If Youth Can, then I Can!

It’s time to come together to take action to prevent violence and improve our communities.

Violence Prevention Media Campaign Toolkit
About If Youth Can, then I Can Violence Prevention Campaign
The If YOUTH CAN, then I Can Violence Prevention Campaign aims to spotlight the issue of community violence affecting youth in our communities. The goals of the campaign are to raise awareness about the impact of the immeasurable negative impacts of community violence on youth, families, and communities, to educate the public about the risk facts and strategies that support resilience in youth and families, and to engage youth, families, and community members on how they can take part and work together to address the complexities of violence and trauma.

The Urban Youth Trauma Center (UYTC) is a SAMHSA funded Treatment Service Adaptation Center and a member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. The program is meant to promote and disseminate comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated care for multi-problem, high-risk youth affected by trauma and community violence.

Youth Overcoming Urban Trauma and Healing: A Community Action Network
YOUTH-CAN is a network of community representatives striving to share information and resources to improve the local and national community’s ability to organize and mobilize responses to community violence as they impact youth and their families. This training initiative focuses on trauma awareness, collaboration, and supporting best practices for violence prevention and trauma intervention. The goals of YOUTH-CAN are to increase awareness about trauma and community violence, promote the use of best practices for violence prevention and trauma informed care, promote individual level participation and responsiveness to address community violence, and support connections and collaborations to address community violence.
The **If YOUTH CAN, then I Can Violence Prevention Campaign** aims to spotlight the issue of community violence affecting youth in our communities. This toolkit includes information about the media campaign and how you can participate.

### In this toolkit you will find.....

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Visit our pages:

- [http://www.psych.uic.edu/ijr-programs/urban-youth-trauma-center](http://www.psych.uic.edu/ijr-programs/urban-youth-trauma-center)
- [www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter](http://www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter)
- [UYTC Thunderclap page](http://www.psych.uic.edu/ijr-programs/urban-youth-trauma-center)

Share our Thunderclap page to take a stand against community violence.

Post your pledge to Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag #IfYouthCan, and tag us @UYTC_Chicago.

To post to Facebook, like our page [www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter](http://www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter), and tag us in a public post to your timeline with the hashtag #IfYouthCan (see pages 16-19 to learn more).
On April 1, 2016, The *Urban Youth Trauma Center* at the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Institute for Juvenile Research launched its ‘If Youth Can, then I Can’ Violence Prevention Campaign.

Over the past decade in America, over 300,000 people have been killed as a result of gun violence—and millions more have been the victim of assaults, robberies, and other crimes involving a gun.

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), youth violence is the second-leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 24.
- 14 million (or one in five), children in the US are exposed to violence involving a weapon between the ages of 6 and 17.
- In 2015, an average of one person every three hours was shot in Chicago – more than in any other city in the US.
- Between January 1, 2016 and February 22, 2016 there have been 421 shooting victims in Chicago alone.

This is why the *Urban Youth Trauma Center* is rallying individuals like you to take the pledge and to take action to prevent violence and improve our communities!

It’s time to come together to take action to prevent violence and improve our communities.

**The goals of this campaign are**

1. To raise Awareness about the negative impacts of community violence on youth, families, and entire communities.
2. To Educate the public about the risk factors and strategies that support resilience in youth, families, and communities.
3. To Engage youth, families and community members in the process of working together to address the complexities of Community Violence.
Despite many challenges that youth face, youth can thrive in the midst of violence. By taking action to make a positive impact in their communities, these youth inspire us to build a better world.

If Youth Can, then I Can!

“When I met my mentor I was trying to regain my soul, body and mind that I had given to my gang since I was 15 years of age. After meeting my mentor he encouraged me to leave the gang and [taught me] how to show love and respect to other human beings. Now, I’m doing much better with my life and I am following in my mentors teaching to help other youth comprehend that their lives are valuable and that anyone can change from being a gang member to to help heal and turn others lives around for the better of our communities, cities, and even the WORLD.’

– Male, 27
Oakland, CA

"Project FIRE helped me because it slowed me down from being reckless all the time after I got shot. It helped me learn that there's more things than just being out in the streets. You can do something that you're good at and have a future. Wanting to get better so I can be successful as an artist in the future helps me stay out of the streets."

