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**Preventing Violence
in Contra Costa County:
A Countywide Action Plan
&
A Framework for Action**

NCJRS

JUL 19 1995

ACQUISITIONS

Contra Costa County
Health Services Department
Prevention Program
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This document is divided into two parts. The first section, *Preventing Violence in Contra Costa County: A Countrywide Action Plan*, was developed by the Contra Costa County Health Services Prevention Program and placed on the November, 1994 ballot by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

The second section, *Preventing Violence in Contra Costa County: A Framework for Action*, is a working document also produced by the Prevention Program. The *Framework* will be updated periodically based on the recommendations of Contra Costa County individuals and community-based organizations, Health Services Department staff, school district personnel, and elected and appointed officials.

The Prevention Program, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, is an interdisciplinary public health program that focuses on the prevention of violence, childhood injuries, and chronic disease. Rather than create new, stand-alone programs, the Prevention Program coordinates, cultivates and links existing community resources in a systems approach. The Program has a national reputation for establishing and developing effective, health-related community coalitions.

For further information, or to request additional supplemental materials, contact the Contra Costa County Health Services Department Prevention Program, 75 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill, CA, 94523. (510) 646-6511; fax (510) 646-6520.

Preventing Violence in Contra Costa County: A Countywide Action Plan

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Placed on the November ballot by the
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

August 9, 1994

For further information, contact:
Contra Costa Health Services Department
Prevention Program
(510) 646-6511

Preventing Violence in Contra Costa County: A Countywide Action Plan

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors firmly believes that violence is preventable and that all opportunities to reduce and prevent violence in Contra Costa should be pursued. Therefore, the Board joins with cities, school districts, and community members throughout the county to make violence prevention a priority.

Violence is a learned behavior and therefore preventable. The *Countywide Action Plan* is formulated with the premise that violence is a health issue. As a health issue, violence requires attention not just to the outcomes of violent injury, but to the symptoms and, ultimately, to the prevention of violence. Therefore, this plan recommends the systematic integration of community, private, and public entities in the development of solutions.

For more than ten years, community agencies and government departments have been coordinating a variety of violence prevention efforts. Many efforts by community-based programs predate the county government's role in violence prevention. Voter approval of the *Action Plan* is an endorsement of increased awareness, concern, commitment, and involvement of the entire Contra Costa County population so that a significant reduction in violence will be achieved.

The *Countywide Action Plan* delineates 25 critical recommendations that will reduce violence in the county. A fully inclusive list of recommendations would require surveying existing and proposed violence prevention measures throughout communities and government. A supplemental document, the Framework for Action, enumerates many of the specific activities that local communities and governmental bodies can undertake to reduce violence. The Framework is intended as a working document to be broadened and revised on a community by community basis.

A completely effective violence prevention plan would also address the root causes of violence, including fundamental issues relating to unemployment, oppression and mental health. However, the 25 recommendations enumerated here can serve as guidelines to help identify priorities and allocate resources.

These recommendations deal with six themes: Safe Homes, Safe Schools, Safe Neighborhoods, Safe Workplaces, Government Service, and Policy Initiatives. The recommendations are organizing principles; implementation in each community would require the development of specific action steps and examples. This document is primarily concerned with assault, homicide, sexual assault, and battering. Child abuse, elder abuse, and suicide are not as thoroughly addressed in the plan, although following these recommendations would significantly impact each of these concerns.

Preventing violence is a responsibility that will take many years to achieve. This *Countywide Action Plan* will serve as a road map to help us reach our goals more effectively. For further information, call the Health Services Department Prevention Program, (510) 646-6511.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Homes

Recommendation 1: Promote the concept that all Contra Costa home environments can and should be violence free.

Recommendation 2: Provide community and governmental support to families that will assist them in reducing the risk of violence.

Recommendation 3: Recognize family violence as a significant problem in all parts of the community and reduce its prevalence and impact.

Schools

Recommendation 4: Develop educational interventions to empower youth who, despite disadvantages, can develop social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, resiliency, and a sense of purpose or future.

Recommendation 5: Raise awareness of the link between violence, alcohol, and other drug abuse.

Recommendation 6: Create stronger linkages between schools, community groups, and government for violence prevention.

Recommendation 7: Foster a school environment which provides for the safety of the campus community and creates an atmosphere conducive to learning and respect.

Neighborhoods

Recommendation 8: Conduct activities which help create a sense of community and draw on the natural strengths of groups and individuals in their neighborhoods.

Recommendation 9: Promote efforts which assist in creating an atmosphere of safety in streets and neighborhoods.

Recommendation 10: Promote awareness, knowledge, and involvement of the diverse cultures in Contra Costa County, including "youth culture."

Recommendation 11: Provide and enhance opportunities that enable individuals, families, and the community as a whole to heal from the impact of violence.

