliers, and the government also lead to well-being and peace of mind.
- **Teach** family members the principles of financial management. Involve them in creating a budget and setting family financial goals. Teach the principles of hard work, frugality, and saving. Stress the importance of obtaining as much education as possible.

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## Foundations/Charitable Trusts

Foundations have an important role to play in reducing violence because of their ability to foster initiatives which are holistic, comprehensive, systematic, evidence-based *and* empowering. They can recommend resources and guide the process when it comes to determining solutions for ending the violence plaguing our communities. Furthermore, foundations can play an important role by making innovative and non-traditional grants that may have a profound impact within the African American community. Therefore, foundations and charitable trusts are strongly encouraged to do the following:

- **Convene** a community collaboration that would generate a detailed, strategic and tactical plan to address the issue of violence; one that would engage and empower a wide spectrum of concerned citizens, organizations, and community leaders to reach those who are impacted by violence. Support key elements of the plan once it is in place.
- **Fund** this strategic and tactical planning exercise, which might include finding model programs implemented across the country. Make site visits to neighborhood organizations that are currently implementing solutions to assess program success.
- **Fund** service organizations that develop and offer needed services identified through this planning process, including currently unfunded and under-funded services. Redefine the criteria for their success rate to reflect more than the “numbers.”
- **Place** members of the community with life experience relevant to the issue of violence on their boards, key commissions, and committees.
- **Provide** funding for youth employment, training, and apprenticeship programs.
- **Embrace** youth violence and youth education as major initiatives. Identify and fund effective programs that provide solutions.
- **Monitor** donations made to the community to determine effectiveness and real needs, in order to justify future funding. The evaluation process must include reports from the people who are the recipients of the services provided by the funding source. Each foundation and charitable trust should identify a process by which those served by such programs can have an opportunity to assess such programming.
- **Fund** grass roots organizing efforts, community centers, and neighborhood revitalization programs.
- **Develop** programs and give funding to street workers and community outreach programs so they can implement the agendas set forth above.
- **Report** investments in the African American community annually to the wider community. Publicize a list of the organizations that have applied for and have received foundation monies.



## **GANGS / VIOLENT STREET GROUPS**

In this document we have chosen to use the words 'gangs' and 'violent street groups' interchangeably as we are concerned about violence in all of its forms and manifestations. Furthermore, we also recognize that not all (or most) street violence is perpetrated by organized gangs.

It has been widely acknowledged that Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and many cities across the nation, experienced increased gang activity in the early 1990's. With a tripling of the homicide rate in 1994 in Pittsburgh a series of events occurred that resulted in a marked de-escalation of violent gang activity and a lull in overt gang violence. The most significant of these events was a federally initiated strike to target the most violent of the evolving gangs and their leaders with direct interdiction. Nationally, as the millennium closed, youth violence and gang activity was reduced with the use of various intervention strategies. Even though overt gang violence of the '90's had diminished substantially, since that time there has been a rise in drug trafficking offenses, and its subsequent violence turned away from actual gang activity to criminal enterprise pursuits and apparent 'turf' or territorial disputes.

Moreover, in recent years, there has been an increase in gun violence and homicides in predominately poor neighborhoods in the Pittsburgh region. With the escalating killings of African American males it is clear that gang and violent street group activity is on the resurgence. Therefore, local government and law enforcement agencies have initiated intensive interdiction efforts in attempts to curtail such activities. There may be similar trends in other cities across the nation.

In Pittsburgh "gangs" consist of groups of peers, neighbors and/or classmates that hang around together and sometimes engage in illegal enterprises (drug selling, "petty" thievery, etc.). They are not imported from other cities or states, which may have occurred in the past, although there are those that have migrated to the area for other reasons. Their activity is known to community and family members and sometimes is implicitly encouraged. Gang or group members typically live by a street code which discourages reporting criminal activity or engagement with law enforcement. That code also encourages the use of firearms to settle disputes. However, only a relatively small number of those are engaged in serious violent crime.

The majority of gangs operating in the Pittsburgh area are broken up into locations, even coming down to specific streets. Since the locations are so small police often do not know which group is responsible and may simply lump them together. In 2009 the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police estimated that there was a total of 41 gangs with approximately 875 gang members operating in Pittsburgh.

### **The Impact of Gangs and Violent Street Groups**

- Gangs with access to guns play a significant role in violent crime in many poor communities across our nation.
- Violent gang activity has an increasingly negative impact on the learning environment of students in the affected communities; i.e. excessive tardiness, chronic absenteeism, suspensions and expulsions.

- Many communities are disproportionately impacted by poverty and social disorganization that places young people at greater risk for gang involvement, which in turn results in ongoing criminal activity.
- Although some resources and programs are available in many of the affected neighborhoods to address the issue of gangs and their impact, there is often a lack of coordinated resources that target and enroll violent, gang involved individuals.
- Family problems significantly impact youth in the neighborhoods harboring gang activity and foster gang membership.
- Gang-involved youth are impacted by poverty, unemployment, limited educational achievement, and a lack of positive activities and positive influences and role models. These same factors often keep young African American and minority males trapped in the gang lifestyle into their early twenties.

#### Gang Legislation Highlights Reported in 2011 by the National Gang Center

- *Of the 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.), all but Vermont have enacted some form of legislation relating to gangs or gang-related activity.*
- *Twenty-two have passed gang prevention laws.*
- *More than half the states have laws that provide for enhanced penalties for gang-related criminal acts.*
- *Forty-one states (41) and DC have legislation that defines “gang.”*
- *More than half of the states’ legislatures have laws against graffiti.*
- *Twenty-four (24) states define “gang crime/activity.”*
- *Twenty-three (23) states have legislation on gangs and schools.*
- *Twenty percent (20%) of the states have enacted laws that deal with gang-related databases.*

#### **Strategies to Impact Gang/ Street Group Violence**

- **Be open** to the possibility that gangs and gang-related activity actually exists. Acknowledge that such gangs and gang-related/violent street group activities have most likely not really been eliminated, but have been reduced to happening on a smaller scale (i.e. neighborhoods or streets, or the level of intensity).
- **Maintain** regular identification of gangs/groups and their members as a step towards understanding and redirection of gang members.
- **Initiate** collaborations among community, faith-based leaders, parents, students, law enforcement and political leadership, to collectively assess the depths of a region’s gang problem and to determine the realities of what may exist.
- **Deploy** faith-based and community groups, and dedicated street organizations (volunteer as well as professional) to interact with gangs and their members. Such entities can play a very significant role in the redirection of gang members towards more productive endeavors.
- **Help** the healthy growth of our children so that they become law abiding citizens. Encourage and teach the resolution of disputes without resorting to violence and gun play. Let them know that criminal activity is unproductive and unhealthy for the individual, the family, and the community.

- **Promote** messages that encourage the resolution of disputes without violence and gun play.
- **Educate** one's self and family members about the gang culture and learn the signs of gang membership. Don't be afraid to use your influence to correct these behaviors. Also, when signs appear, seek constructive intervention for impacted individuals.
- **Discourage** everyone from selling and consuming drugs or partaking in any illegal matters.
- **Encourage** youth and families to utilize their personal skills and strengths as steps toward a more legitimate, healthy and productive lifestyle.
- **Assist** affected youth in understanding how to constructively deal with grief, loss and disappointment without lashing out destructively or resorting to violence to cope with such issues.
- **Create** opportunities for youth and their families, who have overcome gang violence and who have endured life's obstacles, to become mentors, coaches and educators to others.
- **Mandate** all mentoring programs focused on addressing violent street groups to incorporate community-based and/or professional skills development components for community youth and adult mentors. Include physical, emotional, and social support components for mentees.
- **Encourage** all adults to stop fearing our youth. Invite people from the various neighborhoods to join street level workers to gain a better understanding of the problems youth face. This could include forming neighborhood block watches; holding community celebrations and picnics; engaging youth constructively; or simply by coming out to stand on one's porch. Don't be afraid to talk with our youth.
- **Involve** all segments of the community (including parents, youth, students, elders, etc.) in non-partisan, pro-active community organizing and strategy planning to end violence.
- **Foster** strong, positive, productive and mutual relationships between the community and every level of the school district, the business district, and law enforcement agencies (probation, parole etc.). This relationship must be based upon honesty, integrity and accountability.
- **Insist** that school administrators, local politicians, corporate investors or funders include a process for assessing and determining each community's unique dynamics pertaining to the potential for incidents of violence and crime (including the activities of gangs/violent street groups) in any plans for redistricting schools, government housing complexes and communities. Consider establishing a committee or task force with specific knowledge on these issues/concerns that will help to facilitate the assessment and decision-making process.
- **Pay** special attention to existing or potential neighborhood rivalries when closing schools and relocating students. When redistricting occurs there is a high potential to mix the gangs where, in some instances, there are alliances being created, mostly around drugs and money.

- **Insist** that appropriate regional officials develop and implement a comprehensive regional strategy to deter gang activity that includes coordinating activities among government agencies, local schools and universities, as well as corporations.

### Key Points When Working for Gang Peace “Anti-Gang”

**A**lways seek first to understand, then to be understood by others.  
**N**egotiate the Win.



**T**itle the Message.  
**I**ncorporate a holistic approach.

**G**ive support and provide the resources and funding to those who want to do this work.  
**A**nticipate push back from those who have not succeeded in this work.  
**N**ever give up on the youth and families that are victimized.  
**G**et out and be visible.

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## Government Policy and the Role of Government

Government Policy has an impact on every phase of our lives twenty-four hours a day. This is true whether we are in agreement with these policies or not. Government policy affects the food we eat, the water we drink, where we can park our cars, what medications we can take. Government policy determines which activities are legal or illegal and what the punishment is for said illegal activity. Government policies are set at all levels of government: federal, state and local.

Government policies should be written in such a way as to protect the rights of all citizens and to maintain an orderly society. However, some government policies have contributed to unequal treatment of some segments of our population and gave others unfair advantages. This includes severely restricting the rights and opportunities of some citizens to access life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Where necessary, current government policies need to be reformed in order to correct inequities, and future government policies should show no bias against any citizen or group of citizens.

### Government Policies should:

- **Protect** and **Preserve** the rights of all citizens
- **Guarantee** all citizens equal protection under the law
- **Ensure** all citizens have access to adequate health care.
- **Assure** that all children receive a quality education
- **Protect** citizens from unfair lending practices
- **Prevent** discrimination in employment practices
- **Counteract** discrimination in law enforcement
- **Defend** citizens from unfair housing practices
- **Provide** equal access to public services in all communities
- **Dispense** equal public safety in all neighborhoods



## The Role of Government

The purpose of government is to engage in activities to promote the “common good,” and to regulate and control social, political and economic spheres. Government entities must collaborate with local communities, businesses, and the philanthropic communities to impact violence. To alleviate the root causes of violence, and not merely control the violence, governmental entities should do the following:

- **Fund**, monitor and evaluate programs that meet the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of children, youth, families and adults in the community. These needs affect the human spirit -- acceptance, belonging to community, positive social grouping, as well as affirming both the self *and* the community
- **Support** “real” programs that emphasize keeping families safely together.
- **Pass**, implement, and enforce regulations and legislation that protect the civil rights of *all* people. Be open to participate in evaluations of program effectiveness to ensure that such programs meet the needs of affected individuals.
- **Create** and/or expand opportunities for input from youth, families and adults regarding policies aimed at reducing violence.
- **Produce** a political report card to assess accountability to responsibilities and campaign promises involving the reduction of violence. This report should be presented to the public periodically, preferably quarterly.
- **Provide** incentives, including tax incentives, for businesses participating in the economic revitalization of blighted areas; providing training/apprenticeship programs; creating employee wellness plans and programs; and developing employer sponsored childcare programs.
- **Commit** finances and provide sufficient staff for expanded and comprehensive youth employment and apprentice programs.
- **Provide** community education forums about political and governmental processes.
- **Fund** programs for those transitioning from the criminal justice system.
- **Fund** and support mentoring programs, particularly those which recruit more persons of color.
- **Fund** and promote entities which can provide wide publicity for positive examples of African American images and role models.
- **Legislate**, regulate, and provide funding for culturally relevant best practices that ensure a quality education for *all* children, especially African Americans, to prepare them to live in a global community.

- **Fund** educational programs from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 that ensure that students can function well in cultural, recreational, and social contexts.
- **Support** research initiatives that identify best practices in violence prevention. Give priority support to programs that integrate the best practices in violence prevention.
- **Ensure** that *all* people have access to comprehensive illness prevention and treatment health services regardless of financial status.
- **Form** partnerships with communities that include health care centers and health care clients to ensure that the physical, social, and emotional needs of everyone are being met in a culturally sensitive manner.
- **Fund** for early childhood stimulation to assist children in reaching developmental milestones.
- **Provide** wellness centers that include recreation *and* education.
- **Provide** health insurance coverage for both mental *and* physical health care services.

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## Gun Violence Reduction

A civil society is based on citizens and lawful authorities working cooperatively to reduce the violence in our neighborhoods. The irresponsible use of guns, especially handguns, is to blame for a great percentage of the violence and killing that occur in our neighborhoods. In addition, guns are frequently involved in accidental injuries. The following actions will help to reduce the prevalence of gun related accidental injuries and violence:

### Communities:

- **Ask** "Where did the gun come from?" after every shooting or crime.
- **Understand** exactly where guns are coming from and stop the supply of guns at the source.
- **Demand** that retail gun dealers be held accountable for illegal sales of firearms and failing to track or lock up their inventory.
- **Pass** child access prevention laws requiring individuals to properly lock up their firearms to prevent both child access and theft, the number one supplier of crime guns.
- **Hold** individual gun owners liable for improperly stored guns, those guns that are supposedly "lost" or "stolen", and otherwise illegally transferred guns.

### Families:

**There is NO SAFE WAY to tell for certain whether a gun is loaded or unloaded—especially for a child. Gun manufacturers do not provide loaded magazine indicators or child safety locks and until they do, children should not be anywhere close to handling guns.**

- **Ask** if there is a gun in the home where your child goes to play. If the answer is, "Yes," ask how the gun is stored.
- **Decide** where you want your child to be playing based on the presence of firearms.
- **Talk** with your pediatrician about the various risks of guns in the home for all ages of children.
- **Discuss** the difference between real gun violence and the glorified violence in video games and movies with children and other household members. Be a good role model of gun safety and responsible behavior.
- **Provide** age-appropriate gun safety instruction to all members of the household, **if you plan to purchase a gun for the home**. Emphasize that guns should be pointed only in a safe direction, that the trigger should not be touched, and confirm that it is not loaded. Teach respect for the destructive potential of guns.
- **Secure** all firearms in the home to reduce the risk of accidents, theft, or unauthorized use. Keep guns and ammunition locked away in separate locations when not in use. Store guns unloaded and use a gunlock. Any defensive gun kept to protect a family must be stored unloaded and secured with a gun lock against unauthorized or unlawful use.

- **Do not allow** children or visitors to have unsupervised access to guns stored in the family home. Plan carefully to avoid a tragedy.
- **Support** community and legislative efforts to reduce the presence of guns and the levels of gun violence in our neighborhoods. Contact elected officials in person, write letters, send emails, sign petitions, and attend community events to voice one's opinions. Vote for candidates who support efforts to stop irresponsible gun ownership to make our neighborhoods safer from gun violence.
- **Insist** that law enforcement track down the source of guns used in crimes in order to stop the flow of crime guns and illegal guns wreaking havoc in our neighborhoods, especially in those neighborhoods disproportionately affected by gun violence. Once said gun tracking data is collected, it shall be made available for analysis by city, county, and state lawmakers, policymakers, and academics.
- **Be proactive**; choose *not* to have guns in the home.

#### **Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice System:**

- **Investigate** thoroughly all gun-related incidents including reports of people brandishing guns and complaints of shots fired. This action should be applied in a fair and uniform fashion throughout all neighborhoods.
- **Prosecute** all gun-related crimes and seek maximum sentencing when guns are used in the commission of illegal activities
- **Charge** persons who have their misplaced -- "lost" or "stolen" or otherwise -- guns from the Pittsburgh police a "recovery" fee that can be used to fund a gun buyback program.
- **Prosecute** persons who fail to report their guns lost or stolen as required by Pittsburgh's 2009 ordinance.
- **Track** the source of guns, including assault weapons, used in crimes and prosecute the criminals who illegally manufacture, distribute, and/or sell these weapons. Gunsmiths who illegally modify firearms should also be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.
- **Publicize** the source of guns that are used in crimes (how many are stolen from individual owners, who are retail dealers who sell illegally, etc.).
- **Enforce** the ordinance such as the one passed in Pittsburgh, PA requiring individual owners to report when their guns have been "lost" or "stolen."
- **Educate** the community to the fact that it is a felony for a person to buy a gun for someone else ("straw purchase").
- **Revoke** the licenses of retail gun dealers who violate state requirements for licensing.

#### **Legislative Bodies:**

- **Pass** laws to reduce the unchecked flow of handguns into our communities including reasonable limits on the number of guns that can be purchased within a specified timeframe, requirements for reporting lost or stolen guns, and laws regarding safe

storage of guns and ammunition. Pass state and national laws, and provide funds for enforcement efforts, which restrict access to high capacity, paramilitary weapons.

- **Strengthen** the system and enforce the laws used to identify persons who are not legally authorized to purchase guns. Ensure that individuals who have lost the right to possess guns are entered into the national computerized system. Ban all gun sales or transfers that do not involve a background check through the system.
- **Redirect** a portion of the existing tax collected on gun and ammunition sales toward gun safety education programs targeting urban populations. Use these monies to fund advertising campaigns addressing responsible gun ownership and gun security initiatives.

#### **Pediatricians/Mental Health Providers:**

- **Educate** families about the increased risks to family members (i.e., a gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in unintentional shootings, domestic violence, suicide, etc. -- than it is to be used against intruders).
- **Educate** families about the fact that firearms are not regulated by any consumer product safety agency (unlike cribs, strollers, teddy bears etc.). As a result, consumers are completely unaware of any potential defects that may cause potentially lethal malfunctions such as safety locks that fail.

