

# North Minneapolis Community Violence Report

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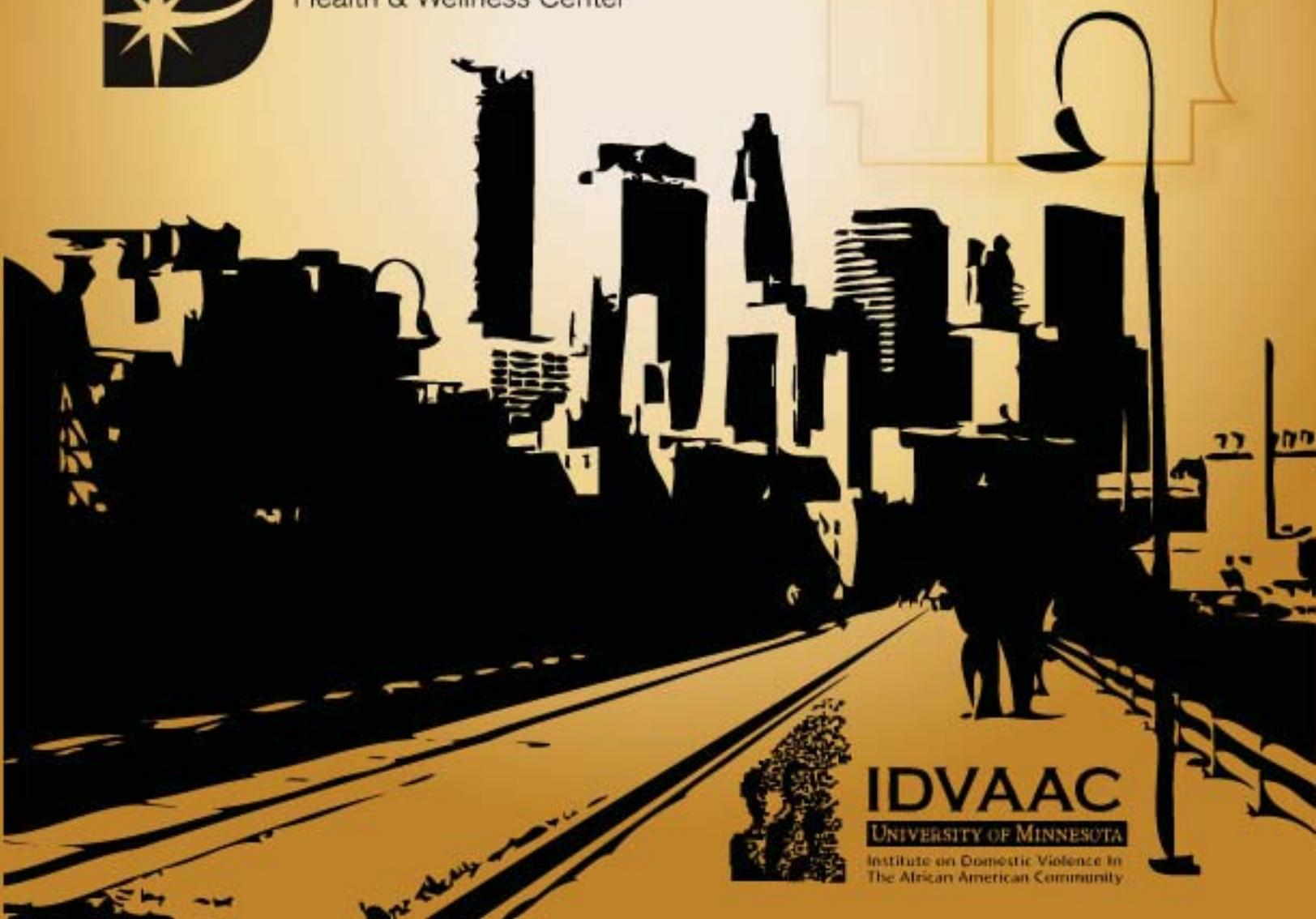
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**NORTH POINT**

Health & Wellness Center



**IDVAAC**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Institute on Domestic Violence in  
The African American Community

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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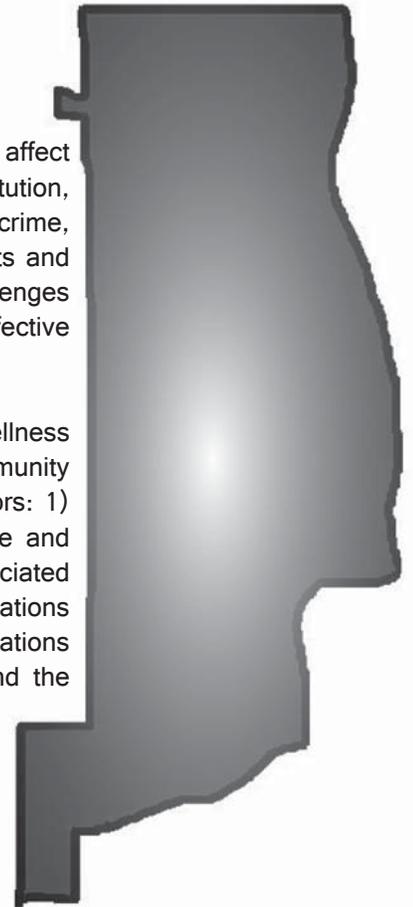
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## INTRODUCTION

*The* Northside Minneapolis community struggles with a number of complex issues that affect its residents' ability to thrive. Such struggles include poverty, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, community disenfranchisement, intimate family violence, gang activity, youth and adult crime, and severe and pervasive community violence. Each of these individual issues intersects and compounds the impact of the other. Consequences for communities that face these challenges include ambiguity about the causes of community disorganization and uncertainty about effective responses to resolve these problems and uplift the community.

In order to examine how to address these pressing concerns, NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center enlisted the aid of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC). This document is a product of this partnership. In this document, the authors: 1) provide an overview and analysis of the elements that exacerbate the impact of crime and community violence in the North Minneapolis community; 2) outline risk factors associated with violence and crime, particularly among youth and adults; 3) offer theoretical explanations associated with these issues; and 4) provide prevention and intervention recommendations based on the literature, the identification of community models across the country, and the authors' insights and experiences as practitioners and academicians.