Recommendation 12: Ensure that all youth have the opportunity to engage in constructive, safe, and supervised activities during non-school hours.

Recommendation 13: Cooperate with religious leaders and congregations in providing education and support to individuals and families.

Recommendation 14: Distribute violence prevention information and resources through traditional and non-traditional media and public information avenues, including teachers, counselors, librarians, and health care providers, among others.

Recommendation 15: Provide direct services to youth through community-based organizations which complement and enhance services already provided in the school environment, including those that deal with alternatives to incarceration.

Workplaces

Recommendation 16: Expand public and private employment opportunities for young people while encouraging them to remain in school.

Recommendation 17: Create a workplace atmosphere which enhances employee safety and support for violence related concerns.

Recommendation 18: Create an atmosphere conducive to the involvement of businesses as a partner in community violence prevention efforts.

Government

Recommendation 19: Conduct and distribute research and data that will assist practitioners, policy makers, and the public in understanding and intervening appropriately in the epidemic of violence.

Recommendation 20: Implement violence prevention activities within governmental settings which can serve as a model for other workplaces.

Recommendation 21: Develop organizational guidelines and protocols which assure and streamline the delivery of violence prevention services.

Recommendation 22: Provide government leadership that enables the county as a whole to enhance violence prevention efforts.

Policy Initiatives

Recommendation 23: Encourage government, school districts, and city councils to enhance local programmatic efforts by advocating statewide and national changes in policy.

Recommendation 24: Actively reduce the number of firearms, particularly handguns and assault rifles, in private ownership.

Recommendation 25: Educate practitioners, policy makers, and advisors so that they have adequate knowledge and skills to play a productive role in violence prevention efforts.

NEXT STEPS

- ◆ Initiate a county wide task force to review the *Countywide Action Plan* to determine priorities and immediate and long term implementation steps. This process should involve young people, community groups and individuals, violence prevention practitioners, religious and business representatives, and elected and appointed officials. The Framework for Action is intended as a working document for review and revision by this and other task forces.
- ◆ Develop and implement an aggressive funding plan to support programmatic recommendations.
- ◆ Initiate a broad training program to heighten the violence prevention skills of groups involved in implementation.
- ◆ Map existing violence prevention efforts throughout the county.
- ◆ Identify roles and duties of those involved in leadership and implementation of the *Countywide Action Plan*. Existing collaborative efforts should provide the underpinning for implementation. Specify mechanisms whereby individuals can become further involved in community efforts.
- ◆ Plan, develop, and advocate for an anti-violence legislative agenda.
- ◆ Assess progress on an annual basis. Recommendations must incorporate measures of success to monitor progress, assess direction, and assure that violence prevention is maintained as a key item on the public agenda throughout the county and state.

WORKING DOCUMENT

**Preventing Violence in Contra Costa County:
A Framework for Action**

A supplement to
"Preventing Violence in Contra Costa County:
A Countywide Action Plan,"
placed on the November ballot by the
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

August 9, 1994

For further information, contact:
Contra Costa Health Services Department
Prevention Program

Preventing Violence In Contra Costa County: A Framework for Action

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors firmly believes that violence is preventable and that all opportunities to reduce and prevent violence in Contra Costa should be pursued. Accordingly, on August 9, 1994, the Board of Supervisors placed "Preventing Violence in Contra Costa County: A Countywide Action Plan" on the November ballot for voter approval. In endorsing the Action Plan, the Board joins with cities, school districts, and community members throughout the county to make violence prevention a priority.

This document, the *Framework for Action*, is a supplement to the Action Plan. The *Framework* is a "working document" that enumerates many of the specific activities that local communities and governmental bodies can undertake to reduce and prevent violence.

Violence is a learned behavior and therefore preventable. The *Framework for Action* is formulated with the premise that violence is a health issue. As a health issue, violence requires attention not just to the outcomes of violent injury, but to the symptoms and, ultimately, to the prevention of violence. The term "health" is used here in the broadest sense, not just the medical aspects, but as an approach that pinpoints the underlying causes and risk factors. Because violence is a complex issue, using a health approach facilitates the systematic integration of community, private and public entities in the development of solutions.

For more than ten years, community agencies and government departments have been coordinating a variety of violence prevention efforts. Many efforts by community-based programs predate the county government's role in violence prevention. Voter approval of the Action Plan is an endorsement of increased awareness, concern, commitment, and involvement of the entire Contra Costa County population so that a significant reduction in violence will be achieved.

This *Framework for Action* is intended as a "work in progress." A fully inclusive list of actions would require surveying existing and proposed violence prevention measures throughout communities and government. A completely effective violence prevention plan would also address the root causes of violence, including fundamental issues relating to unemployment, oppression and mental health. However, the 25 recommendations enumerated here can serve as guidelines to help identify priorities and allocate resources.

