



Peace It Together

community connections

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A Publication of The Center for
Victims of Violence and Crime

Violence Hurts All of Us

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Helpline
412.392.8582

Help and Healing Start Here.

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Our logo symbolizes the journey of moving from the darkness of violence towards the light of healing.

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A Message from the Executive Director



At various times in our lives, many of us have thought that violence is something that happens to *those people*, in *that* community...over *there*. But, local and national crime statistics support what CVVC has come to witness firsthand working across Allegheny County: Violence is a public health issue impacting all populations and communities. No one is immune.

We believe that violence is the number one public health issue today—requiring intervention, prevention and education efforts that can effectively raise awareness, promote peace, and help stop violence before it starts. We also believe that such a public health initiative undeniably calls *all* of us to action.

If you want to be a part of increasing the safety, health and well-being of individuals, families and communities, by reducing violence and its impacts, we invite you join CVVC's Peace It Together Community Initiative today and "Do Your Piece for Peace". Together we can reach across barriers of race, class, gender and community, united as people of goodwill to make a difference.

As a Peace Partner we invite you to:

- **Learn More:** With greater understanding, we can better reach out to family, friends and co-workers who have been victimized to support them in their personal healing and recovery. By knowing more, each of us can also address risk factors and decision-making to promote healthier, violence-free life-styles.
- **Support the Work:** Make a financial contribution to CVVC and support critical services to victims and witness of crime, as well as community education and outreach programming.

As you read through this issue of our newsletter, we hope you are inspired to a greater awareness of the underlying causes of violence, and the many ways it hurts and harms—believing together we have the power to make a difference.



Stephanie L. Walsh

Mission Statement

The Center for Victims of Violence and Crime is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to help individuals, families and communities survive the trauma of violence and crime, by offering victim advocacy services, crisis intervention, counseling and community education programs that address the causes and impacts of violence.

Violence
Hurts...

All of us.

*“Do Your Piece
for Peace.”*



CVVC's
**Peace It
Together**
Community Initiative



CVVC is making
a difference...

So can YOU.

Become a Peace Partner Today!

- **Learn more** about the impacts and underlying causes of violence and ways to support others in their personal healing and recovery.
- **Invite us** to your school, workplace, community or faith-based group to provide prevention and education programming.
- **Support the vital work we do** by making a financial contribution that enables us to provide critical services to victims, as well as community education and outreach programs.
- **Stay connected, committed and counted!**
Receive CVVC publications and invitations to events, programs and trainings. Learn about volunteer opportunities. Be recognized as a Peace Partner with a complimentary gift and a listing in our annual publications.

Join CVVC's Peace it Together
Community Initiative.

Go online at www.cvvc.org, or call 412.350.1975



Violence Hurts All of Us:

The True Impact of Violence on Individuals, Families and Communities

– by Lisa Payne Renfro & Mary Jo Harwood, MSW, LSW

When we hear the word “violence”, images of leading TV news stories and front-page headlines, with all their shock and sensationalism, race to the forefront of our minds. All too often we believe that violence is something that happens to someone else, somewhere else. We may also rationalize that the victim must have brought about their victimization because of the community they live in, their lifestyle, class or ethnicity... something that sets them apart.

“The reality is that no one is immune to violence. It can exist in any home, community, workplace or school.”

The reality is that no one is immune to violence. It can exist in any home, community, workplace or school. You do not have to look very far to find a person who has experienced violence either directly, or indirectly. When one factors in all the forms of violence and crime, it becomes apparent that anyone, regardless of economic status, educational achievement, religion, ethnicity or race can become a victim.

According to the Surgeon General, each year many thousands of people become the victim of violence. In a single year, more children die of gun violence than from cancer, pneumonia, influenza, asthma and HIV/AIDS combined (Children’s Defense Fund). Family violence accounted for 11% of all reported and unreported violence between 1998 and 2002. And, approximately one in five persons murdered in 2002 was killed by a family member (Department of Justice, 2005). Imagine our response if such a disease existed that ravaged our society to the extent that violence does? We would immediately begin to devise systems to

identify those affected and provide services to treat them (Rumburg, 2003). Over the years, we have mistakenly and naively believed that violence was to be addressed and eradicated by the police, the courts and the penal system (Koop, 1991). Addressing violence is in actuality a public health issue and an awesome challenge for all of us. Its scope and reality can no longer be ignored.

