When we think of violent acts committed or witnessed by young people, we often view prevention as a long-term investment that begins when children are young and takes years to "pay off." But there is another variety of prevention for those who work with youth in residential facilities, hospitals, schools, or other environments requiring immediate intervention.

Research on such programs have found several elements crucial to the successful reintegration of youth: starting reentry services during placement and continuing those services following release; involving family members and other prosocial individuals during the transition process; assessing youths' risks and needs to provide them with appropriate services; and focusing on important parts of reintegration, such as education, to ensure successful reentry.

The National Reentry Resource Center's Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice is working to develop resources for the successful reentry of juvenile offenders. In a 2011 publication, the Committee identified five key areas emerging in youth reentry policy and practice:

1. Integrating the science of adolescent brain development into the design of reentry initiatives.
2. Ensuring reentry initiatives build on youths' strengths and assets to promote prosocial development.
3. Engaging families and community members in a meaningful way through the reentry process.
4. Prioritizing education and employment as essential elements of a reentry plan.
5. Providing a stable, well-supported transition to adulthood that helps create lifelong connections.

Evidence-based reentry programs specifically target youth reentering the community. Operation New Hope (formerly Lifeskills '95) is a curriculum-based aftercare treatment program designed to assist chronic high-risk juvenile offenders as they
As the director of a secure juvenile detention center for 17 years, I was trained in several nonviolent crisis intervention disciplines. The Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Handle with Care (HWC) of Gardiner, New York, provided outstanding training for those who worked with young people in institutional or formal settings. One of the core components of training was how to stabilize violent behavior. CPI participants say the program approaches issues with long-term preventive solutions rather than relying on staff to act appropriately when faced with aggression. It's a common-sense method that helps organize thinking about chaotic moments. Staff identify behaviors that may escalate into dangerous situations, and defuse such situations through nonverbal and verbal intervention strategies.

HWC has provided school staff training for managing students from Pre-K–12 since 1985. Their verbal intervention programming integrates two models of thinking: 1) understanding the cycle of violence and different points along the continuum where people may be, so interventions can target their needs, and 2) a self-awareness model that identifies common triggers staff need to be aware of to monitor and control youths' reactions and provide better care.

CPI's seven precipitating factors that lead to acting out are as follows:

**Fear:** A youth is likely to act out because of fear when he or she is in an unresolved conflict with a peer or is being placed in a setting for the first time. Psychologically, a young person placed in a new setting may be unconsciously asking, "Can you control me? Because if you can't ... how can you protect me?" One way a youth expresses this uncertainty is by physically acting out—testing how authority figures deal with the situation. The HWC curriculum asks, "Are you a solid object that a youth can reach out and touch, or does the hand go right through you because you are not a solid person and therefore not worthy of trust?" I have seen great bonds develop between a scared kid and a staff member who handled him or her appropriately, even in a violent moment when the staff member chose to restrain the youth in a nonviolent and compassionate way.

**Failure:** The youth we work with every day have often experienced a life of continued disappointment and failure. School, sports, and hospitals, schools, etc.—people who are required to defuse potentially violent situations on an ongoing basis. Despite all the situations that can arise during a day in the life of a youth, there are only seven precipitating factors that contribute to acting out. This type of behavior results from events and circumstances that play out as young people interact with peers and staff.

The youth we work with every day have often experienced a life of continued disappointment and failure. Despite all the situations that can arise during a day in the life of a youth, there are only seven precipitating factors that contribute to acting out. This type of behavior results from events and circumstances that play out as young people interact with peers and staff.
Frustration and resentment may also stem from learning disabilities (LDs), according to the National Center for Learning Disabilities. As kids move into middle school, behavioral signs of LD include resisting class work or homework, refusing to follow the teacher's directions in order to get sent from the room, cutting class, and bullying.

Displaced Aggression: A trip to court, an appointment with a social worker or probation officer, a disappointing visit from family members, or abuse or bullying that recently took place—all of these scenarios can trigger acting out due to displaced aggression. In cases like these where you are present and the source of the anger is not, look out.

Maintenance of Self-Esteem: Regardless of the organization or role, not once did we allow staff or youth to refer to each other by their nicknames. Depending on a child's situation, a well-intended handle can easily turn into an insult that leads to an assault. Responses vary depending on who uses the nickname, inflection and tone, and the state of the person being referred to. An abbreviation like "Bob" is likely safe, but "Shorty" or "Razor" could cause any number of problems, resurfacing bad memories or reinforcing negative roles.

To the furthest extent possible, behavior should be corrected offstage—not publicly, if it can be avoided. Snapping fingers at someone, using "hey you" to get his or her attention, or taking a teasing or condescending tone may eventually lead to trouble. The behavior we model teaches young people how to act and interact appropriately.

Loss of Personal Power: Treating everyone in a community facility or classroom the same way may challenge those who see themselves as adults to show you just how wrong you are. A 17-year-old in a group setting who has been out of the classroom may challenge those who see themselves as adults to show you just how wrong you are. A 17-year-old in a group setting who has been out of school for too long, or those at the edge of the system, may challenge your authority or your belief that they have no power over you.

