



CDC Advances Research to Prevent Youth Violence, Sexual Violence, and Child Abuse and Neglect

CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control announces ten new research awards that will continue to build the evidence for preventing youth violence, sexual violence, and child abuse and neglect. These include: two National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention, five awards to evaluate the effectiveness of primary prevention strategies implemented by or planned for implementation with Rape Prevention and Education (RPE) Programs, and three awards to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies for high-risk families to prevent child abuse and neglect.

National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention

Two new [National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention](#) awards will build the evidence for community- and policy-level violence prevention strategies. These Centers will work with local health departments and community partners to develop, implement, and evaluate youth violence prevention strategies in high-risk neighborhoods. This research investment is approximately \$12 million over the next five years.

- ***The Denver National Center of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention: The Denver Community-Level Collaborative – Dr. Beverly Kingston – University of Colorado***
An infrastructure to support coordinated, comprehensive youth violence prevention is critical but often lacking particularly in high-burden urban communities. The Denver Youth Violence Prevention Center will address this gap by collaborating with partners in two communities to implement *Communities That Care (CTC)*. *CTC* is an evidence-based, community-level prevention system that uses data to help communities understand how to best prevent violence. The Center will evaluate the impact of its activities on the communities' readiness and capacity to implement prevention activities and decreases in rates of youth violence. An implementation roadmap will be developed so that other communities can replicate and benefit from Denver's successes.
- ***Clark-Hill Institute for Positive Youth Development: Evaluation of a Comprehensive Community-Level Approach to Youth Violence Prevention – Drs. Saba Masho and Terri Sullivan – Virginia Commonwealth University***
Effective youth violence prevention programs are available but underutilized, and more needs to be learned about approaches that change community-level risks for violence. The Clark-Hill Institute will implement and evaluate *Communities that Care (CTC) PLUS*, an enhancement of *CTC* with *Walker-Talker* community outreach that strengthens awareness, capacity, and collaboration to use evidence-based strategies. *CTC PLUS* will be evaluated in three Richmond, Virginia neighborhoods for associated changes in rates of youth homicide and injury, neighborhood factors that affect the likelihood of violence, and community capacity to implement effective strategies.

Evaluating Practice-Based Sexual Violence Primary Prevention Approaches from CDC's RPE Programs

Five new research awards will rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of primary prevention strategies being implemented by, or planned for implementation with, [CDC's RPE Programs](#) to prevent the perpetration of sexual violence. CDC's RPE Programs support health departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and four U.S. territories to work with rape crisis centers, state sexual assault coalitions, and others to prevent sexual violence. This research investment is approximately \$9 million over the next four years.

- ***Testing the Efficacy of a Strengths-Based Curriculum to Reduce Risk for Future Sexual Violence Perpetration among Middle School Boys – Dr. Leah Wentworth – Health Research, Inc. – New York State Department of Health***

The New York State Department of Health will collaborate with Cornell University to evaluate the efficacy of a strengths-based curriculum called the *Council for Boys and Young Men*. This program is designed to reduce risk for future sexual violence perpetration among middle school-aged boys aged 12-14 years. The impact of the program on a number of outcomes will be examined, including sexual assault perpetration, bystander behavior, attitudes related to gender roles and acceptability of sexual violence, interpersonal relationships, and youth-adult connectedness. Factors that may impact the implementation of the program will also be assessed, and results will be used to inform future RPE Program activities.

- ***Preventing Sexual Violence Through a Comprehensive, Peer-Led Initiative: A Process and Outcome Evaluation – Dr. Katie Edwards – University of New Hampshire***

This research will be conducted in collaboration by the University of New Hampshire, the South Dakota (SD) Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault, the SD Department of Health, Peer Solutions, and Rapid City, SD Area Schools. A youth-led violence prevention initiative, *Peer Solutions' STAND & SERVE*, will be implemented and evaluated via a quasi-experimental design in middle and high schools within Rapid City, SD. Examined program effects will include sexual violence perpetration, bystander actions, and other behaviors, such as bullying and suicidality. Information will be collected from youth, school staff, caregivers, and social media to understand how prevention messages are shared. A cost-analysis of implementing the program will be conducted to inform replication, dissemination, scalability, and sustainability efforts.

