

# On-going non-gun-related violence and prevention research: Youth Violence

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# Significant Progress: Youth Violence Prevention

- Epidemiology of youth violence – rates as well as developmental and contextual patterns
- Risk and protective factors – with particular attention to *malleable* factors as targets of prevention
- Effective preventive interventions – growing list of evidence-based interventions that have been rigorously evaluated (e.g., randomized controlled trials)

# Significant Progress: Prevention Science

- Research across areas of prevention science has demonstrated the tremendous potential of prevention in improving the nation's health by reducing the incidence of morbidity, mortality and the associated social costs of problems and disorders including violence
- Use rigorous research to have the same impact on gun violence

What do we know about patterns, risk and prevention?

# Epidemiology (Patterns)

- Cuts across gender, age groups, socioeconomic levels, racial and ethnic groups
- Starting earlier related to greater and longer involvement
- Present in the general population, concentrated in small portion (6% account for 2/3 of the violence; data suggesting small group seriously involved during adolescence)
- Higher rates concentrated in high-poverty, low resourced communities

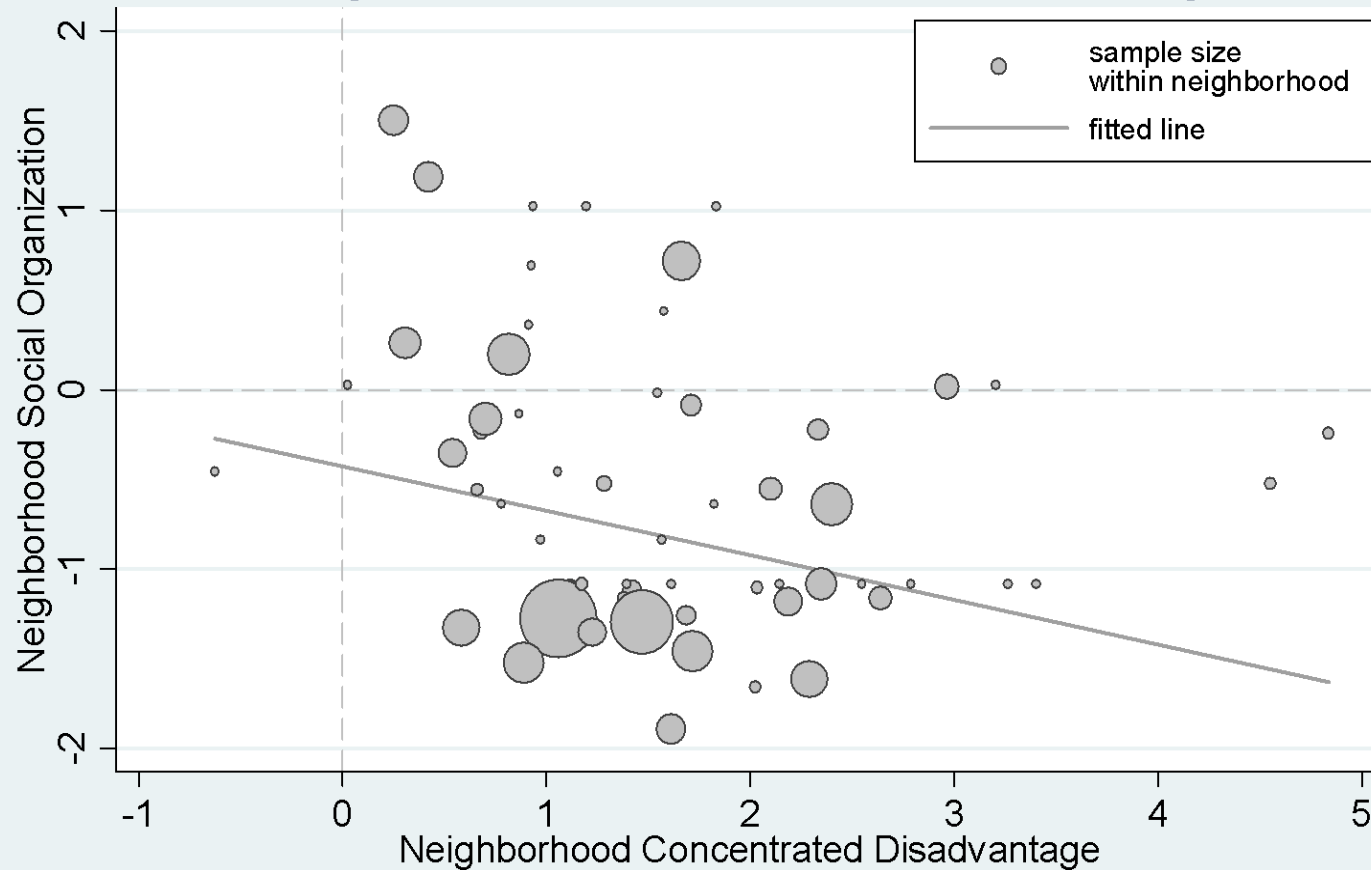
# Youth Homicide and Violence

- In 2010, 4,828 young people ages 10 to 24 were victims of homicide—an average of 13 each day
- Homicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24 years old
- Among homicide victims 10 to 24 years old in 2010, 86% (4,171) were male and 14% (657) were female.
- Among homicide victims ages 10 to 24 years old in 2010, 82.8% were killed with a firearm
- 707,212 young people ages 10 to 24 were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained from physical assaults

# Key Aspects of Community/Neighborhood (both why crime occurs and influence on individual risk)

- *Community Structure*
  - ▣ Poverty, crime and violence, housing quality, crowding, built environment
- *Neighborhood Social Processes*
  - ▣ Social connection and support, informal social control, norms and attitudes regarding violence

## SAFE Neighborhood Social Organization vs. Neighborhood Concentrated Disadvantage,





# Key research findings regarding community context

- Community/neighborhood characteristics matter
- Both structure and social processes are important
  - ▣ Social processes may have an important protective effect
