Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma: A Framework for Community Resilience and Healing

Dr. Howard Pinderhughes
Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma: A Framework for Community Resilience and Healing

Building Bridges to Healthy & Resilient Communities
California School-Based Health Alliance
2021 School Health Conference
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Howard Pinderhughes, PhD
Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences
The forgotten riot that sparked Boston’s racial unrest
It’s like a jungle, sometimes It makes me wonder how I keep from going under…

Accepted into gang, then shot to death

13-year-old killed on Valencia only hours after joining

Bayron Alvarado-Martinez
Root Causes

Structural Factors

Environmental Factors

Individual Level Factors
Root Causes = Structural Violence

- Poverty
- Inequality
- Racism
- Sexism
- Oppression
- Power Dynamics

Trauma

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Structural Violence

Structural violence refers to harm that individuals, families, and communities experience from the economic and social structures; social institutions; relations of power, privilege, and inequality; and inequity that harm people and communities by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

(Pinderhughes et al., 2015)
Structural Factors

**Economic**
- Inequality
- Housing
- Education
- Employment

**Social - Cultural**
- Racial dynamics/relations
- Gender dynamics/relations
- Ideologies
- Culture of violence
- Individuality

**Political**
- Political power
- Social policy

**Institutions**
- Financial institutions
- Schools and universities
- Government
- Media
- Criminal justice system
- Social services
Environmental Factors

**Neighborhood Effects**
- Concentrated poverty
- Population density
- Social organization
- Social control mechanisms
- Availability of drugs and alcohol
- Availability of weapons
- Community violence
- Parental guidance and involvement

**Family Factors**
- Composition
- Structure
- Relations
- Family violence
- Child abuse
- SES
- Housing situation

**Peer Group Factors**
- Social supports
- Social basis
- Social attachment
- Primary activities
- Connection to institutions

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
## Individual Level Factors

### Psycho - Social Factors
- Developmental factors
- Experiences
- Exposure to violence
- School attachment and achievement
- Value system
- Sense of self efficacy
- Self esteem
- Genetics
- Perceived opportunities

### Emotional State
- Fear
- Frustration
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Isolation
- Jealousy

### Motivation
- Power
- Revenge
- Retaliation
- Self defense
- Domination
- Justice
- Catharsis
- Deterrence

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
# Individual Level Factors

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(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Foundational ACEs Study

A collaborative effort by the Centers for Disease Control and the Kaiser Health Plan Department of Preventive Medicine in San Diego

• Recurrent physical abuse
• Recurrent emotional abuse
• Contact sexual abuse
• An alcohol and/or drug abuser in household
• An incarcerated household member

• A household member who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
• Mother is treated violently
• One or no parents
• Emotional or physical neglect

(Felitti et al., 1998)
Synergistic Trauma

The combination of:

• Individual trauma from multiple, chronic, and repeated exposures to violence - *Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder* (C-PTSD)

• The trauma of structural violence

(Pinderhughe et al., 2015)
What about Community Trauma?
Community trauma is not just the aggregate of individuals in a neighborhood who have experienced trauma from exposures to violence. There are manifestations, or symptoms, of community trauma.

Community Trauma is:

- Cumulative and synergistic impact of regular incidents of interpersonal violence
- Historical and intergenerational violence
- Continual exposure to structural violence

(Pinderhugtes et al., 2015)
Community Environment

Equitable Opportunity
- Economic and Educational Environment

Place
- Physical/Built Environment

People
- Social-Cultural Environment
Symptoms of Community Trauma
Community Environment

- Intergenerational poverty
- Long term unemployment
- Relocation of businesses and jobs
- Limited employment
- Disinvestment

- Deteriorated environments
- Unhealthy, often dangerous public spaces
- Crumbling built environment
- Unhealthy products

- Disconnected/damaged social relations and social networks
- The elevation of destructive, dislocating social norms
- A low sense of collective political and social efficacy

(Pinderhughes et al., 2015)
Physical/Built Environment

Deteriorated environments and unhealthy, often dangerous public spaces within a crumbling built environment.

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Economic/Educational Environment

Opportunity
- Intergenerational poverty
- Long term unemployment
- Relocation of businesses, corporations, and jobs
- Limited employment opportunities
- Government and private disinvestment

(Pinderhugues et al., 2015)
Social - Cultural Environment

Damaged, fragmented or disrupted:
- social relations (especially intergenerational)
- social networks and
- infrastructure of social support

• Low sense of collective political and social efficacy

• Elevation of destructive social norms promoting violence and unhealthy behaviors over affirming, community-oriented, positive social norms

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Life in the killing zone

 Violence is the most pervasive part of growing up in East Oakland

By Anastasia Hendrix
Chronicle Staff Writer

This is a place where dozens of murders were committed last year within walking distance of an 11-year-old's doorstep.

