

Q & A Transcript: Violence Intervention Programs

July 15, 2021

QUESTION (Donna Vanhook): How do communities move towards addressing and advocating for gun violence as a public health issue?

ANSWER (Greg Jackson): Yes. Well, we have quite a few people who are a part of this event who are part of our coalition in North Carolina. But I think the first thing is just making sure your elected officials understand the scale of violence in your community and how the impacts are harming communities. But then secondly, breaking down the solutions that exist. What we found is whether it's a city council member or Congressman in Washington is that there are our elected officials have a very small amount of knowledge about what are the options that exist to address violence. The dominant narrative is more police, more enforcement, harsher sentencing. But we must open people's minds and show them some of these evidence-based practices exist and are thriving. And so, I would say first, make sure they understand the scale and try to do some type of briefing or presentation that breaks down the solutions that exist. From there, we can advocate to the stakeholders and folks that need that help. I will say at Community Justice Action Fund, we do a quarterly training called Justice Camp. We actually just finished our last one yesterday. We train people on advocacy strategies and tactics and how to effectively push that message. But honestly it has been very simple in this case because a lot of these solutions work so well. As you've heard from Amy and David, they're seeing a lot of results with a little bit of resources. And so, we have so many test cases that we could put before our leaders that, that really sell it for us. Hopefully that's helpful.

QUESTION: Do these models incorporate racial trauma therapy for those who exhibit internalized racism?

ANSWER (Amy Vincent): So, we don't necessarily have therapy specific to that, but we do have a trauma psychologist on staff and we provide counseling for all of our patients and participants through counselors in our program. And then whatever we're not able to take on because of capacity we refer out to culturally competent providers in the community as well. So I think it's a great idea and I love that. And if there were more capacity, we would certainly be focusing specifically on that too.

ANSWER (Greg Jackson): Yeah. I mean, I've definitely seen programs that integrate those types of strategy. [The Pathways Program](#) in DC as part of their weekly therapeutic sessions, they do cover kind of institutional racism. And how do the impacts of racism, how is that feeding into their trauma and their perspective on both themselves and how they deal with conflicts in a broader society? So, I do think it's a really smart thing to incorporate. It's not necessarily the norm, but I think it's very valuable wherever it is incorporated.

QUESTION (Paul Moon): Is there an example of a domestic violence prevention program that could work well with ARPA funding?

ANSWER (Greg Jackson): I don't have one off the top of my head, but I will say there is a whole sector of these programs that do specialize in addressing domestic

violence. And we're working on kind of a [policy playbook](#) on that hopefully we'll be able to release later this summer. If you follow our information, you'll get that policy playbook that breaks down some of the community-based strategies to address domestic violence. I will say though, that in a lot of these programs, especially the cognitive behavioral therapy programs, there are many conversations focused on healthy masculinity and how to navigate not only your relationships in the community, but in your relationships in the home. A lot of these wraparound programs cover some of the things that hopefully can prevent someone moving in the direction of domestic violence. But there also is a whole lane of organizations that do specialize in this and we can try and circle back and get that too.

QUESTION (Bridgette Richards, Shiala Baldwin, Monica Kearney): People want to know more about whether legal services are offered as part of the program. Another question is whether you could talk more about the funding for your program, and then a question about whether these models can be applied to rural service providers that may have hospitals, but don't have a trauma center.

ANSWER (Amy Vincent): So, let me start with those. We don't provide legal services. We don't provide legal advice, but we do refer out to our partners in the community who do that. We often work with legal aid or other providers who provide pro bono work. I'll come back to the funding question because I think the rural question is a great one. And something that we've been working on in Virginia is looking at what can you do if you are in a rural area. And most rural areas don't have trauma centers, but that's okay. If you are seeing increased violence, which a lot of our rural communities are at least in our state and I assume it's not much different in North Carolina, there are programs like our [Emerging Leaders Program](#) where you maybe are doing some more prevention work. But you also can do a very smaller version of a hospital-based violence intervention program. You still have all of those same resources at your fingertips, through your emergency department at your local community hospital.

QUESTION: (Shiala Baldwin question re-stated): What advice, in terms of finding funding, would you give to a community that wants to establish what you are doing?

ANSWER (Amy Vincent): If you work at your local community hospital or trauma center, I think it's talking to your leadership. That's how we started was in the initial investment from our hospital CEO. He saw the need because Dr. Botanos was able to show him the data, the numbers, and how it would help the hospital save money. I mean, sometimes you have to talk about the dollars, which is the sad part, because it's about individual lives, not money, but sometimes that's what you have to show first. So, we got our initial seed money from our hospital CEO. He was willing to invest in a half time case manager – half-time. So even with a small investment of that half time case manager, it allowed us to prove the concept over a two-year period and we're able to gain more funding to grow to full time. Once Virginia opened up the funds for hospital-based violence intervention programs, we were able to expand to five case managers and those four peer supports. But if

you're looking to get started, like I said, talking with your hospital leadership, pulling data. For national data, you want to look at places like HAVI, the [Health Alliance for Violence Intervention](#). They are our partners. We are a member of their organization. They are your national hospital-based violence intervention network. Reach out to them as well. They are going to provide you with more national statistics, connect you with other hospitals as well. We're happy to be a resource, but it's always good to hear from other hospitals who are doing the work too. So you have multiple perspectives. And then tapping into those ARP funds, that one time, funding to get you up and running.

For more information, a good resource on hospital-based programs is The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (www.thehavi.org).

ANSWER (Greg Jackson): In April, 26 government grant programs were adjusted to be more inclusive of these strategies. You can read more about that change here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/04/07/fact-sheet-more-details-on-the-biden-harris-administrations-investments-in-community-violence-interventions/>

QUESTION (Bridgette Richards): This is going to have to be our last question just cause we're running out of time, but for Mr. Johnson, who did you work with in local government to support your programming? Where did you start?

ANSWER (David Johnson): I'd say it started with our former health director. She went out and had seen the model, and she brought those ideas back and did a presentation. Durham County gave, I want to say a half-million-dollar investment to initially start on Bull City United. And we have taken off from there. And then we have partnerships with the city government, and I also think we just got a grant from Representative David Price also. We've been doing a lot of grinding and seeking funds since our first initial investment.