

Connection as Prevention

A practical guide for strengthening the relationships that support safer communities

Violence prevention is not only about interrupting incidents. It is also about strengthening the conditions that make violence less likely.

Trust. Connection. Belonging. Credible relationships. Conflict navigation. Community voice. Accountability. Opportunity. These are not secondary to safety. They are part of how safety is built.



WATCH FOR THESE SIGNS

A community safety strategy may be missing its relational layer when:

- Engagement happens primarily after violence occurs.
- Residents are treated as recipients rather than partners.
- Organizations compete instead of coordinating.
- People closest to the violence have little influence over strategy.
- Unresolved conflict between partners undermines collaboration.
- Success is measured only by incidents rather than relationships and community capacity.



FIVE PRACTICES THAT STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 1 Build Trust Before You Need It**
Relationships developed only during crisis are rarely strong enough to carry the weight of crisis.
- 2 Center People Closest to the Harm**
Those most affected by violence hold knowledge that cannot be replaced by professional expertise alone.
- 3 Treat Conflict as Information**
Conflict often reveals unmet needs, competing interests, broken trust, or unresolved harm.
- 4 Strengthen the Ecosystem, Not Just Individual Programs**
Community safety depends on relationships among residents, intervention teams, schools, hospitals, justice partners, government, faith communities, and other institutions.
- 5 Create Pathways for Repair**
Interrupting violence matters. Communities also need processes for addressing harm, rebuilding trust, strengthening accountability, and moving forward.



TAKE THIS INTO YOUR NEXT COALITION MEETING



Who do people trust when conflict begins escalating?



Who has meaningful voice in our safety strategy?



Where are relationships between partners helping the work?



Where are those relationships limiting it?



What are we building between crises?



The Circle Lady™

The Circle Lady™ helps communities strengthen the relationships that make safety sustainable and transformation possible.

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