This is a place where eighth-graders learn what percentages and averages by studying homicide statistics from the streets around their classroom, where numbers represent gunned-down neighbors, friends and even family members.

This is East Oakland — where unrelenting violence affects even the smallest matters of everyday life. Take Troy’s random bullet — one that barely missed his father, who was relaxing on the couch at the time.

“Violence is the most pervasive part of growing up in East Oakland, right in your own neighborhood,” said Troy’s friend Billy. “You see people get shot all the time, and it’s a scary place to live.”

Troy, a 14-year-old from East Oakland, has been shot twice in the last year. The first time, he was hit by a stray bullet while playing basketball at a park. The second time, he was shot in the chest while walking down the street.

“I don’t feel safe when I’m walking through the streets,” Troy said. “I’m always worrying about getting shot.”

But even with the constant threat of violence, Troy and his friends still try to find ways to have fun and enjoy their lives.

“We play basketball, we listen to music, we hang out with our friends,” said Billy. “But it’s always in the back of our minds, you never know when something is going to happen.”

Despite the dangers, Troy and his friends still have dreams and aspirations for the future.

“Eventually, I want to be a doctor,” Troy said. “I want to help people.”

But for now, he’s just trying to make it through his sophomore year of high school, where the violence is just as pervasive as it is in the streets.

“I just want to get through this year,” Troy said. “I don’t want to be another number on the list.”

Prevention Institute
Community Factors

- Physical or Built Environment
- Structure of Opportunities
- Social Organization
- Social Networks
- Social Relationships
- Social Norms

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Community Trauma Factors

- Physical or Built Environment
- Structure of Opportunities
- Social Organization
- Social Networks
- Social Relationships
- Social Norms

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
MY NEIGHBORHOOD IS KILLING ME
A Framework for Preventing Violence And Building Community Resilience

Building Community Resilience Requires Comprehensive and Sustained Policy and Action

(Pinderhug et al., 2015)
Community resilience: the ability of a community to recover from and/or thrive despite the prevalence of adverse conditions.

In the context of community-level trauma, this means putting the conditions in place in which the community can heal from trauma and/or be protected against the impact of trauma.
Physical/Built Environment

- Create safer public spaces through improvements in the built environment by addressing parks, housing quality, and transportation

- Reclaim and improve public spaces

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Bridge Housing - San Francisco

Strategies focused at individual, interpersonal, community, and systems level

- De-escalates chaos and stress
- Fosters resiliency
- Strengthens social connections
- Recognizes trauma

TRAUMA INFORMED COMMUNITY BUILDING
A Model for Strengthening Community in Trauma Affected Neighborhoods
Stronghold Society
Economic/Educational Environment

- Restorative Justice
- Healing Circles
- Economic empowerment/opportunity and workforce development
- Strategies to increase community wealth and resources that can resist the economic pressures that result in dislocation and gentrification

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Restorative Justice, Oakland, California
Salinas, California

La Cultura Cura is a transformative ‘health and healing’ philosophy, which recognizes that within individual, family and community cultural values/traditions/indigenous practices, exists the path to healthy development, restoration, and lifelong well-being. - National Compadres Network
Lakota Mental Health First Aid

Rosebud, South Dakota

- Wagluhtata Pi (Offering of Food & Tobacco)
- Wacante Ognaka (Compassion)
- Wokicunpte (Words of Sympathy)
- Wotakuye (Kinship – Addressing people as our relatives)
- Wokigna (Comfort)
Social - Cultural Environment

- Change the narrative about community and the people in it
- Shift community social norms
- Organize and promote regular positive community activity
- Provide a voice and element of power for community folks around shifting and changing environmental factors as well as the structural factors

(Pinderhuges et al., 2015)
Teens in Action
Louisville, Kentucky
YouthSpeaks, Get Lit, Urban Word

San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, New York City
RYSE

Richmond, California

2016 RYSE Film Festival
Truth be told: Justice Through My Eyes

Sponsored by

Get your tickets at: tinyurl.com/truthbetoldfilms

October 22nd 7pm
321 11th Street
Richmond, CA 94801

"Young people have always been the drivers of change. The visionaries. The ones to imagine and forge new worlds..."