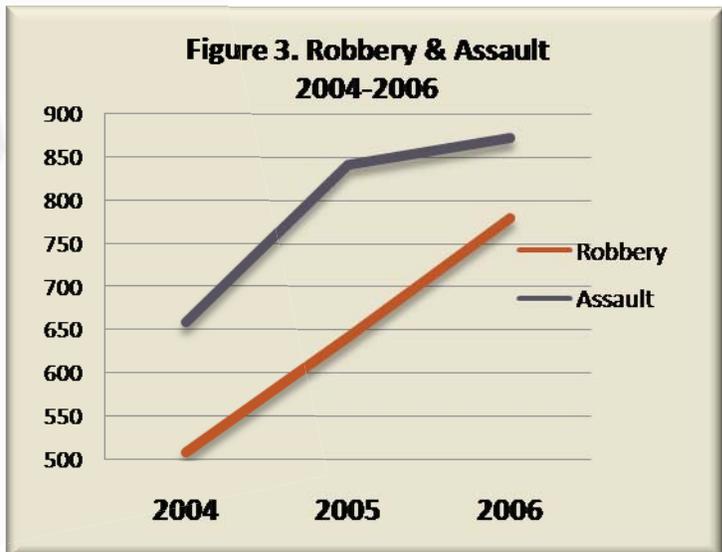
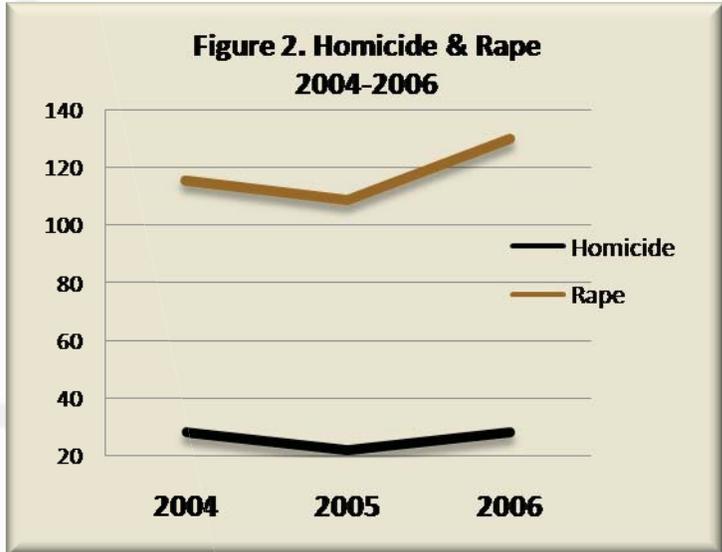
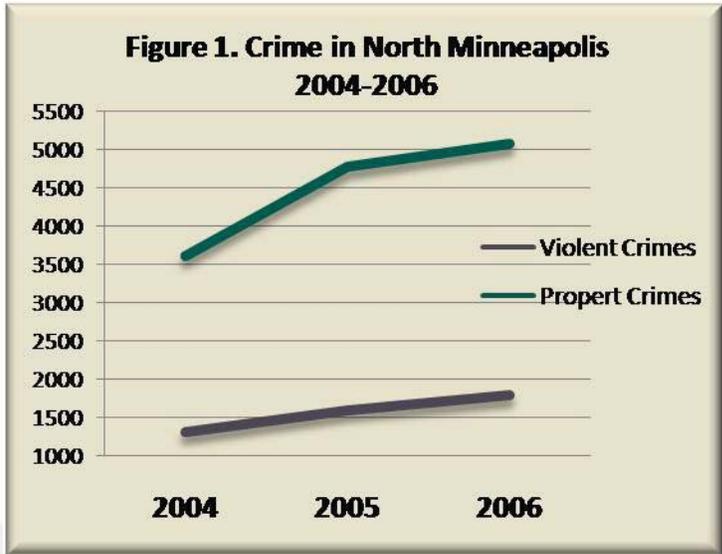


# SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

After a dramatic increase and subsequent sharp decline in homicides in the mid to late 1990s, violent crime in Minneapolis has increased in the last several years. In 2006, there were 40% more homicides than in 2001 (Minneapolis Police Department, 2006). More than half (56%) of the 60 homicide victims in 2006 were African-American males, as were 48% of the perpetrators. Of the 49 homicides for which a motive could be determined, almost half (49%) were motivated by one of the following: robbery (10), gang-related activity (8), or drug-related activity (6). The number of juveniles – youth ages 18 and younger – as victims and perpetrators also increased considerably in 2006. Eleven of the 60 homicide victims and 11 perpetrators of homicide were juveniles, representing a two- to three-fold increase from 2005. All of the juvenile suspects and half of the juvenile victims had prior encounters with the criminal justice system.

More than half (56%) of the 60 homicide victims in 2006 were African-American males, as were 48% of the perpetrators.

North Minneapolis, located in the city's 4th police precinct, contributes disproportionately to the violent crime rate. In 2006, the 15 communities in North Minneapolis comprised 18% of the city's population but accounted for 31% of violent crime, including 47% of the city's homicides (Minneapolis Planning Department, 2001; Minneapolis Police Department, 2006). As shown in Figure 1, there was a 36% increase in violent crime – murder, robbery, rape, and assault – in North Minneapolis between 2004 and 2006, and a 12% increase in 2006. Property crime has followed a similar pattern, with the sharpest increase from 2004 to 2005. Homicides in North Minneapolis fluctuated between 2004 and 2006 (see Figure 2), but there were 27% more homicides in 2006 than in the previous year. In addition, other violent crimes have increased, with robbery increasing by 20-25% in both 2005 and 2006 and assault increasing by almost 30% between 2004 and 2006 (Figure 3). Reported rapes have also increased.