Believe it or not, in Pennsylvania, 26 of every 100 citizens report victimization (Pa Crime Victim Survey, 1999). Closer to home, in 2003, 30% of all homicides occurred outside the city-limits of Pittsburgh. Similar statistics hold for rapes (48%), burglary (46%), vandalism (56%), and family violence (62%) (Allegheny County Police, 2003). Behind the doors of countless homes, as well as on the streets of many communities, rages a struggle that must be addressed. The cost for denial is simply too high.

No matter how “violent” the violation, the pain and disruption to one’s life does not stop with the act of violence or crime. The trauma can last a lifetime. This trauma impacts one’s mental and physical health in deeply profound and devastating ways. What can appear as a simple home invasion, where theft and the replacement of materialistic goods is at worst an inconvenience, can in contrast result in feeling unsafe, and subsequently lead to the inability to live alone. The sudden loss of independence can contribute to depression, fear and an overall mistrust of society.

When a family experiences a homicide, the ongoing media attention and challenges of the justice system can prolong the process of closure and healing long after their loved one has been laid to rest. Meanwhile, survivors of all types of violence struggle with the unanswerable question of





Healing Dialogue Circles

Brother's Gonna Work It Out

Men's Empowerment Group

An on-going forum where issues of personal responsibility, accountability, healing and reconciliation are discussed as men from across all communities explore solutions to reducing violence.

3rd Monday of each month
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
East Liberty Presbyterian Church

Out of the Blue

Women's Healing Dialogue Circle

An on-going healing dialogue circle that provides a safe place where, in the company of sisters, women of color can experience the support and assistance needed to gain deeper understanding into the issues of personal trauma, using culturally sensitive tools for their journey towards healing and wellness.

3rd Tuesday of each month
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
East Liberty Presbyterian Church

The above support groups are free and open to the public. You are welcome to attend any session. CVVC offers a variety of groups. For more information about any of our groups please contact us at 412.350.1975 or go online at www.cvvc.org.

Statistics indicate that after an individual has experienced or witnessed violence, their likelihood of being victimized again, or becoming a perpetrator themselves, increases significantly.

“why?” Their lives are often disrupted by a combination of self-blame, shame, despair, depression, isolation, fear and aggression. These feelings can last for months, weeks or even years.

Statistics indicate that after an individual has experienced or witnessed violence, their

likelihood of being victimized again, or becoming a perpetrator themselves, increases significantly. For example, being abused or neglected as a child increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 59 percent, as an adult by 28 percent, and for both a child and an adult for violent crime, by 30 percent (National Institute of Justice, 2001). An estimated 70% of female delinquents have a history of sexual assault (Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention). The cycle of violence continues as violence perpetuates more violence. Once victimized, a person's sense of normalcy, safety and positive self-perceptions have been distorted, damaged or lost. This can also initiate or aggravate mental health or substance abuse issues.

Crime is estimated to create \$105 billion in medical expenses, lost earnings, and costs for victim services each year. Factoring in the punitive damages, such as pain and suffering, and the reduction of quality of life, brings the total estimated cost of crime to \$450 billion annually (National Center for Victims of Crime, 2004).

Other costs to community are not as readily apparent. When a community is impacted by violence, the community collectively experiences the trauma which can lead to isolation and a heightened awareness for survival.

After more than 30 years of providing direct victim services and community education and outreach, CVVC knows first-hand, there is hope, there is help. The scope and prevalence of violence leaves us with many questions: What can be done? How can we change what's happening? Where do we go for answers? CVVC realizes that when victims receive the help and support they need, wonderful things can happen.