These recommendations deal with six themes: Safe Homes, Safe Schools, Safe Neighborhoods, Safe Workplaces, Government Service, and Policy Initiatives. Under each recommendation a set of actions is listed; these actions are generally applicable to more than one recommendation. The actions are intended as steps and examples, but may require modification in a particular community, and certainly there are numerous other steps that could be listed and should be undertaken. This document is primarily concerned with assault, homicide, sexual assault, and battering. Child abuse, elder abuse, and suicide are not as thoroughly addressed, although attention to the recommendations here would have a significant impact on every one of these concerns.

Preventing violence is a responsibility that will take many years to achieve. This *Framework for Action* will serve as a road map to help us reach our goals more effectively. For further information, call the Health Services Department Prevention Program, (510) 646-6511.

I. BACKGROUND

On February 1, 1994 the Board Of Supervisors adopted the preliminary plan for violence prevention presented by the Health Services Department. The Board directed the Health Services Department to work within county government, as well as with cities, school districts, and non-profit organizations, in a concerted effort to reduce violence in Contra Costa. Meetings were held in various regions of the county to find out how to supplement and reinforce existing violence prevention activities.

Board of Supervisor's representatives hosted violence prevention summits in Central County in May and East County in June 1994. From these summits, a series of recommendations was developed dealing with the themes of Safe Homes, Safe Neighborhoods, Safe Schools, and Safe Workplaces. West County has also sponsored numerous initiatives such as The Enterprise Community, Increase The Peace Month, and the Opportunity West Community Substance Abuse Partnership.

Many sectors of the community, including non-profit agencies and government, are already taking important steps to prevent violence. The *Framework for Action* proposes actions that will enhance these existing efforts and integrate them with new initiatives for preventing violence. It looks at the role of government and institutions, as well as collaborative activities that would benefit from partnerships between communities, government and the private sector.

The *Framework for Action* incorporates the recommendations which grew out of the two regional summits; West county recommendations; research conducted by Health Services Department staff; reports on violence prevention efforts in other communities; and the expertise of individuals who have developed local programs and policies. It addresses six areas: Safe Homes, Safe Schools, Safe Communities, Safe Workplaces, Government Service, and Policy Initiatives. Information from organizations throughout the United States was incorporated into this *Framework*. Special acknowledgement is due the City of Seattle's Violence Prevention Work Group.

Because the problem of violence is so complex, it is crucial that all who live and work in Contra Costa County support the development and implementation of effective violence prevention initiatives.

II. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

A) Rates of Violence

Violence has reached what public health officials conclude is epidemic proportions. Too many lives are lost or radically altered by violence, costing not only grief and emotional suffering, but also a huge financial burden on the public to bear the costs of emergency medical services, law enforcement and jails. Violence is as severe a problem in Contra Costa County as in much of the rest of the nation. As the following figures show, the toll is great.

The rates for interpersonal violence are higher in the United States than any other industrialized nation. For example, in 1990, the rape rate in the U.S. was 8 times higher than in France, 15 times higher than in England, 20 times higher than in Portugal, 23 times higher than in Italy, 26 times higher than in Japan, and 46 times higher than in Greece.¹

Nationally, motor vehicles are the leading cause of injury death among persons aged 1-34. According to data currently being analyzed by the Health Services Prevention Program, in 1992 and 1993, the number of homicides in Contra Costa surpassed motor vehicles as the leading cause of injury death.²

Violence (homicide and suicide) accounted for 44.8 percent of injury deaths in the county between 1988 and 1992. Of these violent deaths, 54 percent were suicides and 46 percent homicides. In 1993, however, homicide outranked suicide, comprising 61 percent of injury deaths versus suicides (39 percent).³

There are 67 million handguns in private hands in the United States.⁴

From 1988-1990, firearm injuries were the leading cause of death for Contra Costa youth between the ages of 10 and 14.⁵

Firearms were the weapon most frequently reported in violent deaths in Contra Costa between 1988 and 1992 (more than 63 percent). In 1992, firearm injuries were the leading cause of injury deaths to Contra Costa residents, nearly twice as many as deaths related to motor vehicles.⁶

Throughout the county, 4,346 aggravated assaults were reported to law enforcement agencies during 1992.⁷

As reported to local law enforcement agencies, 309 forcible rapes were perpetrated on Contra Costa women during 1992. It is estimated that reported rapes are only one-third to one-half of those that actually take place. According to a majority staff report prepared for the Senate Judiciary Committee, at least one out of five women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime.⁸