– Male, 16
Chicago, IL

"People saw some talent in me from my drawing and got me to try other kinds of art. Doing something different from what I had always done showed me there was other possibilities and saved me from the streets. Now I work as a teacher and mentor trying to give younger people the same experience that I had."

-Male, 23
Chicago, IL

Learn more at:

https://www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter
Easy ways to Get Involved!

Here are easy ways that you can participate in the If Youth Can, Then I Can campaign:

1. **TAKE THE PLEDGE**: Take a stand against community violence and take our pledge If youth can, then I can! Post a picture on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram with you holding a sign which states what you will do to contribute to the fight against community violence (#IfYouthCan, @UYTC_Chicago). Use the pledge sheet included at the end of this Toolkit. “To prevent community violence I pledge to....” For ideas about what to pledge, see the Best Practices for Violence Prevention section (pages 8-12).

2. **GET OTHERS INVOLVED**: Tell your family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors about the pledge that you took and what the campaign’s about. Invite them to make their own pledge, support you in yours, and to help get others involved.

3. **SPREAD THE WORD**: Share the information and resources that the campaign has to offer. You can put a link in your email signature, share it to social media, hand out pamphlets and hang up posters! Use social media to publicize your efforts around this campaign. Check out our Resources section inside this toolkit. Share posts which highlight youth-focused activities, seminars, and trainings. Feature groups in your community doing great work with the youth and share tips on increasing awareness and engagement around violence prevention. With a “share” or a retweet (“RT”) you can educate your networks about violence prevention. Tag your posts with #IfYouthCan. Share our Thunderclap page to take a stand against community violence.

4. **SHARE STORIES** of people making a difference! Get word out about what youth, communities, teachers, service providers, and others are doing.

5. **PARTICIPATE IN A LOCAL EVENT**: Check out what agencies and individuals in your area have planned. You can take part in a peace march or a movie screening, or handout out campaign materials together.

6. **ORGANIZE AN ACTIVITY IN THE COMMUNITY**: Work with local community groups (mentoring organizations, faith based organizations, schools, or other groups that work with youth and families) to spread awareness about the impact of violence and trauma and to enact solutions. Check out our Best Practices for Violence Prevention Section inside this toolkit and on our website.

7. **VOLUNTEER**: Take time to volunteer with local agencies, schools, and community centers to provide support to youth engage in different afterschool activities. Share a skill/talent that you have or just assist with the scheduled activities.
It’s on us to start the conversation!

Are you ready to help get the word out about the Urban Youth Trauma Center’s ‘If Youth Can, then I Can’ Violence Prevention Campaign, but not sure where to start? Below you will find a list of conversation starters we have gathered for you!

• “Community violence affects everyone; it’s everyone’s business. 1 in 3 people in the United States knows someone who has been shot. It’s not a matter that only impacts ‘bad kids’ or only those who are impacted by it directly. We, as a country, need to address the underlying causes of violence and trauma that continue to plague our communities.”

• “Violence and trauma can be prevented, and we can each do our part to participate and make sure that becomes reality.”

• “Violence prevention is a subject that we as a country need to talk about! It’s time to bring this topic to the forefront of our Nation’s dialogue.”

• “Violence is not limited to those who are dying. For each person killed, there are 10 times as many people disabled by it, and others who bear the psychological, physical, and financial costs for it.”

• “Violence creates a ripple effect that impacts entire generations.”

• “Youth who have experienced gun-related injuries and/or witnessed violent crimes can suffer from continuous struggles, including unrest, fear, and traumatic stress.”
Webinars on Community Violence:

**America’s Child Soldiers**
- Brad Stolbach
- July 6th, 2016 at 12:00 pm ET/11:00 pm CT/9:00 am PT

Create an account and register at [http://learn.nctsn.org/](http://learn.nctsn.org/)

Enroll in the speaker series titled *Building Resiliency: Supporting Youth Affected by Trauma and Community Violence* to view upcoming and past webinars.