# RISK FACTORS FOR VIOLENT CRIME

Violent behavior is often multiply determined, and research has identified a number of factors associated with an increased likelihood of involvement in violent crime. These factors are frequently referred to as “risk factors” in that they are not exact determinates of violent behavior, but rather their presence increases the chances that the person will act aggressively. Risk factors have wide variation in their impact on behavior because of the operation of “protective factors” that reduce the probability of a negative outcome, despite the risk. Most intervention programs are a combination of reducing risk and enhancing protective factors.



The great majority of violent crimes are committed by a relatively small number of individuals, with data from a number of studies showing that 6-8% of the male population accounts for 60-85% of the violent crime (Loeber, Farrington, & Waschbusch, 1998). Also, there is significant continuity in violence and aggression over the lifespan.

Longitudinal studies that track individuals across time have found that among men convicted of violent crimes as adults, many if not most, had histories of childhood aggression and delinquent behavior (Farrington, 1991). Youth displaying antisocial behavior from ages 6-13 are significantly more likely to commit violent offenses as adults (Hawkins et al., 2000). This correlation in violent behavior suggests

that much of adult aggression – particularly that of chronic offenders – is incubated in childhood and requires an examination of those factors that contribute to violent behavior in children and youth.

Reviews of longitudinal studies of violent youth have identified risk variables in the following domains: individual level factors, family factors, peer-group related factors, and neighborhood or community factors (Hawkins, et al., 2000). These variables are outlined by category in the text that follows.

Risk factors have wide variation in their impact on behavior because of the operation of “protective factors” that reduce the probability of a negative outcome, despite the risk.

## INDIVIDUAL LEVEL FACTORS

- Early initiation of violent behavior;
- Beliefs and attitudes that support violence;
- Involvement in other forms of antisocial behavior (e.g., stealing, selling drugs, or destruction of property);
- Aggressiveness; and
- Hyperactivity or attention deficit.

### Family factors

- Low levels of parental involvement;
- Poor family management practices (e.g., inconsistent rules and discipline, or poor monitoring and supervision);
- Child maltreatment;
- Parent-child separation; and
- Parental criminality.
- School Factors
- Academic failure,
- Low bonding to school,
- Truancy and dropping out of school, and
- School characterized by a high delinquency rate.

## PEER-RELATED FACTORS

- Delinquent peers,
- Gang membership, and
- Delinquent siblings.

## COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD FACTORS

- Poverty;
- Community disorganization (e.g., crime, poor housing, or selling drugs);
- Availability of drugs and guns;
- Neighborhood adults involved in crime; and
- Exposure to community and domestic violence.

These risk factors vary in terms of malleability, i.e., the ease with which they can be changed, as well as their impact. The more risk factors that are present, the greater the probability that violence will occur (Rutter, 1979). Also, certain risks carry more weight than others and their impact varies across developmental level. For example, for youth ages 6-11 the strongest predictors of later serious or violent offending are non-serious delinquent acts, aggressive behavior, substance use, poverty, and antisocial parents. Among 12-14 year olds, it is non-serious delinquent acts, lack of strong social ties, antisocial peers, and poor academic performance (Loeber & Farrington, 1998). Gang involvement is a significant risk factor of violent offending. Many of these factors are related and some may occur, or be enhanced, in response to involvement in violent crime. For example, association with delinquent peers may be both a risk for and an outcome of involvement in anti-social activities.

# MAJOR THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE & PREVENTION IMPLICATIONS

Social scientists have developed a broad range of theories constructed to explain the causes of crime and violence. Listed in the text that follows is a review of the major theories that have been used to explain crime and interpersonal violence among the urban poor.

## SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION THEORY

Proponents of social disorganization theory claim that the high rates of crime and interpersonal violence, particularly among the inner city poor, are directly related to the break down in community social control.

Inner city social control institutions – e.g., the church, the family, the educational system, and civic organizations – are said to lack the capacity to inspire young people to adopt values, norms, and roles that lead to conformity and behaviors that lead to social progress within society (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Furthermore, proponents of social disorganization theory suggest that poverty and other adverse social conditions tend to erode the capacity of parents, community members, and other social control agents to work together to promote social control through the supervision and monitoring of youth and young adults most at risk for criminal involvement. According to criminologists who seek to explain crime in the inner city in terms of social disorganization theory, there are several major correlates that are associated with high crime rates, including:

- **Poverty;**
- **Chronic unemployment and underemployment;**
- **High rates of family disruption and female-headed families;**
- **High population turnover;**
- **Low rates of homeownership;**
- **Low rates of academic success; and**
- **Community tolerance of minor criminal offending (e.g. public drinking, public gambling, illegal drug use, and prostitution) (Sampson & Wilson, 1995).**

Proponents of social disorganization theory essentially argue that structurally disorganized communities lack adequate formal and informal control mechanisms to inhibit criminal behavior. Thus, community social disorganization provides a community and cultural context that allows alternative ways of succeeding in society to emerge. It also implies a lack of attachment to significant others who promote or manifest conventional behavior.

## PREVENTION IMPLICATION OF SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION THEORY

Prevention implications of the social disorganization theory as outlined by Sampson and Wilson (1995), are as follows:

- The establishment of strong networks of social relationships among individuals who promote conventional values and norms will lead to the prevention of crime and delinquency.
- The larger the network of acquaintances within a neighborhood, the greater the community's capacity will be for informal surveillance and formal supervision of young people.
- Efforts designed to enhance the social control functions of basic community institutions – e.g., the family, the church, the local educational institutions, and civic organizations – will enhance the capacity of the community to encourage young people to adopt conventional values, norms, roles, and lifestyles.

## SUBCULTURE OF VIOLENCE THEORY

A major theory that has been relied upon to explain the high rate of urban violence, particularly interpersonal violence among African Americans, is the subculture of violence theory. Proponents of the subculture of violence theory basically argue that the high rates of interpersonal violence among African Americans is a direct result of their internalization of values and norms that condone violence as means of resolving disputes (Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967). Additionally, references to the construction of manhood identities that place emphasis on honor, respect, and toughness are common in the various formulations of subculture theory. The reference to overt masculinity as a correlate of interpersonal violence is best characterized in the work of Marvin Wolfgang (1958), a leading proponent of subculture theory and major American violence researcher. According to Wolfgang (1958):

Quick resort to physical combat as a measure of daring, courage, or defense of status appears to be a cultural expectation, especially for lower, socioeconomic class males of both races. When such a culture norm response is

elicited from an individual engaged in social interplay with others who harbor the same response mechanism, physical assaults, altercations, and violent domestic quarrels that result in homicide are likely to be relatively common.