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## The Health Care System

The healthcare system has a unique and important role in reducing the physical, emotional, and social problems that contribute to violence in our communities. This role goes beyond providing direct care services. It includes responsibilities related to partnership with communities and health care clients to provide health-related education and employment opportunities. Members of the health care system are called upon to take the following actions to heal the wounds caused by violence and reduce the violence in our communities.

### Individual Health Care Providers:

- **Attend** to the entire person in a culturally sensitive manner. Ensure that clinical evaluations address the physical, psychological, and social factors that cause or result from violence.
- **Develop** a treatment plan collaboratively with the client, family supports, and other health care providers that take into account the client's unique needs, values, and resources.
- **Identify** and develop relationships with community service providers in order to refer victims of violence to appropriate community resources.
- **Partner** with community stakeholders to identify the social services that would be beneficial for addressing the root causes of violence in the community. Advocate for resources to provide these needed services and participate in efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions.
- **Provide** confidential and culturally sensitive screening for alcohol and/or substance abuse. Screen for signs of emotional abuse or violence during all episodes of care.

### Health Care Oriented Businesses:

- **Display** public service information in waiting areas regarding community agencies providing services to reduce violence including help-lines, shelters, and emergency services. Provide business cards or other pocket sized items with local agency contact information.
- **Develop** tracking systems to evaluate the adequacy of mental health and violence screening programs and the effectiveness of referrals. Seek feedback from clients regarding satisfaction with the care system and suggestions for improvements.
- **Support** efforts to provide access to comprehensive health care regardless of the individual's insurance coverage or ability to pay.
- **Partner** with community members to identify services desired by community members and to design culturally sensitive programs to address community needs.
- **Hire** health care professionals and support personnel that reflect the diversity of client populations.

### **Health Insurance Organizations and Agencies:**

- **Provide** the same level of coverage for mental and physical health care services.
- **Fund** mental health case management services to increase continuity of care and reduce non-compliance with the treatment plan.
- **Consult** with representatives of the communities impacted by violence when identifying service priorities and developing new services.

### **Government and Foundations:**

- **Provide** comprehensive mental health and social services to people transitioning from prison or institutional settings.
- **Locate** publicly funded mental health and wellness care services in the communities most impacted by violence.
- **Support** efforts to achieve universal access to comprehensive health care.

### **Health Care Educational Institutions:**

- **Increase** amount of needs-based financial assistance to people of color in order to achieve greater diversity in the health care professions and increase the number of culturally diverse role models.
- **Partner** with community health care/wellness providers to identify local needs for violence reduction education programs. Provide continuing education programs directed toward health care professionals as well as programs designed for the lay public.
- **Develop** relationships with health care providers and social service agencies in the communities impacted by violence in order to provide diverse opportunities for student clinical education and service learning activities.
- **Support** research focused on violence and the conditions that contribute to high levels of violence in the local community.
- **Encourage** faculty providing clinical services to individuals impacted by violence to partner with existing local community agencies and organizations to bring needed services into the communities affected by violence.

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## **Internet and Social Media/Social Networking/Cyber-bullying (Facebook, My Space, Twitter, etc.)**

The Internet has opened up a world of opportunities for everyone. Social Communication Technology/Social Networking (i.e. Facebook, My Space, Twitter, etc.) is a part of our everyday lives since we utilize this technology to remain in touch with others. Most of society utilizes Social Media in the way it is intended. However, when an individual terrorizes another with words and images via the internet, it harms the entire community. Therefore, safeguards must be put into place to keep all members of the community safe and free from violence (i.e. cyber-bullying). Everyone has the responsibility of preventing cyber-violence in the following ways:

### **Families:**

- **Review** account settings and terms and conditions with their children regarding the use of Social Media, including cell phones, and point out the consequences for misuse of the technology.
- **Monitor** children's use of the computer and their social media accounts. Also monitor passwords, phone numbers, etc.
- **Use** the parental controls for children under age 17. Parents should not allow their children to block parental access to their accounts.
- **Be aware** that cell phones with internet capabilities may also contribute to students' retrieval of inappropriate information.
- **Report** any misuse of the Social Communication Technology with the website creators of the offending websites.
- **Provide** police officers with information necessary for prosecuting those who misuse the social communication technology.
- **Communicate** with youth in a non-accusatory manner if they have a question about the use of social media.
- **Be present** and open to communication when youth are confronted with social media conflicts.
- **Set aside** time to have personal interaction with their children so that they will not isolate themselves with social media.
- **Adhere to** the age-requirement use of social media. (In 2010 the minimum age was 14).
- **Discuss** with your children the saying that "words can hurt as much as fists."
- **Attend** workshops for parents, caregivers, and people of all ages on how to safely navigate cyber technology, and how to use security and privacy settings that might already be in place.

### **Media, Education, Business and Corporate Communities:**

- **Inform** students that potential and future employers and universities and colleges might use the internet to search for personal information on possible new employees and/or candidates for work-study programs
- **Develop** norms for use of the social communication tools in the workplace and have all members on their sites agree to use of the norms.
- **Produce** literature to inform the communities of the benefits and consequences for using Social Communication Technology/Social Media.

- **Create** a mechanism for employees to report inappropriate use of the Social Communication Technology/Social Media.
- **Develop** “On-Line Safety Programs to present to parents, communities of faith, community and social organizations, pediatricians, and others.
- **Develop** marketing strategies for social media and anti-bullying initiatives for schools, university and colleges, social service and government agencies.
- **Invite** media to become partners in promoting internet safety. Encourage their ‘buy-in’ for advancing communication via posters, PSAs, billboard ads, newspapers, videos, You Tube, etc. Engage them in the dialogue as well.
- **Publicize** internet safety tips through religious and social service organizations, libraries, parent/school organizations, school assemblies, pediatrician and doctors’ offices, and media resources.
- **Create** a campaign for “Google Day” or “Go Google Yourself” throughout the community, or even nationally, to encourage people to research what information about themselves may be available on the Internet.  
**Ask** government agencies to broadcast and distribute internet safety information to their clients and constituencies.
- **Investigate** and apply for grants which will enable organizations to address the issues of the negative uses of social media, including cyber-bullying.
- **Prosecute** individuals that utilize social communication technology inappropriately.

#### **Youth and anyone else using social media:**

- **Become** cyber savvy. Understand the meaning of “Too Much Information” (TMI).
- **Practice** appropriate use of social media.
- **Participate** in open lines of communication with their parents about use of technology and the people with whom they communicate.
- **Report** to parents any inappropriate conduct that occurs on the social websites.
- **Be cautious** about who to accept as one’s friend and any friend requests on social media forums. Do not give out personal information to strangers or people who they do not trust.
- **Avoid** adding people to social media lists from friends whose mutual friends they may not recognize.
- **Investigate** a requester’s profile before accepting a request. Verify and confirm the person’s identity or ignore the friend request.
- **Choose** whether to make pictures either public or private to prevent cloning or fraud.
- **Use** common sense about what is being uploaded on the internet to avoid exploitation of personal information.
- **Avoid** putting any personal or family information on any social media website.
- **Choose** pictures wisely for social media websites. Beware of personal surroundings and reflective surfaces such as mirrors or glasses when taking pictures that can be uploaded to social media.
- **Don’t** send messages to anyone who has posted personal messages felt to be inappropriate or unwanted. Remove them from one’s personal site.
- **Refrain** from posting negative status or comments on one’s profile page or anyone else’s that may cause regret. Don’t post anything on social media websites that wouldn’t be said to the person’s face.
- **Utilize** all private account settings when creating any social media account.
- **Do not** make private conversations public.
- **Minimize** the use of social media and maximize human interaction.
- **Acknowledge** the power of personal interaction as opposed to constant use of social media outlets and text messages. For example, a personal visit, eye to eye contact, or calling them on the phone.
- **Abstain** from using social media websites as a diary and/or main source of communication or expression.

- **Consider** using an 'avatar' (character or symbol) instead of actual faces as the picture for one's personal profile.
- **Don't exploit** other people's personal conflicts, i.e. brawls, arguments, or incidents of cyber-bullying through social media.
- **Beware** of sexual predators, sex offenders, or suspicious-sounding persons who might be older and prey on younger people.

### **Internet Safety:**

- **Be aware** that any personal information posted to the Internet is there forever. Be cautious when doing uploads or posting blogs, videos, pictures, and/or statuses, etc., on the Internet.
- **Refrain** from putting personal information on the internet which may be harmful to one's future.
- **GOOGLE yourself.** Research the Internet to find out what exists with regard to one's personal information or history.
- **Do not use** webcams to record and then post acts or activities for which permission has not been granted, particularly those acts or activities which are obviously private and/or sensitive.
- **Know** that acts of invasion of privacy through the internet could lead to five years of imprisonment or, if considered a hate crime, up to ten (10) years of imprisonment.
- **Talk** to family members about the dangers of scams.
- **Realize** that legitimate financial institutions do not and will not solicit funds through the Internet. Beware of money scams.
- **Report** any incidents of someone asking for personal bank account information, as well as any incidents of intimidation to obtain such.
- **Set up** pop-up blockers on personal computers to protect them from viruses.
- **Utilize** the "report as spam" button to filter out unwanted, potentially harmful, or offensive email messages.

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## The Juvenile Justice System

The Juvenile Justice System interfaces with youth when they violate the laws of local municipalities, states, or the federal government. Youth enter the system for a variety of behavioral reasons, which may include some type of abuse or social pressure. Therefore, to greatly reduce the numbers of youth impacted by this system, juvenile justice officials should do the following:

- **Collaborate** with parent and families, communities, and schools in preventing youth from entering/re-entering the Juvenile Justice System. This collaboration should include working with health, human services organizations, churches, businesses, law enforcement and educational institutions.
- **Work** with above-mentioned organizations to ensure early intervention, in-home intervention, and alternatives to detention/incarceration programs, such as community service, drug and alcohol treatment, including Afro-centric mental health treatment options.
- **Provide** group homes and foster care families with support services (education, health, mental health, recreation, spiritual, socialization activities) as alternatives to detention. This process must include an assertive and aggressive approach which guarantees the accountability of the provision of said services for the needs of the children.
- **Provide** effective training and supervision to ensure that all staff, at all levels, will utilize demonstrated best practices throughout all juvenile justice systems and programs.
- **Work** with established neighborhood councils and other community groups in determining alternatives to detention/incarceration.
- **Provide** and/or expand quality education, recreation, health and mental health treatment and spiritual care to those in detention facilities. Juvenile justice system agencies and programs could also collaborate with other entities providing similar services.

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## Law Enforcement

As in many other cities in the United States, there are no easy explanations for the rapid explosion of gun violence and homicides plaguing our area's neighborhoods. A common thread is evident. Gun violence is fueled by rampant unemployment and boredom due to lack of positive activities for youth, as well as robberies and disputes occurring over simple slights. Strategies and initiatives advocating gun violence reduction must be addressed immediately and will require unprecedented understanding and cooperation among all levels of the criminal justice system and the community. The public's perception and judgment of misconduct by some members of the area police bureaus is a serious concern, particularly police abuse of authority and a lack of just punishment for abusive behavior. Furthermore, a large proportion of the community continues to perceive that racial bias is inherent within the culture of area police bureaus.

Teamwork is essential in law enforcement activity, as well as "community policing" environments in which citizens, community groups and the police work together as equal partners to attack and solve this problem. Therefore, all levels of law enforcement should do the following:

- **Review** all existing police policies and procedures with a high level of input from community advisory coalitions or groups created with representation from the command staff or area police departments to identify options for improvement and evaluation.
- **Develop** a more racially balanced work force. Actively recruit and hire African Americans and Hispanics to the police force. Place community members on hiring boards.
- **Provide** training and exam preparation assistance for the police exam aimed at expanding the numbers of minority recruits to area police bureaus.
- **Challenge** state civil service laws, policies and practices that are discriminatory and which create barriers to the hiring of African Americans and other people of color within police, public safety and fire departments. The absence of racially balanced law enforcement agencies often contributes to the creation of tension and possible violence in the community.
- **Provide** police officers with sensitivity and cultural diversity training.
- **Insist** that police officers solicit information without being confrontational and generate voluntary compliance from law violators without resorting to physical force.
- **Give** greater authority to members of the Civilian Police Review Board to participate in investigations of alleged police misconduct, in the development of new standards of police conduct, and in the review and implementation of such new standards. Investigate other community-police relation advisory models from other cities.
- **Institute** better monitoring systems for the sales of all weapons, and create new and more effective systems that would strongly impact the sales of illegal firearms, especially assault weapons
- **Invest** as much money into rehabilitation as is invested in incarceration.

- **Encourage** more citizens to participate in the citizen's police academy to learn more about police operations, which would in turn foster better community relations.
- **Lobby** the political structure and law enforcement to change any laws that currently inhibit the employment, training, and educational opportunities for African Americans and other people of color.
- **Lobby** for laws that would allow the records of non-violent criminals to be expunged, either after completion of some criteria or after a short time period following release (one to two years).
- **Become** an integral part of the community by engaging in more positive communication with youth and parents. Develop better trust between the police, the youth and the community. Serve as positive role models for youth. Greet youth with help, not harassment.

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## **The Role of the Media (TV, Radio, News, etc.)**

The media (TV, radio, newspapers and so forth) must understand the role they play in perpetuating negative images of African Americans. Having the ability *and* the responsibility to present a more balanced picture of our youth and our community, the media, should:

- **Develop** and promote programming that presents positive African American role models. Increase the number of positive images of African American families, as well as individuals, shown on television and in all other media.
- **Provide** opportunities for youth to produce and participate in forums about issues of importance to them, and provide venues for them to exchange information. Give ample media coverage for all summits, conferences, and gatherings that promote proactive, positive images of young people that help them empower themselves.
- **Broadcast** and televise Town Hall meetings for and about youth, as well as provide programming where the youth and adults can dialogue and exchange information to bring together the generations.
- **Provide** volunteering, internships, apprenticeship, and job opportunities to as many African Americans and other people of color as possible. Furthermore, the media must develop and expand their commitment to inform everyone about all media employment and job training opportunities throughout the region.
- **Make** a better effort to inform the community about existing employment and training programs within the community at large.
- **Hire** more people of color in all phases of the media industry.
- **Promote** and feature programming about corporations, governmental agencies, or community-based programs that are making special efforts to provide training or employment opportunities for African Americans and other people of color.
- **Fairly** and accurately report inequities imbedded in the current educational system, such as disparate educational outcomes, high dropout rates, and disproportionate suspension rates.
- **Be** more responsive to community complaints about programming, news items, or other media forms that continue to portray negative stereotypes about people of color.
- **Feature** anti-violence public service announcements.
- **Provide** more media coverage of community-based organizations that are doing positive things in the community.

- **Encourage** local and national media to utilize more people of color as “experts” on issues that affect the entire community, not just for issues concerned with the minority community.
- **Take** an active role in communicating the presence of community hotlines linking youth and families to immediate crisis intervention services.
- **Provide** ongoing exposure of positive role models, who happen to be people of color, not only during months specifically designated for certain cultures and ethnic groups.
- **Encourage** area companies and corporations to underwrite positive public service announcements and campaigns that support alternatives to violence.
- **Provide** educational programming that addresses community ills that contribute to helplessness and violence such as predatory lending, domestic abuse, and health disparities.
- **Conduct** a summit on minority imaging (including the adverse effects of stereotyping).

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## The Media: Impact of Rap Music on Violence

Capitalizing on the huge popularity of rap music, the record labels, the movie and TV entertainment industry, as well as the advertising industry, have invested billions of dollars into promoting artists with music influenced by the gangster, the gang, and the pimp cultures. The entire entertainment industry, as well as a few rap stars, have gained huge financial benefits at the expense of the “hearts and minds” of millions of youth. Today’s youth are given a skewed view of life and are receiving mixed messages that are damaging to their healthy development and well-being when they are exposed to music videos, video games, or movies with violent themes. Even young children are being exposed to sexually explicit lyrics, curse words, and messages that glorify the ‘fast life.’ Playing violent video games desensitizes youth to the real consequences of violence. Heavy exposure to negative music and images has a great impact on youth violence in the African American community.

Everyone – the entertainment media, music artists, parents, and the community -- has to take responsibility for what our children and youth are seeing and hearing. These messages and images found in the music contribute to the violence that permeates the streets of our communities. There has to be a change. Therefore, the following groups should accept these challenges:

### Parents and Families should:

- **Monitor** what music teens and children listen to and what they see in the media (TV, movies, videos, and games). Recognize and be ready to counteract the potentially damaging messages about gender roles, self-gratification and the acceptability of violence.
- **Prevent** children from playing violent video games, from watching violent movies and consuming other forms of media. Movies, music and pop culture glorify violence and have a strong influence on our youth.
- **Become** educated about the lyrics and the messages in the music and videos and have discussions with their children to help them understand the messages they receive. Be mindful that many of the messages in the music are subliminal.

### Rap Artists should:

- **Take** creative control of their music. Learn about the true history of the Hip Hop culture, and reclaim the notion that rap music can be a vehicle for teaching social awareness in a more positive manner.
- **Stop** using curse words, as well as racist, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic and other hateful and derogatory words in their music.
- **Lay** the N –word to rest.

### **The music, advertising, and other types of media should:**

- **Recognize** the harm being done to the mental and spiritual health and well-being of all youth by consistently promoting artists who project and exhibit harmful messages.
- **Promote** and nurture both local and national rap artists who present more positive messages.
- **Realize** they have traded profits for the well-being of our communities and must provide restitution. For example, provide financial support to community initiatives, agencies and programs counteracting violence.
- **Accept** their complicity in creating and promoting negative stereotypes of African Americans through the exploitation of Black talent.

### **The Community should:**

- **Pressure** the local broadcast corporations to play more music with positive messages by local and national artists.
- **Support** rap artists who present more uplifting messages in their music; artists who do not use misogynistic, sexist, racist, or homophobic words and messages.
- **Lobby** local, state and federal legislators to encourage them to regulate, to the extent they can, violent content in the media.
- **Join** with artists, community leaders, and national spokespeople who advocate for a radical change in the rap music industry, which has seemingly lost its creativity, forgotten its original responsibility to uplift the Black Community through the promotion of the positive values coming from the Hip Hop culture.