- ***The Impact of Sources of Strength, a Primary Prevention Youth Suicide Program, on Sexual Violence Perpetration among Colorado High School Students – Dr. Dorothy Espelage – University of Florida***

The University of Florida and the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment will collaborate on a randomized controlled trial of *Sources of Strength (SoS)*. *SoS* is a school-based program that builds connections between trained student leaders and adults to strengthen social connectedness, help-seeking, and healthy norms about behavior. Previous program evaluations have shown many benefits, including reducing risks and increasing supports for students with histories of suicidal ideation. The potential broader effects on sexual violence perpetration by 9th-11th grade students will be examined in 24 high schools. This prevention strategy could have substantial public health impact by addressing risk and protective factors for multiple forms of violence.

- ***A Randomized Trial of Wise Guys: The Next Level – Dr. Kathryn Beth Moracco – University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill***

This research will be conducted through a collaboration between the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the Children’s Home Society of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault. The study will rigorously evaluate an ongoing RPE-funded program, *Wise Guys: The Next Level*. This program seeks to reduce sexual violence perpetration by addressing known risk and protective factors, such as rape culture and unhealthy masculinity, gender stereotyping, communication, and consent in relationships. Using a cluster-randomized design, the study will evaluate the program’s impacts on the perpetration of sexual violence, dating violence, bullying, and harassment as well as sexual risk behavior. The implementation costs will also be assessed to inform future prevention activities.

- ***Youth Empowerment Solutions for Healthy Relationships: Engaging Youth to Prevent Sexual Violence – Dr. Poco Kernsmith – Wayne State University***

Wayne State University, the University of Michigan, and the Michigan RPE Program will collaborate to adapt, implement, and evaluate *Youth Empowerment Solutions*, a primary prevention strategy focused on influencing community-level change through youth empowerment and positive youth development. A group randomized trial will be used to examine the effects of the strategy on sexual violence and teen dating violence perpetration, youth empowerment, social connectedness, and social norms in six high schools in Wayne County, Michigan.

Research Grants for Preventing Violence and Violence Related Injury

Three new research awards will evaluate the effectiveness of policies and programs that provide economic and other support to high-risk families in order to prevent child abuse and neglect. This research investment is approximately \$1,050,000 over the next three years.

- ***Preventing Child Maltreatment with Economic Supports – Dr. Kristen Shook Slack – University of Wisconsin-Madison***

Project GAIN (Getting Access to Income Now) is designed to prevent child abuse and neglect by improving family economic resources and reducing financial stressors. Families in the intervention will have assessments of their economic needs, receive assistance in identifying and accessing resources, and get support with financial decision-making. Approximately 800 at-risk families will be randomly assigned to the intervention or control groups. This research will collect information from families over one year and from administrative databases over two years to examine the intervention’s effects on rates of child abuse and neglect. A cost-benefit analysis will be conducted.

- ***Exploring the Causal Impacts of Economic and Social Safety Net Policies on Child Neglect in the United States: Implications for Primary Prevention – Dr. Michelle Johnson-Motoyama – University of Kansas-Lawrence***

This multi-phase study will examine whether economic and social safety net policies impact rates of child abuse and neglect using an integrated, longitudinal database. It will investigate the association between reports of child neglect and changes in multiple state and county programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Earned Income Tax Credits, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs, which occurred between 1995 and 2014. The effects of state policy changes on rates of child neglect based on children’s age, race/ethnicity, and gender will be examined. A cost analysis platform will be developed to inform prevention strategies.

· ***A Medical Home-Based Intervention to Prevent Child Neglect in High-Risk Families – Dr. Caroline Kistin – Boston Medical Center***

This study is a randomized controlled efficacy trial of *Child Abuse Prevention Problem Solving (CAPPS)*. CAPPS is a targeted intervention designed to address specific stressors faced by low-income parents of children with special health care needs and to enhance family strengths in order to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect. The program seeks to improve parent functioning by decreasing perceptions of being overwhelmed by daily problems, increasing self-efficacy, and buffering the impact of life stressors on mood. Approximately 250 parents from seven urban patient-centered medical homes will participate in a randomized controlled trial. The study will examine for program effects on referrals to child protective services for neglect, adherence to children’s medical care, and improvements in key parenting skills and overall well-being.

Learn More About CDC’s Approach to Violence Prevention

For further additional information and resources on youth violence, sexual violence, and child abuse and neglect, please reference:

- [CDC’s Division of Violence Prevention](#)
- [Preventing Multiple Forms of Violence: A Strategic Vision for Connecting the Dots](#)
- [National Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention](#)
- [CDC’s Rape Prevention and Education Program](#)
- [Technical Packages for Violence Prevention \(Sexual Violence and Child Abuse and Neglect\)](#)



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