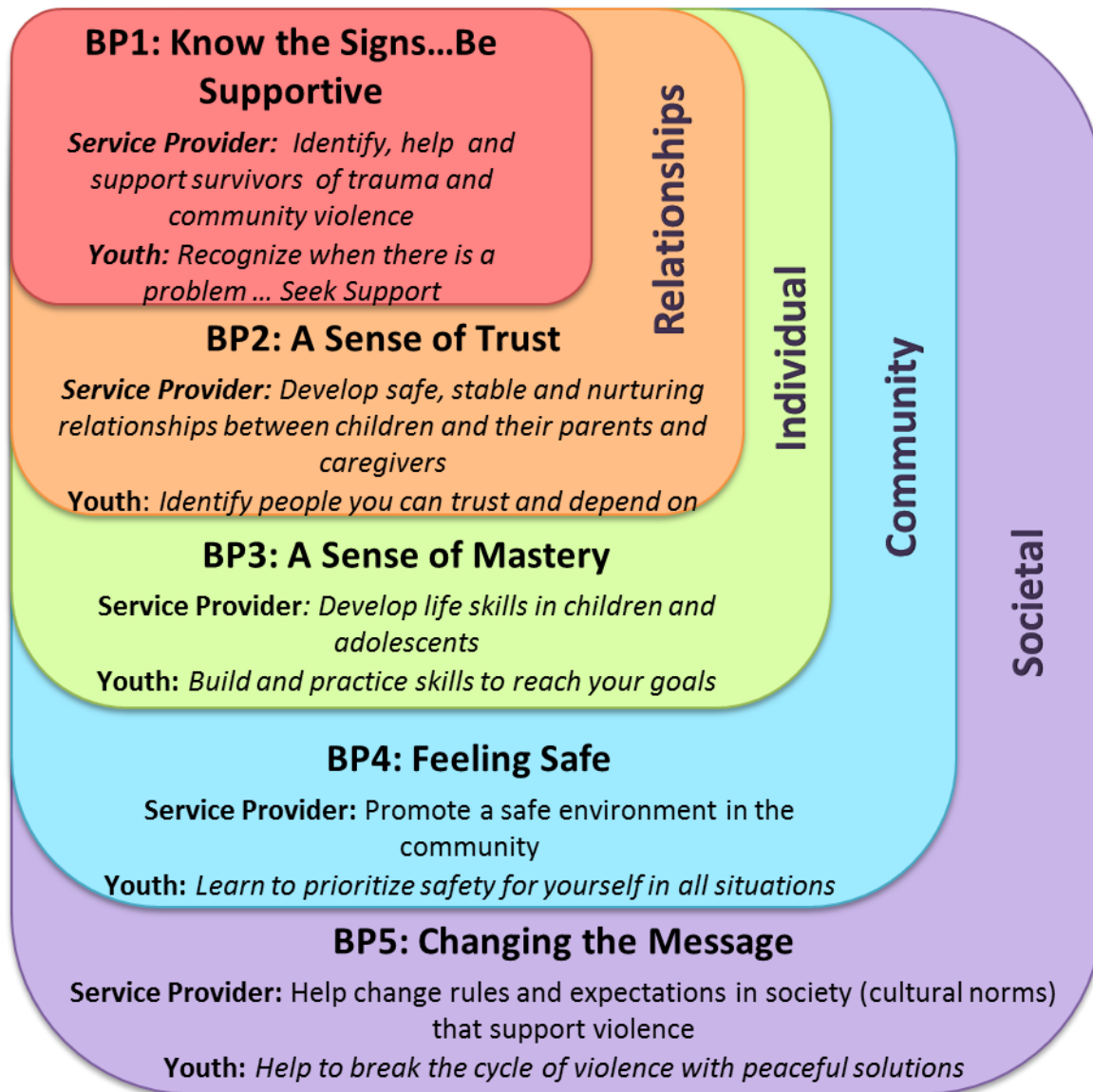


Best Practices for Violence Prevention and Trauma Intervention

Learn and apply the five Best Practices for Violence Prevention and Trauma Intervention, including what they are, why they are important, and examples for how to use each strategy. Everybody plays a role. What can you do?