See the Appendix for the full version:

*A Historical Perspective of Rap Music as It Relates to Violence in the African American Community* by Steve Johnson

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## The Role of Mental Health Providers and University-Based Professionals

Healthcare providers and university-based professionals must attend to the full range of interventions that may prevent violence and its mental health consequences. This requires integrating research and treatment with a full understanding of the complex and important interactions between social, community, and family realities. It is critical to consider their impact on individual's risk for: violence and self-injurious behavior; depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorders; difficulties in emotional, cognitive and moral development; and impediments to educational and vocational opportunities. Therefore, these entities should collaborate to:

- **Affirm** support for the Surgeon General's assertion that youth violence is a public health issue of utmost importance; that youth violence is preventable; and all university health care resources should be carefully coordinated "to apply the science of public health to the treatment and prevention of violence." (Surgeon General's report)
- **Individualize** intervention strategies to the children, youth, and young adults at every stage of their development.
- **Screen** systematically and refer as indicated for violence related mental health problems and their associated problems (e.g. addiction, violence exposure, family conflict, trauma-related mental health issues).
- **Ensure** that available clinical services reflect the best understanding and the best application of evidence-based practice recommendations.
- **Evaluate** the effectiveness of current and future services to determine if goals are being achieved and if not, implement the changes that should be made to improve them.
- **Re-evaluate** ongoing services whose evidence base suggests they may not be effective. Request and implement appropriate changes.
- **Hire** experts in violence prevention who specialize in evaluating the effectiveness of ongoing interventions and research strategies; one specifically with the responsibility for oversight. ([www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/evaluation\\_improvement-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/evaluation_improvement-a.pdf))
- **Treat** identified individuals with effective, coordinated, ongoing interventions, making sure to integrate these services with an approach to individuals' immediate and extended family.
- **Expand** clinical interventions to as many as possible of the individuals' immediate and extended family.
- **Integrate** clinical services with long-term social services, especially those that address educational and vocational opportunities.

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## Mentoring and the Impact on Youth Violence

Mentors and mentoring organizations can have an impact in reducing youth violence by creating an environment where our youth are motivated to achieve by empowering them to become self-sufficient shareholders in the economic and social fabric of the communities in which they live. Mentors provide strong and positive role models in the lives of our youth. One-on-one and/or group mentoring exposes our youth to caring role models who reinforce the adage that says, "What they see is what they can be". Mentors, through their examples of leadership, dedication, and friendship, can nurture our youth and compel them to carry out the tradition of a continuous quest for educational excellence and to re-invest in our communities. Mentors act as guides for our youth in life experiences, fostering positive self-perception and self-respect, cultural enrichment, and the pursuit of positive life-long goals.

Therefore, agencies, communities of faith, individuals and organizations should:

- **Cultivate** an environment of trust by removing the intergenerational and socio-cultural barriers to communication.
- **Demonstrate** the virtues and values of being a man or woman and the willingness to show empathy without being viewed as soft. Respect and responsibilities are essential
- **Create** an environment that is empathetic to all of the challenges the youth may be facing: hunger, poor hygiene, inadequate clothing, inadequate housing, lack of financial resources, etc.
- **Provide** a platform for youth that would build self-worth, self-awareness and self-esteem.
- **Talk** openly about one's experiences and how one's life is not unlike the youth being mentored; let no subject be taboo so trust can be built to help the youth get in touch with their true selves, not the self-inflated bravado displayed too often by our youth.
- **Support** youth by exposing them to educational and internship opportunities that will allow them a close-up view of realizing their dreams.
- **Collaborate** with businesses that will allow for exposure to real life jobs.
- **Teach** youth to have self-discipline by engaging them in motivational interviewing that allows them to uncover environmental and social triggers, such as peer pressure and bullying, that lead them into unhealthy behaviors such as drugs and violence.
- **Encourage** youth to disengage from situations that can lead to violence by instructing them to walk away and seek the advice from their mentors or family members who reflect the values to which they aspire.
- **Require** the youth to be accountable for their actions.

- **Instill** in the youth the value of maintaining personal grooming, proper bearing when in the company of professionals, proper speech and tone when engaging people outside of our community and how to speak respectfully to everyone at all times.
- **Provide** access to behavioral therapy if needed to break barriers that the mentor may not be equipped to handle.
- **Identify** educational deficiencies and provide appropriate follow-up and/or resources.
- **Collaborate** with local schools to provide tutoring or materials the mentor can use to tutor the youth in his or her charge to decrease deficiencies in reading and mathematics.
- **Display** “*Ductus Exempla*” Leadership by Example: Lead in the way you wish to be followed!

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## Restorative and Rehabilitative Justice

Restorative justice is a community-strengthening alternative to the current prison-industrial complex that has particularly ruined the lives of too many Black youths and young adults. It is an attempt to reverse the damaging impact of a criminal justice system that traditionally relied on a policy of punitive justice resulting in lengthy incarceration and the lifelong stigma of a criminal record. Restorative justice views crime not only as breaking the law, but also as violating the relationships among people in the community. The goal of restorative justice is to repair the relationships between the offender and the other members of the community.

There are four critical elements in restorative justice:

1. Offenders acknowledge the harm they caused, take responsibility, and commit to making things right.
2. Individuals harmed by the crime are given the opportunity to express how the crime has impacted their lives directly to the person who caused the harm, and have choices and a voice in determining the restorative action plan,
3. The parties involved are assisted by community members (mediators) to identify measures that must be taken to repair the harm caused by the criminal acts.
4. Both parties mutually participate in activities of restoration and reconciliation. The needs of victims, offenders and community members must be taken into consideration throughout the dialogue process.

Restorative justice programs across the U.S. have reduced recidivism rates, increased the amount of compensation available to victims of crime, and avoided expensive incarcerations. Many parties have a stake in the success of restorative justice projects and the following actions support the successful transformation of our criminal justice system.

The role of the community is to support the progressive efforts established by the jails and prisons. We must create environments of understanding within communities and create community collaboratives that support and advocate for restorative justice.

We therefore call on the following stakeholders to do their part in this effort.

### Legislative System:

- **Pass** legislation rescinding mandatory sentencing laws allowing local judges the independence to determine the most appropriate response to criminal acts.
- **Fund** restorative justice programs with money that otherwise would be budgeted to support expensive incarcerations.
- **Fund** effective mental health services, school systems, job training programs, and job development projects which strongly support the goals of restorative justice programs for reducing recidivism.

### **Local Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice System:**

- **Inform** the community about existing restorative justice programs to which everyone has access, including the Dialogue and Resolution Center at the Center for Victims of Violence and Crime, as well as the Dialogue Program for Victims of Violence and Crime in the Office of the Victim Advocate through the PA Department of Corrections.
- **Identify** and provide training, in collaboration with community groups, for individuals who express an interest in facilitating dialogues.
- **Refer** all petty/non-violent/first-time offenders to community mediation as a pre-trial diversion and dismiss criminal charges. Consider the referral of cases involving more significant crimes on a case-by-case basis.
- **Balance** the participation by and needs of the victim, offender, and community members through the process of each dialogue.

### **Educational Institutions:**

- **Implement** restorative justice programs within the schools rather than using suspension or detention as a means of behavior control.

### **Jails and Prisons:**

- **Establish** a reentry program that begins at least six months prior to release, that includes community/family support, and that provides assistance at sequential levels, based upon risk of recidivism; this program is especially for offenders at the highest risk of re-offending. Prisons and jails should educate family members, friends and associates about such programs, who should in turn encourage the high risk inmates to participate in such programs. The creation of reentry programs falls primarily on the staff of jails and prisons.
- **Develop and/or Expand** alternatives to arrest for low-risk and special needs populations, which include women. Provide arresting and emergency response agencies with options for placement other than incarceration. For example, refer individuals with addictions to substance abuse treatment programs; refer those with other mental illness to mental health treatment programs. When such alternatives do not exist, government and/or the private sector should seriously explore the development and implementation of such alternatives.
- **Assess** the risk of all individuals at booking; use this assessment for bail determination and to divert to community programs/jail alternatives.
- **Place** incarcerated individuals into housing units within jails and prisons that are connected with programs that address their needs and strengths according to validated assessments.
- **Emphasize** the role of community members and organizations in helping ex-offenders transition from jail/prison back to the community.
- **Provide** families with opportunities to support offenders; and provide support for children and families of people who are incarcerated.

### **The Role of Former Offenders:**

- **Obtain** cognitive behavioral treatment to address factors leading to criminogenic behavior (thinking or poor decision making that leads to criminal activity).
- **Participate** in family support programs (for natural or created families).

### **The Business and Corporate Community:**

- **Partner** with jail and prison/community collaborations by helping with the development of employment opportunities for ex-offenders.
- **Participate** in providing training and skills development to currently incarcerated offenders.

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## Restorative Justice: The Role of Former Offenders

Having recognized the devastating effects their behavior has had on the life of the African American Community, persons incarcerated and formerly incarcerated in the justice system can provide invaluable service to the prevention of violence within our communities. One important role of these individuals would be to encourage youth on the outside not to enter into prison as a rite of passage, or view it as requirement (or definition) of manhood in the African American community and American society. Other roles include the following:

- **Continue** to meet among themselves to discuss and take actions through the networks they have established to reduce violence in the African American Community. Such identified actions could be shared with other community-based organizations, agencies, and religious groups attempting to impact violence.
- **Be** prepared to transition into educational, training and/or work programs prior to and/or upon release. Be open to participate in evaluations of program effectiveness to ensure that such programs meet the needs of affected individuals.
- **Detoxify** from drugs and alcohol and participate in treatment programs prior to and upon release.
- **Submit** voluntarily to both pre and post counseling and health testing, including health related issues such as sexually transmitted diseases, and assist in the elimination of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the African American Community.
- **Participate** in individual and community healing activities that address body, mind and spirit.
- **Encourage** family members to participate in neurological testing of children and youth, so that developmental and educational needs can be addressed appropriately for quality interventions, if needed.
- **Discourage** children and youth from falling prey to the influences and pressures of illegal activity. Such activities can lead to the death of the body, the mind and the spirit. Encourage oneself and others to engage in activities that will help fulfill the potential of the entire community.
- **Take** part in civic activities and leadership opportunities. Those who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated have, in many cases, demonstrated leadership and entrepreneurial skills. These same skills now can be redirected for positive outcomes.
- **Register** to vote to build the political power of the African American community to ensure strides in education, health and economic development and overall community survival. The prohibition for registering to vote is only for people currently serving time for felonies. To further explain, a convicted felon may register to vote after being released from prison. Secondly, people presently serving time for a misdemeanor have the right to register and vote by absentee ballot.

- **Apply** to have offenses expunged as soon as possible after incarceration to be able to attend college and increase ones' accessibility to the job market.
- **Engage** in cultural, recreational, intellectual, and social activities to build body, mind and spirit in order to deal with the impact that violence has on their lives and the lives of others. Such engagements would lessen and/or prevent future violence.
- **Relate** to women and children with respect and participate in male/female relationship-building workshops and activities.
- **Nurture** and financially support one's children and family.
- **Participate** in mentoring programs.

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## Senior Citizen Crime Prevention

Senior Citizens are a rapidly growing population within the United States. Though crime is statistically low in this age group of 65 and older it nonetheless happens. They are most vulnerable to fraud, burglary, phone solicitation and various other criminal activities, and must be vigilant when it comes to preventing crime and violence from happening to them. As a resolution to this problem and to alleviate any fears, senior citizens should adopt the following practices:

- **Use** deadbolt locks at home on all doors to deter break-ins; seniors should keep them locked even when inside of the house.
- **Adopt** a pet, preferably a dog, if alarm systems are not affordable. Dogs protect their territory and are effective to keep unwanted persons away.
- **Don't** advertise living alone on an answering machine for either your home phone, or your cell phone.
- **Use** the initials of your first and middle name on junk mail or any mail sent to you.
- **Install** sensor and timed-lighting sensors inside and outside the home.
- **Identify** all strangers who come to your home by installing peepholes on the front, side, and back doors.
- **Know** your neighbors and have them check on you and vice versa.
- **Create** a neighborhood watch group.
- **Keep** all valuable items, papers, etc. in a safety deposit box at a bank and not in the home if possible. Safety deposit boxes in the home can be stolen.
- **Don't** carry large sums of money on your person when going to public places or stores.
- **Establish** direct deposits for all checks received on a regular basis.
- **Refrain** from exposing the contents of bags and purses on store counters and in shopping carts.
- **Never** reveal social security numbers, credit card numbers or passwords. Never wire money to an unknown location, or agree to pay upfront fees for loans, credit repair or cash advances. Never donate to a charity without verifying its legitimacy.
- **Engrave** your valuables with a number system all your own and keep the list in a safety deposit box at a bank.
- **Read** all contracts for home improvements, insurances, etc. carefully before signing. Take sufficient time to carefully review and understand contracts and not be coerced.

- **Park** in or near well-lit areas and be aware of surroundings. Have keys within reach when approaching the vehicle. Be alert when unloading packages and lock the car immediately once inside.
- **Beware** of on-line scams.
- **Don't** be a victim. Take charge and live life free of crime.

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## Service Organizations

Non-profit service organizations can have a significant effect on reducing violence by offering quality programs that engage youth and adults positively; providing alternatives to violence; and providing activities which can also discourage destructive behavior. Being productive and creating an environment that is positive and supportive has an impact on violence prevention. Quality programs and services provide a way to engage its participants to intervene and challenge perspectives that lead to violent behavior. Other programs intervene more directly once the issue of violence has surfaced. In both cases, giving people hope and vision for a productive future becomes an incentive for people to avoid the cycle of violence. Therefore, service organizations should:

- **Coordinate** and collaborate with one another to avoid offering duplicative services and to fill in gaps in service. Collaborate on funding where possible and feasible. Sponsor and participate in ongoing consensus-oriented, democratic discussion/work groups to develop strategies and action plans for providing solutions.
- **Solicit** input from grassroots individuals, groups, and community collaborative efforts that may not be considered formal nonprofits or service organizations. Such entities may have strategies and action plans for providing solutions to the violence in our communities. These non-traditional resources can offer a unique and valuable perspective to such problems.
- **Apply** for funds that allow *needed* programs to be supported and expanded.
- **Create** opportunities for children and youth from different communities to come together in a safe environment. Keep facilities open late in the evenings and on Saturdays to give children a *safe* place to “hang out.”
- **Establish** and expand programs that expose children to a broader world-view, programs that take them out of their own communities. Provide a more holistic picture of the world around them. Expose youth to a wide range of experiences occurring in and out of the city.
- **Increase** the number of community events, which have the goal of eliminating fear and increasing opportunities for citizens to work together.
- **Support** youth centers where young people can go to hear speakers with messages that foster positive social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth. Introduce children, youth, and adults to successful people in their communities who have met and conquered many of the problems they have faced.
- **Promote** and expand programs that teach youth how to resolve issues in new and non-violent ways. Teach conflict resolution in a culturally sensitive manner. Develop and implement peer leadership programs that encourage youth, in partnership with adults, to take the lead in reducing violence.

- **Implement** sports programs that stress the importance of cooperation and teamwork. Offer opportunities beyond football and basketball. Provide more opportunities for physical activity and self-discovery such as soccer, rowing, boxing, swimming and hiking. These kinds of activities help to improve physical and emotional well-being, as well as providing healthy ways to channel anger and aggression.
- **Provide** resources for training programs and job search needs. Offer parenting skills classes and stress counseling with effective outreach to those who need it.
- **Provide** community-based extracurricular educational programs such as parent leadership skills, tutoring, GED preparation, computer skills, etc. for families with young children from birth to age five. Such programs prepare parents to get involved in their children's development and education from the start.
- **Provide** internships, apprenticeships and jobs for youth which can provide experience leading to wider career opportunities.
- **Initiate** and expand basic entrepreneur courses *and* help interested youth to create and develop small businesses.
- **Provide** community with information about available services of agencies and organizations. Such services should be offered on a sliding income scale.
- **Provide** adults with training for reaching and counseling youth in the community, in community organizations and in schools.
- **Work** to secure community funds for youth centers.
- **Hold** *all* political leaders accountable for their promises to support community-based, anti-violence initiatives and community enhancement programs.
- **Be** an advocate for youth whenever and wherever possible.

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## Street Level Outreach

Anyone who works at the street level helps to reduce violence by providing outreach, activities and services. Therefore, they should:

- **Begin** by developing personal, individualized relationships with young people and adults who might benefit from their guidance and interaction.
- **Help** youth get the services they need by identifying support services and developing individualized goal-oriented plans.
- **Serve** as advocates for youth. Be a link between youth and community stakeholder groups by providing those organizations with solutions to current issues and problems and bringing youth to the appropriate resources for help.
- **Provide** crisis intervention by serving as a liaison to offset violent incidents both before youth get involved with the police and afterwards to begin the healing process. This could also include the involvement of street level workers in resolving conflicts between youth from various neighborhoods, preferably before police intervention becomes necessary.
- **Look** for opportunities to prevent or diffuse conflict and to help youth learn to resolve their issues in new and less violent ways. Special emphasis should be placed on introducing them to mediation and conflict resolution skills.
- **Support** the community restorative justice system. Assist mediators in developing relationships with members of the community.
- **Help** keep children and youth in school. Reach out to youth who may need extra help to stay in school and introduce them to appropriate resources such as medical services, mental health services, substance abuse services, and alternative education programs designed for youth.
- **Encourage** *all* adults to stop fearing our youth. Invite people from the various neighborhoods to join street level workers to gain a better understanding of the problems youth face. This could include forming neighborhood block watches; holding community celebrations and picnics; engaging youth constructively; or simply by coming out to stand on one's porch. Don't be afraid to talk with our youth.
- **Encourage** the community *at large* to talk with youth and bring to them one's concerns with understanding and respect
- **Show** youth how to use their "street skills" (hustling, etc.) in constructive, productive and legitimate ways. This will boost their self-esteem and validate their self-worth. Doing so contributes to preventing our youth from entering the criminal justice system.

