

Creating a World Without ~~Violence~~

Career
Violence

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in NGO Advisor's 2017 report on
the top 500 NGOs in the world,
and 1st among non-governmental
organizations focused on
violence prevention.**

Cure
Violence

Violence is a contagious disease that can be prevented and, ultimately, cured.

To say that violence spreads like a disease is not a metaphor—it is a scientific fact. Violence meets the dictionary definition of disease, and hundreds of studies confirm that violence is contagious. Believe it or not, that’s very good news.

As a society, we have highly effective public health methods that are used worldwide to stop the spread of contagious diseases. We need to apply these methods to end the epidemics of violence that confront us daily, from one side of the planet to the other. And we need to do it now.

For more than 15 years, Cure Violence has successfully worked to reduce violence in some of the most violent communities in the United States and around the world. It has done so by viewing the problem of violence through a public health lens and using a scientific approach to preventing it.

Cure Violence has progressed from an innovative community violence prevention model to become the nationally and internationally recognized expert on the health-based approach to violence prevention. It is ranked 12th in NGO Advisor’s 2017 report on the Top 500 NGOs in the world, and 1st among non-governmental organizations focused on violence prevention.

The violence problem is not simple, and many factors come into play—power, race, gender, class, religion, politics, and grievances. These factors are important, but only by understanding violence as a contagious epidemic process can we reverse the contagion, save lives, and make communities safe.

The model uses proven public health methods to stop the spread of violence.

The Cure Violence model is based on the World Health Organization’s approach to reversing the epidemic spread of infectious diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis, and cholera. The model applies these same three proven strategies to stop violence. Trained, culturally appropriate workers interrupt the transmission of violence, prevent its future spread, and transform community norms.

The model has been successfully replicated in diverse settings, proving its effectiveness across a variety of communities, cultures, and ethnicities.

Three Strategies

1 Detect and Interrupt Potentially Violent Conflicts.

Violence interrupters are a new category of health workers who prevent shootings by identifying and mediating potentially lethal conflicts in the community and following up to ensure conflict does not reignite.

2 Identify and Treat Individuals at the Highest Risk.

Outreach workers work with those at the highest risk to make them less likely to commit violence by talking in their terms, looking at the costs of using violence, and helping them obtain needed support and social services (e.g., job training, drug treatment).

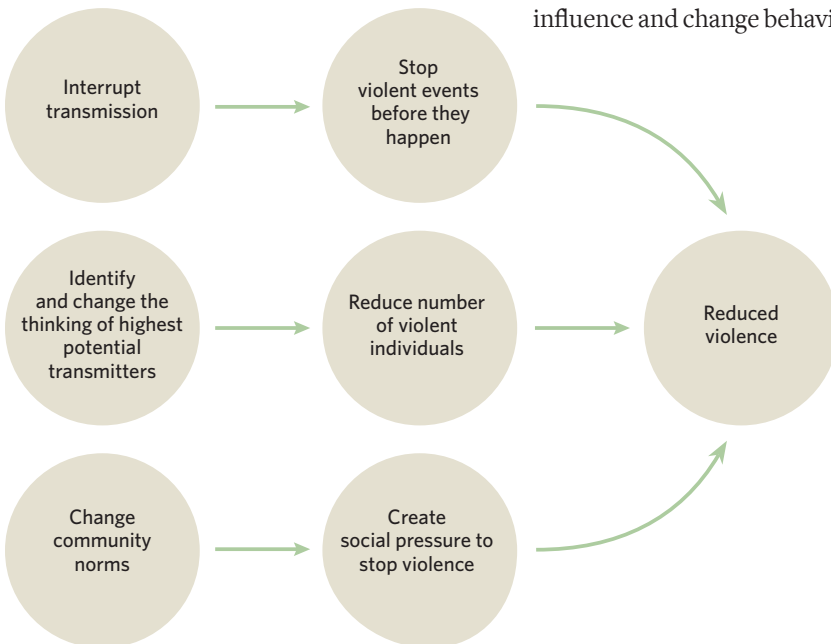
3 Mobilize the Community to Change Norms.

Workers engage community leaders, residents, local business owners, faith leaders, and individuals at high risk to shift the message and expectations about violence—conveying that it is a behavior that can be changed.

Credible Workers

Public health outreach is most effective when workers share the same background and come from the same neighborhood as those at risk for violence. Cure Violence hires and trains violence interrupters and outreach workers who already have the trust of community members and are able to influence and change behavior.

The Cure Violence Theory of Change



Like an epidemic disease, violence clusters and spreads within geographic areas.