**Example Past Webinars:**
- **Triumph over Trauma:** Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Youth Exposed to Community Violence
- **Addressing Trauma and Disproportionate Ethnic Minority Contact in Juvenile Justice through Empowerment:** It’s about more than a seat at the table

**Coming Soon:**

**National Forum to Discuss Youth Exposure to Community Violence**

A panel of experts will answer questions submitted by community members. The call is an open invitation. Stay tuned for call details at [www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter](http://www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter)

Submit your questions or comments to uytc@psych.uic.edu

**Other National Campaigns:**

**National Youth Violence Prevention Week**
April 4-8, 2016

**Chicago Safe Start’s Childhood Exposure to Violence Prevention week**
April 18th-22nd, 2016
Addressing Trauma and Violence

Violence holds victims, families, friends and entire neighborhoods hostage, causing paralyzing fear and trauma that is ongoing. Community violence is everyone’s business because not a single person in a community is left unaffected by the deleterious effects that violence leaves behind.

Community violence can be reduced and prevented. We can all take action to improve the lives of those who have survived violence.

There are many factors that contribute to violence, ranging from individual, relationship, community, and societal.

Solutions must address these factors.

Learn and apply the Best Practices for Violence Prevention and Trauma Intervention, including what they are, why they are important, and examples for how to use each strategy.

**Know the signs...Be supportive**
1. Identifying, helping and supporting victims of community violence

**A Sense of Trust**
2. Support safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children, caregivers and caring adults

**A Sense of Mastery**
3. Develop life skills in children and adolescents

**Feeling Safe**
4. Promote a safe environment in the community

**Sending the Right Message**
5. Change rules and expectations in society (cultural norms) that support violence

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**Best Practice #1: KNOW THE SIGNS... BE SUPPORTIVE**

*Identifying, helping, and supporting survivors of community violence*

**The Impact:**
Early exposure to violence can make it more likely that someone will be a victim or perpetrator of violence in the future. Exposure for youth can lead to many social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive problems.

**The Importance:**
- Helpers should know and understand the signs of someone who is struggling with trauma.
- There are effective tools for identifying and helping youth and families who have been affected by violence and trauma.

For these reasons, it is important to:

*Identify and support survivors of trauma and violence.*

**What YOU can do:**
- Utilize trauma screening and assessment tools
- Learn about the services available in your community, help to spread the word about what resources are available
- Connect youth and families to services (counseling, life skills, support groups)
- Share your experiences and explain how support helped you
Best Practices For Violence Prevention

Best Practice #2: A SENSE OF TRUST

*Developing safe, stable, and nurturing relationships between children and their parents, caregivers, and caring adults*

**The Impact:**
Witnessing community violence and having people close to you (e.g. caregivers, siblings, peers) who engage in violence can affect relationships and trust.

**The Importance:**
- Children do best when they are well cared for and have stable relationships with caregivers.
- They are less likely to be victims of maltreatment or have problems because of aggressive behavior.

For these reasons, it is important to:
*Support the development of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships.*

**What YOU can do:**
- **Support** parents and caregivers, and help them to find support from individuals, groups, or organizations.
- **Promote activities** that support relationship building for families (game night, family dinner, sports, etc.).
- **Educate** caregivers on the effects of violence and trauma, as well as parenting skills and techniques.
- **Mentor** children and adolescents, serving as a reliable adult in their lives that listens and works to build trust together.
- **Connect** youth and families to helpful services, programs, and resources.

Best Practice #3: A SENSE OF MASTERY

*Developing life skills in children and adolescents*

**The Impact:**
Experiencing early violence and adversity has been linked to poor social skills, low academic achievement, impulsiveness, truancy, and poverty. These factors can fuel more violence.

**The Importance:**
- Learning skills in sports, arts, leadership, academics, and vocational programs can help youth manage themselves better and deal with everyday life challenges.
- This can protect them against aggression, lead to better social skills, and better school and job performances.

For these reasons, it is important to:
*Develop life skills in children and adolescents.*

**What YOU can do:**
- **Sports** and recreation (e.g. coaching, playing together)
- **Arts** and music (poetry or lyric writing, playing an instrument, listening to favorite meaningful artists)
- **Build skills** including leadership, vocational, and academic (e.g. tutoring, debate team, computer skills)
- **Coping skills** (deep breathing, drawing, poem writing)
- **Organize** workshops or help to form study or skill-based groups
Best Practices For Violence Prevention

Best Practice #4: FEELING SAFE
Promoting a safe environment in the community

The Impact:
Living, working, and going to school in urban areas can at times feel like being in a war zone. Additionally, these children lack access to safe areas for recreation.