- The Audacity to Lead with Love & Rage

Trauma and Social Location

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Historical Trauma/Entrenchment

Coping

Support

Social Barriers/Structural, Policy/Institutional

Support

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Support
Building Community Resilience

- Sustainable community economic development
- Restorative Justice
- Healing Circles
- Reclaim and improve public spaces
- Shift community social norms
- Enhance social connections and networks
- Rebuild intergenerational connections and relationships
- Organize and promote regular positive community activity
- Providing more of a voice and elements of power for community folks around shifting and changing environmental as well as structural factors

(Pinderhughes et al., 2015)
Strategies to Address and Prevent Community Trauma and Substance Use
Developing a community-trauma informed approach to the opioid epidemic in Ohio

The need to address adverse community experiences and community trauma

Prevention Institute’s Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience (ACE®R) Framework has been eye-opening as a lens that helps communities grappling with the tremendous impacts of the opioid epidemic. With high rates of opioid use disorder (OUD) in Ohio, staff of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Bureau of Prevention were searching for a strategy to address opioid overdose deaths and prevent the epidemic of opioid and other substance misuse from growing every day in the state. When they came across PI’s ACE®R Framework, the concepts of community trauma and building resilience to address harm in the community resonated deeply with what they saw driving the crisis in the state: loss of industry, high rates of unemployment, broken relationships and lack of social support, social isolation, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness in communities hardest hit. Holly Stone, Chief, and Valerie Leach, Prevention Administrator, OhioMHAS Bureau of Prevention, were interested in seeing if the framework had applicability to developing a prevention plan for the state.

“Trauma reaches beyond those who directly witness or experience it, affecting communities on many levels. There’s a need for healing and building resilience to prevent future community trauma. We’re excited to be a part of this innovative approach to addressing community trauma resulting from the opiate epidemic.”

— Molly Stone, Prevention Bureau Chief, OhioMHAS

To date, the ACE®R Framework has been used in communities across Ohio to think about and advance actions to build community trauma-informed teams, support the development of local theories of change that

(OHIO | CITY VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES 1)
The concepts of community trauma and building resilience to address harm in the community resonated deeply with what 12 Ohio counties adversely impacted by Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Opioid Overdose Deaths saw driving the crisis in the state:

- Loss of industry
- High rates of unemployment
- Broken relationships and lack of social supports
- Social isolation
- Pervasive sense of hopelessness in communities hardest hit

(The Ohio Experience)
The Ohio Experience

This approach has been used to:

• Build community trauma-informed teams
• Support the development of local theories of change that consider community trauma
• Reduce stigma that arises when issues are seen solely as problems of individual behavior versus through a broader lens of contributing community factors
• Link root causes of OUD to other “wicked” problems such as social isolation, joblessness, and poor educational opportunities
• Develop a strategic roadmap that considers underlying factors and root causes driving OUD
Local Priorities

- Promote social connectedness by increasing utilization of parks and other public spaces
- Increase economic stability
- Reduce social isolation by increasing access to transportation
- Increase safe, affordable housing options
Making Connections for Mental Health and Wellbeing Among Men and Boys in the U.S.

A Report on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Men and Boys in the U.S. and Opportunities to Advance Outcomes related to Prevention, Early Intervention and Stigma Reduction
Making Connections: Report Findings

Photos: Teri Clark, Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors

- **Limited notions of masculinity** socialize males toward isolation and not seeking assistance

- **Boys and men of color are disproportionally impacted** – with far-reaching implications related to fathering, families, and communities

- **Military service members, veterans, and their families** experience trauma and its effects disproportionally

(Prevention Institute, 2014)
Making Connections: Report Findings

• Prevention is not at scale to maximize impact needed

• Indigenous and lay people approaches are emerging – supporting healing and mental wellbeing

• Resilience is a critical protective factor – and can be catalytic for community-wide prevention approaches

Photos: Teri Clark, Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors

(Prevention Institute, 2014)
Making Connections for Mental Health and Wellbeing Among Men and Boys

The Community of Practice is inclusive of 14 sites, with diversity in geography, organizational leadership, and population

(Prevention Institute, 2014)
A Gendered Lens
Making Multiple Connections

- Bridging mental health to population and community level approaches

- Focusing on the places where men/boys spend their time, through the people with whom they interact and trust

- Connecting systems and institutions to mental wellbeing and each other
Making Multiple Connections

• Reconnecting to cultural identity and expanded notions of masculinity

• Supporting connection in coping with stressors (past, present and future)

• Connecting men and boys to each other, their families and community

(Prevention Institute, 2014)
Four Imperative Shifts

From mental health meaning mental illness to an emphasis on wellbeing and resilience

From a focus on treatment only to also expanding upstream prevention

From a focus on the individual to transforming communities

From one size fits all to applying a cultured and gendered lens

(Prevention Institute, 2014)
Comprehensive Upstream Strategies

• Creating space for being/doing/connecting
• Creating networks for gendered and cultural approaches
• Building capacity to help self and others
• Supporting civic/community action to enhance wellbeing
• Facilitating advocacy for changes in policy, practice, and/or systems
• Amplifying narratives of healing and hopefulness