Recent advances in neuroscience, behavior science, and epidemiology now shape our understanding of how violence spreads and how people exposed to it process their experiences and then behave toward others.

Behavior Is Contagious

We know that people acquire behaviors through imitation, which is a process that scientists and educators sometimes call “social learning.” We also know that individuals adopt violent behavior through unconscious modeling of what they’ve observed and experienced. In other words, behaviors—including violence—transmit from one person to other individuals and groups. The physiological effects from both witnessing violence and the associated trauma accelerate the contagious nature of the behavior.

The 2012 Forum on Violence Prevention sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine reviewed dozens of studies on violence from various scientific disciplines. Forum participants

concluded that the brain processes violent input—observing violence or experiencing trauma from violence—in the same way the lung processes tuberculosis by producing more tuberculosis, or the intestines process cholera by producing more cholera. The brain processes violence by producing more violence, just like an infectious disease.

The Effects

For some people, violence-related trauma results in hyper reactivity that causes them to respond more aggressively to slight provocation, leading to rapid escalation of conflicts. For others, exposure to violence can lead to rage and an uncontrollable desire for revenge.

Violence can “transmute,” which means exposure to one kind of violence increases not only the likelihood an individual will engage in that form of violence, but other types as well. For example, exposure to community violence has been shown to increase one’s risk of perpetuating domestic violence, and exposure to war violence increases an individual’s risk of engaging in community violence.

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Multiple independent evaluations have proven the Cure Violence model to be effective.

Research conducted by Johns Hopkins University, University of Chicago, Northwestern University, the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and others has shown large, statistically significant reductions in violence where the Cure Violence model is at work.

Beyond reducing violence at both community and individual levels, studies also show that the model helps people in neighborhoods get assistance with education, employment, parenting, and other issues that profoundly affect their lives.

SELECT RESULTS ACHIEVED IN TARGETED HOTSPOTS IN CITIES WHERE THE CURE VIOLENCE MODEL WAS IMPLEMENTED

UNITED STATES	Baltimore	Up to 44% fewer shootings Up to 56% fewer killings 365+ days with no shootings or killings in three communities
	New York	20% lower shooting rate, compared to control group 365+ days with no shootings or killings in one community 2 years with no shootings or killings in one community
	Chicago	41% - 73% fewer shootings and killings 100% reduction in retaliatory killings 48% fewer shootings during rapid-reduction pilot program
INTERNATIONAL	Cape Town, South Africa	53% fewer shootings 31% fewer killings
	United Kingdom Youth Prison Program	95% reduction in group attacks 51% reduction in overall violence
	San Pedro Sula, Honduras	73% - 85% decrease in shootings and killings
	Loiza, Puerto Rico	50% decrease in killings in first year of implementation; maintained for two years

Cure Violence helps cities reduce shootings and killings in violence-torn neighborhoods.

Any community that has a problem with violence should consider implementing the Cure Violence model. The Expert Training and Technical Assistance Center staff works with local implementation partners to replicate the approach in their cities. By training and deploying their own credible violence interrupters and outreach workers, the targeted communities reduce the numbers of shootings and killings in violence-torn neighborhoods.

In-depth training and technical assistance (TTA) is also available to implementation partners for a variety of program adaptations and enhancements, including citywide scaling, hospital response program, school-based program, and other consulting. In total, these offerings constitute a comprehensive health-based, violence-prevention and response system that allows cities to address their local priorities.

Citywide Scaling

An implementation partner typically applies the Cure Violence model in a limited number of a city's "hotspots"—the areas with the highest rates of shootings and killings. TTA staff can assess a current partner's capacity to bring the model to 75% - 80% of the hotspots and help secure political and financial support by engaging key constituencies through return-on-investment projections and business case presentations.

Hospital Response Program

Implementation partners can receive TTA to replicate the Cure Violence Hospital Response Program, which creates formal

partnerships with area hospital trauma centers. This program deploys hospital responders—trusted community members with similar backgrounds to trauma victims—on a 24/7 basis when a gunshot, stabbing, or blunt trauma victim arrives. These trained responders intervene during the critical time period after a violent incident to prevent retaliation and interrupt the cycle of violence.

School-Based Program

Conflicts among neighborhood factions—often those concerning basic respect, turf, and identity issues—can spill over into a high school setting. Implementation partners can adapt the Cure Violence model to create on-site school programs where credible workers work with high-risk students to mediate conflicts that might otherwise turn violent and improve school attendance. In one school, more than 90% of conflict mediations were successful at preventing violent incidents.