First, victims can reconnect, find meaning within the context of their life story, and be unburdened enough from their experiences to live fulfilled lives. To facilitate healing, CVVC provides a full continuum of services to victims and witnesses of all types of violence or crime. Trained CVVC Counselor Advocates provide crisis intervention, counseling, accompaniment through the criminal justice and medical systems, and victim compensation assistance.

Second, CVVC realizes that education and intervention works. Awareness is a proven method to bring about desired and needed change. CVVC

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Help...



CVVC Youth Programs:

Creating Brighter Futures—Promoting Violence-Free Lifestyles

— by Lisa Payne Renfro

The Reality:

When addressing the reality that violence is a public health issue, there is little doubt that our children are at significant risk and extremely vulnerable. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics children ages 12-19 experience the highest rate of violent victimization in the United States at a rate of 55 per 1000 persons in the population.

These numbers are even more alarming since violent victimization during adolescence raises the odds of a young person becoming a perpetrator, or a victim of violence in adulthood. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reports that adolescents who were victims of violence are more than three times more likely to be a perpetrator of felony assault and more than twice as likely to be a victim of felony assault than adolescents who were not victims of violence.

Based on this information, it is abundantly clear intervention and education for our youth must take the highest priority. Children are not equipped to process and cope with the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual impacts of violence alone. It is our responsibility to provide them with the skills and information necessary to allow them a safe, violence-free future, which they both need and deserve.



The Story:

CVVC offers innovative violence education, intervention and prevention programming for area youth, designed to provide the information and skills necessary to live violence-free lives. In addition to our core child and youth safety curriculum, we have recently developed and implemented two additional youth education programs called “D.R.U.M.A.” (Developing Respect and Unity through Music & Arts) and “D.E.S.T.I.N.Y.” (Directing, Educating, Strengthening, Training and Inspiring our Nation’s Youth).



The educational model of both D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. and D.R.U.M.A. focuses on youth leadership and skills development delivered in a culturally and socially relevant context. Participants learn conflict resolution, anger management, effective communication, team building, bully prevention, values clarification, personal responsibility and leadership, risk-reduction, personal safety, diversity, and the impacts and trauma of crime. In addition, the curriculum addresses all forms of sexual assault, as well as the relationship between drugs, alcohol and violence.

The D.R.U.M.A. program adds a component of music and the arts to CVVC’s core violence prevention model. Student’s creativity, passion and participation are awakened as they take part in a variety of music and arts activities, including drum circles, dramatic skits, poetry and the creation of posters to showcase the lessons learned. Youth are also exposed to cultural and diversity awareness activities and perspectives that encourage the development of well-rounded individuals.

The D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. program is a powerful assembly-type seminar delivered to middle and high school-aged youth, complete with multi-media presentations, dramatic performances and workshop sessions which address impacts of crime, healthy relationships, facing conflict and addictive behavior. Tailored to address either an all male or female assembly, youth are encouraged to engage in self-reflection, identification of positive role models and goal-setting for their future; all the things that go into directing the path of their own life and making healthier decisions. When asked if they would like to see more seminars about these issues in their school, 95% of Westinghouse High School youth who attended a D.E.S.T.I.N.Y. program answered, “Yes”.

CVVC invites and encourages schools, youth programs and other groups involved with youth to call us to provide violence prevention programming and education. No child is immune from the impact and reality of violence...no matter where they live or go to school. It is only through the involvement of teachers, administrators, youth leaders, parents and others that we can give our youth the skills to live violence-free lives—creating a brighter future for us all. ✨



Pamper Principles: Nurture Your Mind, Body & Soul

– by Tracey Provident & LaVerne Baker Hotep

The aftermath of violence and crime can wreak havoc in the lives of victims. Individuals are often left traumatized and stressed, seeking help and solace while looking for ways to find comfort, heal and get on with life. Outside help and support is very important in one's journey toward healing, but added to that is the need to take extra good care of self. Pampering is an “inside” job, inner grooming so to speak. It refuels and recharges your body, mind and spirit and infuses your life with more peace and joy. Consider some of the following ideas to help restore balance after trauma and help nurture a *self-care first* approach to healing.