- **Participate** in setting up and/or supporting family and youth hotlines and other emergency services.
- **Integrate** street-level initiatives with neighborhoods and families by connecting them with resources such as educational, vocational, legal services, and services provided by religious organizations.
- **Create** opportunities for youth who have overcome life obstacles to become role models for higher risk peers.
- **Identify** opportunities to educate youth about the ways in which emotions related to trauma and loss can be dealt with constructively.
- **Provide** community forums and educational opportunities for other adults to learn more about what they can actually do impact the violence that permeates the streets of *our* communities.
- **Conduct** voter registration and education programs. Organize the youth to vote and participate in positive political activities such as voter registration, flyer distribution, and making phone calls for getting out the vote. This provides an opportunity for youth *and* community empowerment.

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## Teen Dating Violence Prevention

Teen Dating Violence is a serious problem for today's teenagers. Each year, approximately one in three teens reports being the victim of verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual violence. Abusive relationships can impact adolescent development, and teens who experience dating violence may suffer long-term negative behavioral and health consequences. Adolescents in controlling or violent relationships may carry these dangerous and unhealthy patterns into future relationships.

Technology such as cell phones, email, and social networking websites are sometimes tragically used for control, stalking, and victimization. Emotional abuse through digital technology, including frequent text messages, threatening emails, and the circulation of embarrassing messages or photographs without consent can be devastating to young teens.

Though many communities face the problem of teen dating violence, young people are often afraid to discuss it. In some instances, they may not even recognize the severity of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Parents and other adults can also be uncomfortable with acknowledging that young people experience abuse, or they may even be unaware of its occurrence. The time to break the cycle of teen dating violence is now -- before another generation is victim to this tragedy.

### For Teens:

#### If you are being abused, or are in an abusive relationship:

- **Seek** help NOW! If you don't know what to do, consult a friend, family member, minister/priest, community leader, or the police.
- **Contact** the National Domestic Violence Hotline. This is an anonymous and confidential, 24/7 resource which provides crisis intervention, information and referral to victims of domestic violence, perpetrators, friends and families - to contact the Hotline call 1-800-799-SAFE or visit [www.theHotline.org](http://www.theHotline.org).

#### If you have a friend who is in an abusive relationship:

- **Support** a friend who is dealing with relationship violence; talking can make an enormous difference to them. They are probably feeling very isolated and alone. When talking with a friend you think might be abused, there are several things to keep in mind:
  - **Listen** to what they have to say and don't be judgmental.
  - **Let** them know you are there whenever they need to talk and that you are worried about them.
  - **Assure** them you won't tell anyone they don't want to know about the situation—and then keep your word (unless you fear for their physical safety).
  - **Be** specific about why you are concerned - "I felt bad when I saw your significant other insult you in front of all of us. They don't have the right to treat you that way. What did you think about it?"
  - **Reassure** your friend that you won't stand by and let the behavior continue.
  - **Find** someone knowledgeable about abuse that they can talk to, and volunteer to go with them.

### **For Individuals who are Abusers:**

- **Understand** how your actions are hurting and dangerous. Most individuals who hurt their significant others don't consider themselves "batterers"—many are in denial about the severity of their actions.
- **Seek** help NOW!! Find someone who is trained to help abusers – counselors, ministers, community members, support groups, etc.

### **For Individuals who know Abusers:**

- **Reach out.** It's hard for us, as their friends, to believe it, too. But reaching out and talking to a friend we think is being violent in their relationship is truly an act of friendship, though it may seem like the hardest thing you can do. Here are some tips to keep in mind:
  - **Be** specific about what you saw and how it made you feel.
  - **Make** sure they realize that their actions have consequences, and they could get into serious trouble—from getting expelled from school to going to jail.
  - **Do not** look the other way if you are aware of someone abusing his or her partner. Urge them to seek help or, if you don't know what to do, consult a friend, family member, community leader or the police.
  - **Let** them know you care, and that you know they have it in them to change.

### **Families and Communities can:**

- **Think** about relationship abuse as a major social problem that touches the lives of teens, men and women of all social, economic and racial backgrounds. Focus on the ways in which you, as an empowered bystander, can support at-risk individuals and confront abusers.
- **Educate** teens, their families and the community about dating violence. It is imperative that we end the cycle of violence present in so many teenage relationships.
- **Provide** information about violence prevention in classrooms, public libraries, and community organizations frequented by children and youth.
- **Be proactive** in assisting community leaders, parents and teachers in understanding the challenges today's adolescents face.
- **Empower** students with leadership development so they can work with adults in their communities, schools and government to eliminate dating violence in all of its forms.
- **Help** to educate and empower girls and boys not to tolerate abuse or sexism. Get involved with youth outreach and mentoring programs in local high schools and middle schools.
- **Speak out** If you suspect that someone you know is being abused. Let them know that the abuse is not their fault, and that they have nothing to be ashamed of. Encourage them to seek help.
- **Know** that while many victims of relationship abuse are female, boys can be emotionally or physically abused as well. Boys can be abused by their girlfriends, and they can also be abused by another boy if they are in a same-sex relationship. Either way, let them know that the abuse is not their fault, and that they have nothing to feel ashamed of. Encourage them to seek help.

- Visit [www.NNEDV.org/resources](http://www.NNEDV.org/resources) (National Network to End Domestic Violence) to locate your state or territory Domestic Violence Coalition.
- **Familiarize** yourself with the resources in your community including counseling centers and health service organizations. Be a positive resource by sharing information and making appropriate referrals.
- **Support** women and men who are working to end relationship abuse. Get involved with local domestic violence organizations.
- **Encourage** organizations, community groups, communities of faith and others to organize a fundraiser to benefit battered women's shelters and rape crisis centers

**Especially for Men (fathers, grandfathers, uncles, older brothers, coaches, teachers, mentors):**

- **Approach** relationship abuse as a men's issue; involve men of all social, economic and racial backgrounds. Recognize men not only as perpetrators or potential offenders, but also as bystanders who can confront abusive males, as well as potential victims. **A Call to Men** ([www.acalltomen.org](http://www.acalltomen.org)), whose vision is to shift social norms that define manhood in our culture, offers 10 things men can do to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- **Play** a crucial role in guiding the boys in your life into manhood and into positive relationships as they grow older—by teaching them about respect, showing them how to deal with conflict, and setting an example of how to build healthy relationships.
- **Utilize** the handbook *Tough Talk-What Boys Need to Know about Relationship Abuse* as an education tool. The handbook includes a clear definition of relationship abuse, as well as practical guidelines and suggested questions for men to formulate a dialogue. By starting a conversation about relationship abuse, your actions demonstrate that this is an issue that can be discussed thoughtfully and openly.

**Internet Resources:**

<http://loveisnotabuse.com/web/quest/for-adults>

<http://loveisnotabuse.com/web/quest/for-teens>

<http://loveisnotabuse.com/web/quest/for-coaches-fathers-mentors>

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## **Violence against the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning/Queer, Asexual, Intersex (LGBTQAI) Community**

*When we speak we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent we are still afraid. So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive.*

Audre Lorde author, activist

*Homophobia is like racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and their personhood.*

Coretta Scott King

### **Introduction**

Violence against people who consider themselves to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning or Queer, Asexual, Intersexual (LGBTQAI) is a complex and often quite controversial issue. Yet this is also a human rights and human dignity issue that must be addressed. This is also a social justice issue, a public health issue, a safety issue, an economic issue, a mental health issue as well as an issue of societal mores, cultural values, and deeply ingrained prejudices. There are several forms of violence against people who consider themselves to be part of the LGBTQAI Community, including the following:

- Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence
- Hate Crimes
- Violence from law enforcement and the justice system
- Violence against LGBTQAI Youth: Bullying and other forms

In order to prevent violence in the LGBTQAI community, we must work to end inequality and homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, etc. By ending inequality, we create spaces where LGBTQAI people are seen as equal and reduce the amount of violence they experience, including sexual violence.

### **Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence**

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQAI) experience sexual violence at higher rates than people who identify as heterosexual.

According to the PA Coalition Against Rape ([www.pcar.org](http://www.pcar.org)), sexual violence is any type of unwanted sexual contact, ranging from sexist attitudes and actions to rape and murder. Sexual violence can include words and actions of a sexual nature against a person's will. A person may use force, threats, manipulation, or coercion to commit sexual violence.

There is a social context that surrounds sexual violence. Social norms that condone violence such as: using power over others; traditional constructs of masculinity; the subjugation of women; and, silence about violence and abuse, all contribute to the occurrence of sexual violence.

Not always afforded the same legal rights under the law as heterosexual people, LGBTQAI victim/survivors of sexual assault have less access to laws that protect them when they choose to report their experiences. Reporting their sexual assault may mean they have to come out as LGBTQAI which is not always possible or safe. Coming out can lead to more harassment from people who are in helping professions such as law enforcement and medical professionals. Because of the fears of judgment and violence from others, people who identify as LGBTQAI often do not report their experiences of sexual violence.

Transgender people are at increased risk for sexual violence. Those who commit such violence use it to enforce gender boundaries and to exert power and control over the people they target. For instance, murders against transgender people often involve sexual violence. When a person is murdered because of their perceived gender identity or expression, it is a sexually violent act. Often, the crimes that end in murder also include sexualized torture, rape and bodily mutilation. This gender-based violence is fueled by hate and rooted in misogyny.

Therefore, many transgender people are afraid of going to police for help, especially as police themselves are sometimes a source of violence. The National Transgender Discrimination Survey found that 46% of transgender people are uncomfortable going to the police, and 22% of transgender people have been harassed by police. Transgender people of color are especially vulnerable—15% of black transgender people and 9% of Latino transgender people have been assaulted by police. Transgender women of color are frequent targets of police profiling. (The National LGBTQ Task Force).

## **Hate Crimes**

The National Coalition of Anti-violence Programs (NCAVP) strives to increase, power, safety and resources through data analysis, policy advocacy, education, and technical assistance. In 2014, NCAVP issued the following report: *National Report on Hate Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and HIV-Affected Communities*.

According to the report:

- Transgender women, people of color, and gay men face the highest risk of homicide.
- Transgender people, low income people, people of color, LGBTQAI and HIV-affected youth and young adults, and gay men face the most violence.
- More than half of the survivors report hate violence to the police, yet the police classify only a small percentage of reports as bias or hate crimes. Those who did report violence were often met with police hostility and excessive force.

In order to change the dynamics of violence against the LGBTQAI community we must address and change the heteronormative attitude that can lead to homophobic and transphobic behaviors and actions. We must learn to become better allies. A way to begin this process is to become knowledgeable and understand the self-identifying terms proscribed by individuals who may consider themselves part of this community. (See definitions at the end of this article).

### What You Can Do:

- **Work** diligently to end the homophobic, trans-phobic, and bi-phobic culture that fuels violence.
- **Recognize** and understand that gay and transgender people simply want the same things as all Americans – the ability to pursue health and happiness, earn a living, provide for their families, be safe in their communities, and take care of the ones they love.
- **Know** and understand that there are all kinds of families – two-parent families, single mothers raising children, single fathers raising children, foster care families, etc. All families need the support of the community, no matter the composition or the orientation/identity of parents or caregivers. Institutions of faith, schools, social and educational institutions must help them raise children, and provide relevant programs to address the diverse needs of families, as well as the needs of the community.
- **Speak** out against all hate crimes, including crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. One’s silence is another form of support for those who use violence to intimidate and cause people to live in fear. “Speaking Out” shows strength and bravery, as well as the right thing to do.
- **Call** for equal protection under the law, including protection from sexual violence, for *everyone* irrespective of their gender identity or sexual orientation.
- **Send** the message about what is acceptable in public spaces. Be mindful of gender-identity and expression in our everyday conversation. Speak out against inappropriate jokes or comments.
- **Hold** the media accountable for providing information that is accurate, reflective of all people, and that does not allow gender-based violence to live on in our culture.

### Social Service Agencies and Schools:

- **Become trained on the issue of inclusion and provide sensitivity training.**
- **Identify** ways to eliminate homophobic social work practice and policies.
- **Develop and institute affirming programs that provide needed resources such as, shelter and housing, employment, medical and mental health services.**
- **Consider instituting and providing support for organizations such as gay-straight alliances in schools.**

### Law Enforcement and the Criminal Justice System:

- **Require** that all levels of law enforcement personnel receive LGBTQAI cultural sensitivity training.
- **Develop** and institute the sufficient resources to report violence by police: Be aware that transgender women are especially vulnerable, often being wrongly accused of being sex workers as a reason for harassment and possibly arrest.
- **Implement** policies to ensure that police are held accountable among their peers for violent acts against the LGBTQAI community.

## Communities of Faith:

- **Attend** to the spiritual needs of those who have been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Make this commitment a part of the culture of *all* religions and religious institutions.
- **Seek to understand** the complex and unique needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered and questioning people and provide spaces for learning, dialogue and social justice action.

## LGBTQ Youth

Centers for Disease Control Fact Sheet: Parent's Influence on the Health of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Teens [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parents\\_influence\\_lgb.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/parents_influence_lgb.pdf)

## Experiences with Violence

Most lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, asexual, and intersexual (LGBTQAI) youth are happy and thrive during their adolescent years. Some LGBTQAI youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience difficulties in their lives and school environments, such as violence. However, going to a school that creates a safe and supportive learning environment for *all* students and having caring and accepting parents are especially important. This helps *all* youth achieve good grades and maintain good mental and physical health.

Exposure to violence can have negative effects on the education and health of any young person. However, for LGBTQAI youth, a national study of middle and high school students shows that such students (61.1%) were more likely than their non- LGBTQAI peers to feel unsafe or uncomfortable as a result of their sexual orientation.

These youths were also more likely to experience:

- Being threatened or injured with weapons on school property
- Dating violence
- Homophobic teasing and bullying, (also cyber bullying)
- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Unexcused absences from school
- Dropping out of school
- Running away, becoming homeless
- Risky sexual behaviors, placing them at risk for HIV and other STDs (sexually transmitted diseases).

## What Schools Can Do:

For youth to thrive in their schools and communities, they need to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe and supported. A positive school climate has been associated with decreased depression, suicidal feelings, substance use, and unexcused school absences among LGBTQAI students.

Schools can implement clear policies, procedures, and activities designed to promote a healthy environment for all youth. For example, research has shown that in schools with LGBTQAI support groups (such as gay-straight alliances), LGBTQAI students were less likely to experience threats of violence, miss school because they felt unsafe, or attempt suicide than those students in schools without such support groups. A recent study found that such students

had fewer suicidal thoughts and attempts when schools had gay-straight alliances and policies prohibiting expression of homophobia in place for 3 or more years.

To help promote health and safety among LGBTQAI youth, schools can implement the following policies and practices:

- **Encourage** respect for all students and prohibit bullying, harassment, and violence against all students.
- **Identify** “safe spaces,” such as counselors’ offices, designated classrooms, or student organizations, where LGBTQAI youth can receive support from administrators, teachers, or from another school staff.
- **Encourage** student-led and student-organized school clubs that promote a safe, welcoming, and accepting school environment (e.g., gay-straight alliances, which are school clubs open to youth of all sexual orientations).
- **Ensure** that health curricula or educational materials include HIV, other STD, or pregnancy prevention information that is relevant to LGBTQAI youth (such as, ensuring that curricula or materials use inclusive language or terminology).
- **Develop** and publicize trainings on how to create safe and supportive school environments for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, and encourage staff to attend these trainings.
- **Facilitate** access to community-based providers who have experienced providing health services, including HIV/STD testing and counseling, to LGBTQAI youth.
- **Provide** access to community-based providers who have experience in providing social and psychological services to LGBTQAI youth.

### What Parents Can Do:

How parents respond to their LGBTQAI teen can have a tremendous impact on their adolescent’s current and future mental and physical health. Supportive reactions can help youth cope with the challenges they may face. However, some parents react negatively to learning that they may have an LGBTQAI daughter or son. In some cases, parents no longer allow their teens to remain in the home. In other situations, stress and conflict at home can cause some youth to run away. As a result, such youth are at greater risk for homelessness than their heterosexual peers.

- **Be supportive: talk openly with their teen about any problems or concerns and be watchful** of behaviors that might indicate their child is a victim of bullying or violence—or that their child may be victimizing others. If bullying, violence, or depression is suspected, parents should take immediate action, working with school personnel and **other adults in the community.**
- **Take** steps to support the health and well-being of their youth:
- **Talk and listen in a way that invites an open discussion about sexual orientation: this** can help their teen feel loved and supported. Parents should have honest conversations with their teens about sex and about how to avoid risky behavior and unsafe or high-risk situations.
- **Provide** support. Parents who take time to come to terms with how they feel about their teen’s sexual orientation will be better able to respond calmly and use respectful language. Parents should develop common goals with their teen, including being healthy and doing well in school.
- **Find** supportive communities for yourself with other families who have already gone through this process. Reach out to them for support and guidance.
- **Create** support communities with other families where there are none.

- **Stay** involved. Parents who make an effort to know their teen's friends and know what their teen is doing can help their teen stay safe and feel cared about.
- **Be** proactive. Parents can access many organizations and online informational resources to learn more about how they can support their LGBTQAI teen, other family members, and their teen's friends.