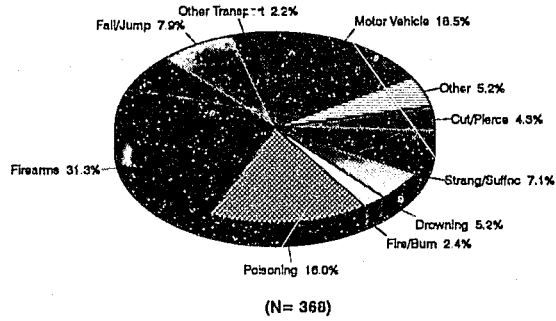
Battering is the leading cause of injury to women and accounts for nearly one third of all emergency room visits by women. Each year, domestic violence generates more than 21,000 hospitalizations, 99,800 hospital days, and 39,900 physician visits.⁹

Alcohol is associated with two-thirds of all violent behavior; one-third of teen suicides are alcohol-related; and more than half of all convicted rapists were drinking at the time of their offense.¹⁰

B. Costs of Violence

Violence caused almost one-fifth of injury medical care costs (\$13.5 billion) nationally in 1992.¹¹

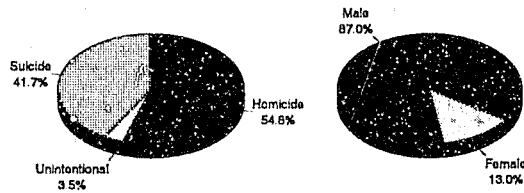
Causes of Injury Death Contra Costa County Residents, 1992



Source: California Department of Health Services, Vital Statistics

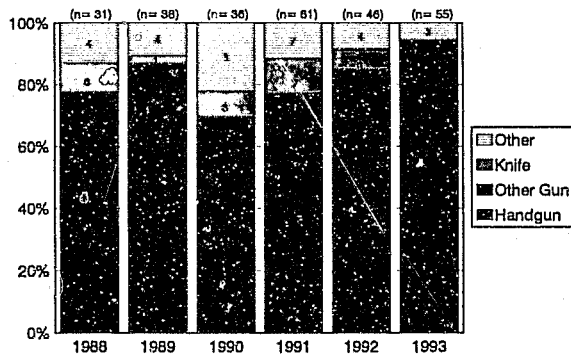
Firearm Injury Deaths Contra Costa County Residents, 1992

Total Number of Firearm Injury Deaths = 115



Source: California Department of Health Services, Vital Statistics

Homicides by Weapon Richmond, CA 1988 - 1993



Source: California Department of Justice (1988-1992); Richmond Police Department (1993)

Direct medical costs related to violence exceed \$5 billion annually, and many of the estimated 1.5 million victims of assault each year are uninsured, placing an incredible burden on the public to bear the cost.¹²

The average cost of treating a child wounded by gunfire could provide a student with a year of college education. Researchers surveyed hospital discharges from 44 acute care children's hospitals and found that in 1991, the average hospital charges for gunshot wounds to children were \$14,434.¹³

More than 80 inner city hospitals have abandoned their emergency rooms in recent years due to unmanageable costs.¹⁴

Between 1982 and 1992, the share of government spending going to the criminal justice system rose from 5.4% to 7.5%. Incarcerating a 25 year-old for life costs a total of \$600,000-\$1,000,000. Average annual cost per prisoner is \$27,000.¹⁵

III. ROOT CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS

The first step to effective action is to define the problem. Only after understanding the dimensions of violence, its root causes and risk factors, can appropriate solutions be developed.

Nationally, as well as locally, experts are finding that the same elements underlie the problem of violence. Three causes (economics, oppression and mental health) and six community risk factors have been identified. Addressing the root causes is critical and requires substantial re-ordering of political and social priorities. Although the risk factors are also difficult to change, they are more amenable to modification.

A. Three Root Causes

1. *Economics*: The depressed economic conditions within a given community, as well as individual cases of unemployment and underemployment, lead to significantly higher levels of violence.
2. *Oppression*: Sexism, racism, and discrimination based on age, class, and cultural background lead to a sense of inequality and powerlessness that is an underlying component of many types of violence.
3. *Mental Health*: In the absence of individual responsibility and family support for responsible behavior, violence is more likely to occur. An unsupportive home life, including physical or psychological abuse, can produce low self-esteem in both the victim and perpetrator. Violence begets violence; it is frequently cyclical. A culture which reinforces violence makes the goal of individual responsibility more difficult to achieve.

It is important to note that while African Americans are the most severely affected by violence and the most likely to be jailed for violent offenses, neither race nor ethnicity is a primary risk factor. The disproportionately high levels of violence in the African American population are indicators of the underlying economic and social conditions in which the

population is likely to find itself. The devastation of these communities by violence is best understood, according to Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, author of *Deadly Consequences*, as a reaction to poverty and to over-crowding, in the context of an American culture where violence "is as American as apple pie."¹⁶