- **Laughter:** Enjoy a humorous movie, read a funny book, play with children or pets, and/or spend time with friends and family. Laughter makes you feel good, stimulates circulation throughout the body and heals the soul.
- **Aromatherapy:** Use essential oils in your living or working space for therapeutic or medical purposes to ease aches and pains and reduce stress—relaxing, sedating or stimulating and restoring both physical and emotional well-being.
- **Exercise:** Take walks. Do stretching exercises with calming music. Enjoy gardening or yoga. While exercising, use a small tape recorder to make notes/thoughts as you are walking, etc.
- **Tea:** Drink various kinds of herbal teas for calming. The warmth of a cup of hot tea is very inviting and relaxing. Try herbal teas like chamomile and sleepy time for relaxation, or peppermint for stimulation.
- **Commune with Nature:** Take walks, explore the woods, visit a favorite ocean, lake or river, and sit outside to appreciate sights, sounds and smells.
- **Flowers:** Brighten your home or work space with colorful, fresh-cut flowers and plants. They make a room more bright and cheery and can do a lot for improving mood.
- **Affirmations:** The power of an affirmation or inspirational thought is that it does not speak to the past or present. It speaks to, and calls forth, a *new future* in the present. By repeating or reading on a regular basis, affirmations can help to “rewire” your thoughts and lead you toward a more positive outlook.
- **Sleep:** You need seven to nine hours of deeply restful/quality sleep each night. Sleep allows the body to rest, recharge, repair and replenish. Can't sleep? Get new sheets, soft blankets or fluffy pillows. Fill pillows with aromatic herbs like lavender to calm nightmares, evoke peaceful dreams and help you sleep more soundly. Consider a sound machine that emanates sounds like ocean waves, wind and babbling streams. Use your bedroom as a place to meditate, read and relax. Paint your walls with color, add plants, and keep a journal on nightstand to record each night your reflections of the day. Include comfortable pajamas, scented candles and music which can calm you.
- **Massage:** Treat yourself to a massage to provide a relaxed state of alertness, relieve mental stress and enhance your capacity for calm thinking and creativity. Massage satisfies the human need for caring and nurturing touch and creates a feeling of well-renewed health and being.
- **Bath:** Take long luxurious baths with lots of bubbles and scented bath oils like lavender for relaxation, or peppermint for rejuvenation. Light candles, tune out the world and soak as long as time will allow.
- **Healing Foods:** Eat healthy foods to help balance your moods, replenish your energy, increase stamina, and boost immune system. ➔

Sources: *Simple Pleasures: Soothing Suggestions & Small Comforts for Living Well Year Round* by Robert Taylor, Susannah Seton and David Greer & *50 Ways to Pamper Yourself* by Stephanie Tourles

and Healing



Help and Healing Start Here.

The Center for Victims of Violence and Crime is a private non-profit organization, tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is eligible to receive donations tax deductible as charitable contributions. The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within PA 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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Violence Hurts All of Us:

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offers violence-prevention, education and training programming to schools, businesses, allied professionals, faith-based institutions and other community groups on a variety of topics. With increased knowledge and skills people are effectively equipped with the tools they need to break the cycles of violence and better ensure safety, well-being, and peace in their lives, families and communities.

Finally, no one person or entity can do this work alone. Everyone has a part to play in making a real change, a real difference. CVVC has created a vehicle through which every citizen, can join together to help put an end to the violence. CVVC's Peace-It-Together Community Initiative provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to do their piece for peace by increasing their understanding of violence, financially supporting the vital work of our agency and inviting us to provide education and training.

Through our collective efforts, the citizens of Allegheny County can share the joy and satisfaction of knowing they are making a meaningful difference. By addressing the violence that hurts all of us, we can create the peace that will benefit...us all.

The New Year Brings Good News:

CVVC Unveils Its New Website: A Resource for Your Help and Healing



Visit us at www.cvvc.org for more in-depth information on our agency, crime victim assistance, education and outreach programs, schedule of events and more.

Also visit us today to become a member of CVVC's Peace It Together Community Initiative and "Do Your Piece for Peace."