According to criminologists who seek to explain crime in inner cities in terms of the subculture of violence theory, there are several major correlates that are associated with high crime rates, including:

- Social, economic, and political marginality;
- Values and norms that condone violence as a means of conflict resolution;
- Community tolerance of interpersonal violence;
- Manhood identities and behavioral patterns that increase one's risk of becoming involved in disputes that result in violent confrontations;
- Increased availability of firearms;
- Exposure to high levels of violence within the family and neighborhood;
- Presence of street gangs in the community; and
- The existence of an entrenched street-based criminal network involved in drug trafficking, robbery, theft, burglary, and prostitution.

#### PREVENTION IMPLICATIONS OF SUBCULTURE OF VIOLENCE THEORY

Prevention implications of the subculture of violence theory are as follows:

- Dispersing populations associated with violent cultural patterns into small residential clusters in which they would represent a normative minority and, therefore, be less likely to receive community-level support for resorting to violence as a means of resolving disputes will result in a decrease in community violence.
- Creating special incentives that would increase homeownership among the working poor and working-class urban residents who reside in neighborhoods that are affected by high rates of social problems and violent crime will lead to a greater personal and collective investment in actions that strengthen the neighborhood and enhance the quality of life.
- The establishment of mentoring programs that are designed to help at-risk urban youth and young adults make a successful passage from adolescence to adulthood by promoting conventional adult roles, encouraging the completion of high school

and post-secondary education, and delaying parenthood will result in a decrease in juvenile delinquency.

- The establishment of school- and community-based conflict resolution programs that are designed to help individuals develop the skills to negotiate and deescalate conflict-ridden encounters will result in a decrease in community violence.
- The funding and establishment of programs that enhance the parenting skills of parents who reside in at-risk neighborhoods is likely to increase the supervision of adolescents who reside in high-crime neighborhoods.

### STRAIN THEORY

One of the most important theoretical explanations of crime in America, and particularly the patterning of crime among the urban poor, is the strain theory. Proponents of the strain theory have argued that American society is organized around a distinct set of designated legitimate goals and designated legitimate means. The primary goals that are said to be fundamental to American society are: 1) the pursuit of upward mobility and social status within the class system, and 2) the acquisition of status through the possession of material goods. According to strain theorists, there is a general consensus among Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class, that these goals are legitimate. In addition to the existence of legitimate goals, American society is organized around the socialization of Americans to perceive specific legitimate means – e.g., education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, the economic market place, and the political system – as the primary means that should be utilized to achieve the “American Dream” (Merton, 1938).



Strain theorists have suggested that most Americans conform to the designated goals and means whether they have a reasonable chance of achieving the “American Dream” or not. They further note that crime in America, particularly predatory street crime – e.g., robbery, burglary, theft, or drug trafficking – result when certain groups experience structural strain as a result of being systematically denied equal access to the opportunity structure or the legitimate means that are to be used to achieve social status and

material success. The denial of access to the opportunity structure is the result of racial or ethnic discrimination by those who have power to serve as gatekeepers.

Consequently, strain theorists argue that crime occurs when individuals are denied access to the legitimate means and resort to illegitimate means to achieve legitimate societal goals (Merton, 1938).

According to criminologists who seek to explain crime in the inner city in terms of the strain theory, there are several major correlates that are associated with high crime rates among the urban poor. These correlates, as outlined by Cloward and Ohlin (1960), include:

- Historical and contemporary patterns of racial discrimination,
- High rates of unemployment and underemployment,
- Poverty,
- Low academic achievement , and
- Lack of vocational training.

### **PREVENTION IMPLICATIONS OF STRAIN THEORY**

Prevention implications of the strain theory are as follows:

- Continued efforts to eliminate barriers that block the urban poor from having equal access to educational and employment opportunities will result in decreased crime rates among the urban poor.
- The establishment of programs that increase school retention and that reduce the high school dropout rate will result in decreased crime rates among the urban poor.
- Increased emphasis on programs that bridge secondary education to post-secondary education or vocational training will result in decreased crime rates among the urban poor.
- Increased enforcement of laws that prohibit racial discrimination as it relates to access to education, housing, mortgage loans, commercial loans, and participation in the electoral process will result in decreased crime rates among the urban poor.

## **UNDERCLASS THEORY**

Proponents of underclass theory assume the existence of a permanent urban underclass. Unlike the lower class of the past, those born in the underclass lack the opportunity to transcend the class position to which they are born. According to Wilson (1996), macro-social patterns of residential inequality give rise to the social isolation and concentration of the urban underclass, leading to cultural adaptations that undermine social organization. Furthermore, Wilson argues that crime among the urban underclass is best explained in terms of the intersection of macro-social forces – e.g. residential segregation; migration; housing discrimination; structural transformation of the American economy; and various community level factors, including residential turnover, concentrated poverty, and family disruption (Wilson, 1996).

A major structural factor contributing to the emergence of the urban underclass is the shift from heavy industrial manufacturing to a dual sector economy involving: 1) expansion of low-wage service sector employment, and 2) the emergence of high-wage service sector employment requiring high levels of education coupled with the expansion of high-wage technology employment opportunities. A major consequence of this economic change is a largely race neutral transformation characterized by the substantial numbers of working-class individuals who have been dislocated from low-skill, high-wage manufacturing jobs (Wilson, 1996).

### *EXODUS OF ADVANTAGED MINORITIES FROM THE INNER CITY*

As a consequence of the dismantling of the system of overt institutional racial discrimination beginning in the late 1960s, advantaged racial minorities, particularly African Americans, have gained access to a broader range of employment and housing opportunities. As a result, the exodus of advantaged racial minorities from the inner city has contributed to several adverse consequences for inner-city communities. According to Wilson (1996), such consequences include:

- Loss of leadership group that provides social stability,
- Loss of valuable conventional role models to emulate,
- Loss of liaisons between the community and the opportunity structure, and
- Increased social isolation of inner-city residents from conventional institutions.



### CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY

According to proponents of the underclass theory, the concentration of poverty in the inner city and the emergence of a distinct inner-city subculture characterized by community disorganization, the break down in social control, and the emergence of urban street culture as a major socialization institution function to promote high rates of interpersonal violence. The fact that poor African Americans are more likely than are whites and Hispanics to reside in a community in which the majority of their neighbors are poor suggest that African Americans who are poor are more likely to be socially isolated from the opportunity structure (Wilson, 1996).

### SOCIAL ISOLATION

Essential to underclass theory explanations of crime in the inner-city is the claim that social isolation associated with the concentration of poverty reduces the number of conventional role models that reside in the community. Conventional role models are needed to demonstrate conformity and commitment to the routine of work and commitment to family and stability. Thus, social isolation from mainstream role models and conventional networks hinder or make it more difficult to achieve social and economic advancement in modern industrial society (Wilson, 1996).

Proponents of underclass theory argue that crime among the urban underclass results from the convergence of several key factors. First, social disorganization isolates individuals in communities in which various forms of deviance/criminal behavior are tolerated. Second, the exodus of advantaged minorities from the inner city leads to increased social isolation of the urban poor. This has provided a context for the emergence of alternative role models among many marginalized members of the ghetto underclass. These alternative role models subscribe to values and norms that condone sexual exploitation of women, toughness, and the acquisition of social status via criminal activity. Third, where there is a lack of intergenerational closure – e.g., deliberate adult monitoring and supervision of youth and young adults – marginalized youth and young adults are more prone to adopt unconventional values, norms, and roles.

According to criminologists who seek to explain crime in the inner city in terms of underclass theory, there are several major correlates that are associated with high crime rates among the urban poor, including:

- High rates of unemployment resulting from the transformation of the economy;
- Ghetto-related behaviors that place emphasis on toughness and sexual conquests;
- Drug use and drug trafficking;
- The existence of street gangs;
- High rates of family disruption, teenage pregnancy, and children born out of wedlock; and
- Lack of conventional role models.

### PREVENTION IMPLICATIONS OF UNDERCLASS THEORY

Prevention implications of the underclass theory, as outlined by Wilson (1996), are as follows:

- The higher the density of acquaintanceships and the stability of formal organizations within a community, the less likely that criminal activities can take root in the neighborhood.
- Efforts must be initiated at every level of government – i.e., federal, state, and local – to increase the capacity of inner-city youth to be prepared to acquire employment in a changing economic marketplace.
- The establishment of enterprise zones in urban areas as a means of providing tax incentives to large employers who agree to locate their businesses in inner-city neighborhoods, as well as train and hire local people, will provide inner-city residents with employment opportunities in a changing economic marketplace.
- Community-based organizations must be mobilized to utilize their resources to address social problems – e.g., academic failure, poverty, teenage pregnancy, drug use, and gang participation – that function as a pathway to violent crime offending and/or victimization.



## LIFE COURSE THEORY

There is a distinct relationship between age and crime, in that criminal offending tends to peak during the late teens and early twenties and declines thereafter. According to the life course theory, criminal offending declines with age over the span of individual lives (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Similarly, it is significant to note that property crime offending tends to peak in the late teens and rapidly tapers off in adulthood. In contrast, violent crime offending tends to taper off at a slower pace than property crime. According to proponents of life course theory, age variations in criminal offending are the result of variations in the influence of institutions of informal and formal social control during the maturation process (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Life course theory is commonly relied upon to explain both the onset of criminal offending and subsequent desistance from crime over the lifespan. According to proponents of the life course theory, there are multiple factors that influence the onset criminal behavior, including 1) the continuity of disadvantage across the life course, and 2) the disruption of bonds to adults who maintain conventional values and behavior. It should be noted, however, that major life events and social ties in adulthood can counteract the trajectories of early childhood that lead to the

**THERE IS A DISTINCT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND CRIME, IN THAT CRIMINAL OFFENDING TENDS TO PEAK DURING THE LATE TEENS AND EARLY TWENTIES AND DECLINES THEREAFTER.**

onset of criminality. For example, attachment to the labor force and cohesive marriage (or cohabitation) has been found to contribute to desistance from criminal behavior, regardless of prior differences in criminal behavior. That is, stable work and marital relations create a stake in conformity and avoidance of behaviors that may disrupt one's employment or marital relations. Additionally, life events that occur in adulthood can either terminate or sustain criminal offending. Life events that sustain deviant behavior across the life course include: weak labor force participation and attachment, and unstable marital relationships. In contrast, ties to work and family in adulthood restrict many criminal opportunities and, thus, reduce the probability that criminal propensities will be translated into action. People in stable work and marital relations are subject to more routine activities and less free time than those in unstable roles. Some turning points in life may also reflect changes in the availability or profitability of criminal strategies. In this sense, adult social ties are important because they create interdependent systems of obligation and restraint that impose significant costs for engaging in criminal behavior. As a result, adults will be inhibited from committing crime to the extent that over time they accumulate social resources in their work and family lives regardless of their delinquent or criminal background (Sampson & Laub, 1993).

Empirical research confirms that desistance from crime is correlated with stable employment, getting married, completing education, and becoming a parent. Moreover, employment alone does not affect desistance from crime; rather, employment along with job stability, commitment to work, and mutual ties binding workers and employers reduce criminality. Thus, desistance from crime not only depends on the existence of social attachments but also the perceived strength, quality, and interdependence of these interactions (Sampson & Laub, 1993)



## SITUATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON VIOLENT CRIME AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

While there is much that has been said and theorized about the causes of violence in the inner city, what must not be missed is that violent offending is ultimately an interpersonal transaction that occurs within a particular setting. This unique setting that is the site of an inordinate number of violent confrontations is referred to by those who frequent this setting as “the streets.” The significance of “the streets” is that street corner settings – e.g., actual physical street corners, bars, drug houses, and other public or semi-public hangouts – function as important social settings in areas that are populated by individuals who are most at risk for violent crime offending and/or victimization. Research that examines the interpersonal dynamics of violent confrontations among urban males suggests that there are several factors that serve as catalysts for violent confrontations that occur in street corner settings. These factors, according to Oliver (1998), include the following:

- Engaging in violence as a form of face saving or reputation defending in response to insults and acts that are defined as disrespectful;
- Resorting to violence as a means of coming to the defense of a relative or friend who has been insulted, threatened, or physically assaulted;
- The existence of community-specific norms that condone violence as a means of resolving disputes;
- The presence of third parties who instigate the escalation of interpersonal conflict;
- The availability of firearms;
- Disputes associated with drug use or drug trafficking;
- Gang feuds; and
- The increased likelihood that individuals will resort to violence as a means of conflict resolution as a result of the effects of alcohol or drugs coinciding with interpersonal conflict.