B. Six Community Risk Factors

1. *Guns*: By virtue of the fact that guns are involved in the vast majority of homicides and suicides, their availability and lethality is a major concern that needs to be addressed.
2. *Media*: Although the mass media justify sensationalization of violence and sexual objectification by claiming that these are what the public wants for entertainment, studies show the psychological damage of such programming.
3. *Alcohol and Other Drugs*: The drug most frequently associated with violence is the one subsidized by the government and legally marketed to consumers: alcohol. The illicit drug trade also contributes significantly to violence.
4. *Incarceration*: Although incarceration is frequently necessary, if there is no funding for adequate prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs, then it is the only form of violence reduction available. When incarceration is the only option, prisons often can become a training ground for more violence. Building and maintaining jails also uses resources that could be channeled to violence prevention efforts.
5. *Witnessing Acts of Violence*: Experiencing violence can produce Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), similar to that experienced by war veterans. Exposure to, or direct involvement in, violence is likely to create the belief that violence is a normal form of conflict resolution.
6. *Community Deterioration*: The funding for community services throughout the United States has taken a notable downturn. Schools, health and mental health services, libraries, recreational centers, and parks are all critical institutions that provide a buffer against the likelihood of violence. At the same time, the "web" of community participation seems to be unravelling, with people's attention focused more on the needs of their own families than on the health of the community as a whole.

IV . A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

As a health issue, violence requires attention not just to the outcomes of violent injury, but to the symptoms and, ultimately, to the prevention of violence. The term "health" is used here in the broadest sense, and refers not just to the medical consequences, but also to the root causes and risk factors, of violence. Dealing with violence as a health—and not just law and order—issue facilitates the systematic integration of community, private and public entities in the development of solutions.

The health of a community is a composite of physical, psychological, social, and economic variables. Consequently, the responsibility for overall community health resides in a number

of systems, including the family, education, health, work, criminal justice, and social services.

An African proverb states, "It takes a whole village to raise one child." Ending violence will require that people in each neighborhood assume responsibility for the problem—even if doing so is risky and frustrating. Stopping the momentum of violence requires a "critical mass" of people who are willing to speak out and work together to change the structures and policies that frame the way we live.

V. PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

The *Framework for Action* enumerates 25 recommendations. They are intended as guidelines for identifying priorities and allocating resources. They are meant to augment, refine, and broaden the efforts already initiated by citizens and institutions throughout Contra Costa County. This plan is a "work in progress." A fully inclusive list of recommendations would require a much more detailed description of existing and projected activities. The recommendations in this *Framework for Action* are followed by suggested actions. The actions are intended as steps and examples, and may require modification in a particular community. Certainly, there are numerous other steps that could be investigated and considered.

All of the recommendations include the following principles, which are guidelines for planning, policy development, and implementation.

- a) Build on existing local efforts and support initiatives that arise from within communities. Many community groups and organizations, individuals, and collaboratives throughout the county grapple with violence-related prevention efforts. Their work must be acknowledged, supported, and enhanced.
- b) Foster individual responsibility and involvement. Each person has the responsibility for behaving nonviolently. Resources to support individual and family mental health need to be readily accessible.
- c) Utilize available data and state-of-the-art violence prevention strategies. Violence prevention efforts can be most effective when based on accurate information about what works.
- d) Encourage partnerships and the collaboration and integration of services. Violence is a complex issue which requires removing barriers that inhibit solutions from emerging. Pay special attention to the expertise of existing coalitions.
- e) Emphasize a multi-level approach. Individual change, institution-wide programs, community activities, and countywide policies are needed. Every level of involvement, from home to school and board room, is critical to changing the "culture of violence."

- f) Support and involve youth in decision-making. Many young people feel isolated and unsupported. Some are victims and/or perpetrators. Changing the experience of young people, and adult attitudes about young people, is crucial to finding a solution to violence.
- g) Resources must be made available. Those who work with young people in schools and communities throughout the county are painfully aware of the dearth of resources for violence prevention activities. There can be no substitute for funding such programmatic efforts.
- h) Develop concrete criteria for success. The accomplishments of the elements of this *Framework* must be measured and reviewed. Violence prevention requires a long-term commitment. It is not enough to simply put programs in place; they must be of high quality and play a clear role in achieving the goal of reducing violence in Contra Costa County.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Homes

Recommendation 1: Promote the concept that all Contra Costa home environments can and should be violence free.

Key elements to include:

- * Conflict and anger management
- * Communication with children
- * Communication with schools and other organizations
- * Discipline guidelines and techniques
- * Reducing the impact of television violence
- * Instilling respect and kindness
- * Diminishing risk associated with firearms in homes
- * Developing a family safety plan
- * Alcohol and other drug risks

Urge parents to seek alternatives to aggressive interpersonal confrontations at home.

Recommendation 2: Provide community and governmental support to families that will assist them in reducing the risk of violence.

Provide education, materials, and referrals which assist residents in becoming more aware of community and school resources, current violence prevention related services, and alternative activities.

Develop ongoing care, services, and training in parenting, conflict resolution, substance abuse, and mental health for high risk families and victims and perpetrators of violence.

