Preliminary framework development for mentorship in Community Violence Intervention Programs

Translational Science Benefits Model

IMPACT PROFILE

Firearm violence takes the lives of thousands of young people every year, disproportionally in Black communities. This study looked at what makes mentoring programs work for youth at risk of firearm violence. The findings help community programs better support young people and keep them safe.

The Challenge

Firearm violence has a devastating impact on Black youth in the United States. Recent statistics indicate that while Black youth represent 15% of the youth population in America, 47% of firearm deaths occur among Black youth, representing one of the highest causes of mortality in this community[1-2]. The Community Violence Intervention (CVI) programs use trusted mentors with lived firearm violence experience to help keep young people safe, but little is known about what makes these mentoring interventions within these broader CVI programs work to prevent future violence.

The Approach

Interviews were conducted with 20 mentors and program leaders in CVI programs and youth development programs across Washington State to find out what is needed for mentoring interventions to reduce firearm violence.

- Explored the backgrounds and motivations of mentors with lived experience of firearm violence.
- Identified the key steps in building trust and strong relationships with young people.
- Examined how mentors work with families, schools, and the legal system to support youth.
- Looked at the bigger social and structural factors that drive firearm violence in communities.

The Impact

The Mentoring in CVI Programs project resulted in clinical, community, economic, and policy benefits.

This study produced a clear framework showing what effective mentoring looks like in CVI programs. It found that mentors with lived experience are essential, and that programs must address young people's basic needs. For example, food, housing, and safe transportation, to be effective. The findings can help CVI programs recruit better mentors, provide stronger support, and work more closely with schools and the justice system to protect youth.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

The Mentoring in CVI Programs project resulted in:

- Interviews with **20 mentors and program leaders** across CVI programs in Washington State.
- Developed a **preliminary framework** that identifies the key components of effective mentoring to prevent firearm violence.

Key Benefits

COMMUNITY — Helps CVI programs build stronger, more effective mentoring to protect young people from firearm violence.

COMMUNITY — Shows how addressing basic needs like housing and food is key to keeping youth safe.

POLICY — Findings can inform research papers that shape firearm violence prevention programs.

CLINICAL — Mentors who address basic needs like housing and food may help reduce the physical health risks that come with living in unsafe conditions.

UW MEDICINE CENTER FOR FIREARM INJURY PREVENTION

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Find out more:

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