## Resources

- *Project Silk*: Provides services and a safe space for young adult members of the LGBT community in a partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the University of Pittsburgh. 810 Penn Ave., Eighth Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15219; <http://projectsilk.org/>.
- *Garden of Peace Project*: Nonprofit networking group that provides resources for medical and mental health care for marginalized populations, as well as legal name-change assistance. Teaming with Project Silk, it offers HIV and STD testing, hormones, mental health, substance abuse and linkage to social services. <http://www.gardenofpeaceproject.org/>.
- *Persad Center* is a human service organization whose mission is to improve the well-being of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning) communities, and the HIV/AIDS communities. We serve our target populations and their loved ones, cradle to the grave, across western Pennsylvania, with service centers in Pittsburgh, Washington and Erie Pennsylvania. [www.persadcenter.org](http://www.persadcenter.org)
- *Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)*: provides anonymous and free group counseling for LGBT individuals and their families. It holds monthly meetings where anyone is invited to participate and gain support or create a network [www.pflagpgh.org](http://www.pflagpgh.org)
- *Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)*: focuses on educating students about the issues surrounding the LGBT community. It also works to ensure a safe learning environment for all students in schools regardless of their sexual orientation. [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)
- *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Helpline*: Hotline provides telephone and email peer counseling, as well as factual information and local resources for cities and towns across the United States. <http://www.glnh.org> Phone: (888) 843-4564
- *GLAAD*: Rewrites the script for LGBT acceptance. As a dynamic media force, GLAAD tackles tough issues to shape the narrative and provoke dialogue that leads to cultural change. GLAAD protects all that has been accomplished and creates a world where everyone can live the life they love. [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

## Definitions

(<http://tahoesafealliance.org/for-lgbqtia/what-does-lgbqtia-mean/>)

- **Gender Identity**: How a person identifies their gender, which may be different than social norms and/or stereotypes of the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Cisgender**: A term used to describe an individual whose self-perception matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

- Sexual orientation: A person's physical or emotional attraction to people of a specific gender or multiple genders; the culturally defined set of meanings through which people describe their sexual attractions.
- Heteronormative: A viewpoint that expresses heterosexuality as a given, instead of being one of many possibilities for a person's sexual orientation. Often expressed subtly where heterosexuality is accepted as the default sexuality.
- Lesbian: A female-identified person who is attracted romantically, physically, or emotionally to another female-identified person.
- Gay: A male-identified person who is attracted romantically, physically, or emotionally to another male-identified person.
- Bisexual: A person who is attracted romantically, physically, or emotionally to both men and women.
- Transgender: A person who is a member of a gender other than what is expected based on anatomical sex.
- Queer: An umbrella term which embraces a variety of sexual preferences, orientations, and habits of those who do not adhere to the heterosexual and cisgender majority. The term queer includes, but is not exclusive to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, trans-people, and intersex persons, traditionally, this term is derogatory and hurtful, however, many people who do not adhere to sexual and/or gender norms use it to self-identify in a positive way. (Can refer either to gender identity or sexual orientation, or both).
- Intersex – Someone whose physical sex characteristics are not categorized as exclusively male or exclusively female.
- Asexual – A person who is not attracted to anyone, or a person who does not have a sexual orientation.

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## **Violence against Women and Girls**

Women and girls all around the world have been marginalized, belittled, abused, deprived and underestimated all because of their gender. Today in the United States, this gender prejudice plays out in myriad forms, not the least of which is women earning on average 70% of what their male counterparts make for the same work. Other forms of gender discrimination take place in more violent ways such as physical and emotional abuse, rape, trafficking and female genital mutilation. Society will not flourish until women and girls thrive by means of equal treatment.

### **Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is divided into three categories: 1) use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against his or her will, whether or not the act is completed; 2) attempted or completed sex act involving a person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act, to decline participation, or to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act, e.g., because of illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or because of intimidation or pressure; and 3) abusive sexual contact. Anyone can experience sexual violence, but most victims are female. The person responsible for the violence is typically male and usually someone known to the victim.

It should be noted that black women and girls are especially vulnerable to sexual violence and predation, being the most unprotected and undervalued demographic. For this reason, special attention should be paid to black women, as it relates to sexual violence and misconduct. *Italicized text and action points were created to address specifically (although, not exclusively) some needs of black women and girls.*

### **Intimate Partner Violence**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious, preventable public health problem that affects millions of Americans. The term describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy. Intimate partner violence can vary in frequency and severity. It occurs on a continuum, ranging from intimidation, to one hit or chronic, severe battering.

There are four main types of intimate partner violence:

- Psychological/emotional violence involves trauma to the victim caused by acts, threats of acts, or coercive tactics.
- Threats of physical or sexual violence use words, gestures, or weapons to communicate the intent to cause death, disability, injury, or physical harm.
- Physical violence is the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing harm, injury, disability or death.
- Sexual violence (see definition of sexual violence listed above).

### **Role of Colleges/Schools:**

Recent national attention on the subject of sexual violence on college campuses has brought this persistent problem to the forefront of mainstream conversation. It is vital that colleges and universities work with community agencies to provide education, awareness, and a prevention approach to fit the needs and culture of each institution.

- **Train** resident hall advisors to both respond to a disclosure of sexual violence and to take steps to prevent violence before it happens.
  - *Train RAs in diversity and inclusion to better ensure that every woman under their surveillance is treated with equal concern and action, no matter the race or class of the woman.*
- **Educate** students through bystander engagement and intervention, such as co-hosting *Mocktail* (non-alcohol) events with students and supporting *Take Back the Night* events.
  - *Educate young women, particularly young black women, about sexual violence – coupled with self-esteem/self-worth – and what to do when she feels victimized.*
- **Engage** students in creating campaigns that address sexual assault on campus, such as posters that focus on obtaining consent and supporting survivors.
  - *Engage students in campaigns that promote the value of black women and girls' lives as well as the realities of sexual violence experienced by black women but rarely spoken of.*
  - *Create membership groups on who's mission is to protect and promote the rights, health, value, and safety of black women on and off campus through action and advocacy.*
- **Utilize** nationally recognized tools such as the *Community Readiness Assessment Model (CRAM)* to assess strengths and weaknesses in prevention efforts and develop tailored short and long range prevention plans.
  - *Utilize current data known about sexual violence and misconduct against black women and girls to develop new initiatives, strengthen old ones, and advocate for policy to change the culture of sexual violence.*

### **Role of Parents/Family:**

Engaging parents is crucial for preventing child sexual abuse. Programs like *Parents in the Know*, offered throughout Allegheny County in Pennsylvania, build skills in parents that promote safe and respectful behaviors, recognize questionable behaviors in adults, how to intervene when witnessing those questionable behaviors and promote discussion between parents and children on healthy relationships and sexuality.

*It is commonplace for black families to not address or acknowledge sexual violence and/or misconduct within their own families, which leads to perpetuated trauma, emotional disorders, and dysfunction within the family.*

### **Here are some ways that family can get involved:**

- **Communicate** openly and honestly.
- **Advocate** for known sexual violence to be addressed within the family.
- **Teach** your children about boundaries, safety, and healthy relationship.
- **Protect** the personal space of the women and girls within the family (as defined by them).
- **Speak out** against gender stereotypes and promote equality.
- **Break the stigma** of speaking out against sexual violence. *Do not allow young women and men (especially) to grow up believing that sexual violence is a normal thing.*
- **Challenge** those who blame the victim. It is never the victim's fault and no one asks to be raped.
- **Be supportive** if someone you love has been hurt. Ask what you can do to help and offer sexual abuse resources.

- **Make** an effort to have the minimum necessary understanding of what to do when a loved one has been victimized to ensure not to activate any triggers for the woman/girl.

### **Role of Co-Workers/Community:**

Places of employment and neighborhoods are important arenas to combat sexual violence. Here are some ways you can get involved at these levels:

- **Challenge** sexist jokes, rumors, comments, and emails.
- **Challenge** stereotypical commentary related to black women's bodies, attitudes, and sexual conduct
- **Promote** a safe and respectful workplace and neighborhood.
- **Be inclusive** when setting workplace standards and expectations. Allow input from the demographics meant to be protected in order to ensure efforts are effective.
- **Be aware** that most of the time people are hurt by someone they know and trust.
- **Advocate** for and embrace training related to sexual violence against women to ensure an educated staff, when it comes to understanding and addressing sexual violence in the workplace.
- **Talk** to appropriate personnel at work. Utilize available community resources (faith communities, community leaders, community-based organizations, etc.) addressing personal safety and sexual violence.

### **Role of Men and Boys:**

Men's violence and discrimination against women and girls is rooted in a history of male domination that has deeply influenced the definition of manhood in our culture. It has 3 primary aspects: 1) women are viewed as having less value than men 2) they are viewed as the property of men 3) women are viewed as sexual objects.

Every boy, every young man and every full male adult must look inwardly as to the need to value women, girls, and to value life. No woman or girl should ever have to fear for their life or the safety of their body simply because they reject a man who has shown interest in them. Men also need to step up and step out and approach the issue of violence against women and girls as 'man's issue'. We must all remember that every man came from a woman and that respect should always be present.

### **Therefore, men and boys should:**

- **Understand** that the liberation of men is directly tied to the liberation of women.
- **Take** on violence against women and girls as a human rights issue: Write a letter to the editor about women's rights, participate in a domestic violence or sexual assault prevention event, donate to a women's rights organization.
- **Form** collaborative efforts with other grassroots culturally specific (and otherwise) community based organizations, whose missions include men purposefully engaging in prevention and/or intervention measures to ensure ending domestic violence in their communities.
- **Teach** and promote healthy concepts of manhood to each other, our sons and other boys.

- **Seek** to educate, organize and empower men and boys to engage in the solution of preventing domestic violence, sexual assault and all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls. Partner with schools, universities, corporations, government, social service agencies and communities.

## Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) includes all procedures which purposefully alter or injure the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. The procedure is mostly practiced with girls ranging from infancy to fifteen years of age. Risk factors include hemorrhaging, fistula (premature incontinence often caused by a tearing of the urine tract during childbirth due to FGM scar tissue), cysts, infections, transmittance of blood born disease, infertility, childbirth complications, scar tissue, excessive tearing during childbirth, stillbirths, and personal death.

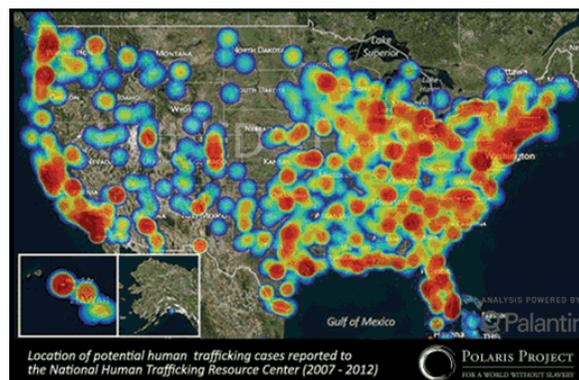
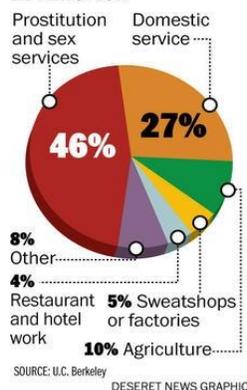
Female genital mutilation is recognized by the United Nations and the World Health Organization as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. It reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children. The practice also violates a person's rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.<sup>1</sup>

With the influx of various cultures from around the world, such practices may be perpetrated within the borders of the United States. More than half a million women and girls in the U.S. are at risk of undergoing female genital mutilation in the United States or abroad, or have already undergone the procedure.

- **Notice** international travel plans of girls to the Middle East or Africa especially during the summer months as most FGM happens then.
- **Observe** changes in a girl's demeanor as many suffer in silence before and after FGM.
- **Encourage** local schools to include FGM as part of sexual education curriculum.
- **Report** information about incidents of FGM to local authorities and/or sexual victim advocates immediately.
- **Educate** the public and **Advocate** for dismantling this practice.
- **Respond** to the mental health and physical needs of those victimized.

## Human Trafficking

### Modern-day slavery in America



<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>, 20 May 2015.

Human trafficking including the trafficking of children is a modern-day form of slavery. It includes the recruiting, enticing, harbouring, transporting, using a person for exploitation or commercial gain by force, fraud or coercion. **Sex Trafficking** is a particularly degrading type of human trafficking which enters the victim into the commercial sex industry.

### **Signs of Human Trafficking**

- **Educate** the public on the signs of human trafficking and **advocate** for the end of this practice. Victims of human trafficking can experience the following:

#### **Common Work and Living Conditions** – The individual in question:

- Is not free to leave or come and go as she wishes.
- Is under 18 and is providing commercial sex acts.
- Is in the commercial sex industry and has a pimp/manager.
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips.
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours.
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work.
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off.
- Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of her work.
- High security measures exist in the work and/or living locations (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.).

#### **Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behaviour** – The individual in question:

- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid.
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behaviour after bringing up law enforcement.
- Avoids eye contact.

#### **Poor Physical Health** – The individual in question:

- Lacks health care.
- Appears malnourished.
- Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture.

#### **Lack of Personal Control** – The individual in question:

- Has few or no personal possessions.
- Is not in control of his/her own money, no financial records, or bank account.
- Is not in control of his/her own identification documents (ID or passport).
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves (a third party may insist on being present and/or translating).

#### **Other**– The individual in question:

- Claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where he/she is staying/address.
- Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in.
- Has loss of sense of time.
- Has numerous inconsistencies in his/her story.

## **Violence against women and girls confined in Institutional and Residential environments**

### **Types of sexual violence include:**

- Without their consent, visual and/or audio recording and distribution of pornographic images of women and girls, including those confined in institutional and residential environments.
- Sterilization of girls and women without their consent, thus affecting the right to reproduce.
- Stripping and leaving arrested and/or incarcerated persons naked longer than five minutes.

### **What to Do:**

- **Enact** expeditiously legislation (local, state, national, international) making the aforementioned types of sexual violence illegal.)
- **Extend** criminal justice and mental health definitions and services to include these types of sexual violence under the parameters of rape.

## **Resources**

### **Sexual Violence:**

The trauma of sexual violence affects individuals, families and communities. If you are the victim of rape or sexual assault, or want to help someone who has been, contact one of the following resources:

Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR)  
1-866-363-7273.

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)  
<https://www.rainn.org>  
1-800-656-HOPE

### **Intimate Partner Violence Prevention:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/definitions.html>  
<http://liveboldandbloom.com/11/relationships/signs-of-emotional-abuse>

The National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-.800-799-SAFE (7233) or  
1-800-787-3224 (TTY) 24/7 for anonymous help.

### **Help for getting out of a trafficking situation:**

National Human Trafficking Resource Center  
1-888-373-7888  
SMS: 233733 (Text "HELP" or "INFO")  
Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week  
Languages: English, Spanish and 200 more languages  
Website: [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org)

**Men and Boys ending sexual violence:**

**Men Stopping Violence**

2785 Lawrenceville Highway

Ste. 112

Decatur, GA 30033

Phone: 404-270-9894

Toll Free: 1-866-717-9317

<http://www.menstoppingviolence.org/>

<http://www.menstoppingviolence.org/programs/because-we-have-daughters>

**A Call to Men**

250 Merrick Road #813, Rockville Centre

New York, New York 11570

Phone: 917-922-6738

[info@acalltomen.org](mailto:info@acalltomen.org)

<http://www.acalltomen.org>

**Southwest PA Says No More**

FISA Foundation

535 Smithfield Street

Pittsburgh PA 15222

412-456-5550

<http://southwestpasaysnomore.org/>

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## Workplace Violence

Violence in the workplace has received considerable attention in the popular press and among safety and health professionals. According to the FBI and the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc. (AAOHN), negative behavior encompasses untrustworthy behavior, habitual lying, chronic bad attitude, verbal threats, history of violence, sexual harassment, domestic disputes which spill into the workplace, and many more unsolicited actions. Moreover, there are different viewpoints when a person perceives that there is a problem in the workplace, and the approach to it may vary when it comes to men and women. However, such differences in perception seem marginal when actual violence occurs. **Every** employee wants to feel safe, and should, within his or her daily work environment.

In order to effectively reduce or prevent these, it is important to curtail or eliminate abuse in any form. The following are some suggested actions:

### Employers:

- **Create** an atmosphere or tone of the office where every employee makes a commitment to prevent or eliminate workplace violence.
- **Communicate and define** job descriptions in a way that clearly lays out areas of responsibilities to help avoid possible employee conflicts and establishes clear and definitive workplace policies that discourage inappropriate interactions which might lead to violent acts calling for appropriate discipline.
- **Write** job descriptions that clearly lay out areas of responsibilities to avoid possible employee conflicts.
- **Define** workplace policies clearly to discourage inappropriate interactions.
- **Discourage** borrowing between co-workers on work premises and curtail gambling. Such practices could lead to very negative inter-employee outcomes.
- **Use** a calm voice, with an appropriate non-confrontational tone, to communicate both instructions and ideas.
- **Prohibit** intimidation of fellow co-workers or subordinates.
- **Set** clear policies that prohibit harassment or sexual misconduct in the workplace. Inform employees about the Human Relations *and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* of that city, county or state.
- **Do not** demean a subordinate in front of one's peers or senior staff.
- **Mandate** training for all employees such as in-house courses on discrimination and diversity.

- **Commit** to having training courses on how to reduce and/or eliminate violence in the workplace, and how not to retaliate in the midst of a negative interaction or circumstance.

**Employees:**

- **Value** one's duties and responsibilities and the opportunity for advancement by not initiating or being involved in workplace violence.
- **Refrain** from gossiping or devaluing of other's character or mannerisms. Stay professional regardless of station or position.
- **Avoid** spreading rumors within the workplace.
- **Do not** forward inappropriate e-mail messages. Employees may receive such e-mails from time to time, but should not send them on to anyone else. Such an act may bring about a disciplinary response from management.
- **Abstain** from putting a subordinate or co-worker in any uncomfortable or unacceptable situation.
- **Avoid** being coerced into activities or work situations that might lead to being reprimanded or fired.
- **Inform** the harasser or abuser, that he/she can be reported, if harassed or abused by a co-worker, subordinate or supervisor. Should the behavior continue first write a memo to the harasser to state that he or she risks being reported to his or her supervisor, department head, or agency administration if the inappropriate behavior does not end.
- **Know** that one can report workplace harassment or sexual abuse to the Human Relations and/or Employment Opportunity Commission of that city, county, or state.

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## Youth Violence Prevention Strategies

Violence is a major public health issue affecting mental, physical, emotional, financial and spiritual health. Education, awareness, and prevention efforts are key components to reducing the prevalence of violence and its devastating impact on society.

### Youth Speak Out:

Everyone, but especially the youth, must understand the high cost of violence, such as death, disability, incarceration, family disruption, community fear and distrust of youth, and its impact on the entire community. They must also respect the rights of others in order to earn respect. The youth themselves are speaking out and saying "Be the change you want to see in the world. Become a leader in changing the culture of violence."