Using an integrated service model, provide enhanced support services for youth who are having difficulty at home.

Recommendation 3: Recognize family violence as a significant problem in all parts of the community and reduce its prevalence and impact.

Set the goal of zero tolerance for family violence.

Initiate a countywide Domestic Violence Council to advise government and improve community support for family violence reduction and prevention.

Mandate treatment for spousal abusers.

Require vertical prosecution (a consistent prosecutor for an entire family violence case) to maximize consistency and competence in prosecuting such cases.

Provide domestic violence treatment in county jails to inmates convicted of spousal abuse.

Immediately restrict ownership of all guns by people who are under court restraining orders, or where a domestic assault has been proved to have occurred.

Encourage health care providers to establish and maintain referral systems for victims of domestic violence.

Enhance police training for handling domestic violence situations and making appropriate referrals and accurate police reports.

Support shelters for people at risk of domestic violence.

Schools

Recommendation 4: Develop educational interventions to empower youth who, despite disadvantages, can develop social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, resiliency, and a sense of purpose or future.

Develop and implement K-12 curriculums that equip students with the skills and tools that help prevent violence:

- * Communication skills, conflict and anger management;
- * History from a variety of cultural perspectives;
- * Causes and prevention of violence which integrates culturally diverse approaches;
- * Family life skills education; and
- * Alcohol and drug issues.

Encourage safe opportunities for youth to express the impact of violence on their lives.

Improve reading skills of young people and adults.

Include community service involvement as a requirement for graduation at all elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Lobby for modifications in the Education Code, such as those which mandate appropriate teacher training, that support the development and implementation of violence prevention curriculums.

Recommendation 5: Raise awareness of the link between violence, alcohol, and other drug abuse.

Incorporate violence prevention into existing alcohol and other drug interventions in school and community settings.

Include alcohol and other drug treatment in interventions for violent individuals.

Publicize accurate information on the relationship of alcohol and other drugs to violence, and base policies on accurate information.

Recommendation 6: Create stronger linkages between schools, community groups, and government for violence prevention.

Enhance community access to school facilities for community events.

Support programmatic partnerships involving community and school groups.

Coordinate school-based "zero tolerance for weapons" policies with existing county and community-based efforts.

Recommendation 7: Foster a school environment which provides for the safety of the campus community and creates an atmosphere conducive to learning and respect.

Obtain a commitment from top-level school district officials to make violence prevention a priority.

Promote clear guidelines, procedures, and protocols related to incidents of violence on campus, e.g. zero tolerance for weapons.

Create staff counselor positions to provide support to students affected by violence.

Create or strengthen alternatives to expulsion.

Strengthen lines of communication between school and home.

Increase family participation through parent contracts and other methods.

Promote respect for cultural diversity.

Sponsor school-based events with violence prevention and cultural celebration themes, e.g. Violence Prevention month.

Create student "Bill of Rights" where it doesn't already exist.

Create or expand "student assistance" programs where young people are encouraged to work together to improve the school.

Neighborhoods

Recommendation 8: Conduct activities which help create a sense of community and draw on the natural strengths of groups and individuals in their neighborhoods.

Initiate and strengthen such neighborhood activities as block parties, neighborhood watch groups and fairs, and neighborhood associations and councils.

Identify and support helpers for children, e.g. block parents and guardians, to provide after-school supervision and support when parents are unavailable.

Encourage retired persons and other community members to volunteer in school and community activities.

Support community-initiated and neighborhood-based projects.

Increase and support the presence of knowledgeable, caring adults in the lives of young people, with special emphasis on high-risk children and youth.

Recommendation 9: Promote efforts which assist in creating an atmosphere of safety in streets and neighborhoods.

Expand community policing to encourage improved police and community relations and enhance violence prevention efforts.

Develop a cadre of trained gang intervention specialists to work directly with gang-affiliated young people.

Create "Safe Havens" for youth and families in community resource rooms, churches, private homes, and businesses.

Strengthen and expand "Take Back the Night" activities and community events that promote peace and honor victims of violence.

Improve lighting and security in vulnerable locations, e.g. ATM's, community centers, and parks.

Recommendation 10: Promote awareness, knowledge, and involvement of the diverse cultures in Contra Costa County, including "youth culture."

Develop activities and materials that highlight the contributions of specific cultural groups and individuals.

Broaden the representation of all cultural groups on county and city boards and commissions.

Create a countywide youth council to foster feedback from young people, and solicit their input into prevention activities. Sponsor youth forums and summits to foster youth involvement.

Provide trainings on cultural diversity to employees in public and private workplaces throughout the county.

Increase the availability of parenting classes which are culturally and ethnically appropriate for diverse communities, through churches, health clinics, schools, and other public, private, religious, and community agencies.

Create or expand inter-generational programs and messages that promote respect and tolerance for both youth and elders.