Emergency Response/Rapid Reduction

Cure Violence successfully piloted an emergency response/rapid reduction model designed to curb violence in areas experiencing sharp spikes in shootings and killings. When this model was deployed in Chicago's most violent police district during what is typically the most violent month, the number of shootings decreased by 48% over a five-week period. This model is of particular interest to implementation partners in cities with significant upticks due to civil unrest and other causes.

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Cure Violence's health-based approach is dynamic, and we continue to strengthen it in new ways.

Model Enhancements

Cure Violence is constantly looking for ways to make its violence prevention model even more effective, and right now has three technological enhancements in development. These technologies will boost the usefulness of Cure Violence's health-based approach and help it reach new audiences.

SOCIAL MEDIA AGGREGATION

PLATFORM—Implementation partners will be able to use social media to detect and interrupt potentially violent events; broadcast targeted public messages designed to change the attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate violence; and measure the effectiveness of these messages at shifting community norms and violent social media behavior.

VIOLENCE INTERRUPTER APP—This tool will help violence interrupters select the conflict mediation techniques that have the greatest likelihood of success, given specific factors in a particular situation. The app has the potential to improve mediation outcomes, which translates into more lives saved.

VIDEO GAME—A Cure Violence video game will help spread health-related messages about violence to a much larger audience.

New Adaptations

Given Cure Violence's successes and unique vantage point, a wide range of institutions have approached the organization to adapt its model to prevent other types of violence that plague our communities. All adaptations involve workers who are credible to each target audience and the same health-based strategies used to curb street violence.

Here are three examples:

- A children's hospital requested that Cure Violence develop programs aimed at preventing **child maltreatment** and **intimate partner violence**.
- A state Department of Corrections invited the organization to adapt its model to address violence within the **prison population**.
- The U.S. State Department asked Cure Violence to adapt the model to reduce individuals' susceptibility to being recruited or inspired by **violent extremism**.

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Cure Violence is spearheading a social movement to change society's approach to violence.

Cure Violence believes violence is a health issue and that the health sector has the most powerful solutions.

A significant barrier stands in the way of adopting a public health approach to violence on a broad scale—the prevailing belief that violence is committed by “bad people.” This view makes violence a moral issue and depends on law enforcement and the criminal justice system for answers. Cure Violence believes violence is a health issue and that the health sector has the most powerful solutions.

Fundamental Shift

The movement aims to make a fundamental shift in the way our nation talks about and deals with violence. The goals are to:

- Train and activate health leaders as **spokespeople** on violence
- Design a comprehensive health **system** for reducing violence and related social factors in health
- Amplify **language** that promotes the understanding of violence and inequity as health issues
- Promote **policies** that facilitate health sector solutions to reduce violence and inequity
- Guide communities and the health sector in **practices** that drastically reduce violence and inequity.

National Health and Community Collaborative on Violence Prevention

Cure Violence is part of the National Health and Community Collaborative on Violence Prevention, a coalition of more than 100 leaders from health and related sectors drawn from the most violent cities in the United States. These leaders are leveraging evidence-based approaches to violence prevention to save lives and create a model that can be implemented nationwide in impactful, sustainable, and equitable ways.

Partners in the collaborative include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, public health departments in major cities, leading universities, national health associations, renowned foundations, and myriad nonprofit organizations. The collaborative is also forming important relationships with criminal justice reform advocates, racial equity movements, law enforcement, city planners, and philanthropic benefactors whose goals align with the collaborative's mission.

VOCABULARY

Old View	Health View
Bad people	Learned behavior
Enemies	Negative norms
"Senseless" acts	Contagious process
Punishment	Interruption & behavior change
Intractable	Solvable
War	Epidemic

*You can be part
of the cure.*

The Cure Violence model is making a meaningful difference right now—reducing shootings and killings and changing norms—in scores of neighborhoods across nine countries, but the public health approach to violence prevention must be extended to many more communities around the world.

While its day-to-day activities encompass training and technical assistance, innovative solutions, and movement building, Cure Violence staff never forget that, ultimately, the work is about keeping people safe and helping them flourish.

There is much work to be done. To expand the use of health-based violence prevention and transform how society views and treats the violence epidemic, concerned citizens, health professionals, and business and civic leaders must work together and invest in the vision of a world without violence.

Your contribution will save lives and make communities safer. Please go online and make your gift today.

cureviolence.org/donate

Cure Violence Around the World*

Canada	50 Neighborhoods
El Salvador	31 Cities
Honduras	9 Countries
Jamaica	
Mexico	
South Africa	
Syria	
Trinidad	
United States	

**As of February 2017*

Cure
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