To reduce the violence that runs in our communities, youth must do the following:

- **Express** anger in a positive way and address personal issues with help from peers, parents, teachers, coaches, and others.
- **Organize** and call for an *immediate* end to *all* of the violence in our communities. Come together and participate in activities that work toward decreasing the tension that exists among individuals, various neighborhoods and communities. Create councils in each community that will be staffed and led by youth and guided by concerned and committed adults. These councils should meet regularly at a safe place to share relevant ideas and concerns. From the various neighborhoods invite adults and other youth who have been identified as being a positive influence in the community.
- **Advocate** for youth involvement on government and community boards seeking input from youth in diverse communities. Efforts should be made to improve communication between police and youth in the community and to build new bridges for mutual respect.
- **Participate** in opening lines of communication between youth and adults during community forums and other activities aimed at reducing violence. Reach out to parents, family members, and other adults to encourage them to participate in activities that youth enjoy. Youth are strongly encouraged to take advantage of all positive opportunities offered.
- **Practice** the proper way to conduct one's self when stopped by the police. Be aware of your rights and responsibilities when dealing with the police. Take advantage of programs that provide these skills as well as other information. There are brochures and pamphlets provided by social service and government agencies. For example, the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) and the NAACP Pittsburgh Branch produced a pamphlet entitled "*You and the Police: Rights, Responsibilities and Realities.*" The City of Pittsburgh has published *Information for People Concerned about Police Conduct*.

- **Call** upon parents, guardians and loved ones to be good role models. Share with them the important role they play in influencing the lives and attitudes of children. If necessary, *demand* they be good parents by being *present* in their lives. All too often some young people have been forced to take on the role of parenting younger siblings when parents or other family members have been unable to do so. Sometimes young people must take in the leadership role in displaying positive family and community values.
- **Demand** that parents, guardians and/or other caregivers take control of their households and provide the nurturing and discipline that children need from the earliest ages. To do so earns the respect of their children.
- **Show** respect for parents, guardians and other adults in your household so that they can trust children and youth to make responsible decisions. Lead by example and show younger siblings how to treat parents respectfully, so that when they become older, they will also be trusted to make good decisions.
- **Interact** with other youth in a respectful way to get respect in return.
- **Lead**, don't follow! Be strong and act independently. Young people should not try to be what *others* want them to be, unless those goals are positive. Far too many youths follow other youth who exhibit serious negative behaviors such as getting involved in unhealthy, and possibly criminal, actions. Be a role model to younger children and encourage them to achieve positive goals, as well.
- **Reject** the mindset that everyone else is the cause of ones' negative life circumstances. This kind of attitude encourages one to play the role of victim and fosters feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, and not having the ability to change ones' life situation. Understand that one *does* have the *personal* power to change life's' circumstances. Develop and adopt the faith to do so.
- **Utilize** ones' talents and skills for positive purposes. It is in ones' own best interest to pursue legal avenues to make money. Recognize that being involved in drugs and in other illegal activities contributes to the breakdown of the family and the community, imprisonment and even death. Remember that short term money will likely lead to short time lives!
- **Encourage** ones' peers to look at legal employment as the preferred lifestyle, one that should be sought by *all* members of the community. Discourage them from continuing illegal and criminal behaviors. Help them understand if they continue they will be forced to suffer the consequences.
- **Influence** ones' girlfriend or boyfriend in a positive manner. In many instances both young men and young women negatively influence, and even compete for authority, in their relationships. Be supportive of doing the —right thing. There is more value to a relationship when both parties wait before taking it the next level.
- **Delay** sexual involvement. Both boys and young men *and* girls and young women should place greater value on their bodies. Some girls and some young women believe they need to be sexually involved to maintain a relationship, which may include getting pregnant. Some young men believe that some young women use sex just to —trapll a man. Moreover, in some situations, because of the way girls and young women present

themselves some young men may feel pressured to engage in sexual activity. In all cases, such behaviors should be strongly discouraged. Sexual activity before becoming emotionally, and/or financially secure or responsible can lead to STDs, unplanned pregnancies, broken lives and broken dreams.

- **Discuss** healthy sexuality and how to build healthy relationships with parents, guardians, or other trusted adults, before becoming sexually active. Young men *and* young women both should participate in sexuality and family life planning education where available. Teen fathers and teen mothers should seek out and participate in parenting support/education programs.
- **Respect** the fact that boys and young men do not have the earning capacity of older males. Neither should boys or young men be expected to compete with adult males.
- **Understand** the fact that girls and young women should, in no way, encourage or force their boyfriends or partners to get involved in criminal behavior to provide for their needs or wants. Remember that material possessions do not bring happiness and should not determine someone's self-worth – you are *who* you are inside and not *what* you appear to be on the outside.
- **End** rumoring. Girls and young women are strongly encouraged to quit the rumors, which pit male against male. Such behaviors far too often lead to physical confrontations between competing young males, sometimes leading to death. Such deaths profoundly affect everyone involved spreading to the entire community.
- **Advance** academically. Realize the importance of making good grades and of being actively involved in positive school activities. Share with other students the fact that being a good student is the very best way to guarantee future employment and career success, and a much healthier community. Such students should be seen as the heroes of the school not the brunt of jokes and ridicule. Understand that to be smart is *not* acting *white*, and being smart is giving one the opportunity to be “green” as in making money.
- **Mentor** younger children. Utilize ones' talents to improve the educational achievement of the younger people in ones' community. This is a constructive use of time and talent and it will positively affect the climate of the neighborhood in which one lives. Volunteering not only helps others, it also makes one feel better about him/her self.
- **Stay** in school and attain the highest level of education possible. Explore other avenues for further education beyond high school that lead toward a career path. These avenues may be technical or trade schools, as well as colleges and universities.
- **Complete** training programs that build trust/respect/self-esteem and give instruction on job application skills, interviewing skills, interpersonal skills, goal setting and job preparation. Take advantage of support systems and training that will teach one how to remain employed and advance ones' career goals.
- **Demand** that *all* adults work diligently to assist youth in obtaining meaningful and legal employment. Youth should not feel that the only way to become financially stable is to engage in illegal or criminal behavior. Youth should seek employment opportunities with major businesses and corporations, as well as businesses in local communities.
- **Form** peer support/tutoring groups in schools, community centers, and religious institutions. Train to become peer educators in conflict resolution and anger management.

- **Participate** in student advisory boards that are balanced and diverse. Volunteer to become advocates/liaisons between the student population and school administration so that youth can have a strong voice in their education.
- **Train** volunteers to serve as youth counselors who can also participate in related activities such as speak-out assemblies at churches, schools and community events.
- **Participate** in the political process by voting in each and every election because voting *does* impact every aspect of society. Even youth who have not reached voting age can make a difference. Get involved in the political process; participate in activities such as voter registration, flyer distribution, and making phone calls for getting out the vote.
- **Become involved** with the Coalition Against Violence. Youth from across neighborhood boundaries work together in all initiatives and strategies.
- **Develop** an anti-violence youth task force as an umbrella group of the Coalition Against Violence.

#### **Youth Empowerment:**

- **Empower** the youth to speak for themselves. Encourage them to speak out at school board city and county council meetings about the plight of youth and insist they provide whatever is necessary to change the culture of violence in the schools and in the community. Seek out adults who are willing to provide 'training' on public speaking.
- **Help** youth discover for themselves their interests, gifts and talents. Motivate them to display and use their talents.
- **Expose** children, when they are young, to different kinds of educational, recreational, cultural, and spiritual events.
- **Provide** programs and activities for strengthening resiliency, including those that foster discipline, accountability, teamwork, self-esteem and character building to give them a sense of purpose, pride, and healthy self-worth.
- **Encourage** all youth to participate in positive uplifting activities and events.
- **Ensure** that all students have an opportunity to become involved in leadership programs by creating a safe group atmosphere and setting. Offer classes that develop leadership building skills and encourage peer leadership programs.
- **Get** students involved in community service and encourage volunteerism; give youth ownership of planning, implementation, and presenting.
- **Empower** youth to organize for peace and other topics important to them.
- **Teach** youth to be stakeholders in their own neighborhoods and communities.
- **Educate** youth about the importance of civic engagement beyond civics class in ninth grade and involve them in the election process as volunteers during elections. Encourage students of voting to register, vote, and even consider running for public office.

- **Reach out** to those youths who say they don't want to change: encourage them to realize their creative talents and motivate them to succeed. Realize that some youth cannot be reached, but do not be discouraged. The main focus is to make every attempt to reach those 'who are on the fence.'
- **Give** girls healthy alternatives, because they can be as aggressive and abusive as teen boys. Provide healthy alternatives for boys as well.
- **Engage** youth, starting at elementary school. Focus on development of violence prevention, anti-violence, anti-bullying, alcohol and other drug awareness and education at the elementary level, or earlier, because the earlier the intervention the better to impact violent behaviors.
- **Encourage** older siblings to show a more positive way to their younger siblings.

#### **Action Steps for Families and the Community:**

- **Provide** transportation from neighborhoods and local municipalities to encourage more youth participation in positive events.
- **Actively seek** more adults to serve as mentors, informal teachers and positive role models.
- **Encourage** community groups, communities of faith, schools and other places to provide space for drop-in programs for children and youth.
- **Demand** funding for 'safe spaces' or havens. These could be libraries, extended day programs, or supervised after-school programs.
- **Support** classroom-based programs for all students to engage in discussions of community issues important to them.
- **Develop** a youth-oriented directory listing grassroots organizations and community nonprofits that are willing to provide venues for leadership education and engagement to interested youth.
- **Respond** to community violence in ways that prevent further conflict; provide first responders, mediators, grief workers, community leaders, and other citizens who are trained or equipped with the necessary skills.
- **Encourage** older siblings to show a more positive way for the younger siblings.
- **Learn** family structure to determine who is engaging in violent behavior; engage families as one unit to become less violent.
- **Provide** more city-wide programs that take kids through reality checks by showing young kids what could happen if they continue to display negative, violent behavior. For example, "Scared Straight" programs, or programs that show children about the jails, etc.
- **Encourage** the youth who are currently in rehabilitative juvenile programs to explain to younger students their process of transformation.

- **Insist** that policy makers institute viable, workable programs to address the issue of violence. Insist that government support existing programs that have proven success and provide the necessary funds to replicate throughout the city.
- **Utilize** “experts” who actually run city-wide programs instead of going to other cities for expertise.
- **Persuade** more grassroots organizations to become involved in the process of making positive change for youth and the entire community.
- **Encourage** adults to mentor youth who have been “written off.”
- **Reach out** to those youths who say they don’t want to change and encourage them to realize their creative talents and motivate them to succeed.
- **Speak out** at school board, city and county council meetings about the plight of our youth and insist they provide whatever is necessary to change the culture of violence in the schools and in the community. Seek out adults who are willing to provide “training” on public speaking.
- **Seek out** adults who can urge student athletes to display more appropriate behavior and become positive role models for other youth.
- **Provide support** for parents to encourage them to take an active and positive role in the lives of their children before they become “street-wise” and engage in violent activities that can lead to injuries, incarceration, and/or death.
- **Provide** family education. Understand family structures to determine who is engaging in violent behavior and provide support for the entire family.
- **Actively show** youth what could happen if they continue to engage in negative and/or violent behavior by providing more programs that take them through reality checks, such as “Scared Straight.”
- **Help** youth who are currently in rehabilitative juvenile programs to explain to younger students their process of transformation.
- **Insist** that policy makers institute viable, workable programs to address issues relative to violence.
- **Utilize** more local experts who are providing effective programs that address the issue of violence before seeking expertise elsewhere. Insist on government support for local program with effective, proven success and provide the necessary funds to replicate such programs throughout the city and region.
- **Seek** and encourage adults to mentor youth who have been ‘written off.’
- **Identify** adults who will insist that all student athletes display appropriate behavior and become more positive role models for other youth.

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## Zero Tolerance

In our comprehensive document, *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities* the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV) has provided every part of society with a role to play in impacting violence. The implementation and mobilization of these strategies *will* make a difference in lessening the violence we all abhor. What we seek, however, is a *society-wide* commitment to ZERO TOLERANCE for violence. Over the years the impact of violence throughout this nation has been far too wide and far too deep. In many of our communities of color the frequent reporting of death by violence has become almost commonplace *and* expected. That viewpoint is unacceptable. It is our stand that *everyone* must have a personal and ongoing commitment to zero tolerance.

- **TEACH** your children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren that the use of violence in their daily interactions is unacceptable.
- **FIND** positive resolutions to negative interactions.
- **SEEK** to create an atmosphere in your home, in your schools, in your work place, and in your community that values peace and understanding.
- **BE** a *ROLE MODEL* for your children, family, and community; Make a personal commitment to live a life of active nonviolence, peace and understanding.
- **ENGAGE** in a *LIFETIME COMMITMENT* to zero tolerance for violence!

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# ***Appendix***



## **Appendix**

- A. “30 Tips of Dignity & Respect Dignity & Respect Campaign Greater Pittsburgh**
- B. The Beginning: The Time to End the Violence is NOW!!! B-PEP/ One Hood News Conference. *Thursday, February 8, 2007***
- C. CAV Pledge for Peace**
- D. Foreword First Edition (2008)**
- E. Foreword Second Edition (2010)**
- F. A Historical Perspective of Rap Music as it relates to the Violence in the African American Community**
- G. Statement on Violence News Conference - September 25, 2015**
- H. You & The Police: Rights, Responsibilities & Reality**

# 30 Tips of Dignity & Respect

## Practice *the* TIPS!

Sometimes it's the smallest things that have the biggest impact. By practicing the 30 Tips of Dignity & Respect every day, each of us can make our organization a better place for ALL to work—with ALL of our differences.

<p><b>TIP 1</b> <b>Start with you.</b> Reflect on how you see others, and how others see you.</p>	<p><b>TIP 2</b> <b>Sweat the small stuff.</b> It's often the small things, such as being kind and courteous, that make a difference.</p>	<p><b>TIP 3</b> <b>Smile.</b> A smile can be contagious.</p>	<p><b>TIP 4</b> <b>Say "Hello."</b> You could make someone's day.</p>	<p><b>TIP 5</b> <b>Say "Thank you."</b> Gratitude is a gift that's never too small to give.</p>	<p><b>TIP 6</b> <b>Build cultural awareness.</b> Differences are barriers only if we allow them to be.</p>
<p><b>TIP 7</b> <b>Treat others the way they want to be treated.</b> Find out what respect means to others.</p>	<p><b>TIP 8</b> <b>Make a new friend.</b> Start a conversation and learn something new.</p>	<p><b>TIP 9</b> <b>Demonstrate mutual respect.</b> Inclusion means being respectful regardless of position or title.</p>	<p><b>TIP 10</b> <b>Ask.</b> It's ok to ask when you're not sure.</p>	<p><b>TIP 11</b> <b>Find common ground.</b> Discover what you have in common.</p>	<p><b>TIP 12</b> <b>Communicate respectfully.</b> It's not just what you say, but how you say it.</p>
<p><b>TIP 13</b> <b>Practice patience.</b> Take the time to get the full story.</p>	<p><b>TIP 14</b> <b>Seek understanding.</b> It's better to not fully understand than to fully misunderstand.</p>	<p><b>TIP 15</b> <b>Share your point of view.</b> Everyone has a perspective. Let others benefit from yours.</p>	<p><b>TIP 16</b> <b>Get someone else's point of view.</b> After sharing your perspective, give others a chance to share theirs.</p>	<p><b>TIP 17</b> <b>Join the team.</b> Do your part to support teamwork.</p>	<p><b>TIP 18</b> <b>Be open.</b> Try to experience new thoughts and ideas as learning opportunities.</p>
<p><b>TIP 19</b> <b>Be flexible.</b> Things don't always go as planned. Adapt to changing conditions when necessary.</p>	<p><b>TIP 20</b> <b>Reinvent the wheel.</b> Do something that hasn't already been done.</p>	<p><b>TIP 21</b> <b>Be a relationship builder.</b> Seek ways to expand your network.</p>	<p><b>TIP 22</b> <b>Build trust.</b> Be fair. Limit bias and favoritism.</p>	<p><b>TIP 23</b> <b>Lead the way.</b> Let your inclusive behavior light a path for others.</p>	<p><b>TIP 24</b> <b>Listen.</b> People feel respected when they know you're listening to their point of view.</p>
<p><b>TIP 25</b> <b>Remember, we all make mistakes.</b> Resist the urge to point out the ones others make.</p>	<p><b>TIP 26</b> <b>Do the right thing.</b> Make a difference. Get caught being good.</p>	<p><b>TIP 27</b> <b>Become a mentor.</b> You—yes, you—can help others realize their potential.</p>	<p><b>TIP 28</b> <b>Lend a hand.</b> A little help can go a long way.</p>	<p><b>TIP 29</b> <b>Live a healthy life.</b> Do something good for your mind, body, &amp; soul. Encourage others to join you.</p>	<p><b>TIP 30</b> <b>Be a champion of dignity and respect.</b> Demonstrate respect for self, others, and your community.</p>

## The Beginning...



### THE BLACK POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (B-PEP)

**“The Time to End the Violence is  
NOW!!!”**

**B-PEP/ One Hood News Conference  
Thursday, February 8, 2007**

Many Pittsburghers, and many citizens of Western Pennsylvania and of our Commonwealth, were saddened, angered and disturbed when we learned that the Pennsylvania Black homicide rate leads the entire nation. Just in case anyone wondered, most African Americans find this statistic startling and absolutely unacceptable. Many community leaders, of various backgrounds have come together tonight to make it clear, quite clear, that this violence must end -- and that it must end NOW!!!

In these early days of Black History Month 2007 we call upon each and every African American to contribute to creating a new, peaceful and loving chapter in our community life where we look into our hearts to see where we have far too frequently sought violent solutions when other alternatives were readily available to us to solve our disputes.

Violence cannot be the norm. It must become the exception! To our African American community, I say: White people are not killing us. WE are killing us. WE have become the problem, and WE must now find the solutions. Our churches, our mosques, our institutions, our schools and our families must set the tone. We must collectively take ownership of the problem and set the stage for a new day of valuing ourselves as a Black people, as a worthy people, as a loving people. We have no other choice. Our future IS at stake!!

Though our African American community must take the lead in ending “Black on Black Violence”, the majority community has a key role to play as well. There is much in the history of this nation which has planted the roots of destruction within the African American community. Our wish tonight is that the majority community will take ownership of that history of discrimination, racism, segregation and “white privilege” which collectively has provided the social and psychological foundation for a fractured and unhealthy Black community.