Best Practice #1 Know the signs...Be Supportive

Identifying, helping, and supporting survivors of community violence

Children living in areas where there are high levels of violence exposure may often feel that they are caught in a cycle of violence. Early exposure to an array of traumatic events such as shootings, gang activity, and death can lead to a range of social, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive problems. It is important that individuals working with these youth develop the skills to identify the signs that youth are struggling with trauma and the best ways that they can provide support.

The Impact	The Importance	What You Can Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

WHAT CAN YOUTH DO? ***Recognize when there is a problem ... Seek Support***

Visit the Urban Youth Trauma Center website to download a list of resources and to view videos created by youth for each Best Practice for Violence Prevention.

[Click here to view "Lessons in the Cycle", inspired by Best Practice #1](#)



Best Practice #2 A Sense of Trust

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

There are a range of traumatic experiences that may cause children to feel that they cannot rely on anyone for safety or support. The presence of positive and stable relationships is extremely important for all children. The care and support provided by caregivers, peers, or mentors can help with positive development, demonstrating prosocial behaviors, and resiliency.

The Impact	The Importance	What You Can Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witnessing community violence and having people close to you (e.g. caregivers, siblings, peers) who engage in violence can affect relationships and trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

WHAT CAN YOUTH DO? *Identify people you can trust and depend on*

Visit the Urban Youth Trauma Center website to download a list of resources and to view videos created by youth for each Best Practice for Violence Prevention.

[Click here to view "Trust", inspired by Best Practice #2](#)



Best Practice #3 A Sense of Mastery

Developing life skills in children and adolescents

Early traumatic experiences may cause children and adolescents to develop low self-esteem, poor self-mastery, and the belief that they are unable to accomplish tasks or develop new skills. It is important to work with youth on building new skills and developing a sense of mastery. In addition to improving social skills, developing a sense of mastery and becoming involved in different activities can help to strengthen feelings of self-worth.

The Impact	The Importance	What You Can Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

WHAT CAN YOUTH DO? ***Build and practice skills to reach your goals***

Visit the Urban Youth Trauma Center website to download a list of resources and to view videos created by youth for each Best Practice for Violence Prevention.

[Click here to view "The World is Mine", inspired by Best Practice #3](#)



Best Practice #4 Feeling Safe

Promoting a safe environment in the community

In areas where there is frequent violence, it is important to work towards creating communities or places where individuals can feel safe. Identifying safe spaces, building supportive relationships, talking about ways to protect those living in the community, and working with law enforcement and local organizers can help to keep a community safe.

The Impact	The Importance	What You Can Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

WHAT CAN YOUTH DO? ***Learn to prioritize safety for yourself in all situations***

Visit the Urban Youth Trauma Center website to download a list of resources and to view videos created by youth for each Best Practice for Violence Prevention.

[Click here to view "A Room with Three Walls and Some Curtains", inspired by Best Practice #4](#)



Best Practice #5 Sending the Right Message

Changing rules and expectations in society (cultural norms) that support violence

When children are living in areas with high community violence or are constantly bombarded by messages in the media that make violence seem normal, their perception of what is acceptable may vary and they may begin to demonstrate negative behavior. It is important to identify the current norms within a culture or community that may promote or perpetuate violent behaviors. Once identifying those norms, individuals can work with youth to identify rules and patterns of behavior that are more adaptive and acceptable. While working to address negative behaviors, service providers should remember that many of these youth have experienced multiple traumas and even if they are trying to change, they may be dealing with considerable amounts of distress, feelings of uncertainty, and discomfort. In situations such as this, acting out, emotional outbursts, or violent behaviors may occur and it is important that service providers and community members continue to provide support and understanding.

The Impact	The Importance	What You Can Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rules or expectations of behavior (cultural norms) in our society can sometimes <i>encourage</i> violence. • Aggressive verbal and physical behavior among youth and adults can influence other youth to show or support aggression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

WHAT CAN YOUTH DO? *Help to break the cycle of violence with peaceful solutions*

Visit the Urban Youth Trauma Center website to download a list of resources and to view videos created by youth for each Best Practice for Violence Prevention.

[Click here to view “Make a Change”, inspired by Best Practice #5](#)

