

Safety Principles & Practices

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

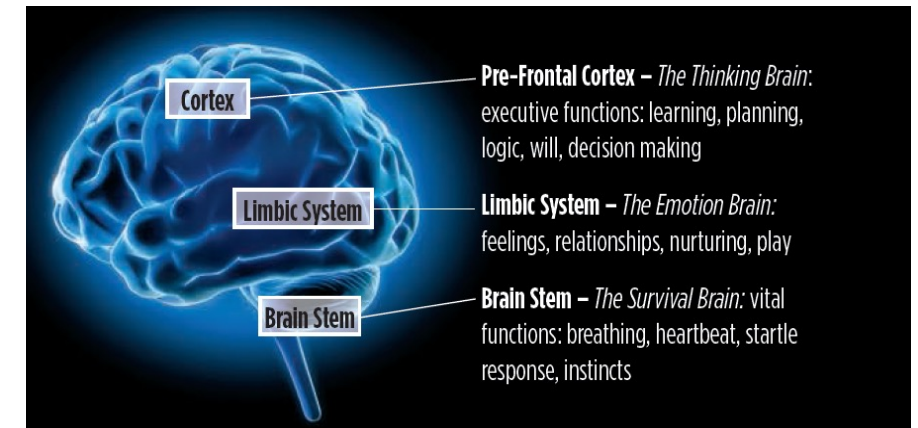
The Roca **IMPACT INSTITUTE**
THINK DIFFERENT. DO DIFFERENT.





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 Donovan



KEY HIGHLIGHTS



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



SAFETY PRACTICES

5 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)