- Direct effects, but important to consider interaction with other developmental systems
  - ▣ Example of families – differences in family functioning and parenting
  - ▣ Differences in how parenting behaviors may relate to outcomes in different contexts

# Key conclusions regarding intervention

- Manage the context
  - ▣ Work with individuals and families to help cope with or manage the ecological context
- Social Organization/Norms and Attitudes
  - ▣ Focused on key social problems
  - ▣ Impact social organization (e.g., CeaseFire, Communities that Care)
- Community/Economic Development
  - ▣ Target changes in the structural characteristics without dramatically altering the residential population of the community (e.g., business improvement districts)

# Emerging research in brain development and neurobiology in adolescence

- Development of self-regulatory processes and executive functioning
- Impact of exposure to violence and chronic stress
  - ▣ 50% - 96% have witnessed community violence in their lifetime
  - ▣ Witnessed three or more events by adolescence
- Social context may amplify risk
- *Implications for preventive interventions*

What do we know about effective interventions?

## Violence Prevention

- Focus on individuals limited effects (tends to be short-term)
  - When embedded as part of a comprehensive program
- Family focused preventive interventions have strongest and sustained effects – when focused at high risk can have an “ecological effect”
- To have population effects need a comprehensive and coordinated approach
  - Universal interventions (delivered to and supporting the whole population)
  - Selective-high risk, early intervention
  - Indicated – already involved
  - Policy and Infrastructure

# What would a comprehensive and coordinated system look like?

- A set of programs based in the best available evidence
- Programs intended to be universal (delivered to and supporting the whole population)
- Programs directed toward targeted or “selected” high risk groups
- Span across development
- Address risk and protective factors at multiple levels of the developmental system
- Policy

# Priority Research Topics (next three years)

- What is the relation of youth gun violence to youth violence more generally?
  - ▣ subset of? distinct developmental trajectory? access key risk?
- Why do youth carry a gun for the first time?
- Are preventive interventions that have been found to be effective for youth violence prevention also effective for preventing youth gun violence? (spirit of intervention development takes a long time/moving quickly)