That check, which came back to us marked “insufficient funds” and about which the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. so eloquently spoke of years ago, must now be cashed if the African American community is to ever have a real and meaningful opportunity to fully participate in many wonderful opportunities which this nation provides so many of its citizens on a daily basis.

On Tuesday, February 20, 2007 at 6:00 pm, at the Hill House Association, the Black Political Empowerment Project and One Hood, have scheduled a “work session” for African Americans and for those from the majority community who wish to identify implementation strategies to support the many existing agencies, programs and initiatives which already exist to attempt to end the violence in our communities. We don’t need to invent new wheels. We need to grease the wheels which already exist.

We will also seek to explore methodologies which will produce a much stronger and effective commitment on the part of the political, foundation and corporate power brokers of this region. Let’s be clear, the dream of which Dr. King spoke on a hot day in August 1963 has NEVER been realized. It is now imperative that we each do what we can do to make the dream a reality!! The time is now. The legacy of King demands it!

*Tim Stevens, Chairman*

The Black Political Empowerment Project



**The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV)**



**Pledge for Peace**

**We want safe, peaceful and just communities for all!**

*I pledge to:*

**VALUE** the life of others

**RESPECT** the rights and opinions of others

**BUILD** positive, productive relationships

**FIND** good in everyone I meet

**FOSTER** a culture and climate of unity in my school and community

**EXERCISE** forgiveness

**ENSURE** everyone I meet feels safe

**BE** an advocate of peace

**SPEAK** out against all forms of violence

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_



Presented by The Black Political Empowerment Project, 2201 Wylie Avenue,  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219 (412) 212-8775

Email: [cav.pgh@gmail.com](mailto:cav.pgh@gmail.com)

[www.b-pep.net](http://www.b-pep.net)

**Moving from Complaint to Possibility-From Planning to Implementation & Mobilization!"**

## Foreword – First Edition (2008)

Sitting on the ‘bench’ of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas has given me an exceptional vantage point with respect to the problems that impact our communities. My role as a Juvenile Court Judge is unique in that it gives me the opportunity to see many troubled youths before they become ingrained in a negative lifestyle and succumb to the evils of “The Streets.”

The “evils” begin to attract and attack our youth when they are young. Violence, gun toting and sexual deviancy becomes an intimate partner in their lives long before they mature with wisdom. Young males that come into my courtroom are more likely to die before they reached adulthood than to graduate from high school. The crime of “weapon carrying” is the most prevalent offense adjudicated. I also see a growing trend of young women engaging in the same offenses.

Addressing this violence phenomenon is imperative. We must find a way to address these problems within our youth subculture. It is all of our responsibility to insure they have the opportunity to become ripe with years, mature with wisdom and most of all productive citizens. If we do not jump in and save our children, they will not have the tools needed to continue the legacy of our fathers. Our first goal, as responsible stakeholders, is to get our youth to realize that violence solves nothing. Our second goal has to give them something to look forward to since most of all they lack hope.

As a Juvenile Court Judge, I am pained by the lack of hope that I see in the eyes of the youth who come before me. I am not surprised by their lack of awareness of the need to be respectful to their parents, elders as well the authorities. It appears that they have long ago turned off their emotions. At first, I was startled by their boldness and lack of fear expressed in their behaviors in and out of court, but then I soon recognized their behaviors as a defense mechanism. I am stilled by their words, those said and mostly unsaid, because of a lack of proper education. I am greatly grieved by the apparent lack of guidance suffered by these young people. Yet I am encouraged by the work of **The Coalition Against Violence** and it is so very important that they be recognized for their dedication to our communities.

Accolades are to be extended to all who have taken the time to sit down, ponder, discuss, seek solutions and provide this booklet as a beacon of hope for our children. The Bible tells us in Psalms 127:3, “*Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him.*” Thus, our youth are our legacy and a blessing from God almighty. We must “*train them up in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).*”

*Judge Dwayne D. Woodruff*  
Court of Common Pleas, Family Division  
Allegheny County  
Pittsburgh Steelers 1979- ‘90

## Foreword to Second Edition

As a judge in the Family Division of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, I sit on a “Judicial Bench.” This courtroom bench is raised two feet above ground level and fifteen feet in front of the table where the lawyer and juvenile defendant sit. Behind me are a United States flag and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania flag.

On a daily basis, young people come before the bench and I can only imagine that they feel some measure of intimidation and fear as they look up at me from the defendant’s table. I consider how intimidated I would have felt at their age and this realization leads me to speak to these young people with sensitivity and in a very caring manner. Additionally, in order to pass down a fair judgment that seeks to impart ‘balanced and restorative justice’ as opposed to punitive justice, I consider what they have done (the crime they committed), in addition to, how they got where they are; what factors led to the circumstances that placed them at the defendant’s table before me.

I have noticed three phenomena in relation to why youth find themselves in the courtroom:

- Youth are exhibiting increased aggression; involved in violent altercations, fights...
- More youth are carrying fire arms/weapons.
- There is an increased lack of understanding of the importance of education, leading to poor academic performance, truancy, high dropout rate...

The years that I have spent on the bench have given me insight into ‘best practices’ or what works best in reaching our youth to

encourage them to travel down the right path, to steer clear of violence and other unlawful activities. I can point out two factors that I believe makes a huge and profound difference; Education and Caring Individuals.

In compiling and writing the 2nd edition of the “Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities” the Coalition Against Violence is exhibiting and providing both, education and care, to every sector of our society. Each chapter thoroughly addresses all aspects of the violence issue and gives guidance toward reducing and eliminating this societal ill. The Coalition Against Violence has updated a document that answers the all-to-often asked question of, “what can I do” with detailed and well thought out responses and action points for every person and community group. This has been a collaborative effort that has the potential to yield great results in this battle against violence. The bible speaks clearly in Psalms 24:5, A wise man has great power, and a man of knowledge increases strength; for waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers.”

I proclaim that accolades are in order for the Coalition Against Violence and all the dedicated individuals who have taken the time to study this violence problem, contemplate it, discuss it, collaborate around it, seek attainable solutions and ultimately, present this document with resolve to educate all and exhibit their care and concern for our children, our communities and our future.

*Judge Dwayne D. Woodruff*  
Court of Common Pleas, Family Division  
Allegheny County

October 2, 2011



**A Historical Perspective of Rap Music as it Relates to the  
Violence in the African American Community  
By Steve Johnson**

Music has always touched hearts and minds. People have expressed the social ills of their particular era through popular music, from jazz to rock 'n roll, to country. In the late 1970s, inner city youth (mainly African American and Latino youth) embraced a new culture and consciousness called "Hip Hop" with its innovative art, clothing, and music. The elements of Hip Hop included deejaying, graffiti art, break dancing and other dance forms, as well as emceeing or "rapping" over beats, and disseminating knowledge.

Groups such as KRS-1 and Afrika Bambaataa with the Zulu Nation intended for rap music to be a tool for teaching the youth in a positive way. Rap lyrics were filled with messages about the realities facing many inner city youth, such as gang violence and drugs. Yet messages about love, unity, justice, respect, and responsibility were also incorporated in the music. During the mid-1980s, groups like Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions and X-Klan, Queen Latifah, and Salt 'n Peppa carried on the tradition of positive teaching through their music. With one or two exceptions, rap artists were mostly African American and a few Latinos.

From its beginnings, older people, both Black and white, viewed rap as an art form that would not last. While the artists were mostly youth of color, rapping about inner city life, the music was being purchased by more young White men, living in suburban and rural areas, than any other group in the US population. Seeing the huge potential for making millions by exploiting the Hip Hop musical form called emceeing or "rap," the major music and advertising agencies seized the opportunity to capitalize on this gold mine and the Rap Industry was born.

In the early 90s "the industry labeled this new music form "Gangsta Rap." One of the first groups to receive world-wide attention under this new "genre" was called *NWA* (Niggas with Attitude) from Compton, California. *NWA* gave "voice" to inner city youth, who lived the thug life, because they incorporated messages about police brutality, poverty, and crime – issues inner city youth face every day. The message might have been about the realities of life, but the sexually explicit and violent images to which youth were being exposed from the "Gangsta Rap" videos held implications that could be seen as being potentially harmful to the "hearts and minds" of the youth.

Capitalizing on the huge popularity of the particular form of music, the record labels, the movie and TV entertainment industry, as well as the advertising industry began to invest millions into promoting those artists with gangster material. Quite often, artists with more positive messages were ignored. Many of the Gangsta and the Krunk rappers have written more socially conscious music, as well. Yet, it appeared that artists who glorified the thug or player life-style received the greatest exposure from the music industry.

It was during this period in history that youth gangs began to rise in many of the inner cities. Rap became an issue of national security when the rapper Ice T wrote "Kill the Police" and Gangsta Rap became part of the national consciousness.

Congressional hearings and boycotts of the music were called to protest the dangerous messages being espoused by many rappers.

It did not matter that the music was the “voice” of many youths, who clearly understood the impact of poverty, police brutality, under-employment and mis-education on their daily existence.

The music corporations must have understood the effects that this music would have on the mentality of the community, especially the youth, but chose instead to keep getting rich. Music label executives and artist promoters heavily pushed “Gangsta Rap,” often to the exclusion of other forms of rap, thereby creating a new culture and mindset.

Whether the rap artists actually lived the lives they spoke about in their music, they felt that to be hugely successful, they had no choice but to do “Gangsta Rap” if they expected to survive in the industry. Moreover, many of these rappers actually believe they are giving a positive message through their music when they give their personal testimonies about the realities of their lives.

However, when they fail to see, or either choose to ignore the trap being set for them by the industry, such artists are only brainwashing themselves into believing the “hype” set forth by the record labels. Furthermore, many rappers glorify the “skewed” messages about power and wealth gleaned from mainstream movies, such as *Scarface* and other gangster movies.

In recent years, “Beef” CDs or DVDs have become very popular. Rappers “go at” each other to prove how much tougher they are than the next guy. These so-called “feuds” between rap stars may be a marketing ploy to drive up sales, but they also send a potentially dangerous message to the youth. These so-called “Beef” CDs are another brainwashing tool, and the youth are not aware of what is happening.

Far too many music albums, music videos, video games, movies, and other forms of media perpetuate negative stereotypes about African Americans and other people of color. Today’s youth are seeing a skewed view of life and are receiving mixed messages that are potentially damaging to

their healthy development and well-being. Not only are young men receiving mixed messages about their manhood and their place in society, the messages about women are also potentially damaging because they tend to show women as objects. The music glorifies the gangster life as well as the pimp life with its fixation on fast cars, fast women, and big money. Furthermore, many adults are fearful that our Black youth are being brainwashed into thinking that they must be “gangster” in order to survive, or that one must be a “pimp” to get the woman and the money.

This brainwashing may be evident in the state of young Black America today when two-thirds of the youth in prison are Black. This may be evident in the Pittsburgh region where the majority of homicide victims of gang-like or “drug-war” violence is Black.

What children hear and see shapes their growth and development. “We are all a product of our environment,” say the rappers.” However, not everyone in the inner city, or from the ‘hood’, is a gangster or a gang member, a “player”, or a “gold-digging” woman.

Nevertheless, many youths try to emulate their favorite rap artists who glorify these things. This music also exposes young children to sexually explicit lyrics, curse words, and messages that glorify the “fast life.” Young people internalize the images and messages they receive from the music, and can become desensitized to the real consequences of violence when they are exposed to too many videos or movies with violent themes.

Rappers and the music industry both reap huge financial benefits, but do so at the expense of the “hearts and minds” of millions of youth. As stated previously, White males buy more rap music than any other group in the United States, approximately 80%. Furthermore, rap music is all over the world; youths from Russia to Africa, from Brazil to Europe are getting their blueprint from watching American videos and listening to rap music.

Millions of young people think that all Black youth in America are pimps, players, gangsters and prostitutes, for these are the images they see. Moreover, millions of African American youth and children internalize these negative images. Add this to the effects of internalized oppression from racism, and even sexism, on Black people in this society. One might be tempted to conclude that youth violence in the African American community may be one of the effects of too much exposure to negative music.

Major corporations continue to invest heavily in "Gangsta Rap" or its latest incarnation known as "KrunK Rap," artists with more conscious or positive messages receive less exposure or airplay. Unfortunately, radio stations all across the country will choose to play a song like "Pop, Lock, and Drop It," with its sexually explicit lyrics, over a song like "I Know I Can" an anthem of self-esteem and self-determination.

More often than not, many of the more conscious artists must turn to the music "underground" to get their music played. The major music networks such as MTV or VH1 show all kinds of music, including KrunK music. However, until recently, BET, the

"Black" network, had a late night rotation which featured the uncut, unedited and so-called more adult and sexually explicit versions of many of the videos shown on other times of the day. Furthermore, there are also websites, featuring the uncut or unedited lyrics of this music, to which even children can have access.

Do the rappers understand this or even care how our children and youth are affected by their music? Do the mostly White producers and executives understand or even care if the music they sponsor glorifies and perpetuates negative stereotypes? Do parents know exactly what their children are listening to on the radio, or seeing on TV? Is this music a contributing factor to the violence that permeates the streets of many African American communities?

Everyone -- the music executives and promoters, the TV music and radio network heads, parents and the community -- must take responsibility for what our children and youth are seeing and hearing. If this music *is* a contributing factor to the violence that permeates the streets of our communities, there has to be a change.

Steve Johnson is the author of *Wake Up Young Black Males: Life Is What You Make It*.



**Statement on Area Violence**  
**From The Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) and**  
**The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV)**  
**Tuesday, September 15, 2015**

Area viewers of local television news have, for some time, been exposed to numerous incidents and tragedies involving violence. The unfortunate fact is that the frequency of such reporting is at such a level that many of us might have become almost *immune* to the depth of the pain caused to all of us, to our children in particular, and to the health and welfare of our communities in general, by the regular reporting of such negative news.

The news reports this past Saturday morning on local news, which included the reporting of the deaths of both fifteen year Curtis Pounds shot on Thursday in Knoxville, and the report that fourteen-year-old Desean Fountain who was shot the previous week in East Liberty did not survive, coupled with the reporting of numerous other shooting incidents, was just too much for many of too ignore and not address.

Many of the partners of B-PEP, the Black Political Empowerment Project, the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence (CAV), Voices Against Violence (VAV) and CeaseFirePA have come together this morning to express our collective upset as to what is happening in and *to* our communities. We thank each and every one of these additional partners who has joined us today to express their outrage.

One thing we want to make very clear to *anyone* who wonders, this ongoing violence within our neighborhoods and communities is absolutely *unacceptable*. We are collectively, once again calling upon all persons who have committed, and those who are contemplating any acts of violence, to please think twice, and then think again, about how their acts of violence affect the loved ones of those who are shot and/or killed, and the profoundly negative affects upon themselves, their futures and the community at large.

When a child can't stand outside his home without fearing violence, we have come a long way in the wrong direction. When a 22-month old infant is killed in his own home, due to negligence involved in how guns are stored, and when we have another home where a father leaves two guns on a table allowing 9-year-old to shoot his six-year-old brother, we have come a long way in the wrong direction. When a fifteen-month-old baby, such as Marcus White Jr. is shot and killed, as happened a few years ago in East Hills at a picnic, we have come long way in the wrong direction.

Some time ago I stated that unfortunately, many of us, particularly within the urban setting, are within "three degrees of death": We have possibly personally lost someone we love to violence as has Rich Carrington, Executive Director of Voices Against Violence, who just lost, on September 10<sup>th</sup>, one the young people who attended his summer camp, or B-PEP Election Protection staff member, Audrey Thomas, who just lost her grandson to a shooting in the Hill District on September 7<sup>th</sup>; or we personally know someone who has lost someone to violence; or lastly, we know someone who knows someone who has lost someone to violence. When I grew up in the Hill District, just blocks away from this office, I could not say that.

We call upon parents, grandparents and relatives who have people in their families who they *know* or suspect might be involved in violent and/or illegal activities which may be putting their families and communities at risk, to at least *attempt* to direct their loved ones in another direction. We must individually and collectively continue to seek ways to end the violence and build new opportunities and possibilities.

We also call upon our political and corporate leaders to make a priority the uprooting of the roots of poverty and dysfunctionality within our communities and do whatever is necessary to re-build those same communities. With B-PEP's Corporate Equity & Inclusion Roundtable (CEIR) we are calling upon Corporate Pittsburgh to be proactive in seeking, training, retaining, mentoring and promoting African Americans and people of color throughout the Pittsburgh Region, and to providing breakthroughs for entrepreneurial opportunities for African Americans and people of color. It remains the position of B-PEP, the Coalition Against Violence and the Corporate Equity & Inclusion Roundtable that the roots of violence are rooted in the absence of access to employment and positive entrepreneurial opportunities. Without a true commitment to realization of these goals the violence we say we all abhor will NOT go away!

There are numerous organizations, agencies, religious groups and individuals who, on a regular basis, attempt to plant seeds of hope to replace the roots of violence, many of whom are represented at this morning's news conference.

We have just recently had conversations on laying the foundation to expand our B-PEP/CAV anti-violence Youth Summits in area schools to implement many of the strategies listed in our "Strategies for Change" document. Our whole focus, once we complete the revised document is to seek partners in 'implementation and mobilization' of the hundreds of strategies contained in our document.

B-PEP and the Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence is [dedicated] to eliminating the various forms of violence, at last Thursday's B-PEP Planning [by addressing] a form of what might be called 'violent rhetoric.'

In our new Coalition Against Violence document we will be including the revised version of the "You and The Police" brochure which is aimed at educating young people, and the community at large, with regard to their rights when interacting with police. We

have also requested Chief Cameron McLay to ensure that all of his police officers are trained in what's in that document and the rights of our citizens which must be respected, and he has agreed to do so.

However, as many of us in this room move to ensure that the rights of our citizens are protected and that the relationship, particularly between the police and the African American community and communities of color is improved, we must be diligent to also foster both respect *from* the police to our community, and to foster respect *from* our community *to* the police.

Many of us at our B-PEP meeting were quite concerned that some people walking in a Black Lives Matter march in St. Paul Minnesota on Saturday, August 29, 2015 and crying out "Pigs in a Blanket – Fry 'em like bacon" were indeed undermining the positive roots of a very powerful movement. Advocating violence toward police is not the way to gain new partners throughout this nation in the movement to eliminate police brutality and to educate our nation on some of the historic wrongs which have taken place on the part of some police officers against African Americans and people of color.