Recommendation 11: Provide and enhance opportunities that enable individuals, families, and the community as a whole to heal from the impact of violence.

Coordinate and enhance emergency mental health response to victims and witnesses of violent incidents, similar to that which exists for other epidemics or natural disasters, including critical incident debriefing after violent incidents, violence risk assessment and referral to ongoing supportive services.

Train and support community groups and individuals to provide ongoing emotional support to affected individuals.

Recommendation 12: Ensure that all youth have the opportunity to engage in constructive, safe, and supervised activities during non-school hours.

Expand cultural activities and recreational opportunities (eg. music, arts, multi-cultural events) for youth.

Open more late-night recreation areas, library homework centers, and education programs for youth—including tutoring, computer skills, humanities and the arts, and athletics, e.g. midnight basketball, midnight Shakespeare.

Support summer and holiday programs for youth, including mobile recreational and library services.

Adjust staffing patterns and scheduling as necessary to accommodate afternoon and evening activities for young people in sites such as community centers.

Make parks and playgrounds safe.

Recommendation 13: Cooperate with religious leaders and congregations in providing education and support to individuals and families.

Increase the use of churches, mosques, and synagogues as places to meet and collaborate.

Enhance training to clergy and lay leaders in addressing violence-related issues.

Encourage religious leaders to become further involved in violence prevention efforts throughout the community.

Recognize religious institutions as important resources for violence prevention.

Recommendation 14: Distribute violence prevention information and resources through traditional and non-traditional media and public information avenues, including teachers, counselors, librarians, and health care providers, among others.

Emphasize the message that violence is preventable, highlight the positive actions of youth, and promote violence prevention efforts.

Develop an extensive media campaign using effective anti-violence messages.

Integrate and upgrade hotline numbers and referral systems. Publicize crisis intervention "help" lines, compile guides of violence prevention services, and re-establish the library's Bay Area Information and Retrieval Services (BAIRS).

Expand school and public library collections and displays of violence prevention materials, e.g. educational videos.

Enhance the use of churches, schools, community-based agency sites, and businesses as outlets for information.

Recommendation 15: Provide direct services to youth through community-based organizations, which complement and enhance services already provided in the school environment, including services that deal with alternatives to incarceration.

Enhance violence prevention training and leadership programs.

Expand and coordinate opportunities for leadership and community service.

Expand literacy skills training.

Create or expand tutoring and mentoring opportunities.

Increase alternatives to incarceration, e.g. community service, and strengthen re-entry support for incarcerated minors.

Promote positive peer interaction through peer counseling programs and education.

Make community mental health resources more available and relevant to young people.

Improve and expand the distribution of information to youth about available programs and services.

Workplaces

Recommendation 16: Expand public and private employment opportunities for young people while encouraging them to remain in school.

Increase number of job opportunities for youth.

Provide school and community-based job skills training, job search, career guidance, and mentoring programs.

Link school and business efforts to create mentoring and internship programs for high school youth.

Train and employ youth to help achieve violence prevention goals.

Recommendation 17: Create a workplace atmosphere which enhances employee safety and support for violence-related concerns.

Develop and provide materials, training, and consultation related to the problem of workplace violence and what can be done to prevent it.

Provide forums for discussion, and institute training and procedures for employers(ees) in the following areas:

- * Interpersonal skills;
- * Anger management;
- * Conflict resolution with clients, co-workers, and the public;
- * Stress management;
- * Fears related to violence in the work setting; and
- * Awareness of origins, precursors, and magnifiers of violence.

Promote employee flexibility with schedules for violence prevention training.

Involve labor unions in planning for effective, appropriate workplace violence prevention efforts.

Create visual aids on conflict resolution in workplace settings.

Provide childcare alternatives for workers.

Promote awareness and encourage use of Employee Assistance Programs.

Encourage individual businesses to develop a violence-related safety plan that acknowledges the needs of both workers and clients.

Recommendation 18: Create an atmosphere conducive to the involvement of businesses as a partner in community violence prevention efforts.

Involve private business in sponsoring paid internships for young people; encourage career ladders from paid internships to longer term jobs.

Encourage business participation in mentoring, such as Compac and the School Volunteer Program.

Coordinate business funding of local violence prevention efforts.

Encourage business "Adopt-a-school" programs and other community participation efforts.

Government Service

Recommendation 19: Conduct and distribute research and data that will assist practitioners, policy makers, and the public in understanding and intervening appropriately in the epidemic of violence.

Analyze current local data to develop a violence profile for Contra Costa County.

Conduct countywide survey of firearm injuries and deaths, to be completed by Fall 1994.

Further refine and disseminate existing research on alcohol and other drug abuse related to violence.

Participate in national forums and networks of violence prevention professionals to gain access to state of the art research and methods.

Conduct targeted research into effective programs, models, and policies used locally, statewide, and nationally.