Reports

Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2012
Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics, 2013
The Bureau of Justice Statistics has released "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2012," reporting on current crime and school safety data. Twenty-one indicators of school crime are described, including victimization at and away from school, teacher injury, bullying and cyberbullying, weapons, and schools' safety and security measures.

2013 Short Report on Youth Mental Health
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2013
This report addresses challenges faced by young adults. More than one fourth of young adults surveyed had experienced four or more types of potentially traumatic events, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, or witnessing domestic violence. Nearly 20 percent of young adults aged 18–25 had a mental health condition in the past year—of these, more than 1.3 million had a severe disorder that compromised their ability to function. The Children's Mental Health Initiative, aimed at improving mental health outcomes from birth to age 21, funds grantees to put system-of-care principles into practice by helping adolescents and young adults obtain services and supports, build partnerships with their families and communities, and use evidence-based practices to improve functioning at home, in the classroom, and in other areas of life.

Four in 10 Teens Have Experienced Dating Violence: What Parents and Providers Can Do
Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013
More than one in three teens has experienced dating violence, according to a recent study. The report was based on data from a
year-old in a group setting who has been out of school for 2 years, fathered a child, been shot, and continues to sell drugs for a living must be handled differently than a youth who has run away for the first time. Clearly, not all youth are the same, and therefore must be treated differently. Pulling a youth aside, confirming his or her status, and asking respectfully for cooperation is likely to yield better results.

Attention Seeking: Many young people who are engaged in service systems cannot communicate well. Whatever the cause—parenting deficiencies, abuse and neglect, immaturity—the result is often an inability to express needs. Some children simply don't know how to appropriately get the attention of an adult to discuss a problem or ask for something. Experience has taught them if they act out, an adult will have to pay attention and may lead to getting what they need or want.

Mental Illness/Impairment: Some young people are suffering from diagnosable disorders that can lead to acting out. While very few youths are psychotic (the onset of psychosis is generally in early adulthood or later), mood disorders, autism, and developmental or intellectual disabilities can result in defiant behavior, as the youth does not have skills or abilities to cope with stressful circumstances. Use of illegal substances can also cause acting out.

We used to teach our staff to take inventory every day and ask this question: If each child in our care acts out today, what would likely be the cause? What would precipitate the behavior? A thoughtful answer to that question allows you to head off trouble at the pass. This approach is "real time" prevention. Thoughtful preparation and modeling of appropriate behavior is the heart of leading by example, and smart policy for those who interact with young people on a daily basis.

Dave Marsden is the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention Technical Assistance Director.

News

Campaign to Provide Safe Passage on Way to School
Along the Safe Passage routes, 1,200-plus workers watched over students as they made their way back to school. While many cities have programs to help children get to and from school safely, few are as extensive as Chicago's—proof of the city's intense commitment to violence prevention and education.

The Secret for Preventing Youth Violence
Seven months after 730 8th- through 12th-grade students in Chicago completed a 2012 summer jobs program that aimed to give teens social skills and support, participants noted a substantial (51 percent) drop in arrests.

Stopping the Slaughter
Philadelphia's Mayor Michael Nutter calls for action to end the gun violence that claims some 32 victims a day in the United States. Seventy-five percent of homicide victims in the city are black men, as well as about 80 percent of those arrested for homicide. Mayor Nutter says a partnership is in order for cities, states, and federal agencies and corporate, philanthropic, religious, and social advocacy communities to break the cycle of violence that has plagued Philadelphia for too long.

Other Resources

Recent studies associating bullying with depression and suicide led the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to convene an expert panel. In conjunction, the Journal of Adolescent Health released a special online supplement examining the relationship between bullying and suicide among youth. Three findings were key: bullying is a significant public health problem; a strong association exists between bullying and suicide-related behaviors; and public health strategies can be applied to prevent bullying and suicide.

In an effort initiated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to end teen dating violence, organizations, advocates, students, and violence prevention professionals have submitted short Public Service Announcements. On September 6, winners of the "I Veto Violence Because ..." contest will be announced.
Violence (CEV). “According to the ABA, “the recommendations of the CEV report regarding youth in the juvenile justice system seek to ensure that youth who have been exposed to violence receive the services they need to address its effects, [and] also promote the idea that youth in the juvenile justice system should not be treated as hardened, irredeemable delinquents or criminals. Instead, youth should be treated in a way that takes their age, background, identity, and violent or traumatic experiences into account.”

Training Opportunities

Improving Conditions for Youth in Confinement
On September 4, 2013, the National Center for Youth in Custody will present "Putting It All Together: How Juvenile Facilities Can Create and Sustain Improved Conditions for Youth" to discuss methods for providing consistently safe, secure, humane, and therapeutic environments for confined youth.

OJJDP Webinar to Explore Survey Data Collection
In collaboration with the National Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center, OJJDP’s National Training and Technical Assistance Center will host "Demystifying Survey Data Collection," a 90-minute Webinar focusing on the process of survey data collection. Methods of electronic data entry, tabulation and reporting, and paper-and-pencil surveys will be discussed, as well as how to develop a participant survey, format data for efficient use, and use descriptive statistics to summarize results. Register to participate in the September 5, 2013, Webinar.

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