Safety Principles & Practices

Recommendations for Working with Young Adults at the Center of Urban Violence

The Roca IMPACT INSTITUTE

THINK DIFFERENT. DO DIFFERENT.
VIOLENCE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

- More often than not, interactions are instantaneous - Emotion & Trauma-Driven Behavior
- Small groups/clicks change allegiances
- Highly Mobile
- With the understanding of trauma, young people are stuck in the bottom brain remaining in a state of hyper vigilance
WHAT WE DO

- Safety First
- Connect with young people individually on social media and in person
- Call them up when we see stuff
- If young we know are connected in different ways, address that
- Use our CBT to work through their Think-Feel-Do cycles over time
- Work with police and criminal justice partners on dangerous issues to intervene
VIOLENCE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Social Media Experiences

- Example of threat in person vs. threat on social media
- Different types of social media
  - Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube (music videos etc.)
  - Worth noting snap chat – disappears if you don’t save it
- Rapid expansion of social networks
- Can see where people are
- The challenge of the platform

Social Media Examples

- 19-year-old young woman in Chelsea
- Young person threatening and posing with weapons
- Threats through rap songs
- Boston Globe – Joan Donavan
Safety itself is a core intervention and culture that is created through relentlessly building trusting relationships.

Safety is more than a set operational procedures and protocols; however, clear and thoughtful operational procedures are necessary to provide the foundation of safety work with young people.

- Creating safety requires building relationships with young people, developing deep working partnerships with key law-enforcement partners, and gathering, using, and communicating information quickly and completely.

- Safety should be integrated into daily operations and programming.
SAFETY PRINCIPLES

- Be trauma informed in all interactions with young people
- Have individual and collective confidence that you can protect young people and staff
- Create a welcoming culture for young people
- Invest time and resources into the relationships and tools for behavior change
- Be vigilant but not reactive
SAFETY PRACTICES

1 Strong truthful relationships with young people
   - Create a culture of welcoming & belonging
   - Lead with the belief that change is possible
   - Have direct and difficult conversations about safety from first contact
   - Do not inadvertently create distrust and fear

2 Begin safety planning upon receipt of referral
   - Start every new enrollment with a safety profile
   - Safety contracts are important to help set expectations and talk about how to communicate safety needs with young people
SAFETY PRACTICES

3 Routine use of roles & structures to manage and reduce anxiety
   - Staff should have clear roles and responsibilities in maintaining safety: decision makers; relationship builders; supporters
   - Consistent communication and meeting structures that are run daily without fail must be in place

4 Rapid, real-time, consistent information gathering & communication about safety
   - Staff should have clear practices and expectations about information sharing
   - Young people, street networks, and social media are valuable sources of information
   - Crisis Situations require specific communication protocols
   - Use Safety Circles for communicating safety with young people
Clear and systematic coordination with law enforcement partners

- Regular communication with all law enforcement partners (multiple and key points of contact)
- Acute safety incidents protocols are important to have in place when there is time sensitive, imminent danger for young people (i.e. Shooting Response Protocol)