

SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO PREVENT SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: FROM RESEARCH TO POLICY AND PRACTICE

WEB CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Good research does not always make its way outside of academic journals to drive smart policy and strong practice. Using a seminal resource, [Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Link Among Multiple Forms of Violence](#) and the [CDC's Preventing Multiple Forms of Violence: A Strategic Vision for Connecting the Dots](#), this topic highlights how research has been translated into practice, provides examples of partnerships and multi-sector efforts, and explores implications for local, state, and national practice.

PRACTITIONERS & ADVOCATES FEATURED

- **Linda Dahlberg, PhD**, Senior Advisor, [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- **Elizabeth Ablah, PhD, MPH**, Associate Professor of Prevention Medicine and Public Health, [Kansas University School of Medicine – Wichita](#)

KEY FINDINGS

A. Connecting the Dots and CDC's Strategic Vision break down silo-ed approaches to preventing violence and open up new opportunities for collaboration. Research from *Connecting the Dots* shows how different forms of violence are experienced together, share underlying factors, and produce common outcomes. Risk factors – such as norms that support aggression, lack of

economic opportunities, and low neighborhood cohesion – increase the likelihood for multiple forms of violence to occur. At the same time, protective factors like coordination of services and community connectedness decrease many forms of violence. CDC's strategic vision makes the case for cross-cutting approaches to better address and prevent multiple forms of violence concurrently.

B. A participatory assessment process can help build understanding and investment in addressing shared risk and protective factors and spur think beyond programmatic interventions. Winfield, a rural Kansas community wanted to understand and address the underlying factors for violence so a local coalition joined together with the state health department and Kansas University. Residents brought a deep

EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS & LINKAGES

understanding of community needs and how the community would respond to potential interventions, while the state health department helped residents design evidence-informed, community-based assessments of risk and protective factors. Through this partnership, Winfield was able to move beyond



Source: Elizabeth Ablah

In Kansas, partners used a shared risk and protective factor approach and involved residents from the start. [Image of coalition members and residents.]

education alone to change systems, environments, and policies. Drawing from *Connecting the Dots*, state and local partners recognized that community violence is a risk factor for sexual violence, and used hot-spot mapping to identify key areas to implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental

Design (CEPTD). CPTED principles can be used to promote positive interpersonal interactions and the safe use of spaces through enhanced visibility, access management, and proper maintenance and design features (e.g., cleaning and greening, fixing up abandoned buildings and vacant lots, etc.). In this case, the involved parties were interested in preventing sexual violence and were open to trying new ways to accomplish their shared goal.

- C. In addition to tracking rates of violence, shared risk and protective factors can be used to assess progress in preventing sexual and domestic violence.** Measuring change can be difficult, especially because rates of violence vary from year to year, and it takes time to see the lasting impacts. Shared risk and protective factors not only provide another source of information to evaluate, but can also help identify community gaps and assets upfront to prioritize efforts. For example, the community in Kansas measured community connectedness – a protective factor – using voter participation and the ‘Sense of Belonging Scale’ from the Chicago Youth Development Survey. This scale evaluates different elements of connectedness, such as the likelihood of ‘asking people to watch my home’ or ‘go to neighbors for advice.’ Winfield was then able to divide up the community into zones to

SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO PREVENT SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: FROM RESEARCH TO POLICY AND PRACTICE

view Sense of Belonging Scores by neighborhoods. Based on this assessment, one potential strategy is to improve collective efficacy within zones and throughout the community to prevent violence.

D. By working together across multiple forms of violence, practitioners can demonstrate to policymakers and funders that investment

in violence prevention can have an impact across several issues. By connecting the dots between multiple forms of violence, practitioners can work together as a violence prevention community to advocate for program, practice, and policy change. There are opportunities to move deliberately in this direction at the local, state, and national levels.

RESOURCES

- [Web Conference Link](#)
- [Web Conference Slides](#)
- [Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence \(CDC\)](#)
- [CDC Connecting the Dots Strategic Vision](#)