

Essential Elements of Youth Violence Prevention

This working document was created by members of the New Mexico Youth Violence Prevention Network. Two focus groups were facilitated by the New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community; to insure youth voice, one focus group was facilitated with members of the New Mexico Youth Alliance. The purpose of this document is to identify effective strategies that support and strengthen youth violence prevention throughout New Mexico. It will also serve as a tool to begin to frame Youth Violence Prevention in New Mexico and be a source of guidance to communities who have a vested interest in creating change in the area of Youth Violence. Please note, however, that the data below is raw data; it has not been tested by communities. Community conversations will occur in order to solicit statewide input.

Elements identified by youth *and* adults

Elements identified by adult focus group

Elements identified by members of the Youth Alliance

Build Positive Public Awareness to Stop the Stigma of Youth Violence

Develop indicators of well-being focused on youth violence prevention

Youth violence awareness

- Acknowledge and identify the problem in the community
- Advise parents to talk to their children and inform them about violence
- Inform and Educate – parents, leaders, and youth
- Talk to youth on how to prevent violence
- Voice to communities that violence is preventable

Change societal norms and impose bottom up education and awareness by creating one core message used by partners through a youth development awareness campaign and a (statewide) market plan

Engage digital storytelling process "by youth" that promotes positive stories about youth through personal stories of their own

Provide and Expand Meaningful Alternatives for Youth and Families

Create safe spaces and environments

Provide more opportunities for youth involvement in planning youth violence prevention programs and alternative activities such as:

- Sports
- Alternatives (employment)
- Training (job skills)
- Education (tutoring, GED)
- Youth Violence Prevention Day

Encourage more adult involvement in activities with the purpose of building stronger relationships between youth and adults

Develop family incentives that are fun, engaging, and interactive

Advocate for funds with the intention of supporting momentum and strength of quality youth violence prevention programs

Provide Education through Social Skill Programs to Increase Behavior Change and Emotional Awareness

End self hatred – knowledge and pride of who we are as individuals

Educational topics identified:

- "Working Through Your Anger/Rage" curriculum in schools to all students
- Appropriate social skills for youth to effectively interact with others
- Anger management skills for youth and adults
- Violence prevention programs focused on Empathy
- Teach parents to channel their anger to something other than children
- Teach teens to channel their anger through exercise
- Behavior management
- Communication skills
- Parenting skills
- Teach and reinforce good manners

Offer positive support help to the family

Help change family behavior

Support and Strengthen Policies and Services in Connection With Youth Violence

Connect indicators of well-being to policy platform incorporating youth-led advocacy

Advocate for more youth violence prevention legislation (gangs, bullying, etc.)

Support quality neighborhood watch programs

Reward communities for violence reduction



Develop a Community-led Planning and Implementation Process

Build partnerships addressing youth violence through a statewide Network:

- Collaboration and partnership between sectors
- Quarterly gathering of all violence prevention advocates

Provide technical assistance to organizations developing youth violence programs

Train adults to effectively work with youth on violence prevention

Statewide training on youth violence prevention strategies

Support and model effective programs/policies

Promote Cultural-Values Through Broad-based Representation

Develop culturally appropriate programs addressing youth violence including, but not limited to:

- Cultural identity
- Strengthening cultural tradition
- Acceptance
- Openness

Rely on cultural values to help be a guide

Cultivate positive respect (for self and others)

Expand the world views of young people

Assess Needs and Identify Resources

Host community conversations

- Assess communities of their approaches/ strengths
- Opportunity for community involvement; youth and adults
- Community forum on violence prevention

Community education

- Teach "rural living" concept
- Family support (emotionally, financially, educationally)

Build communities (meet your neighbors)

Peer mediation—adult [to parents] and youth

Promote Healthy Families with Counseling

Provide positive youth, family and relationship counseling and support

Provide quality school counseling

Family counseling out of school

Drug-rehab counseling (in home, prison, and those in transition)

Prevention of alcohol/substance abuse leading to child abuse



Ensure Youth Leadership and Engagement

Build relationships and partnerships between adults and youth

Create opportunities for youth to be involved in leadership, i.e., youth-led peer education and mentoring programs

Develop support networks for youth in school and in the community

Train youth to be messengers of violence prevention

Engage diverse youth in solution planning and incorporate youth voice in:

- Educating
- Awareness building
- Planning processes

Safe Places Providing Resources for Violence Prevention

Provide safe haven for child abuse victims

Collaborate with other community organizations/ sectors

Provide and support an organization that will help the community with the prevention of violence

Involve community elders to observe families in crisis and provide support to them

Make sports available for all to get involved in as an alternative activity to violence



The Essential Elements were developed through a partnership between the Violence Free Youth Partnership (NMDOH) and the Youth Violence Prevention Network (NMFYC)