Such language is certainly not respectful of such positive law enforcement officers. We are strongly against *any* type of violence, including violent rhetoric, be it *from* the police *toward* us, or violence *from* us *toward* the police.

With the recent incidents involving negligent behavior with regard to the safe storage of guns, particularly in homes where young children reside, we strongly advocate the review of that section by area agencies, organizations, schools and homes. We also strongly advocate that all of our community partners work closely with Ceasefire PA in their efforts to gain legislative support for the revised "House Bill 1010" which advocates additional background checks for the purchase of guns throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We are currently seeking area police officials and political leaders to support this CeaseFirePA initiative *Tim Stevens*

the area close by. If you are in a building that means any nearby area where a person may be hiding.

#### REALITY

1. If the police say that they have a search warrant, ask to see it.
2. Check to see that your specific address is listed and note the specific areas of your home listed.
3. If the police insist on coming in without a warrant, try to get their names and badge numbers, and why they want to come in. Otherwise, stay out of the way.
4. If the police have an arrest warrant, make sure the name on the paper is someone in the household, either you, a listed occupant, family member or tenant.

#### IF YOU ARE ARRESTED OR TAKEN TO A POLICE STATION

#### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. If you are arrested you have the right to remain silent and to talk to a lawyer before you answer questions from the police. Tell the police nothing except your name and address.
2. Do not talk without a lawyer; immediately ask to see one.

#### REALITY

1. Do not give false identification, explanations, excuses or stories. Such information may be used against you and result in additional charges against you.
2. Do not make any decisions in your case until you have talked to a lawyer.
3. You can expect to be taken before a Judge within 48 - 72 hours after your arrest.

#### THIS IS NOT COMPLETE ADVICE.

BE SURE  
TO CONSULT A LAWYER!

#### IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Allegheny County Public Defender Office: 412-350-2401
- Allegheny County Bar Association, Lawyer Referral Service (private defense lawyers): 412-261-0518
- **Police, Prosecutors, and Jail**  
Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, Chief's Office: 412-323-7800
- Allegheny County District Attorney's Office: 412-350-4400
- Allegheny County Jail: 412-350-2000

#### Complaints About Police Misconduct

File written complaints and cooperate with:

- Citizen Police Review Board 412-765-8023
  - Office of Municipal Investigations 412-255-2804
- Further assistance can be obtained by contacting a private attorney and/or:
- ACLU 412-681-7736
  - NAACP 412-471-1024
  - Alliance For Police Accountability (APA) 412-628-5849

#### Current & Historical Contributors Pittsburgh PA:

- ACLU-PA \* Alliance For Police Accountability (APA)
- Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)
- Citizen Police Review Board (CPRB)
- Guardians of Greater Pittsburgh
- Homer S. Brown Law Association
- NAACP, Pittsburgh Unit \* Parents Against Violence
- Pittsburgh Bureau of Police
- Univ. of Pittsburgh School of Law

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Revised March 2015

# YOU & THE POLICE

#### Rights, Responsibilities & Reality

***This brochure is being made available free of charge to all members of the community. It has three purposes:***

1. *To outline for people their legal rights when interacting and communicating with the police;*
2. *To inform people of their responsibilities and obligations any time they (or a family member or friend) have contact or involvement with police officers; and*
3. *To promote improved relations and understanding between members of the community and the police.*

## IN ANY POLICE ENCOUNTER

### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The police can stop and question you if they have reasonable suspicion that you have done something illegal. In such a stop, they can "pat-down" your clothing to check for a concealed weapon if they suspect you have one. Do not physically resist, but make it clear that you do not consent to any further search.
2. You are not legally required to answer a police officer's questions. You cannot legally be arrested just for refusing to answer questions or to identify yourself to a police officer. But if you are arrested or cited, failure to identify yourself can lead to additional charges or to you being detained when you might otherwise get only a citation.
3. What you say to the police is always important. What you say can be used against you, and it can cause the police to arrest you.
4. You do not have to consent to any search of yourself, your possessions, your car or your home. If you do not consent to a search, be sure to tell the police. If you do consent to a search, it can affect your rights later in court.
5. If the police say they have a search warrant, ask to see it and check to make sure that it lists the right person or address.
6. Do not interfere with, or obstruct, the police; you can be arrested for it.
7. You have a right to record (audio and video) police activity so long as you can do so safely and do not physically interfere with their work.

### REALITY

1. Be polite and respectful. Although "bad mouthing" or criticizing a police officer may be legally protected speech, it is not recommended and might cause you problems.
2. Stay calm, control what you say, as well as your body language and emotions.
3. Don't get into an argument with the police.
4. Keep your hands where the police can see them. Don't make any sudden movements.

5. Don't ever touch a police officer.
6. Don't run.

7. Even though refusing to answer questions is not a crime, it can make the police suspicious about you. If you do decide to talk, remember, anything you say can be used against you.

8. Don't resist even if you believe you are innocent.
9. Don't interfere when an officer is doing his or her job.
10. If you believe that you have been the victim of police misconduct:
  - a. Don't complain or tell the police that they are wrong or that you will file a complaint against them.
  - b. Remember the officers' names, badge numbers and/or patrol car numbers. If the names or badge numbers are not visible, you may politely ask the officer for the information.
  - c. Write down everything you can remember as soon as you can. Memories fade quickly.
  - d. Try to find witnesses. Try to get their names, email addresses and phone numbers.
  - e. If you are injured, take photographs of the injuries as soon as possible, get medical attention, and tell the doctor what happened.

## IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN A CAR

### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The police can ask you to pull over when they observe you committing any traffic offense; this includes moving violations [e.g. failure to signal] and equipment violations [e.g. taillight out].
2. Stop the vehicle safely out of traffic, immediately place it in Park, apply parking brake, turn off the vehicle. Keep your hands visible.
3. Show your driver's license, vehicle registration, and insurance upon request.
4. During a traffic stop, the police can search the passenger compartment of your car if they have probable cause to believe that there may be a weapon.
5. If you are arrested during a traffic stop, the police can search the inside of the car if they have probable cause to believe that evidence for which the person is being

arrested will be found in the passenger compartment.

6. If you are given a ticket, you should sign it. Your signature proves only that you received the ticket. It is not an admission of guilt.

7. If you are suspected of drunken driving and refuse to take a blood, urine or a breath test, your driver's license will be suspended and you will be arrested.

### REALITY

1. If the police are trying to stop you, pull over right away. If possible, try to pull over in a well-lit area or where there are people.
2. Stay in the car until an officer tells you what to do.
3. If it is dark outside, turn on the car's inside light.
4. Keep your hands on the steering wheel where the officer can see them until you are told what to do.
5. Be sure to have all your paperwork current, in order and readily available. This includes: valid driver's license; valid vehicle registration and the little sticker on the license plate; current insurance card; current & valid auto safety and emissions inspection stickers. Having this information can save you lots of money in fines and costs and may prevent the towing of your car.
6. If the officer searches your car even though you object, don't interfere.
7. If you are given a ticket, don't argue about it. You can always fight the case in traffic court later.

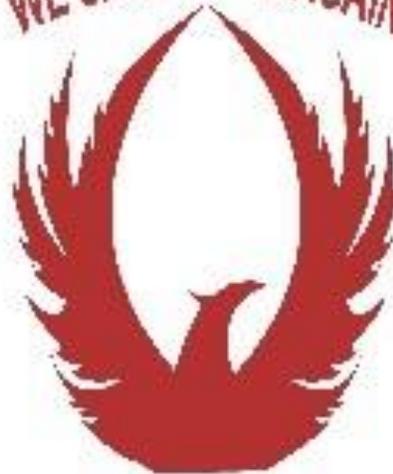
## IF THE POLICE COME TO YOUR HOME

### RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. If the police knock and ask to enter your home, except for the situations in the next paragraph, you do not have to admit them unless they have a warrant signed by a judge. If they insist on coming in anyway say clearly that you do not consent to a search, but do not physically interfere.
2. Some emergency situations like when a person is screaming for help inside or when the police are chasing someone permit officers to enter briefly to try to locate the person in trouble or the fleeing criminal.
3. If you are arrested, the police can search you and

To receive information on obtaining copies of this brochure contact The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence at [cav.pgh@gmail.com](mailto:cav.pgh@gmail.com).

**WE SHALL RISE AGAIN**



**CAV**

**Greater Pittsburgh  
Coalition Against Violence**

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**Contributing Writers:**

**Violence Against Women and Girls**

*Roxanne E. Epperson, Executive Director/Founder  
Women Against Abusive Relationships (WAAR)*

*Julie Evans, Director of Crisis & Prevention Services  
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape*

*Kimberly Gonxhe, Director of the Metro-Urban Institute  
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

*Rev. Michele P. Ellison, President of Ellison Consulting LLC*

**Violence Against the LGBTQAI Community**

*Carmen Alexander, Program Director, New Voices Pittsburgh*

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*Jephord English  
Dr. Crystal Fortwangle  
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**It takes a Village to Raise a Child!  
It takes *everyone* to heal the community and end the violence.**

Since its ‘conception’ on February 8, 2007, the **GREATER PITTSBURGH COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE (CAV)** has been striving to develop, write, and finally implement perhaps one of the most comprehensive and detailed documents ever produced in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region by ‘ordinary’ citizens. Filled with broad-based strategies for reducing violence in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region, each of the documents written and produced by the **COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** contain something for every segment of society to undertake in drastically reducing the violence that permeates so many of our neighborhoods and communities. In 2016, the third edition of the CAV anti-violence strategic document – *Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities* expands its scope with two new sections.

The process by which this document was written is, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary and unique processes ever to be utilized by any collaboration or coalition in the history of Pittsburgh. This was democracy *and* diversity in action. Anyone who came to the table had a ‘voice’ which was honored by everyone present. Each action item was thoroughly discussed by those present at the working sessions. This document was written by collective action, through collaboration and consensus. Without the dedication, time, commitment and faith of so many people, this document would not have been able to “move from complaint to possibility...from planning to implementation and mobilization.”

Therefore, the **COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE** wishes to acknowledge all of the members of the village who made this possible!

From the person who attended just one meeting, to the people who came week after week after week. From the children who came with their parents, to the grandparents and great-grandparents who brought their wisdom to the table. From the people who answered the call to write strategies for action, to the people who provided technical assistance and support. From the board rooms of corporations and universities, to the block watch clubs and community and faith based organizations. From the youth who have inherited the legacy of violence, to the elders who have, through their faith and love, shown us how to heal the community of violence.

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Adrienne Young  
Agjyla Leonard  
Akaisha Yancy  
Alan D. Perry  
Alex Wilson  
Alison Sherman  
Allyssia King  
Alonzo Davis*

*Amanda Cook  
Amr Rageh  
Anastasia Peterson  
Andrew Butler  
Andrew Davis  
Angie Lyeilly  
Angela Stribling  
Ann Tager  
Anne Linaberger  
Anthony Carlisle*

*Anwan Wesley  
Areya Simmons  
Audra Lee  
Audrey Baldwin  
Autumn Dalton  
Becky Gronsky  
Bernadette Turner  
Bob Marin, MD  
Bomani Howze  
Brandi S. Fisher*

Brandi Taylor  
Brian Gay  
Brianna Totty  
Brigette Bethea Patterson  
Brittany Edwards  
Carl Sutter  
Carla Harris  
Carla Brown  
Carmen Alexander  
Carman Lee  
Carmen Pace  
Carolyn Eligan  
Cassandra Paul  
Catherine Bules  
Celeste Taylor  
Chantel Peterson  
Charles Larew PhD, RN  
Charles McCurdy  
Charlotte McDonald  
Cheryl Doubt  
Chief Nate Harper  
Christine McCray  
Christopher McCaney  
Clyde Harris  
Clyde Trent  
Councilman Bill Peduto  
Councilman Doug Shields  
Craig Stevens  
Crystal Sumpter  
Damonte Johnson  
Daniel Hammer  
Daniel Stoddard  
Danielle Bicanik  
Darlene Terry  
Darnell Drewery  
Darnise Wilks  
Darronda Jett  
David Doctor  
David B. Carl  
David Leiberfield  
David Tessitor  
David Thornton, Jr.  
DaVonte Parker  
Dawn Lehman  
Deborah Owens Bailey  
Dell Mager  
Dell Vann  
Delores Thrower  
Denise Johnson  
Dennis Brooks  
Dennis Logan  
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Diane Dahm-Martin

Diane Richard  
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Dominique Dabbins  
Donald L. Woods  
Donna Close  
Dontay Tabb  
Dorcas Amaker  
Dorian Smalls  
Dorothy Shomdahl  
Dr. Jamil Bey  
Dr. John M. Wilds  
Dr. Kimberly Ellis  
Dr. Robin L. Ragin  
Duane Ashley  
Dug Pryor  
Dyamand Burns  
E. Richard Phipps  
Ed Ford  
Ed Ellis  
Eddie Hicks  
Edward Johnson  
Elaine Jenkins  
Elder Eugene Hanner  
Eleanor Scales  
Elena Chaffin  
Elijah Peterson  
Elizabeth Blair  
Ellie Wright Ellis  
Ema Walton  
Eric S. Smith  
Eric Smith  
Erin Gill  
Erin Ludlow  
Ernest Bey  
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Etta Cetera  
Eunice Howze  
Ewane Nanjo  
Faith Stenning  
Flo Taylor  
Florence Williams  
Franco Harris  
Frank Gottlieb  
Free Blackwell  
Frida Ellis  
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George Christopher  
George Hawkins  
George Hogan  
Gina Noel-Brown  
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Glenn D. Seals  
Gloria Scott-Johnson  
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Greg Spencer  
Gregory Trithan  
Gwendolyn Patterson  
H.P. Jackson  
Harry C. Ward Jr.  
Hasceen Leonard  
Heather Brown  
Henry A. Jackson III  
Henry Jackson  
Hilary Brown  
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Javon Daymon  
Jay Gilmer  
Jay McGuire  
Jayme Jordan  
Jaymes Powell  
Jazmine Taggart  
Jeannene Jones  
Jeff Cohan  
Jeff Cummings  
Jeff McRey  
Jennifer Jeffries Murrel  
Jerome Taylor, PhD  
Jibril Abdul Hefeez  
JoAnne Burley, PhD  
Joe (Thunder) Thompson  
Joe "Skipper" Orbovich  
John Lassey  
John McCarter

Johnny Green  
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Jonathan Robison  
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Joseph Harris  
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Joy Woodruff  
Joyce Davis  
Judge Dwayne Woodruff  
Judith Wilson  
Judy Barricella  
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Julie Hollas Tobais  
Justin Menefee  
Karen Wright  
Kashif Henderson  
Kate Hibbard  
Katherine Anderson  
Kathy Blee  
Kathy Cameron  
Kathy Dougherty  
Kathy Gardner MD.  
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Khalid Raheem  
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Kiarra Montgomery  
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Lindel Hodge  
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Lynne Thompson  
M. Hubbard El  
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Marco A. Tinor  
Marcus Hoyle  
Marissa Carrington  
Marissa Carrington  
Mark Frank  
Mark Lewis  
Mark Yokim  
Mar'Keya Beechaum  
Marlene V. Ramseur, Sr.  
Marni Fritz  
Marsha V. Hinton  
Martha Garvey  
Marty Dennis  
Mary C. Young  
Mary Clemons  
Mary Jo Harwood  
Mary Evans  
Matthew Ulrich  
Maureen Anderson  
Maurice Jackson  
Maurice Jones  
Mayada Monsour  
Mayor Luke Ravenstahl  
Melissa Kira  
Melissa Goode  
Mell Steven-Cosneck  
Melvin Pollard  
Michael Turner  
Michael Talton  
Michelle Jackson-  
Washington  
Michelle Lawrence  
Michelle Mannella  
Michelle Coker

Michelle Turner  
Mike Dawida  
Mike Goldrick  
Mikhail Pappas  
Min. Walter Evans  
Minister Harlan Humphrey  
Minister Jasiri X  
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Monica Carlisle  
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Renny Clark  
Rep. Jake Wheatley  
Reshae Scott  
Rev. Albert R. Foreman  
Rev. Barbara King  
Rev. Brenda Gregg  
Rev. Cornell Jones  
Rev. David Thornton, Sr.  
Rev. Denise Welch  
Rev. Eugene Blackwell  
Rev. James E. Garmon Jr.  
Rev. James L. Garmon  
Rev. James M. Cooper  
Rev. James McLemore  
Rev. John Welch

Rev. Joseph D. Lewis  
Rev. Le Saunders  
Rev. Maureen Cross-  
Bolden  
Rev. Michele P. Ellison  
Rev. Ronald Peters  
Rev. Samuel Ware  
Rev. Sharon  
Higginbotham  
Rev. Sheldon Stoudmire  
Rhonda J. Sears  
Rich Bowers  
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Richard Carrington  
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Russell L. Bynum  
Sabria Dixon

Sam Laffey  
Sam McArthur III  
Samantha Meher  
Samantha Spadone  
Samuel Wright  
Sandra McKenney  
Sarah B. Campbell  
Sarah Campbell  
Seth Cullens  
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Shawn Carter  
Shawn Dalton  
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Sheila Tucker  
Shirley Heim  
Shirley Muhammad  
Shonquia Hachett  
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Sr. Barbara Finch  
Stan Caldwell  
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Tene Croom

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Wanda Austin  
Wayne Babish  
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Will Thompkins  
William Anderson  
William Jackson III  
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Yvonne A. Morris  
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# The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence

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Individual sections, as well as the complete document, of **Strategies for Change: Building More Peaceful Communities** can be downloaded for your convenience at [www.b-bep.net](http://www.b-bep.net).

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The Greater Pittsburgh Coalition Against Violence also produces the **Community Services Directory: Your Anti-violence Guide to Community Services**, a companion to **Strategies for Change**, which contains many of the agencies, organizations, and groups in the Metropolitan Pittsburgh area that provide violence prevention and intervention programs, as well as other services.

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WE SHALL RISE AGAIN



**CAV**

**Greater Pittsburgh  
Coalition Against Violence**

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