Recommendation 20: Implement violence prevention activities within governmental settings which can serve as a model for other workplaces.

Use government departments as laboratories for new violence prevention approaches, such as "Violence-Free Zones" in all county office and clinic settings.

Identify and create an inventory of all activities related to the issue of violence that are being conducted in county departments.

Develop a pilot "clinic safety plan" in at least one governmental setting.

Recommendation 21: Develop organizational guidelines and protocols which assure and streamline the delivery of violence prevention services.

Develop uniform protocols for all Health Department settings that assist staff in identifying and referring patients affected by violence.

Train medical personnel to more effectively use the current protocols for serving clients affected by violence, including those for domestic violence.

Provide a social worker trained in violence prevention to appropriate county clinics to conduct support programs and refer clients to community resources.

Avoid waiting lists for persons in need of services; when waiting lists are inescapable, provide some other alternative services.

Streamline internal communication within government regarding violence prevention referrals and related community services.

Recommendation 22: Provide government leadership that enables the county as a whole to enhance violence prevention efforts.

Establish a Violence Prevention Task Force to coordinate the implementation of the *Framework for Action* to include community leaders, community based organizations, young people, business representatives, religious leaders, elected officials, and other governmental representatives.

Sponsor an annual forum and hold frequent trainings on countywide violence-related policies, programs, media advocacy, and prevention strategies.

Encourage newly trained advisory board members and staff to become participants in efforts sponsored by others throughout the county.

Formalize existing linkages between substance abuse and violence prevention efforts throughout the county to incorporate violence and substance abuse prevention themes and activities.

Support multi-disciplinary funding that includes community leaders, community-based organizations, and government programs; support multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral projects.

Health Services Department (HSD) Administration must set priorities for violence as a public health issue in terms of funding, programming, staff development, and worker safety.

Use existing linkages with colleges and universities to help integrate violence prevention training into all areas of professional practice.

Policy Initiatives

Recommendation 23: Encourage government, school districts, and city councils to enhance local programmatic efforts by advocating statewide and national changes in policy.

Review all relevant statewide and national violence prevention legislation, and provide updates to all local officials and interested community members.

Urge elected officials to review and take positions on relevant violence prevention legislation.

Analyze policy related to media, firearms, alcohol and other drugs, and educational issues, and similar issues in which local efforts are pre-empted or significantly controlled by state or national regulation.

Recommendation 24: Actively reduce the number of firearms, particularly handguns and assault rifles, in private ownership.

Exercise local zoning and licensing powers to enhance local regulation of gun dealers.

Impose applicable fees on firearms and ammunition to fund local enforcement, prevention, and education programs.

Restrict the availability of ammunition and ban high-velocity and fragmentation bullets.

Limit firearms purchases to one per month per person.

Encourage corporate and governmental sponsorship of gun buy-back programs.

Call for the repeal of the state's pre-emption of local firearms laws and encourage stronger state regulations.

Enforce existing laws that regulate the sale of firearms and encourage coordination between all county departments with responsibility for such enforcement.

Continue to support emerging state and federal legislation that regulates firearm purchases, manufacturing, sales, and transfers and licensure

Recommendation 25: Educate practitioners, policy makers, and advisors so that they have adequate knowledge and skills to play a productive role in violence prevention efforts.

Initiate a broad training program in violence prevention for county and community practitioners and policy makers, with particular emphasis on these topics:

- * Causes and risk factors;
- * Data sources, interpreting and sharing data, epidemiology of violence;
- * Policy and environmental approaches;
- * Violence prevention strategies;

- * Community programs and resources;
- * Relationship of alcohol and other drugs to violence;
- * Conflict resolution involving coworkers, clients, and administration;
- * Recognizing emerging violent situations;
- * Assessing and referring high risk individuals; and
- * Listening to clients/community.

Make violence prevention training mandatory for appropriate HSD contracted service providers.

VII. NEXT STEPS

Initiate a countywide task force to review the *Framework for Action* to determine priorities, and set immediate and long-term implementation steps. This process should involve young people, community groups and individuals, violence prevention practitioners, religious and business representatives, and elected and appointed officials.

Develop and implement an aggressive funding plan to support programmatic recommendations.

Initiate a broad training program to heighten the violence prevention skills of groups involved in implementation.

Map existing violence prevention efforts throughout the county.

Identify roles, duties, and resources of those involved in leadership and implementation of the *Framework for Action*. Existing collaborative efforts should provide the underpinning for implementation. Specify mechanisms whereby individuals can become further involved in community efforts.

Plan, develop, and advocate for an anti-violence legislative agenda.

Assess progress on an annual basis. Recommendations must incorporate measures of success to monitor progress, assess direction, and ensure that violence prevention is maintained as a key item on the public agenda throughout the county and state.

#104FRMWRK.815

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