The Importance:
• Everyone plays a role in keeping a community safe, but no one person, family, organization, or system can make a difference without support.
• We all play a part in making communities safe.

For these reasons, it is important to:

Promote a safe environment in the community.

What YOU can do:
• **Enhance** community resources by taking steps to improve the positive relationships and peaceful activities in communities (e.g. community clean up, garden space for produce or plants)
• **Increase** monitoring and response capacity, including a monitored and safe space for children and families (e.g. home, office, etc)
• **Plan** for what to do and who to contact to protect yourself if and when violence happens
• **Advocate** through outreach to local law enforcement, hospitals, elected officials, etc.

Best Practice #5: SENDING THE RIGHT MESSAGE
Changing rules and expectations in society (cultural norms) that support violence

The Impact:
• The rules or expectations of behavior (cultural norms) in our society can sometimes encourage violence.
• Aggressive verbal and physical behavior among youth and adults can influence other youth to show or support aggression.

The Importance:
• Having the wrong impression about other people’s intentions can lead to violence (an accidental bump interpreted as intentional).
• Violence in the media and on the internet can make people more accepting of violence in the community.

For these reasons, it is important to:

Change expectations in society (cultural norms) that support violence.

What YOU can do:
• **Promote** equality, education, and safety
• **Serve** as a role model in language use and mutual respect
• **Engage** in community activities around the message of changing violence norms
• **Participate** in conversations whenever possible to promote peace and discourage retaliation
• **Promote** conflict resolution skills and restorative justice approaches
Press releases and media pitches are a great way to get the word out about the If YOUTH CAN, then I Can Youth Violence Prevention Campaign in general, as well as any local events or fundraisers that may be going on. We have provided a few templates for other organizations and community members to utilize in the following pages, you can find a sample press release, a sample media pitch, and a sample media alert. We have highlighted the parts to be customized in red.

**Sample Press Release**

For Immediate Release

Contact:
Name  Phone  Email

**NAME OF ACTIVITY SPONSOR**

Commemorates the If Youth Can, Then I Can Violence Prevention Campaign by ACTIVITY Initiative Raises Awareness and Prevents Youth Violence in Our Communities

Too often do we hear about senseless acts of violence happening to the youth in our communities, both locally and nationally. Today, youth face violence on multiple levels. They hear about violence happening to a loved one. They see violence happening in their communities. And in many unfortunate situations, they themselves become the victims and perpetrators of violent acts. The effect of violence exposure extends beyond the victim, to their families, and entire communities. Violence is so prevalent that it has become acceptable. The time to act is now.

**YOUTH VIOLENCE IS NOT, AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED THE NORM**

Today, youth across the country are taking a stand against violence. Youth are doing this not only through words, but also by their actions. We see youth serving as peer mentors and connecting to other youth, providing positive relationships and activities for youth to express themselves. We see youth becoming activists and taking a stand against violence in our communities. These acts may seem small, but they make a big difference in empowering others to play a part in preventing community violence.

The Urban Youth Trauma Center is embarking on a national campaign to raise awareness about the negative impacts of community violence on youth, families, and entire communities; educate the public about the risk factors and strategies that support resilience in youth, families, and communities; and to engage youth, families and community members in the process of working together to address the complexities of Community Violence.

INSERT A QUOTE FROM YOUR ORGANIZATION’S LEADERSHIP AND INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION IS DOING FOR If Youth Can, Then I Can Violence Prevention Campaign
Below is a sample of a media pitch to a youth magazine, encouraging editors to write a story about Youth Violence Prevention Month during [MONTH]

Greetings [NAME]

“Some of your readers may be part of a silent crisis. National findings have shown that youth violence is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 24. One in five children in the US are exposed to violence involving a weapon between the ages of 6 and 17. In Chicago, an average of one person every three hours was shot – more than any other city in the US – in 2015. Between January 1, 2016 and February 22, 2016, there have been 421 shooting victims in Chicago, this year alone.

Today, many people hear these statistics and accept them as the new normal for some of our communities, causing them to feel powerless in preventing these acts from happening. However, prevention is possible and help is available for youth and families affected by violence.