## SUMMARY OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

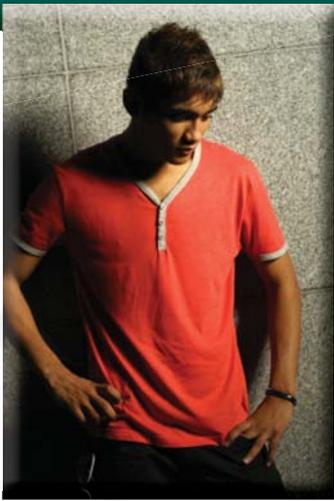
The text that follows offers a summary of recommended policy and program initiatives for the North Minneapolis community to consider as part of efforts to formalize a response to violent crime in the community. Community-based and criminal justice recommendations are provided.

### COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

While it is important that the high rates of violent crime in North Minneapolis be broadly defined and addressed as a challenge confronting the entirety of Minneapolis and all that that implies, it is equally important that key stakeholders in North Minneapolis assume a leadership role in addressing violent crime given its disproportionate impact on the quality of life within the immediate environment. Hence, it is vitally important that the response to violence

in North Minneapolis be formally addressed by the formation of an intentional community-based agenda. The residents of North Minneapolis can not and should not wait for others to do for them what they must begin to do for themselves. Consistent with this view, outlined in the text that follows are several community-based initiatives that are essential to the establishment of a coordinated community response to the reduction of violence in North Minneapolis.





THE FORMATION OF PARTNERSHIPS WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PAROLE AND PROBATION, IS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED AND COMMUNITY-INFORMED APPROACH DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE REDUCTIONS IN VIOLENT CRIME OFFENDING AND VICTIMIZATION.



These specific recommendations include the following:

- The North Minneapolis community should establish a community-wide North Minneapolis Violence Prevention Coalition (NMVPC) to serve as a clearinghouse and to coordinate violence prevention initiatives and activities.
- The NMVPC should serve as a clearinghouse for the development and implementation of community-based violence prevention initiatives. That is, the NMVPC should maintain lists and descriptions of community-based violence prevention programs that are available within the community and those that are available outside the community.
- The North Minneapolis community should increase its efforts to raise public awareness about the impact that interpersonal violence is having on the quality of life of its residents. Additionally, the anti-violence public awareness campaign should be designed to: 1) inform North Minneapolis residents of their risk of experiencing violence, and 2) mobilize coordinated community efforts to address violence.
- The North Minneapolis community should establish a faith-based violence prevention initiative modeled after Boston's Ten-Point Coalition.
- The North Minneapolis community should support efforts to establish home-based intensive community supervision of chronic juvenile offenders. Additionally, home-based community supervision should be supplemented by intensive parenting education.
- The North Minneapolis community should promote and support the development of culturally relevant school- and community-based conflict resolution programs for young people in grades K-12.
- The North Minneapolis community should promote and support the establishment community-based support groups for the survivors of homicide victims, as well as the survivors of non-fatal violent victimizations.
- The North Minneapolis community should work to establish a community-based job networking club that specifically targets teenagers and young adults.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

While there are multiple causes of violence and numerous consequences associated with its occurrence in urban areas generally and in North Minneapolis specifically, it is important to recognize that community-based initiatives alone cannot stabilize a community that is plagued by violent crime or sustain violence prevention efforts over a significant period of time. Hence, the formation of partnerships with criminal justice agencies, particularly law enforcement and parole and probation, is an essential component of a comprehensive community-based and community-informed approach designed to achieve reductions in violent crime offending and victimization. Consistent with this view, IDVAAC recommends the following:

The North Minneapolis community should enhance its efforts to partner with the Minneapolis Police Department to address violence through aggressive directed patrol of violent crime "hotspots" and the broader implementation of the Minneapolis "Weed and Seed" program.



## COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES & STRATEGIES

The high rates of community violence in socially disorganized urban neighborhoods in the United States are the result of multiple factors. Hence, it is unlikely that a single agency or single approach is likely to substantially reduce the occurrence of this problem. What is needed is a comprehensive violence reduction plan that provides an opportunity for a host of stakeholders to offer their specific expertise within the context of a coordinated community response.

The following provides additional information on some of the recommendations for community-based initiatives.

*The North Minneapolis community should establish a community-wide North Minneapolis Violence Prevention Coalition (NMVPC) to serve as a clearinghouse and to coordinate violence prevention initiatives and activities.*

A major component of any strategy to address interpersonal violence in North Minneapolis necessitates the establishment of a community-based coalition that has as its primary mission coordinating community-specific responses to reduce the high rates of community violence in North Minneapolis. This can only be achieved if various stakeholders – e.g., violence prevention advocates; representatives of the faith community; community-based civic organizations such as professional membership organizations, sororities, fraternities, and Masonic lodges; community centers; youth leaders; representatives of criminal justice agencies; local entrepreneurs; and health care providers – are actively involved in crafting a coordinated community response. An important element of this approach involves regularly scheduled meetings to share information about the efforts of various stakeholders to address community violence. The coalition will also provide a context for stakeholders to not only become informed about the efforts of others but to form partnerships to engage in coordinated violence prevention initiatives.