(Prevention Institute, 2014)
Emerging Pillars of Wellbeing

Hope
Dignity
Trust
Safety
Belonging and
Connection
Control of Destiny

Image source: F Mira, Creative Common
Creating Space for Being/Doing/Connecting

United Women of East Africa
San Diego, California
United Women of East Africa, San Diego
Amplifying Narratives of Healing and Hopefulness

Image source: Boston.com, greenhouse
Each One Teach One

Youth leaders, young warriors, come forward

We will write our own history books.
We will dance with love in our hearts for all.
We will protect the weak from the powerful.
We will not surrender to poverty. It is inexcusable to live on the streets in the land of millionaires.
We will not take your abuse.
We will not sit in the back of the bus. We will not be segregated from the peoples and cultures of South, Central and North America. No more borders.
No human being will be called illegal. All people have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
With love in our heart we will fight injustice.
We will not give up our lands, traditions, language.
We will see God in every human being.
We will take care of and love all our old. Our hearts are not for sale.
We will not hide our colors and songs.
We will love all people.
We will fight for love and respect.
We will face up to our mistakes and learn from them.
Our good dreams will come true.
We want unity in the community.
Youth leaders, young warriors come forward.
The community is in need of new leadership.
You cannot buy love.
We will not be raped.
No one will stop our self determination.
Stop gentrification! Save the Mission District!
We have the right to speak freely.

Peacemakers can never end violence.
The love within our hearts will end all violence.
No one, no institution will take away our freedom.
The real criminals will go to jail.
Addiction to tobacco, alcohol and crack cocaine will be no more.
Families will never be separated.
We will never be under the control of drugs.
Drugs is violence.
We will not abuse our families and children.
The establishment is trying to keep us at-risk.
When locked down.
will not be at-risk.
will not be poor.
will not be locked down.
Revolution will not be televised.
We can keep your corporate junk food and cheap Star Wars movies.
We will not be used and abused by any system.
Save the children.
If one child goes hungry, the whole system has failed.
If one child cannot read, the whole system is dumb.
If one family is homeless, the whole system has failed.
If one youth is locked up, we all are locked up.
When one child dies from AIDS, we all die.
We will love our brothers and sisters who are in state concentration camps.
We will close down the jails and youth prisons.
Youth will not have to sell dope for the man.
Gangs will become brothers.

Gangs will stop gentrification.
Peace.
Brothers.
Peace.
We will care for the sick.
No more unemployment.
All families and youth will have respectable jobs.
No more roach motels in the kitchen.
Education by and for youth.

We are teachers.
We must and can educate ourselves.
When you walk off this stage, we walk with you.
When you graduate from college, we graduate with you.
When you go to work everyday, we go to work with you.
When you cry for a loved one, we cry with you.
Can you imagine a world without war?
Can you imagine a world without poverty?
Can you imagine a world without hate and violence?
Life is very short.
Life is a we thing.
No one will live alone.
No one will suffer.
We all must make it together.
Look into your hearts to find your true SELF.
Love all, forgive all — all power to the youth!
Free the youth.
Free the community.
Free RAP.
Free KPFA.
Life in the killing zone

Violence is the most pervasive part of growing up in East Oakland

By Anastasia Hendrix
Chronicle Staff Writer

This is a place where dozens of murders were committed last year within walking distance of an 11-year-old's doorway.

This is a place where third-graders learn about percentages and averages by studying homicide statistics from the streets at surrounding their classrooms—numbers that represent gunned-down neighbors, friends and even family members.

It's a place where police tape blocks off a fresh murder. There is sorrow and outrage, and politicians promise to solve the problem—but the deadly pattern always continues.

This is East Oakland—where unrelenting violence affects even the smallest matter of everyday life. Take Itter, an 11-year-old fifth-grader, for instance:

On the morning of his birthday, he was sitting in the kitchen eating breakfast with his family when a random bullet—one that barely missed his father—who was relaxing on the couch at the time.

The bullet hit the window, broke it, and entered the house. It hit Itter in the head, knocking him unconscious. The bullet lodged in his skull, causing a hole that he still carries with him.

Itter's family was shocked and scared. They didn't know what to do. They called the police, who arrived quickly. But it was too late. Itter was dead.

His favorite show was "Worst-Case Scenario," which details how to survive life-threatening situations such as how to stop the trunk of a car by breaking a light and pulling out wiring so it can withstand the impact and survive.

"It makes me feel better to know I'm alive," Itter said. "I'm always afraid of what might happen to me.

In his bedroom, located just a few feet from the kitchen, Itter has a tattoo on his arm that says, "Nothing lasts forever."
I WILL HELP BUILD A HEALTHIER EAST OAKLAND!
PEACE in the COMMUNITY
References


