



**National Network
For Safe Communities**
Saving Lives, Saving Communities

RETHINKING SUPPORT & OUTREACH TO REDUCE YOUTH VIOLENCE

Violence and community chaos is a national scandal

Violent crime is very high in places, even in “safe” cities

Concentrated in poor minority, especially black, neighborhoods

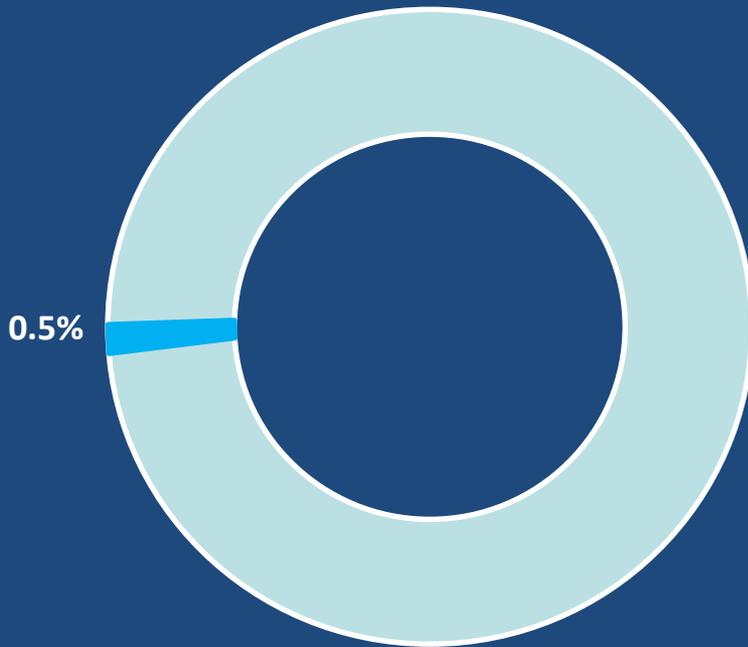
Black men are ~6% of the population, ~50% of the homicide dead

National homicide rate now ~4:100,000: but in places like Rochester’s “Crescent,” young black men are killed at a rate of 520 in 100,000

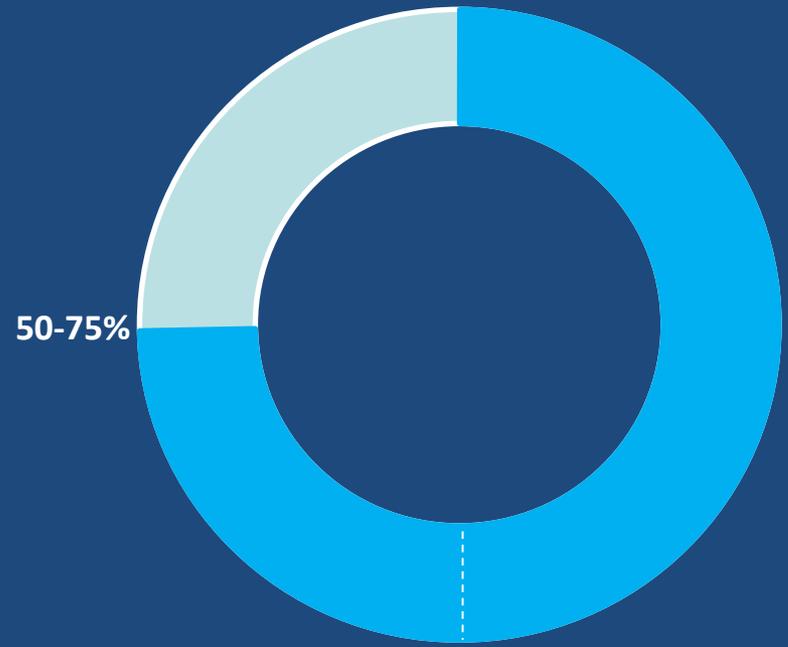
- 65 times national average
- 1 in 200 young black men killed every year

Connection between violence & groups

There is a profound and so far invariant connection between serious violence, and highly active criminal groups.



Representation in population



Representation in homicides

Two major approaches to reduce violence

Law enforcement

Crack down on gangs, individual gang members, drugs and drug dealing

Root causes and social services

Improve communities, support families, work on the economy, address racism and oppression, enhance education

But neither **enforcement** nor **social interventions** have had any meaningful impact on gangs and gang violence.

Group Violence Intervention

Direct, sustained engagement with core actor

Community, social services, law enforcement standing and acting together

Explicit goal to reduce **homicide** and **serious violence**

Core elements:

Community moral engagement

Help for those who want it

Clear, group-focused consequences

An approach, not a program

Traditional Framework

Programs under GVI have typically sought to provide

- Education and remedial education
- Life skills
- Job training and placement
- Substance abuse and mental health treatment
- Mentoring
- Emergency assistance
- Reentry-type services

Limited success

Traditional social service programs and goals have been an uneasy fit with the rest of the work

Setting up for failure: “They can’t even pass a GED”

Not much uptake: typically **under 10%** of street pop.

Poor engagement and completion

In her 2013 evaluation of the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence, Dr. Robin Engel found

“**no discernible relationship between social services provided and reductions in violence**”

Where GVI has been with social services

Most don't take it, and don't expect them to

Worth it anyway

it changes narratives for the community and the streets

Must be honest

“We will do everything we can,” not “we will fix your life”

More resources won't help

we don't know how to help this core population

Limited resources and effectiveness don't change the core fact that the violence is completely unacceptable

“It is wrong, it has to stop. And we'd like to help you.”

This is profoundly unsatisfactory

Everybody wants the core population to get help and change:
and for the most part they're not

For some partners, this – not violence reduction – is the most
important goal

Lasting personal change would support violence reduction and
community transformation

This is extremely frustrating to everyone involved: service
providers, the other partners, communities, the group
population, and funders

Perceptual differences

GVI model

- Deals with small group of “impact players”
- Success is keeping people alive and reducing gun violence

Traditional services

- Community-wide orientation
- Success is program completion, job placement and retention, recidivism, similar metrics

Traditional services often cannot account for

Managing immediate post-homicide aftermath:

Organize funeral services, Outreach to friends and family of victim and perpetrator

Offer a safe bed for the night for someone in danger

Run interference at trauma wards between rival groups

Basic things, like a bus pass or an alarm clock

Food, shelter, transportation

Clear fines to get a driver's license

Help get ID, mailing address

Alternate framework

Support & Outreach

- Sustained relationships are the single most important thing
Creating new relationships and community
Relationships are mutual and natural, not hierarchical and professional
- Offers of hope, relationship, and community are more effective than promise of “social services”
- Deal with the violence dynamics and safety
- Address the trauma street life incurs
- Provide traditional services, but only in a broader, sustained context

Primary goals of Support & Outreach

To keep core offenders alive and out of prison
and to help them thrive

Recognize that movement in this direction is progress
(instead of “not getting a job is failure”)

Recognize and address that street thinking and trauma
produce violence

not lack of work and resources

The principles of Support & Outreach

The doors are always open

Build relationships, link ex-offenders with a new, positive community, meet often

Debrief from and wean off street life, and **build new idea of life**

Honor and address trauma

Protection from risk and harm

Respond to **immediate needs**

(Food, a bed, a haven from violence)

Replace and outperform the street:

Be available 24/7, advocate

Incentivize collaboration, acknowledge achievement

(Candy bars at Rikers improve program completion by 60%)

Help people **articulate** what they feel and need

“A closed mouth doesn’t get fed”

Special attention to failing participants



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