*The North Minneapolis community should establish a faith-based violence prevention initiative modeled after Boston's Ten-Point Coalition.*

The faith community must be included in any comprehensive effort to reduce the occurrence of violence in the African-American community. The ten-point coalition to mobilize churches in Boston is a model of what the faith community can do to prevent violence. The Boston Ten-Point Coalition is an ecumenical group of Christian clergy and lay leaders working to mobilize the Christian community around issues affecting African American and Latino youth, especially those at risk for violence, drug abuse, and other destructive behavior. The Ten-Point Plan calls upon churches and faith-based agencies in Boston to work collaboratively to develop an action plan aimed at reducing violence and helping youth to develop more positive and productive lifestyles by:

- Establishing “adopt-a-gang” programs to serve as drop-in centers and sanctuaries for troubled youth;
- Sending mediators and mentors for African American and Latino juveniles into the local courts, schools, juvenile detention facilities, and the streets;
- Commissioning youth workers to do street-level work with drug dealers and gang leaders;
- Developing concrete and specific economic alternatives to the drug economy;
- Building linkages between downtown and suburban churches and inner-city churches and ministries;
- Initiating and supporting neighborhood crime watches;
- Developing partnerships between churches and community health centers that would, for example, facilitate counseling for families and individuals under stress, offer abstinence-oriented prevention programs for sexually transmitted diseases, or provide substance abuse prevention and recovery programs;
- Establishing brotherhoods and sisterhoods as a rational alternative to violent gang life;
- Establishing rape crisis drop-in centers, services for battered women, and counseling for abusive men; and
- Developing an African American and Latino curriculum with an additional focus on the struggles of women and poor people as a means of increasing literacy and enhancing self-esteem in young people.

**THE BOSTON TEN-POINT COALITION IS AN ECUMENICAL GROUP OF CHRISTIAN CLERGY AND LAY LEADERS WORKING TO MOBILIZE THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AROUND ISSUES AFFECTING AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINO YOUTH, ESPECIALLY THOSE AT RISK FOR VIOLENCE, DRUG ABUSE, AND OTHER DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR.**

The significance and promise of community-based coalitions to address community violence is reflected in the fact the Ford Foundation has provided \$750,000 to replicate the Boston approach nationwide. Additionally, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has given \$75,000 to the Ten-Point Coalition to develop a handbook to explain how religious and law-enforcement groups can form coalitions and to hold a conference to promote violence reduction. Information regarding the Boston Ten-Point Coalition is available online at [www.bostontenpoint.org/tenpointplan.html](http://www.bostontenpoint.org/tenpointplan.html).

*The North Minneapolis community should support efforts to establish home-based intensive community supervision of chronic juvenile offenders. Additionally, home-based community supervision should be supplemented by intensive parenting education.*

Multi-systemic therapy (MST) is a promising example of intensive home-based supervision for chronic juvenile offenders that is supplemented by parental education. The MST approach is based on the assumption that the best way to help at-risk youth is to help them by helping their parents enhance their parenting and supervision skills. MST seeks to achieve several important goals, including:

- Improving caregiver discipline practices;
- Enhancing family relations, communication, and acceptance;
- Increasing at-risk youths' association with pro-social peers;
- Assisting at-risk youth and their family members in developing a support network of extended family, neighbors, and friends to facilitate gains from therapy; and
- Empowering at-risk youth to cope with family, peer, school, and neighborhood problems.

The MST intervention approach includes the following key elements:

- Each youth referred to the program is assigned a therapist.
- The therapist conducts a needs assessment and develops an individualized treatment program.
- MST is provided through home-based delivery of supervision, individual counseling, parent education, and family counseling.
- Therapists have low case loads – typically encompassing a ratio of 1:4-6 families.
- The MST team is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- MST team members have daily contact with at-risk youth and his/her family members.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Evaluation studies have found MST to be effective in facilitating positive behaviors. For example, outcome studies report:

- MST reduced long-term rates of criminal offending in serious juvenile offenders.
- MST reduced out-of-home placements of serious juvenile offenders.
- MST was shown to improve family functioning.
- MST has reported favorable outcomes and cost savings when compared to more commonly used juvenile justice services.

For more information on MST, visit [www.mstservices.com](http://www.mstservices.com).



## CRIMINAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

The following provides additional information on the recommendation for criminal justice initiatives.

The North Minneapolis community should enhance its efforts to partner with the Minneapolis Police Department to address violence through aggressive directed patrol of violent crime “hotspots” and the broader implementation of the Minneapolis “Weed and Seed” program.

Weed and Seed is a law enforcement and community partnership established and supported by the U.S. Department of Justice to reduce violence through multi-agency law enforcement collaboration and community revitalization. It is a violence prevention strategy that seeks to prevent, control, and reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and gang activity in designated high crime neighborhoods. Currently there are more than 300 Weed and Seed sites in the United States, ranging from several blocks to several square miles.

### WEED AND SEED PROCESS

Four basic program components underlie the Weed and Seed approach: 1) aggressive policing, 2) community policing, 3) community participation, and 4) leveraging of resources. For more information on weed and seed, please visit [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html)

#### AGGRESSIVE POLICING

In most Weed and Seed sites, joint task forces of law enforcement agencies from all levels of government collaborate to reduce crime by targeting communities experiencing disproportionately high rates of violent crime. The intent of aggressive policing is to stabilize the community by focusing attention on arresting both serious and minor crime violators. Law enforcement agencies partner to “weed out” violent criminals, drug abusers, and gang members through the use of targeted, aggressive directed patrol.

A key feature of aggressive directed patrol is “zero tolerance” of public disorder crime, for example, loitering, curfew violations, public intoxication, liquor law violations, disorderly conduct, public gambling, and prostitution. In practice, aggressive policing includes field stops and interrogations of individuals whom the police believe may be in possession of illegal drugs, selling illegal drugs, or carrying weapons.

New York City’s experiment with aggressive directed patrol/quality of life policing has produced positive results. For example, zero tolerance of subway fare-cheaters – i.e., those who jump the turnstiles rather than pay – resulted in a 50% reduction in felonies committed in the subway system. A profile of persons arrested for failing to pay subway fares found that at some stations, one in seven fare cheaters had a warrant for a violent felony or had a weapon. In addition, many were in possession of illegal drugs and weapons or were on parole. Aggressive policing in New York City has been credited with reducing the number of homicides in the city from 2,241 in 1990 to 984 in 1996 – a decline of 56%.