For your next issue, I hope you will consider writing something about the impact of community violence on youth and families, which can educates your readers about solutions and the role they can play to help prevent youth violence.

Below is a little more background on NAME OF ORGANIZATION. If you’re interested, I can share additional information and preventions tips, as well as coordinate an interview for you with NAME. Just let me know how I can help with any coverage you’re considering.

Warm regards,

[YOUR NAME]

*Include a paragraph giving background information about your organization
This is a sample media alert for a candlelight vigil during [MONTH]

***MEDIA ALERT***MEDIA ALERT***MEDIA ALERT***MEDIA ALERT***MEDIA ALERT***

[ORGANIZATION NAME ]’s [EVENT NAME ] at [LOCATION ] raises awareness about the negative impact of violence on youth, educates the public about strategies that promote resilience in youth and families, and engages youth, families and community members in the process of working together to address the complexities of Community Violence.

WHAT: One in five children in the US are exposed to violence involving a weapon between the ages of 6 and 17, making youth violence the second-leading cause of death among young people.

[ORGANIZATION NAME ] joins The Urban Youth Trauma Center’s If Youth Can, then I Can! Violence Prevention Campaign on _______ to host [EVENT NAME] to discuss solutions and reflect on the issues faced by youth, families and communities impacted by violence.

WHO: [LIST SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS]

WHERE: [DATE]

INTERVIEWS: [LIST STAFF AND/OR VOLUNTEERS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW]

About the If Youth Can, then I Can! Violence Prevention Campaign
The If YOUTH CAN, then I Can! Violence Prevention Campaign aims to spotlight the issue of community violence affecting youth in our communities.
http://www.psych.uic.edu/uytc-take-the-pledge

About Your Organization: [GIVE MEDIA SOME MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION]

Contact: [PROVIDE NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER, AND EMAIL OF CONTACT PERSON]
Below you will find a list of resources to obtain more information about each of the five Best Practices for Violence Prevention and Trauma Intervention. Resources for caregivers, youth, clinicians, and general audiences are included. We hope that within this toolkit and the resources below, you will find the tools you need to make a big difference in your community!

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<td><strong>Recognizing Behavior Changes in Children Exposed to Violence</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Trauma-informed care</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Trauma and Families: Fact Sheet for Providers</strong></td>
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<td>Support safe, stable and nurturing relationships between children, caregivers and caring adults</td>
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<td><strong>Family Engagement Resources for Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, &amp; Educators</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Mentoring: An Investment in Reducing Youth Violence</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Mentoring and Trauma Awareness</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Resources for Families</strong></td>
<td><strong>Peer Mentoring</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Take the Speak Up Pledge</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Help Prevent School and Community Violence:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1-866-SPEAKUP&lt;br&gt;<strong>Look for a program similar to Safe Streets in your area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Clinicians and Gun Violence: What to Know and What to Do</strong></td>
<td><strong>Best Practices to Prevent Youth Violence</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>School Violence Prevention</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere Strategy Selector</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reducing Violence Through Police/Youth Problem Solving</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Speak Up Violence Prevention Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>What is Restorative Justice?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Youth-focused Policing Resource Center</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Gun Violence Prevention Network</strong></td>
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Take a stand against community violence and take our pledge! Post a picture on our Facebook page with you holding a sign that states what you will do to contribute to the fight against community violence. For ideas, check out the Best Practices for Violence Prevention section inside this toolkit.

To help prevent violence I pledge to...

If Youth Can, then I Can!
Take action to prevent violence and improve our communities

Step 1 – Write down your Pledge
Step 2 – Take a picture of or with your Pledge
Step 3 – Share your pledge in social media!

Post your pledge to Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag #IfYouthCan, and tag us @UYTC_Chicago.

To post to Facebook, like our page www.facebook.com/UrbanYouthTraumaCenter, and tag us in a public post to your timeline with the hashtag #IfYouthCan
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Pledge Your Commitment to Preventing Violence!

TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT VIOLENCE.

TAKE THE PLEDGE.

IF YOUTH CAN, THEN I CAN!
To help prevent violence I pledge to...

If Youth Can, then I Can!
Take action to prevent violence and improve our communities