However, there have been problems with limiting the response to violent crime on aggressive policing. For example, this style of policing is similar to a military action and has created an inordinate amount of tension between the former mayor of New York, Rudi Giuliani, the New York Police Department, and the African-American community. Critics argue that New York’s aggressive policing of hotspots is directly responsible for the disproportionate representation of African Americans and Hispanics (75%) among the 175,000 persons who were subjected to field interrogations a few years ago. Given the police-community relations challenges associated with aggressive patrol, the North Minneapolis community should reject any law enforcement efforts that do not include neighborhood restoration, community partnership, and community policing as part of a comprehensive plan to address violent crime.

#### COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING

Community-oriented policing (COPS) has been incorporated in Weed and Seed to bridge the weeding and seeding components of the initiative. At each Weed and Seed site, a COPS unit is assigned to the area to engage in police and community collaborations with local community organizations. Community policing involves two important components: proactive community engagement of local community leaders and organizations, and collaborative problem solving to prevent crime and/or address social problems that have the potential to contribute to crime. Community policing, when done well, promotes a sense of responsibility within the community for solving crime problems and enhancing community-police collaborations.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD RESTORATION

Promoting the long-term health and resilience of the community is a major goal of the Weed and Seed program. Public agencies and community-based organizations collaborate to “seed” a range of human services, including prevention, intervention, treatment, and neighborhood restoration programs. Typical restoration activities include providing grants to restore recreational facilities, enhancing and expanding the availability of delinquency prevention programs within community centers, and establishing a neighborhood-based weed and seed organization to function as a liaison with law enforcement and the city administration.

*The North Minneapolis community should promote and support the development of culturally relevant school- and community-based conflict resolution programs for young people in grades K-12.*

The placement of conflict resolution curricula in elementary and secondary schools, as well as community centers, is critical in the effort to facilitate early prevention of interpersonal violence. Conflict resolution interventions have been designed to teach individuals how to negotiate arguments and disputes that have the potential to escalate into violent confrontations. The primary goal of conflict resolution programs is to replace the norms of face saving and retaliation with norms of non-violence. Furthermore, most conflict resolution programs seek to help young people build life skills – critical thinking, decision making, communication, and peer pressure resistance. Such skills are essential if young people are to define problems and generate solutions, anticipate consequences of behavior choices, learn self control, manage stress, and form and retain friendships.

Prothrow-Stith’s Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents (1987) is a leading example of school-based conflict resolution. The Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents was designed to target inner-city high school students with information and skills that would enhance their capacity to successfully manage conflict situations.

### PROCESS

The Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents is presented in 10 sessions divided into 3 sections. Curriculum components provide information on

- The risk of violent crime offending and victimization,
- The role of anger in interpersonal violence and how anger can be constructively channeled, and
- Alternative means of conflict resolution.

### EVALUATION RESULTS

Those using the curriculum report fewer fights at school, as compared to students not exposed to the intervention.

Identify members of the community who can serve as guide and illuminate pathways to criminal, chemical and violence sobriety



## RECOMMENDATIONS

IDVAAC has offered several important recommendations that can reduce the challenges for the North Minneapolis community. One additional recommendation relates to engaging a number of people who have previously been a problem within the North Minneapolis community but are now part of the solution. These individuals include men and women who have been involved with substance abuse, the sex industry, crime, and/or violence as youth and adults. These individuals have transformed their lives and seek to give back to the community. They may be known to the community and have long histories of criminal, chemical, and violence sobriety. These persons can be guides in the process of change. One must be very particular about who is selected and determine who should be included through other key informants in the community who know that their change is real. These guides can offer a number of life lessons about successfully negotiating change. NorthPoint has an opportunity with such a group to study success rather than failure. For example, how did these men and women change their lives in the midst of the challenges and chaos? Who were their guides in the community? What would they recommend as prevention or interventions that could have reduced the time of their negative behaviors? Where should these prevention and intervention efforts be located? What is the message, and who should deliver prevention and intervention messages?

THERE ARE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS – E.G., BATTERER GROUPS, GANG OUTREACH PROGRAMS, AND PRISONER RE-ENTRY INITIATIVES – THAT HAVE PROACTIVELY SOUGHT OUT EX-OFFENDERS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE INTERVENTION, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND GROUP FACILITATION.

There are an increasing number of interventions – e.g., batterer groups, gang outreach programs, and prisoner re-entry initiatives – that have proactively sought out ex-offenders in order to enhance the authenticity of the intervention, particularly in terms of outreach activities and group facilitation. Relevant examples around the United States include: Operation Ceasefire, Chicago and Los Angeles; The African American Program, Portland, Oregon; and the Osborne Association, Brooklyn, New York.

An innovative example of the potential of including individuals with a violent crime background in discussions pertaining to the prevention of crime is the LIFERS (Long Incarcerated Fraternity Engaging Release Studies) organization that is housed in the Graterford Correctional Institution in metropolitan Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In the early 1990s, the LIFERS group partnered with the End Violence Program, a community-based violence prevention agency. As a result of the partnership, the incarcerated members of LIFERS received training in transformational leadership. Subsequent to this training, members of the LIFERS groups sought out ways to engage the Philadelphia community toward reducing the occurrence of violence and street crime. On April 17, 2003, the LIFERS group, in partnership with several community groups, sponsored an anti-crime summit within the Graterford Correctional Facility. More than 150 individuals representing the public attended along with more than 100 prisoners. The anti-crime summit represented what is likely the first-ever prison-based and prisoner-organized conference designed to provide local community leaders and organizations an opportunity to hear the views of violent crime offenders concerning how to prevent crime and violence.

In sum, IDVAAC offers this information as a place to start. IDVAAC and its associates would love to engage in further exploration and discussion with the administrators of NorthPoint to discuss how the recommendation can be tailored and implemented in the North Minneapolis community.

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